

No. 100



N° 100

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 28 September 2015

Lundi 28 septembre 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 416-325-3708.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 416-325-3708.

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



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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 28 September 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 28 septembre 2015

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Today in the House we have the honour of welcoming a former member, Mr. Gary Fox from Prince Edward–Hastings during the 36th Parliament. Please join me in welcoming him back to Queen's Park.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We could be talking about the ghost of Gary Fox, but that was my message to you that I'm planning to get in front of you before you step on my—anyway, introduction of guests.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's my pleasure to introduce Krista Klages and Bryce Klages, mom and dad of page captain Eastyn Klages, from the great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have four friends to introduce this morning. The mayor of Sarnia, Mike Bradley, is with us today, and Whitby councillor Chris Leahy, Brantford councillor Brian Van Tilborg and Katrina Miller from the Keep Hydro Public campaign. Welcome to Queen's Park and question period this morning.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'd like to introduce the families of two page captains today. Kelly Hu, from the great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham—her mother, Feng Shao, is in the members' gallery this morning, and also page captain Siena Pacheco has her mother, Rosmarie; her father, Luis; her sister Alexia; and grandmother Anna Belli all with us this morning.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to welcome Harry Dearden to Queen's Park today from Cambridge. Harry, welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have some visitors from back home. My son Michael with his wife, Sabrina, and three children—Kaitlin, Anika and Maddox—are coming to Queen's Park. We'd better behave.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to welcome all of the members of the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants visiting Queen's Park today. I invite you to join me, along with all other members, for Physician Assistants Awareness Day in room 230 from 12 noon to 3 o'clock to learn more about the positive impact that our physician assistants are having on patients in Ontario.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to welcome members of the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition—they're

here today lobbying, fighting the good fight for agriculture—with special mention to Matt Bowman, who comes from the great riding of Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague the Minister of Community Safety and the government House leader for running 89 kilometres this weekend in support of those wonderful police officers we have had across Ontario who passed away. Congratulations. I'm very proud of you.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I believe the students and the teachers from Branksome Hall are here today. I recognize the Hunting Stewart tartan. Welcome.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: The Minister of Health mentioned that the physician assistants are here today. There is one from my area, Stephanie Ruttinger.

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

Although already introduced, I would be remiss if I did not introduce Mr. Brian Van Tilborg, a city councillor in Brantford. Thank you, Brian, for being here, and welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is to the Premier. Criminal charges have now be laid against one of the Premier's most senior operatives, Gerry Lougheed Jr. The OPP investigations against the apparent contravenions of the Election Act by the Premier's deputy chief of staff and Gerry Lougheed remain open and ongoing.

Now that charges have been laid, will the Premier set the record straight? Did the Premier instruct either Pat Sorbara or Gerry Lougheed Jr. to offer Andrew Olivier a job or an appointment in exchange for staying out of the Sudbury by-election?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As the Leader of the Opposition knows, we're aware of the charges that have been laid against Mr. Lougheed. The police have informed Pat Sorbara's counsel that she will not face any criminal charges. That is also public knowledge now.

I've been open with the Legislature, I've been open with the media, and I've been open with the public about these allegations. We have faith in the process. We have co-operated—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I am going to seek order immediately. The member from Renfrew, come to order.

Please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We have co-operated fully with the process, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to do so. This matter is now before the courts and I will not be commenting on the situation in Sudbury.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: Just because Pat Sorbara will not face criminal charges, it doesn't mean that she won't be charged under the Election Act.

In a media interview in mid-December, Gerry Lougheed Jr. confirmed that he spoke with the Premier before he spoke with Andrew Olivier. On the tapes, Mr. Lougheed says, "I come to you on behalf of the Premier." On the tapes, Pat Sorbara says, "You've been directly asked by the leader and the Premier to make a decision to step aside to allow Glenn to have the opportunity uncontested...."

In the eyes of the hard-working people of Ontario, Pat Sorbara's actions are no different than Gerry Lougheed's; in fact, they may be worse. Will the Premier tell the people of Ontario what she instructed Lougheed and Sorbara to say and to offer to Andrew Olivier?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

1040

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I would just remind the Leader of the Opposition that there are no criminal charges that are going to be laid against Pat Sorbara. That is public knowledge.

As far as I know, in terms of the Elections Ontario investigation, it is ongoing. We have no knowledge to the converse of that, and we'll continue to co-operate with that independent investigation. But in terms of the other questions about the Sudbury by-election, those matters are before the court.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The Premier is going to have to tell the truth at some point. There's a possibility that this Premier—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ask the leader to withdraw and to be very cautious of how—things that we can't say directly, we're not going to say indirectly.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

To the Premier: The Premier is going to have to be transparent at some point. There is a possibility that this Premier will be subpoenaed to testify. There is a possibility that the deputy chief of staff will be subpoenaed to testify.

The Premier's office must be held to the highest standard. How can the Premier, in good conscience, continue

to evade answering these questions when there are serious criminal allegations of corruption that go to the heart of the highest levels of her office?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I have answered questions in this House; I have answered questions with the media. I have been very clear in terms of my involvement in what happened.

There are no criminal charges being laid against my staff person, Pat Sorbara. There is an ongoing investigation in terms of Elections Ontario. But I would say to the Leader of the Opposition that at every juncture, I have co-operated. I have worked with the investigation. I will continue to do so.

I have answered those questions, Mr. Speaker. Now there are issues that are before a court, and I won't comment on—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order.

New question.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is to the Premier. When the Liberal government couldn't negotiate a contract with the doctors, they slashed their fees paid to physicians in retaliation. The Liberals have cut \$580 million from physician services as a punishment for not agreeing to the government's deal.

What does this government not understand? This is a cut to patients. They aren't just punishing doctors; the government is punishing patients in Ontario. The people of Ontario are going to be hurt. The people who are going to be hurt are stroke patients, young families, the elderly—all those in need of Ontario's medical help and care.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Premier being so short-sighted? Why does she continue to slash health care funding for front-line health care workers?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Leader of the Opposition is talking about a negotiation. We have a deep respect and admiration for the doctors of this province. We know how critical they are.

I grew up in the family of a general practitioner. My dad has worked—he's not working now; he's going to be 90 years old next year. But he practised in this province, and I know how critical primary care physicians are. It's why we've hired thousands more doctors. There are thousands more doctors in this province than there were when we came into office in 2003.

Unfortunately, the Ontario Medical Association rejected the offer that was on the table. A third party, Justice Winkler, came in, looked at the offer and recommended that the OMA accept the offer. They chose not to, so we had to go forward and implement the offer.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: Rather than blaming hard-working doctors, let's talk about the facts. The \$580-million cut to health care is threatening access to quality and patient-focused care. With 800,000 Ontarians already without a doctor and 140,000 new patients each year in Ontario, these cuts will make it even harder for people to get the care they need: cuts that will lead to the closure of many walk-in clinics, clinics that are visited each day by the very people who don't have a family doctor. That means those patients will have no choice but to go to emerg, and that means longer wait times at emerg.

The damage from these cuts is being felt in communities large and small. Will the Premier get her priorities straight and stop this assault on front-line health care in Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is just raring to answer the supplementary, Mr. Speaker, but let me just be clear. Despite the fact that this member was in the federal government at the time when Stephen Harper slashed the Canada Health Transfer—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Start the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton will come to order, and the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Despite the fact that that cut will mean \$8 billion less to Ontario over 10 years, we have consistently increased health care funding. Doctors' salaries and doctors' compensation in Ontario have gone up 60% under our watch. The average doctor in Ontario bills about \$350,000. They're among the best paid in the country.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, according to the Premier's own budget, the federal government transferred—

Interjection.

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

Carry on.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, according to the Premier's own budget, the federal transfers increased by \$652 million, but you only spent \$598 million, so you've cut \$54 million from the health care budget in Ontario. Years of cutting funding to doctors: Two years ago it was

\$850 million, then it was a \$580-million cut earlier this year, and now another \$235-million cut.

This has real results in Ontario's health care delivery. This means the closure of at least six addiction centres just in Toronto alone. It means longer wait times at ERs, family doctors' offices and clinics. It means 140,000 people struggling to find a family doctor.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is, that maybe instead of \$5 million in bonuses to Pan Am execs, \$24 million in salaries and benefits for—

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

Interjection.

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

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I know that the member opposite, the leader of the official opposition, wasn't here under the Mike Harris government when that government slashed health care, closed hospitals and fired thousands of nurses across this province.

It's true that when we came into government in 2003, we inherited a system that was disrespectful of our doctors. Doctors were leaving the province. Doctors weren't adequately compensated. We've corrected that.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Finish, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We appreciate the work that our doctors do across this province. We increased their compensation from government by 61% over the last decade to the point where they're among the best paid in Canada, if not in North America, as they should be, and that's going to continue. The cost of our budget as well is increasing by 1.25% each year. It will continue to increase to represent our doctors well.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Last January, at the beginning of her efforts to hide her role and the role of her office in the Sudbury bribery scandal, the Premier issued a statement saying that Mr. Lougheed "is not government or Liberal Party staff. He speaks for himself." But Mr. Lougheed certainly seemed to think that he was speaking for the Premier, and it's a bit rich for the Premier to distance herself from a well-known senior Liberal bagman who has raised a lot of money for her campaigns and has raised a lot of money for Mr. Trudeau's campaign.

Does the Premier still stand by her statement that Mr. Lougheed wasn't speaking for her or anyone in her office?

1050

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will repeat what I said earlier, Mr. Speaker. Of course we're aware of the charges that have been laid against Mr. Lougheed. There are no criminal charges that have been laid against my staff person, Pat Sorbara. There is now a case before the courts, and I'm not going to comment further on that.

The leader of the third party knows that I have answered questions in the Legislature; I have answered questions of the media; I've been very clear about the incidents around the Sudbury by-election. But I'm not going to litigate a case that is now in front of the courts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier has refused to take any responsibility in the Sudbury bribery scandal. But while the Premier is trying to act like she barely even knew Gerry Lougheed, the transcripts say in black and white that Mr. Lougheed was acting "on behalf of the Premier...."

My question to the Premier is this: Did the Premier order the call, and was Mr. Lougheed, in fact, speaking on behalf of the Premier as he claimed?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, these are issues that are going to be dealt with in a court. I'm not going to comment any further on them.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier can try to dodge responsibility for this mess, but something simply is not adding up. If the Premier has nothing to hide, she should just say so.

The transcript says very clearly, "They would like to present you options in terms of appointments, jobs, whatever...." On the recording, it certainly seems that "they" are the Premier and Ms. Sorbara. Who ordered the call? Was it the Premier, was it Ms. Sorbara or was it someone else in the Premier's office?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I think the leader of the third party should maybe look to her deputy leader, who is also a lawyer, and maybe get some legal advice. That advice should be along the lines that she should not be soliciting anybody in this House to interfere in a judicial proceeding. I think that's a well-known fact. You don't need to have a law degree to understand that we do not interfere in any kind of investigation or judicial proceeding. It would be highly inappropriate, Speaker.

All these questions that the member opposite is asking are inappropriate. I would suggest to her, respectfully, that she should not be soliciting anybody in this House to interfere in a judicial proceeding.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. This is a Premier who loves to talk about having conversations, and it's clear from the transcripts of the recorded telephone calls that the Premier, Ms. Sorbara, the member for Sudbury and Mr. Lougheed were all

having lots of conversations behind the scenes. There is good reason to believe that every single one of these four people know who it was who ordered Mr. Lougheed to make the call.

Will this Premier show some leadership, Speaker, and allow the people in her office and in her caucus to come forward with what they know about the order to have Mr. Olivier accept a bribe?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Speaker, there is a process that has unfolded and is unfolding outside this Legislature. I have co-operated with that process; I will continue to do so.

But the fact is that this is not the court. This is not the court where the decisions are going to be made. That process is not in this room, Mr. Speaker. It is happening outside of the Legislature. We will continue to co-operate, Mr. Speaker, as we have done all along.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier of the province of Ontario shouldn't have to be sworn in by a judge to be up front with the people of Ontario. She has been tying herself in knots to protect herself and Liberal insiders while she keeps the truth from Ontarians. The Premier, Ms. Sorbara, the member for Sudbury and Mr. Lougheed are all in this up to their necks, Speaker.

Does this Premier actually expect Ontarians to believe that no one in her office or her caucus knew about the calls to offer Mr. Olivier a bribe to step aside?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, once again there is a reason why we keep our judicial system separate from our political system. The reason is exactly this: We do not try cases in the Legislature. What the leader of the third party is doing is trying to inject politics into a manner that is before the courts. I think the prudent advice to her would be that she should refrain from doing so. She is not a judge; she is not the trier of fact. As far as I know, she's not a litigator in this case either. All those steps will take place in front of a judge. It's not a matter of getting sworn before a judge or not. That is how the system works, and it works like this for a reason—for centuries—it is the right system.

Let's not mix politics with the judicial proceeding. Let's respect the process. The Premier has co-operated on this matter from day one.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It seems that no matter how badly you behave, if you're a Liberal, you have to be dragged away in cuffs before you're held accountable in this province. This Premier needs to actually step up and show some responsibility. Someone is not coming clean.

No one believes that the Premier, that her deputy chief of staff and that the member for Sudbury absolutely knew nothing. If the Premier and her staff had nothing to do with this, she should simply say so. She's the one that promised over and over again that she was going to do things differently this time around for the Liberals. It

seems like the same old same old is happening in this chamber.

Why won't the Premier be up front and honest with Ontarians and tell this House who ordered that call?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The Premier has been honest and up front with the people of Ontario. She remains—she has been open on this matter. She has co-operated—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.
Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The Premier has co-operated on this matter from day one, but we are not going to break rules by interfering in a judicial proceeding. I think the leader of the third party should also refrain from doing so. We are not going to comment any further on this matter.

The Premier and this government will remain focused on the mandate that the people of Ontario have given to us. We will continue to focus on building Ontario up. We are going to continue to focus on investing in the skills and talents of Ontarians. We are going to continue to focus on building infrastructure, which is much needed across this province.

HOME CARE

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Last week, the Auditor General released a scathing report detailing the CCACs' failing of our most vulnerable citizens. The CCACs' failing of the people of Ontario means that this Liberal government has failed the people of Ontario. The Liberals failed when they allowed 40% of funding to go directly to bureaucracy, which is quite unheard of. Every member in this House must have heard a horror story of a patient being denied the CCAC service they deserved.

Why did the minister ignore the cries of those patients in need? Where was the accountability in this government to ensure cost-effective care?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. I think the member knows that I spoke to the Auditor General's report last year. I endorsed her report. I accepted it—

Interjection: Last week.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Sorry, last week. I accepted her report. I accepted all of her recommendations, and I indicated that I plan, as the minister, to implement all of the recommendations in her report. But I also mentioned that, since earlier this year, we've been very engaged. In fact, the government had asked some time ago for Gail Donner and an expert panel to look at home care for us. She presented her report in January of this year. Since then, we've accepted and implemented all of her recommendations as well.

We have a 10-point action plan that reflects her recommendations. We're going to be working with both reports, implementing both reports in their entirety.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the minister: Minister, for far too long this Wynne Liberal government has ignored

all those people who were turned away or moved down the wait-list at the CCACs. For five years, this ministry failed to conduct an analysis to show whether service providers could better deliver direct programs. This Liberal government allowed costs to skyrocket without considering the damage to our health care system. It's time for action, not for studies or high-priced consultants. It's time for accountability.

Minister, the Auditor General's report clearly shows that you're incapable of controlling the bureaucracy in the health care system. Are you not up to the job?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The member opposite knows, because he has a background in the health sector—and I appreciate that and enjoy the fact that he will be an effective critic for that and I'm sure for other reasons. But I want to say that we have world-class health providers that are working in our CCACs and with the contracted agencies, providing support to people, roughly 800,000 Ontarians year-round. But I want to point out that the party opposite did vote against our \$250-million increase annually for our CCACs, for home and community care, going forward in the next three years.

1100

We're investing \$2.5 billion in our CCACs. We're implementing. We're not having another study; we're not doing another review. We have two good road maps that we're following, with recommendations from the Auditor General and with recommendations from Gail Donner and her expert panel. We're implementing her recommendations to make sure that we're providing the best possible care.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: A question to the Premier: The Premier says that she has an election mandate from the people to sell off Ontario's oldest and most important public asset, but Ontarians aren't buying it. They don't like being duped. At least 165 Ontario municipalities have passed resolutions since the election opposing the Premier's sale of Hydro One, and over the weekend a national columnist wrote, "Her decision to privatize Hydro One is a reminder of how flexible—some might say duplicitous—Liberals can be once they gain power."

Will the Premier stop her duplicity, listen to Ontarians and reverse her reckless, short-sighted plan to sell Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I appreciate the question from the critic from the third party. They have been criss-crossing the province, meeting with people and flaming them on so-called skyrocketing hydro prices because of broadening ownership.

Just last week, the Supreme Court of Canada—not a journalist in any newspaper; the Supreme Court of Canada—upheld the right of the Ontario Energy Board to ensure consumers pay just and reasonable rates for electricity or any other utility, on expenditures like collective bargaining labour agreements.

In a decision Friday, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled on the long-standing dispute that began after the energy board determined Ontario Power Generation's labour costs were too high and disallowed the full payment amount requested.

The Supreme Court of Canada says, "The OEB's mandate is to review the underlying cost structure and make sure the costs that OPG seeks to pass off to customers [through] rates are just and reasonable." This applies—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, again to the Premier: These 165 municipalities need money for infrastructure. They also know that Hydro One makes money for Ontario. The Hydro One prospectus tells investors to expect cash dividends of \$500 million per year. They know that a privatized Hydro One will drive up electricity rates and make it harder to deliver essential municipal services. They know this is a bad deal.

Will the Premier stop ignoring these 165 municipalities and keep Hydro One public?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member wants to ignore a ruling from Supreme Court of Canada, which says that the OEB does have the power and is in fact reducing rates when required to be reduced. Not only with electricity companies: The Ontario Energy Board, just last week, again—a lot of fast-moving news here. The OEB approved decreases in natural gas rates for Enbridge and Union Gas customers.

The OEB is functioning. It's responsible, it's one of the best regulatory agencies in North America, and it will control, modify and hold Hydro One to account on rates.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Vic Dhillon: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. As the member for Brampton West, I know that transit is extremely important to those living in my community. Many of my constituents rely on GO Transit to get to and from work every day, and they tell me that they want to see our government making investments in transit and transportation that truly count.

As part of budget 2015, our government announced improvements to the GO rail network as part of our regional express rail plan. Can the minister please tell members of this House what kind of service improvements Ontarians can expect under this plan?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by thanking the member from Brampton West, not only for his advocacy and the question today, but for continuing to be a great champion for all of Brampton.

As announced in budget 2015 and as the member mentioned, our government is making the single largest infrastructure investment in this province's history. We are investing \$13.5 billion to improve the entire GO Transit network as part of our regional express rail plan. As part of that plan, we'll be giving those living in the GTHA new travel options with faster and more frequent service, and electrification on core segments of the GO

rail network. Specifically, that means that these investments will more than double peak service and quadruple off-peak service compared to today, reduce journey times for some cross-region transit trips by as much as 50%, and give a much wider range of travel options for those living in and around the GTHA.

Progress is already being made, but our government will continue to work with Metrolinx to deliver on this important plan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I want to thank the minister for his response. As the minister noted, our government is making the single largest infrastructure investment in Ontario's history, and I know that those living in my community will be pleased to hear that they will be seeing service improvements as part of our regional express rail plan. But I also know that those living in my community do not want to wait 10 years to see these improvements.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell members of this House if those living in Brampton can expect to see increased service sooner than 10 years from now?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member again for the follow-up question. We expect that over the next 10 years, weekly trips across the entire GO rail network will grow from the current 1,500 to nearly 6,000. Importantly, we're not waiting 10 years to deliver important results. Earlier this month, I was happy to announce that we have already added 14 new train trips on the Kitchener line between Mount Pleasant GO station and Union Station. This is an investment that will directly help those living in the community of Brampton along this particular line.

It's further proof that our government's commitment to making daily commutes and quality of life better for Ontarians is happening, whether they live in York region or, frankly, whether they live in Thunder Bay, where we build most of our transit vehicles, or in Brampton. Credit to this Premier and her leadership for getting the job done.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. The true price of the many Liberal scandals is hitting home in northern Ontario. To pay for their gas plant scandal or their smart meter scandal, this government is firing nurses. Hundreds of nurses have been fired in Sudbury, Timmins, the Soo and my hometown of North Bay. A recent Sudbury Star headline reads "Nurse Lay-offs Jeopardize Lives." Or the North Bay Nugget headline: "Deaths Will Rise if Nursing Cuts Not Opposed." The Liberal government just fired 158 health care workers at the North Bay hospital. Speaker, that's on top of the 197 they fired over the last three years.

When will this government come clean and admit they are firing nurses to pay for their scandals?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I've had the opportunity to speak with the member opposite specifically about his hospital in North Bay. He does know, because we've talked about this, that the funding in that hospital has increased by over \$100 million since we came into office.

He also knows, and I took some time to detail this with him because I believe it's important, that the LHIN and the hospital are still having discussions. There has been no decision. There isn't an official plan going forward by the hospital that has been approved by the LHIN. The LHIN and the hospital are in those negotiations, working first and foremost to make sure there will be no negative impact on patient care.

I'm confident that if we give that time and space to the LHIN and to the hospital to have those negotiations, to build that plan together—as well, the ministry has been working diligently with both parties to make sure that we're prepared to step in where we need to to make sure that quality of care is maintained.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: The Auditor General told us that the consequences of Liberal spending would “crowd out” the programs Ontarians depend on. Add the cost of their scandals and we now see what this government is doing. Waste a billion dollars on the Ornge scandal? Fire 100 nurses in Timmins and the Soo. Waste a billion dollars on the gas plant scandal? Fire 100 nurses in Sudbury. Waste a couple of billion dollars on smart meters? Fire a couple of hundred nurses in North Bay. Get caught paying \$10,000 to have computer files deleted? Don't worry; just fire another nurse up north.

Speaker, how many more nurses and front-line health care workers is this government going to fire to pay for their next scandal?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

1110

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The member opposite of course has his own list; here's mine. That opposition party in the last election promised to fire 100,000 workers in the broader public sector, many of them health care workers. That party opposite, when they were in government, fired thousands of nurses and closed dozens of hospitals. We've hired since we came into office to correct their mistakes and the damage that they have done—have hired more than 24,000 nurses. More than 10,000 of those are registered nurses. And, of course, Sudbury, the very first location in this province to have a nurse-practitioner-led clinic, the first of 25 that exist in this province today.

That's our commitment. It's not the commitment of your party. In fact, we've corrected over the last decade the errors—

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

Stop the clock. As you have been reminded, this is the chair that you speak to and not through. This is the chair that you speak to when asking questions and delivering answers.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question, through you, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier. Your Liberal operative, Mr. Lougheed, who has done a lot of work for both yourself and Justin Trudeau, has said that he'd been trying for years to get Mr. Thibeault to run in the Ontario Legislature. In the end, there was just one problem, and that was that there was a Mr. Olivier who wanted to run for that nomination. Surely this hurdle must have come up in your discussion with Mr. Thibeault. Our question simply is this: Can you confirm that you actually talked about the problems in regard to the nomination with Mr. Thibeault before he ran?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, Speaker, I'm not sure the member heard my response earlier. I will restate that I think the opposition should not be soliciting the government to interfere in a judicial proceeding. It would be highly inappropriate. Our system ensures that there is clear delineation between the political side—the legislative branch and the executive branch—and the judicial, the court system. I think the member will agree with me that it would be very inappropriate for any member of this House to interfere in this matter or speak to it. We'll let the judicial proceedings continue and have the facts come out and deliberations made at that stage.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To the Chair, please.

Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Through you, Speaker, back to the Premier: No, I don't agree with that. The facts are, Mr. Thibeault had discussions with a number of Liberal operatives, including the Premier, in regard to running in the Sudbury by-election. Our question is a very simple one: Did the Premier or anyone else have discussions with Mr. Thibeault vis-à-vis the problems they were going to have when it came to the nomination process, yes or no?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: With all due respect to the member opposite, he should know that in our system, facts are not litigated in the chamber of the House. There's a reason that a judge is referred to as the trier of fact. It's the judge's job to determine the facts.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I think the member opposite should listen to his deputy leader. He's pleading with them, he's begging them not to ask these questions. I think they're jeopardizing his law licence as a result by not heeding his advice on this matter. This is a judicial proceeding. We should not be interfering, and we will not be commenting any further on it.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the minister responsible for seniors' affairs. The oldest members of the baby boom generation in North America turned 65 in

2011. By the year 2036, our province's older adult population will more than double to 4.1 million seniors. This major change is going to affect every jurisdiction in Canada, and it's presenting both challenges and opportunities for every community here in Ontario.

Minister, you recently launched the Age-Friendly Community Planning Grant, which is going to help build more accessible and inclusive communities across the province. This funding is very important, and it's been well received by municipalities and organizations across the province, including in my riding of Kitchener Centre, where the city of Kitchener received \$50,000.

Can the minister please inform this House how this new grant is going to help improve the lives of seniors in Ontario?

Hon. Mario Sergio: Thank you to the member from Kitchener Centre.

Our new \$1.5-million Age-Friendly Community Planning Grant program is yet another example of our government's commitment to seniors in this province. This funding is providing grants to municipalities and organizations to undertake essential strategic planning in their communities, with a strong focus on seniors. It is assisting communities to decide what local improvements they can make to enable people of all ages to fully participate in community life, such as installing automatic doors, adding benches in parks and roadways, increasing accessibility of retail centres and transportation, and installing countdown timers at crosswalks.

Working together with municipalities to invest in age-friendly communities is part of our government's economic commitment to help build Ontario up, and also to build a better Ontario for our seniors.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: It's very encouraging to see the steps that we are taking to actively support municipalities across Ontario as they plan to accommodate seniors to contribute and stay active in all aspects of life.

In my community, as mentioned, the municipality is receiving \$50,000 for a project that's going to conduct a needs assessment and develop an action plan to address any identified needs and gaps for seniors in Kitchener. This project is also directed at ensuring that my community is not only friendly for older adults but also for persons with all abilities and of all ages. We want Kitchener to continue being as vibrant and healthy as possible.

I've already received lots of positive feedback from the city and from local seniors' groups that are expressing interest and gratitude for this funding.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on other initiatives that we have undertaken to develop more age-friendly communities across Ontario?

Hon. Mario Sergio: Again, thanks to the member.

Our collective challenge is to ensure that our communities grow to meet the evolving needs of every person, regardless of their age or ability. This is why age-friendly planning is so important, and it is why we will continue to work with municipalities, seniors' organizations and community partners as well.

Ontario is investing an additional \$200,000 in an outreach initiative program to provide free assistance across the province to communities that are interested in adopting age-friendly planning principles.

We have developed an invaluable planning guide to provide essential information to municipalities on the development, implementation and evaluation of plans for age-friendly communities. As well, we have been partnering with the University of Waterloo, the Ontario Interdisciplinary Council for Aging and Health, and the Seniors Health Knowledge Network to lead this particular outreach.

We will continue to find new ways to serve our seniors.

HOME CARE

Mr. Todd Smith: My question is for the Premier this morning. Premier, one of the most frequent issues that comes up in my constituency office in Belleville is home care—or the lack of it. Patients and their families are often on the receiving end of much less care than what the CCAC has originally promised them. Last week, we learned from the Auditor General why.

The minister's probably going to pop up like a Whac-A-Mole and tell us that he's spending millions more on home care, but what the Auditor General told us last week is that more and more money is being sunk into administration and sunshine list salaries, and less and less is going into actual health care on the front lines.

Premier, can you explain why only 47% of people who need to see a nurse in the first 24 hours after leaving hospital are actually seeing one of the home care workers, and why administrative salaries have gone up by 27%?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. It is unacceptable, that figure that he just described about the rapid-response nurses. It's so important, when individuals do transition out of hospital, that they can expect to receive that care when they arrive home, to support them. We will be working with our LHINs and our CCACs to make sure we can improve that, to set targets and to measure the success, so we actually see that improvement in that area.

I had said last week as well, with the Auditor General, that we accept all of her recommendations; they're equally important. She also has an important recommendation number 5, which says essentially that we should review the entire model of delivery of home care to Ontario citizens. We plan on not having another review. We've been spending a long time looking at this. We have Gail Donner's report from earlier this year to benefit from. We're taking the whole set of recommendations and moving forward to make sure that we're providing the best possible care we can for these vulnerable individuals.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: Speaker, with all due respect, and back to the Premier, you've had 12 years to figure this

out. You're dumping millions of dollars into the salaries of people who don't see patients.

Katie Hollister-Lobe in my riding is one such case. She was originally told that 90 hours of care per month would be provided to her mother, who has end-stage dementia. That was reduced first to 80 hours per month, and is now being reduced all the way from 90 down to 40 hours a month. Katie and her husband had managed to cobble together some additional care through community care programs that they pay for, but that barely covers the hours that the CCAC originally promised her mother. They may have to leave their jobs. They may have to move.

Speaker, can the minister explain why Katie's mother, who spent 42 years as a nurse, deserved to have her care cut so that more money can be put into administration, into the bank accounts of those working in administration, executives at CCACs?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I think most of us know that CCACs were actually a creation of the Conservative Party in the late 1990s. We actually saved a significant amount of money when we took the PCs' 43 CCACs that they created around the province and reduced them to 14, so that they were coordinated well with the LHINs, as well.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Are you saying they're a bad thing? Are you going to disband them? What are you going to do? Don't blame the Tories for your mess.

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

Finish.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: After the Progressive Conservative Party created those 43 CCACs in the 1990s, in fact, these two reports this year are really the only substantive reports that have been done by anyone of our CCACs in that 20-year period. I welcome the recommendations. We plan on implementing all of them, Mr. Speaker.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. The Premier has stated that her deputy chief of staff has been cleared of any charges or any wrongdoings by the OPP. However, that's not true. It's been made explicitly clear that the investigation is still ongoing. Charges may still be filed against her staff under the provincial Election Act, and she may very well be at the centre of the scandal as the person who directed Mr. Lougheed to make the call for the Premier.

Ontarians deserve honesty, and it shouldn't take the courts to get it. Will the Premier please be up front with Ontarians and address the allegations of bribery in her office?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let me just correct what the member opposite said. What I said is that Pat Sorbara's counsel have told her that there will be no criminal charges laid against her. I also said that as far

as I know, the investigation by Elections Ontario is ongoing. So I just want to correct what the member said.

We have co-operated with the investigations, we will continue to co-operate with the investigations, but there is now an issue before the courts, and I will not comment on that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The Premier is in fact quoted as saying, "I never believed that my staff did anything wrong." But the reality is that her deputy chief of staff is still under ongoing investigation. How is it that the Premier had no knowledge that her staff and a high-ranking Liberal campaign team member were engaging in illegal activity during the by-election? It has taken an investigation and criminal charges laid by the OPP to uncover corruption in the Premier's office. How could the Premier be so unaware of this alleged illegal activity in her own office by her own staff?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, Speaker, I'm really surprised by the line of questioning from the deputy leader, who is an esteemed member of the same profession that I share, as a lawyer, who knows really well that court proceedings must not be interfered with. I'm sure he has advised clients in the past to do the same, to make sure that they let the courts decide if a matter is under a court proceeding.

I think that in all the questions that he has been asking, he is essentially soliciting the government, the Premier, to move away from that very well-known principle in our system where we keep the political system separate from our legal system.

I would urge the member opposite that we should focus on real issues that matter to Ontarians, issues like building our communities up, making sure that we continue to build infrastructure, and ensure that our province's economy is growing every single day.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: My question this morning is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Ontario is a leading jurisdiction for the exploration and production of minerals in Canada, and a major player across the world. The mining and exploration industry is an incredibly important contributor to our provincial economy. This is particularly clear in my community of Sudbury, with a rich history in mining, Mr. Speaker.

While lower metal prices are having an impact, the forecast for mineral production in Sudbury is bright. The area is home to several of Ontario's key advanced mineral exploration projects.

Our government continues to invest in this important sector and ensure that the mining sector remains a vibrant part of our province's economy. Mr. Speaker, through you, can the minister inform the House on the status of the mining industry in Ontario and its significance to our provincial economy?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, let me thank the member for Sudbury for the question. He's certainly

one of the strongest advocates for the mining sector in the Ontario Legislature. Thank you so much.

We are indeed proud of the fact that Ontario remains a leading jurisdiction for the exploration and the production of minerals in Canada, and a major player across the world. We have world expertise in mine financing, geology, engineering, the advantages of a strong economy, competitive business costs, and a world-class research and development environment as well.

The bottom line is pretty interesting: In 2003, exploration expenditures in the province of Ontario were \$219 million. In 2014, despite some of the challenges in the sector, they were over \$500 million, which is great news.

The value of mineral production: In 2003, mineral production in the province was \$5.7 billion—a lot. In 2014, it was over \$11 billion, a record-setting performance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: It is part of our government's plan to build Ontario up by creating a dynamic and supportive environment where businesses can prosper. Ontario is a leader not only in the Canadian mining industry but also globally. There are hundreds of international companies in Ontario engaging in mineral exploration, and hundreds more in the supplies and services sector who benefit from that investment.

The total number of direct jobs in mineral production was 26,000 in 2014. There are also an additional 50,000 jobs associated with manufacturing and processing. The mineral sector is the largest private sector employer of aboriginal peoples in Canada.

I know that the minister recently celebrated the success of Detour Gold at their site just outside of Cochrane. Can the minister please elaborate on the status of the gold sector in Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It's a great follow-up. Just last week, I was joined by a number of municipal leaders and aboriginal leaders on an exciting trip to Detour Gold's site, just a couple of hundred kilometres from Cochrane, as they poured their one-millionth ounce of gold. That, of course, was only 30 months after their first gold bar in February 2013. It was a tremendous experience to see them pour the molten gold. Only moments after, I was holding that solid gold bar in my hand. They wouldn't let me take it with me.

Let's put our province's gold sector in perspective. Approximately two thirds of the exploration spending has gone towards exploration for gold in 2014, with similar spending expected this year. Much of this spending is at key gold projects in traditional gold camps across northern Ontario.

We've got a great story to tell the mining sector. Certainly, we're very, very proud of the strong role Ontario is playing.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, I hope you will remember that in 2013, municipalities in Ontario

were hit with a major ice storm that took out hydro for days and resulted in damages that cost millions of dollars.

Almost two years later, many municipalities are still waiting for part of the emergency support they were promised. When asked why this was taking so long, the parliamentary assistant of municipal affairs and housing blamed the municipalities.

Could the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing tell us whether he agrees that the delay is the fault of municipalities, or whether the provincial government should take the blame?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Someone once said, "No one's guilty but everybody's responsible." I wouldn't want to tag responsibility for the slowness of any system on anyone, especially the federal government, that has to clear the applications and is much more stringent in terms of the requirements, which played some role. I wouldn't want to do that in this House, because that would be unfair.

1130

There were some struggles. Municipalities had to document their real costs. There was a procedure set out to allow that to happen. We followed that procedure, and there was a lot of money delivered to municipalities to assist, money that we hadn't budgeted for but still delivered.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Partial funding after two years is not the emergency support these municipalities had been promised. The government took over nine months to even create an application and waited until November to do the training—that's the following year.

We all know municipalities went to great lengths to get those applications done last winter and get them in, and with that, you will know municipalities are not the problem with this program.

Would the minister apologize for his parliamentary assistant's attempt to blame municipalities, and apologize for his failure to deliver the emergency support municipalities need now and yesterday, not—

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: We would much rather point direction than fingers. I'm not going to apologize on behalf of municipalities for whatever time it took for them to get their material together. We respect municipalities; they work hard.

By the way, let me just take a minute to compliment the EMS workers and the hydro workers and all the others who worked tirelessly to recover from that ice storm. It was something that befell our province, which we didn't anticipate, but when push came to shove, we all worked together to respond appropriately.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. The people of Sudbury know who Mr.

Gerry Lougheed Jr. is. They know he is a Liberal fundraiser for the Premier and, right now, for Justin Trudeau. They know that he is a senior Liberal insider who does the bidding of the provincial and federal parties in Sudbury and beyond.

The Premier was given a chance to show some integrity and show that she is the Premier for all of Ontario. Instead, why has the Premier consistently put well-connected Liberal insiders ahead of the interests of the people of Sudbury? When will the interests of the good people of Sudbury actually come first?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, I would restate that what the member is asking about speaks to a matter that is before the courts, and it would be highly inappropriate to interfere in the matter.

This government continues to work hard and has invested heavily in improving the lives of the people of Sudbury when it comes to investing in our health care and education. In Sudbury, the investments have been at record levels over the last 12 years, and we're very proud of everything that we have done in Sudbury, the work that our former member of provincial Parliament, cabinet Minister Rick Bartolucci, did on behalf of the people of Sudbury, and the work that the current member for Sudbury continues to do on behalf of Sudbury.

That community is much better off over the last 12 years in investment in our health care and education system than ever, and we stand by that record.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Back to the Premier: Everybody in Sudbury knows what role Gerry Lougheed Jr. played in the Sudbury by-election for the Premier and that he is playing right now for Mr. Trudeau. He is a senior Liberal insider, and he does whatever is necessary for the Liberal Party. In all of the conversations between the Premier, Mrs. Sorbara, Mr. Thibeault and Mr. Lougheed, not once did what is best for the people of Sudbury ever come up—not once.

Will the Premier admit that through all of this, it has always been about what is best for the Liberal Party and never about what is best for the good people of Sudbury? My question is simple: When will the interests of the good people of Sudbury come ahead of the interests of the Liberal Party?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: This government and this Premier will continue to stand by all communities across this province, including Sudbury. We have invested an incredible amount when it comes to health care and infrastructure in Sudbury. That is why, after the great work that Rick Bartolucci did in that community, that community once again in a by-election voted for the current member from Sudbury, Glenn Thibeault. Why? Because they supported a government that has continued to invest in Sudbury and who has always put the needs and wants of the Sudbury community up front. That is why we have somebody who has devoted his life serving Sudbury and now is a member of the government and continues to serve that community.

We will not leave Sudbury behind. We'll continue to make sure that Sudbury is ahead and a priority for this government.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Over this summer our government hosted the Climate Summit of the Americas, from July 7 to July 9. Like many Ontarians, constituents in my riding of Ottawa South are concerned about climate change and greenhouse gas pollution. They're worried about what kind of world their children and their grandchildren will be left with if we don't take strong action on climate change. There is frustration at the lack of strong action on climate change from national governments, and in particular from their federal government.

Speaker, through you, could the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change inform the House about the outcomes of the Climate Summit of the Americas and their importance as part of Ontario's leadership in fighting climate change?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank the member for Ottawa South for this and for his leadership on this issue.

The results of the summit were quite extraordinary. We had 22 members of the Brazilian, US, Mexican and Canadian federations sign on to an agreement and now committed to enough emission reductions between now and 2030—equivalent to the annual emissions in one year of the United States.

As a matter of fact, Governor Brown and I two days ago were standing on a stage in New York City, inducting 14 more members from the Americas into this group, doubling the number of countries.

The United Nations framework on climate change was so taken with this that they have now set aside a day as a result of these efforts, for the first time, to bring what are called subnational or infranational governments into the formal UN reduction strategy. This was an enormous accomplishment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: My question again is back to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. I'd like to thank him for updating us on the success we had in bringing leaders from across the Americas together to take action on this important issue.

Increasingly, provinces and states are providing leadership on climate change, especially where national governments have failed to take meaningful action. In Ontario, we beat our 2014 greenhouse gas target of 6% below 1990 levels. Ontario is continuing to demonstrate leadership on climate change. It was announced in April that we will be moving forward with a cap-and-trade system to reduce greenhouse gas pollution while keeping Ontario's industries competitive.

Speaker, through you, could the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change inform the House on

what the commitments of the climate action statement mean and why subnational action on climate change is so important?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: One of the other things that came up when I was at the UN last week during Climate Week—what came up often, over and over again, was the incredible leadership of Premier Wynne, Premier Couillard and Jerry Brown. When I was speaking with Christiana Figueres, one of the things that came out of that was that on the first day of the summit, Undersecretary Lacy from Mexico committed the Mexican government to work with California, Quebec and Ontario to create a carbon market across America. That is viewed as one of the most important steps to securing it.

But I also want to thank members opposite: the member for Huron–Bruce and the member for Toronto–Danforth, who attended and participated and have been working, I think, to elevate this above partisan politics. Because it really goes to the question from the member from Oxford: We're going to face more flood events like in Burlington and more damage like we saw on GO Transit. We will see many more years where we lose 80% of our apple crop and where things like ice storms cost the public. That's why—

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

FATAL TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

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

Mr. Mike Colle: I wonder if we could have a moment's silence for the grandfather and the three children that were killed in a horrible accident yesterday at Kirby Road and Kipling Avenue, in York region, and just reflect on this incredible tragedy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence is seeking unanimous consent for a moment of silence upon the tragedy. Do we agree? Agreed.

Could I ask all members in the House and all visitors to please rise for a moment of silence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

VISITORS

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: Thank you very much, Speaker. In the west public gallery this morning, we have members of the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition. They will be having meetings at Queen's Park today and hosting a reception in room 228 later this afternoon.

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

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'd like to introduce two members of the public from my riding of Burlington who are in the gallery today, members of the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants, here for a luncheon reception: Deniece O'Leary, president of the Ontario

chapter of the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants, and Julie Kasperski, vice-president of the Ontario chapter of the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Again, on a point of order, my apologies—I just wanted to recognize the very bright young girls from Branksome Hall who were here until a few minutes ago. These are soon-to-be extraordinary young women and leaders, and it was very great to have them here in the House today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before we move into our deferred votes, I'm going to recommend to the House and to all members, if your visitors don't show up during introductions, that if you know they're coming, you might want to do a pre-introduction during the time allotted for introductions. That allows us to continue with the schedule that we have got established. You would be helping us in our agreed-upon process by the House leaders. If there is a change to be made, it must be made by them.

DEFERRED VOTES

ENDING COAL FOR CLEANER AIR ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR L'ABANDON DU CHARBON POUR UN AIR PLUS PROPRE

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

Bill 9, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use to generate electricity at generation facilities / *Projet de loi 9, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement pour exiger la cessation de l'utilisation du charbon pour produire de l'électricité dans les installations de production.*

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

The division bells rang from 1142 to 1147.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On December 2, 2014, Mr. Murray moved second reading of Bill 9, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use to generate electricity at generation facilities.

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

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Baker, Yvan
Balkissoon, Bas

Gravelle, Michael
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hoggarth, Ann
Horwath, Andrea

Moridi, Reza
Munro, Julia
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Natyshak, Taras

Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hudak, Tim	Pettapiece, Randy
Bisson, Gilles	Hunter, Mitzie	Potts, Arthur
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Brown, Patrick	Jones, Sylvia	Rinaldi, Lou
Chiarelli, Bob	Kiwala, Sophie	Sandals, Liz
Clark, Steve	Kwinter, Monte	Sattler, Peggy
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Scott, Laurie
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet
Damerla, Dipika	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Del Duca, Steven	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Tabuns, Peter
Dhillon, Vic	Mantha, Michael	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dickson, Joe	Martins, Cristina	Thibeault, Glenn
DiNovo, Cheri	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dong, Han	Matthews, Deborah	Vanhof, John
Duguid, Brad	Mauro, Bill	Vernile, Daiene
Fedeli, Victor	McDonnell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Fife, Catherine	McGarry, Kathryn	Wilson, Jim
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMahon, Eleanor	Wong, Soo
Forster, Cindy	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Fraser, John	Meilleur, Madeleine	Yakubski, John
French, Jennifer K.	Milczyn, Peter Z.	Yurek, Jeff
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Norm	Zimmer, David
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 95; the nays are 0.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 2, 2015, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1151 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GORDIE MICHIE

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate a young Parapan Am Games athlete from my riding, Gordie Michie. A proud member of the St. Thomas Jumbo Jets Swim Team, Gordie brought home several medals from the Toronto 2015 Parapan Am Games that were held this summer. Michie made Canada and our community proud when he won gold during the 100-metre men's backstroke. He went on to bring home silver in the 200-metre individual men's medley, bronze in the 200-metre men's freestyle, and concluded with another bronze in the 100-metre men's breaststroke.

It is very impressive to see such determination and ambition in Gordie. What an honour it is to travel to our province's capital to compete for our great country.

On behalf of the residents of Elgin–Middlesex–London, I'd like to thank Gordie for all of his hard work and tireless training efforts that brought him to this incredible achievement. It is a privilege to represent

Team Canada, and I hope Gordie's steadfast efforts will lead him to many more successes on the road to Rio in 2016.

FORT ERIE RACE TRACK

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to use my time today to offer my congratulations to the Fort Erie Race Track; to their CEO, Jim Thibert; and the whole team for having another record-breaking year.

Last year at the track they had two days with over \$1 million in wagers. That was record-breaking compared to the first 117 years. This year they blew that out of the water. This year they had six days with over \$1 million in wagers, including a day when they had nearly \$2 million.

It's not just that betting numbers are up. The attendance at the track is up; food sales are up; the number of programs sold at the track is up; every area of the track is beating expectations.

For having the biggest year that anyone has ever seen at the Fort Erie Race Track, I'd like to offer Jim, his staff, and all the unionized workers congratulations.

I can't speak about the Fort Erie Race Track without bringing up the slots. Not only has this government taken away the slots at the Fort Erie Race Track; they've also excluded them from the surrounding gaming zone, costing hundreds of people their jobs in my riding.

Mr. Speaker, this is a track that, year after year, breaks its own records, and year after year exceeds its performance goals. But this government refuses to help the track and all the people who make a living out of it.

Three years ago, the Premier committed to integrate horse racing with the OLG, including gaming, which would bring the slots back to Fort Erie. The racetrack has met their end of the bargain, but where has this government been?

Fort Erie has seven racing days left. I would like to ask all the members here to come to the Fort Erie Race Track.

CANADIAN CANCER SURVIVOR NETWORK

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: On September 16, I had the honour of hosting the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network reception here at Queen's Park. This is the second time I have hosted the reception, and what a great turnout. Thank you to everyone who came. As a survivor of cancer and a supporter of the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network, I know the importance of receptions and events like this, which help raise awareness so that critical research can be done to help combat this disease.

At the reception, we had the privilege to hear stories from three men who had survived prostate cancer. Their stories were enlightening and very emotional. I think that those of us who were present can agree that we all learned a lesson about how important our health is and

how critical it can be to make sure you have regular checkups with your doctor.

My brother, just last year, was diagnosed with prostate cancer, and I'm happy to say his prognosis is good. Some people are not so fortunate.

The Canadian Cancer Survivor Network works to empower collaborative action by cancer patients, families and communities to identify and work to remove barriers to optimal care. They ensure that cancer survivors have access to education programs and have opportunities to have their voices heard in planning and implementing an optimal health care system.

Once again, I was very happy to host this reception, and I would like to thank the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network for all the great work they do.

AMATEUR SPORTS CHAMPIONS

Mr. Michael Harris: While it's always an honour to speak about the great folks in Waterloo region, I'm especially proud after a summer sports season that saw so many of our young people achieve so much.

I'll start with the New Hamburg Midget Heat, who went 12 and 0 to win the gold at the under-18 men's Canadian fast pitch championship in New Brunswick, defeating my seatmate's Tweed team.

Speaking of perfect records, the Kitchener Panthers seven-and-eight-year-old minor rookie baseball team came about as close to perfection as you can get. The Panthers went 61 and 1 this season, completing their dominance with a 13-5 victory over Leaside to win the Ontario Baseball Association's provincial championships in Kitchener.

On the soccer pitch, it was our under-14 Woolwich Wolfpack girls rolling to victory at the Ontario Cup, defeating the Brampton Brams United Rebels 3-0 in the final.

Ontario Cup honours also went to the under-16 Kitchener 99As, who dropped the King City Royals 3-2 after going into halftime down 2-1. Never count the people from Waterloo region out, Speaker.

Best of luck to the Wolfpack in Kitchener as they head to the Canadian championships in St. John's, Newfoundland, and Surrey, BC.

Meantime, Kitchener-Waterloo United FC sit on top of their soccer world following a 4-3 defeat of the New York Red Bulls for the Professional Development League championship.

And I would be remiss, Speaker, if I didn't mention Kitchener's Mandy Bujold, who made us all so proud in taking home boxing gold at the Pan Am Games.

We're proud of all of them and thank them for their championship efforts.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I had the chance to visit some of our jails and correctional facilities during our

summer intersession, and I look forward to continuing those visits.

Our jails cannot be ignored. Our correctional officers, staff and nurses cannot be ignored. Our inmates cannot be ignored, and we cannot continue this out of sight out of mind mentality. We cannot pretend there isn't a crisis in corrections.

Our correctional system is full of safety concerns for those who live and work in it. Chronic understaffing means that jails are in lockdowns more often and inmates are stuck in their cells. This makes for an even higher-stress environment than you can imagine. Constant overcrowding means that people sleep on mats on the floor. It means that infirmaries are being used as cells and not for care.

Correctional officers and probation and parole officers are among our first and constant responders who deal with stress, threat, danger and trauma on a regular and ongoing basis. Jails should be a safe place to live and work.

Mr. Speaker, here's just one example of something to address: Metal detectors don't pick up ceramic blades or most of what gets into our jails. So when is this government going to commit to safety and commit to scanners that will do the job?

The more weapons, the more overcrowding, the more stress, the more danger for everyone living and working in the facilities. The less this government supports our system, the more it breaks down.

Our shiny new P3 jails have been in the news for a number of reasons. Glass that breaks shouldn't be used in our jails. Locks that can be unlocked shouldn't be used in our jails. Pieces of the building should not break off easily to be used as weapons.

This is a government that has allowed shortcuts to happen, so when are they going to address this crisis in corrections?

DRY STONE FESTIVAL

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I rise today to applaud the 2015 international Dry Stone Festival that was held on Amherst Island this last weekend. Amherst Island holds the greatest concentration of historic drystone walls and fences in Canada. Some are close to 200 years old, and most were built by Irish settlers.

The festival was a great success due to the passionate and tireless commitment of organizers Andrea Cross, Dry Stone Canada and the Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland, and, of course, an army of volunteers and over 30 drystone wallers from very far.

1310

Drystone wallers are sculptors guided by nature's canvas. The 450-million-year-old blocks they coax and coerce into long-lasting art forms are reminders of our historical connections to the landscape.

The festival celebrated Irish heritage and will boost local tourism and the local economy through the creation of a new, year-round attraction. Indeed, it is the world's

first attempt to mimic the ancient, mystical, Mayan-Celtic lunar solar stone calendars of early civilization. I will never forget the moment when we saw the sun break through the clouds and shine on a wall behind. Absolutely fantastic.

I am so proud of our government's support for the festival through a \$73,000 tourism initiative grant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Merci. Meegwetch.

ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Today I would like to recognize just a few of the many communities, church groups, service organizations, art organizations, businesses and individual citizens in Perth–Wellington who are coming together to assist in the Syrian refugee crisis. Those groups include the city of Stratford and the Stratford Festival. They have partnered to raise the funds necessary to sponsor several families from Syria and help them settle into the city of Stratford.

They formed a steering committee comprised of a local city councillor, interested residents, members of the faith community and members of the council of churches. Together, this committee has set out to raise \$225,000 to help re-settle a minimum of five families.

I would also like to recognize the Mennonite Central Committee for its outstanding work on this issue. With their history and expertise in supporting refugees, it's no wonder Stratford is working with this reputable organization. MCC will also be opening a gift registry so that local residents can make donations.

The Stratford Festival is also doing its part. The festival will be donating funds from a performance to the fundraising effort. They expect to raise \$20,000 in a single evening. I would encourage anyone interested in more information about this performance to contact the festival directly.

Tomorrow, a public information session is being held in Stratford city auditorium at 7 p.m.

Again, thank you to our community leaders and partners for coming together to support this important, worthy cause.

RON LENYK

Mr. Bob Delaney: Mississauga lost one of its most prominent business people and one of its biggest boosters, most recognizable faces and most-liked neighbours in September. Ron Lenyk, publisher of our newspaper, the Mississauga News, passed away following heart failure. Ron served 31 years as publisher of the Mississauga News. He left in 2008 to be a vice-president of Torstar Corp., going on to become chief executive officer of Mississauga's Living Arts Centre in 2011.

Reflecting the Canada that Ron helped build, he was born in postwar West Germany in a displaced persons camp. He came to Canada with his parents in 1949 at three years old, landing in Nova Scotia's famous Pier 21.

Ron was married with two children and is survived by his wife of 45 years, Olga; daughter, Trina and her husband, Jason Christie, and their daughter, Madison; and son, Terry, and his wife, Taylor Williamson.

There was scarcely a cause or a charity in Mississauga that Ron didn't support or help out with. Ron Lenyk leaves a big legacy and always expressed confidence in the ability of our city's people to fill shoes of any size. We are a better city for having Ron Lenyk among us in the city of Mississauga.

CREDIT VALLEY TRAIL

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I rise today to share the news from the great riding of Mississauga–Brampton South of the Credit Valley Trail. On September 11, Friends of the Greenbelt announced \$100,000 to help Credit Valley Conservation and partners to bring to life a 110-kilometre trail that will stretch from Port Credit in Mississauga to Orangeville.

Each year, Ontario invests \$130 million to support over 80,000 kilometres of trails—trails that link unique communities and green spaces, and encourage people of all ages to explore their natural environment and be physically active. The Credit Valley Trail will also boost Peel region's local economy by drawing visitors and tourists.

As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, I know the trail will create a stronger connection between urbanites and their natural environment. Awareness of our natural surroundings leads to a better understanding of the human impact on the environment and of our undeniable role in climate change.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LARRY BLAKE LIMITED ACT, 2015

Mrs. Martow moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr27, An Act to revive Larry Blake Limited.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

CAPPING TOP PUBLIC SECTOR SALARIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE PLAFONNEMENT DES HAUTS TRAITEMENTS DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

Mr. Bisson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 124, An Act to cap the top public sector salaries /
Projet de loi 124, Loi plafonnant les hauts traitements du
secteur public.

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.

M. Gilles Bisson: Le projet de loi a comme but de
mettre une limite-plafond de deux fois le salaire de la
première ministre pour n'importe quel dirigeant d'une
entreprise publique.

What I just said is that the bill has as its aim to cap the
salary of those people running our public institutions at
two times the rate of what the Premier's salary is. I look
forward to that debate.

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

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

"Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost
of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for
certain energy sources, including the world's highest sub-
sidies for solar power; and

"Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through
the global adjustment, which can account for almost half
of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

"Whereas the high cost of energy is severely im-
pacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents,
especially fixed-income seniors; and

"Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mis-
management in the energy sector by implementing im-
mediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper
Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-
bly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009,
and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of
electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates
and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global
adjustment and debt retirement charges."

I fully support it and will send it with page Grace.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr. Todd Smith: I present this on behalf of hundreds
of people in the Marmora and Lake area.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture has
protected class 3 agricultural land from development for
the purposes of projects under the Green Energy Act; and

"Whereas the United Nations has declared the vital
importance soil plays in human civilization and
protection of this vital resource; and

"Whereas the solar energy facility, SunEdison
Cordova Solar Project, planned for Ledge Road,
Clemenger Road and Twin Sister Road, in the municipal-
ity of Marmora and Lake will occupy agricultural land
that has previously been protected against development
under the Green Energy Act;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-
bly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural
Affairs take the necessary steps to ensure that projects,
including the SunEdison Cordova Solar Project, that are
on protected agricultural land are protected from large-
scale, industrial energy development."

I agree with this, will sign it and send it to the table
with page Gabriel.

1320

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition here to the
Legislative Assembly of Ontario from people across
Durham, including Lynn Odinski.

"Privatizing Hydro One: Another wrong choice.

"Whereas once you privatize hydro, there's no return;
and

"We'll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for
schools and hospitals; and

"We'll lose our biggest economic asset and control
over our energy future; and

"We'll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like
what's happened elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-
bly of Ontario as follows:

"To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario
families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for
generations to come."

I support this petition, affix my name to it and send it
with Krishaj.

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I have a petition that is
addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million
people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of
whom are children. Of the four chronic diseases
responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular
diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the
only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs,
Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs
the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in
direct and indirect health care costs, and this figure is
estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short
years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-
bly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's
private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014,

which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I agree with this. I will affix my name and send it to the table with Sydney.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a payroll tax petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Liberal government has brought forward a payroll tax in the form of a mandatory Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP); and

“Whereas the Liberal government has not conducted nor released a cost-benefit analysis of this new payroll tax; and

“Whereas internal Ministry of Finance documents show that the Liberals are aware that the ORPP will increase the cost of doing business in Ontario and kill jobs in the province; and

“Whereas a McKinsey and Co. survey shows that more than four out of every five Canadians already save enough for their retirement; and

“Whereas the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has stated that a majority of its members would have to lay off workers; and

“Whereas the government’s plan would force the cancellation of many existing retirement plans that have better employer contribution rates; and

“Whereas low-income earners will have their retirement savings clawed back under this scheme; and

“Whereas Ontarians cannot afford another tax on top of their already skyrocketing hydro bills and ever-increasing cost of living;

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

“To abandon the idea of an Ontario pension tax.”

I will gladly affix my signature and give it to page Matt.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

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

“Whereas once you privatize hydro, there’s no return; and

“We’ll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

“We’ll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

“We’ll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what’s happened elsewhere;

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

“To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come.”

I wholeheartedly agree and will hand it to page Sameer.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This petition is titled “Planning for Ontario’s Future.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I strongly agree with this petition and will affix my name to it.

CONCUSSION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I’m delivering this on behalf of my constituents in Nepean–Carleton but also for people as far away as Kingston and White Lake.

“Whereas the rate of concussions among children and youth has increased significantly from 2003 to 2011, from 466 to 754 per 100,000 for boys, and from 208 to 440 per 100,000 for girls; and

“Whereas hard falls and the use of force, often found in full-contact sports, have been found to be the cause of over half of all hospital visits for pediatric concussions; and

“Whereas the signs and symptoms of concussions can be difficult to identify unless coaches, mentors, youth and parents have been educated to recognize them; and

“Whereas preventative measures, such as rules around return-to-play for young athletes who have suspected concussions, as well as preventative education and awareness have been found to significantly decrease the danger of serious or fatal injuries; and

“Whereas Bill 39, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to concussions, was introduced in 2012 but never passed; and

“Whereas 49” separate “recommendations” were made ... “to increase awareness, training and education around concussions” after a jury deliberated from a “coroner’s inquest into the concussion death of Rowan Stringer;

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

“That the Ontario government review and adopt Rowan’s Law to ensure the safety and health of children and youth athletes across the province.”

I, of course, endorse this petition. I ascribe my name to it and I present it to page Siena. Thank you, Siena.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in support of a full range of core hospital services at both the South Muskoka Memorial Hospital in Bracebridge and the Huntsville District Memorial Hospital.

“Whereas the provision of a full range of core hospital services, including acute care in-patient, emergency, diagnostic and surgical services, at both the Huntsville District Memorial Hospital and the South Muskoka Memorial Hospital in Bracebridge by Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare (MAHC) is vital for all of the communities in the entire MAHC catchment area, including Algonquin Park; and

“Whereas the continued delivery of those core hospital services at both South Muskoka Memorial Hospital in Bracebridge and the Huntsville District Memorial Hospital is crucial to the long-term sustainability and economic vitality of the two communities and the entire MAHC catchment area, including Algonquin Park; and

“Whereas the residents of Huntsville, Bracebridge and the other communities in the MAHC catchment area have strongly supported multi-site delivery of a full range of core hospital services, including acute care in-patient, emergency, diagnostic and surgical services, at both the South Muskoka Memorial Hospital in Bracebridge and the Huntsville District Memorial Hospital; and

“Whereas, contrary to the wishes of the people of the entire MAHC catchment area, the board of directors of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare has approved the ‘one-hospital model’ as the preferred model for hospital service delivery in the future;

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

“(1) That the province of Ontario ensure that a full range of core hospital services, including acute care in-patient, emergency, diagnostic and surgical services, are maintained on a multi-site basis at both the Huntsville District Memorial Hospital and the South Muskoka Memorial Hospital in Bracebridge;

“(2) That the province of Ontario ensure that the changes to Ontario’s health care delivery system

currently being implemented do not negatively impact access to services and the quality of care in Bracebridge, Huntsville and the entire MAHC catchment area, including Algonquin Provincial Park;

“(3) That the province of Ontario ensure that the changes to Ontario’s health care delivery system currently being implemented recognize the unique and important role that smaller hospitals, such as the Huntsville District Memorial Hospital and the South Muskoka Memorial Hospital have in promoting economic development and creating sustainable communities in Ontario.”

I support this petition and have signed it.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It’s entitled “Planning for Ontario’s Future.

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

1330

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition, and I will affix my signature and hand it over to page Jacob.

DENTAL CARE

Mrs. Gila Martow: This is a new topic. The petition is called “Teeth: A Necessity, not a Luxury.

“To Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario, Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, as well as Patrick Brown, Leader of the Opposition:

“We, the undersigned, wish to protest the total lack of funding for dental reconstruction necessitated by cancer treatment when compared to the significant funds made readily available for breast reconstruction for women who have had cancer-related mastectomies.”

I will gladly affix my name to this petition and give it to page Matthew.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are critical transportation infrastructure needs for the province;

“Whereas giving people multiple avenues for their transportation needs takes cars off the road;

“Whereas public transit increases the quality of life for Ontarians and helps the environment;

“Whereas the constituents of Orléans and east Ottawa are in need of greater transportation infrastructure;

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

“Support the Moving Ontario Forward plan and the Ottawa LRT phase II construction, which will help address the critical transportation infrastructure needs of Orléans, east Ottawa and the province of Ontario.”

It gives me great pleasure to affix my signature and give it to page Calvin.

LANDFILL

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Whereas the placement of a landfill in the headwaters of multiple highly vulnerable aquifers is detrimental;

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

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

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

Thank you very much for the opportunity to present this petition, and I affix my signature as I agree with it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES LIMITES
DES CIRCONSCRIPTIONS ÉLECTORALES

Mme Meilleur moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 115, An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the Representation Act, 2005 and amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act / Projet de loi 115, Loi édictant la Loi de 2015 sur la représentation électorale, abrogeant la Loi de 2005 sur la représentation électorale et modifiant la Loi électorale, la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Madame Meilleur has moved second reading of Bill 115. I look to the minister to lead off the debate. The Attorney General.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Scarborough Southwest.

I rise in the House today to open debate on this bill that aims to strengthen our election system. The proposed Electoral Boundaries Act will help ensure that Ontarians are represented fairly and effectively in the Legislature.

As members will recall, in June the Premier and I spoke briefly about several proposed measures to reform this province’s elections laws which will strengthen the inclusive society that we are so proud of in this province.

For more than a decade, this government has demonstrated a firm commitment to ensuring we have a just and fair election system. Taking steps to ensure our election laws are not only up to date, but also progressive, is among the principal ways we have sought to achieve this.

As many of you will recall, in 2007 we considered a new electoral system for the province. To help provide voters with a say in deciding how their representatives should be elected, we held a referendum on this issue. This is something no other Ontario government has ever done. While the people decided not to proceed with a new system at that time, it was significant that we asked the question and heeded the response.

Later, in 2010, this assembly passed a bill that included several amendments to make the election process more accessible, convenient and flexible. Some of these measures included creating special ballots for those unable to make it to the polls. To better serve people with disabilities, we also made fully accessible voting locations a requirement. Shortly after, in the wake of the robocall scam during the 2011 federal election, we introduced steep fines and jail time for those committing election fraud. Clearly, our record shows that our commitment to maintaining a democratic electoral system has been unwavering.

I would now like to take this opportunity to tell the members in detail about the Electoral Boundaries Act, which we are proposing to help Ontarians continue to

have a strong voice and effective representation at Queen's Park. Following this, I will also explain a number of other measures that our government is considering to encourage greater public participation in the electoral process.

The legislation we are discussing today would build upon our government's work to strengthen Ontario's election system by ensuring that provincial ridings better reflect population movement and growth. If passed, the Electoral Boundaries Act would create 15 new ridings in southern Ontario. This adjustment will align with the federal electoral boundaries for southern Ontario that were put in place last year. Increasing the number of ridings in these areas will help ensure that this Legislature can better reflect the interests of these wonderfully diverse and flourishing regions. This is about representation by population, a core democratic principle.

We need to ensure that there is appropriate political representation in all parts of the province. Of course, the unique needs of communities in northern Ontario were an important consideration when we drafted this legislation. In 2005, our government made a commitment to support effective political representation in the North, and we intend to keep that promise. As a result, the 11 ridings in northern Ontario would stay the same, to ensure that northern communities continue to have effective representation in the Legislature.

1340

I would like to take this opportunity to tell the members about a few additional measures we are considering to strengthen our election system and to continue our legacy of progress and responsiveness to the changing needs and expectations of our citizens.

When we introduced the Electoral Boundaries Act, we also said we would move forward on other reforms, including the following: We will introduce rules that would allow the provisional registration of 16- and 17-year-olds. While the actual voting age would remain at 18, provisional registration could potentially allow for more meaningful engagement of young people. Later, when they turn 18, these young voters would begin receiving the same voter information as other adults on the electoral rolls. My hope is that they will be a bit more informed about the electoral process and a bit more likely to go to the polls than they otherwise would have been.

Finally, we will tackle the issue of third-party advertising. Ontario currently has rules in place to ensure transparency and free speech in our election campaigns. Third-party advertising rules were introduced in Ontario for the first time in 2007. Currently, third parties that spend \$500 or more on election advertising are required to register with the Chief Electoral Officer. They must also report to the Chief Electoral Officer on election advertising expenses. If election advertising expenses are \$5,000 or more, these reports must be audited.

As members may recall, in the most recent budget our government committed to strengthening the province's rules around election-related, third-party advertising. This will help ensure that we continue to protect the

public interest. Informed by the Chief Electoral Officer's report on the 2014 general election, we are now considering options for moving forward.

I think we can all agree that we believe in a just and fair society, a society that is inclusive and democratic. We know the importance of giving citizens the tools and resources they need to meaningfully participate in society. But Mr. Speaker, maintaining a democratic society does not just mean having a government that is willing to listen to what its people have to say; it must be willing to give people a megaphone through which to speak.

By adjusting electoral boundaries in southern Ontario and pursuing a number of other innovative, progressive electoral reforms, the proposed measures would help us build on the momentum our government has generated over the years.

I urge all members to support our proposed legislation for a stronger and more inclusive Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to recognize the member for Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I rise in the House today to continue debate on this important bill.

As the Attorney General noted earlier, this bill and some other proposals we're considering really get at the heart of the most cherished values we have as citizens of a democratic society—values like fairness and transparency, and the importance we place on progressiveness; the ability to participate, freely and without barriers, in decisions impacting our families, our businesses and our communities, decisions that influence the direction our society takes today and the future our children will inherit.

As some of the members will recall, in June the Premier reminded us of just how hard-earned this right of participation is; that it, in fact, took many decades of struggle before the right to vote was extended to every adult in Canada; and how today, as our society grows and evolves, it is up to us to ensure that our present-day laws continue to reflect those values upon which our province was founded.

As members are aware, last year the Chief Electoral Officer made a number of recommendations to government on different steps we could take to continue to strengthen the province's election system. Strengthening third-party advertising rules and undertaking provisional registration of 16- and 17-year-olds are just two of the innovations he suggested. He also made a number of excellent recommendations that our government has been considering since receiving his report earlier this year.

As the Attorney General explained, the focus of the bill before us today is about ensuring that provincial ridings better reflect population growth and movement. This, of course, responds to another key recommendation of Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer. As members are aware, over the past decade Ontario's population has grown rapidly in many areas of the province. This has resulted in a number of ridings with populations that are substantially greater than the provincial average.

To continue moving Ontario forward, we need to ensure there is appropriate political representation in all parts of the province. So, to ensure fair and appropriate representation of the people living in these areas, the Electoral Boundaries Act would create 15 new ridings in southern Ontario. The change will increase the total riding count in southern Ontario from 96 to 111.

Most of the new ridings would be in areas that have seen substantial population growth, such as Toronto, Peel, York, Durham and Ottawa, places more people are calling home. It includes Brampton, which has become one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, and places like Ottawa, where a few years ago the Ottawa-Gatineau population outpaced the country's national growth.

The new electoral map would help ensure that this Legislature can better reflect the interests of these diverse and ever-expanding regions. This adjustment would align with the federal electoral boundaries for southern Ontario that were put in place last year. Indeed, a glance at the federal riding map currently in play for the October 19 federal election will allow you to see how our electoral landscape would look for southern Ontario come the next provincial election. These are the 111 ridings that were established through the decennial federal boundaries redistribution process, and the changes from the old map to the new map, including name changes, are the ones that we are proposing to make provincially.

Of course, that is where the similarity between our two maps ends. As some of the members may recall, in 2004, federal redistribution reduced the number of federal seats in northern Ontario from 11 to 10. We disagreed with that action, which would only serve to weaken northern representation. That would be a step in the wrong direction. That is why, later the following year, our government passed the Representation Act, 2005, which allows Ontario to keep that 11th northern seat. The step was a reflection of our government's commitment to support effective political representation in the North, and to ensure that people who live in those communities continue to have a strong voice in the provincial Legislature.

As the Attorney General noted earlier, we fully intend to stand by and honour that promise today. To quote my colleague the Honourable Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development and Mines, "Economically and socially, the North represents a unique and vital part of Ontario." And so, through this bill, we are reaffirming our government's commitment to protecting representation in the North.

Should the Electoral Boundaries Act pass, Ontario will have 122 provincial ridings and 121 federal ridings. It is seemingly small, but it is a significant point of difference and change, one to be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, should this legislation pass, I should take this opportunity to clarify that the new electoral boundaries I have described wouldn't come into effect right away, but rather upon the first dissolution of the Legislative Assembly after November 30, 2016. This means that any by-election before the next dissolution of the Legislative Assembly would take place according to Ontario's current electoral map.

1350

The legislative measures and other electoral reform proposals that I've described here are very exciting. As you know well, Mr. Speaker, we can be a raucous bunch sometimes, so while to me the thought of 15 new members, 15 new colleagues and friends in the House, is quite an exhilarating one, you may want to get a larger mace to keep order, with the new members coming into this Legislature.

But with great sincerity, I would like to conclude today by once again urging the members to support the government's electoral boundaries legislation. Each of these measures the Attorney General and I described to you would help reinforce the province's strong democratic traditions and preserve our most cherished values as Ontarians. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions or comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I listened to both speakers on this bill. It was interesting. I heard at different times, I think two or three times by the Attorney General, and certainly by the member opposite, about listening to people. I wish they'd done that.

You know, it's hard to believe that they do listen to people because of what they have done in several other bills that they have passed in recent years. The Green Energy Act comes to mind, how they don't listen to people in rural Ontario over that, and certainly joint and several liability, which is something that over 200 municipalities supported: changes in the joint and several liability business. They didn't listen to that. They just said, "No, you're not right." And certainly the Hydro One sale is something that they're not listening to the people of Ontario about.

So I do have some suspicion that they listen to people, and certainly this bill—these changes that are going to mimic what the federal government is doing—has nothing really to do with listening to anybody. It's just that the federal government is doing it, so we're going to do it. That's about all it is. They continue to reject good comments from the people of Ontario all the time just for their own political means.

Anyway, the bill will be changing these boundaries. I'm very glad it's not touching my riding, because I do enjoy serving the people of Perth-Wellington, and we will be staying the same, although there are some ridings around me that are going to be changed.

I think people get comfortable with an MPP in their riding, and to change it around too often is not a good thing, although certainly in this case the changes are going to occur mostly in urban areas, and it's probably a good thing for those reasons. It's just that saying that they listen to the people of Ontario—it's certainly something they don't do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House and talk about the concerns of the people of Timiskaming-Cochrane—today on Bill 115,

the first true debate about changes to the Election Act. It's an interesting time to talk about the integrity of the Election Act, because we spend a lot of parts of question period talking about the Election Act.

I have a 20-minute space later this afternoon. A lot of people don't realize, and this act lays it out very well, that the boundaries in northern Ontario and southern Ontario don't follow the same rules. It's quite confusing, actually, for people who live in northern Ontario, because—

Hon. Liz Sandals: It's a good thing.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's a good thing. I'm not complaining, because we have—I think we'll all agree that provincially we have a lot more to do with constituents than federally. So we're not complaining.

My riding cuts across three federal ridings, so I have to deal with three federal MPs. So we do a lot more—and I am sure we've all had this: Someone will come into your office and they'll have an issue with government. But to them, they don't care if it's federal, provincial, or municipal. They really don't care. Regardless of party, in the North we have a pretty good rapport with each other to make sure that people don't get the runaround: “Well, this is a federal issue and you have to...”, because especially in my riding, you've got three federal MPs. When you start trying to explain the boundaries, people get really confused, but it's something people have to keep in mind. If they took away one riding in northern Ontario, mine would be gone because mine doesn't exist federally. But it's—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: So you'd better support it.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm not saying I don't. I have my 20 minutes later and I'll bring up a couple of concerns regarding this bill, things that, hopefully, we can fix with this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It is a pleasure to speak about this piece of legislation. Frankly, in my riding, when this comes into effect, it does impact it. One third of the riding goes towards the east, and two thirds of the riding goes sort of west and north. Speaker, I guess from a public perspective, I can tell you that since those new federal boundaries were established a couple of years ago or better, the common question was, “So is the province going to follow the same direction?” That mostly comes from municipal folks in agencies that we deal with, that we share responsibilities with. There was a time, when I first got elected in 2003, when part of the city of Quinte West belonged to a different riding, and that part made it a little bit confusing, even to the residents. That was certainly one of the most asked questions in the last couple of years: Would we follow this?

Frankly, since we started talking about this, I've been trying to get some unofficial feedback. I mean, I certainly didn't run any questionnaires or polls or those things, but when the subject comes up, if there's an interest from the party I'm talking to, I do pop the question, “So are you supportive of this?” The answer is, “Absolutely,” because

if they've ever had any dealings with our local riding office, and our federal counterpart's office, it's always good to have that relationship. And I can say, municipalities were one of the biggest benefactors. I'm also delighted that we're making a decision to give an additional riding to the North because I did do a little bit of travel—not a lot—up in the North, I must admit. It is a vast piece of geography. Frankly, I don't know how some of those members do it. So I'm delighted that we're doing that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm glad to have a two-minute comment on the words from our Attorney General and the member from Scarborough Southwest. I was really interested, listening to the Attorney General's speech, when she started talking about fixing third-party advertising, so I ran down and grabbed a copy of the bill in case I missed something the first time I read through this. I read through it again, and for all the pomp and circumstance she made about fixing third-party advertising, there's not one lick of evidence in here that they're changing anything with regard to third-party advertising. I have no idea why she even commented on it when it has nothing to do with the bill.

It's quite disappointing considering how warped the system has become due to third-party advertising. They had their opportunity. They have this bill in front of us. They could have easily added it in. They didn't have to do any work to create this bill because the federal government did all the work for the last few years. They just mimicked what the federal government did, fixed what's going on in the North and implemented the bill. There is no work on their side of the House on this bill. So at the very least, they could have stepped forward and put their considerations into written paper and discussed how we could amend third-party advertising and make it fair for the people of Ontario. But they've missed this, and I don't understand why they talked about it if they're not even going to do anything about it. It's more bafflegab and bloviation as opposed to actually implementing what we can go forward with.

The other aspect which I thought was very interesting: They want to start collecting data and let 16- and 17-year-olds register, so they could have their name and help promote—I'm all for letting more voters occur in our government. However, I think a better option would be maybe looking at our school system, how we can fix the curriculum so that our kids, our children, our youth get a better education of how the system of government works and operates in this province. Even adults today don't have an understanding of the importance of voting, let alone how governments and elections operate. So maybe fixing the educational process would lend credence to continuing on with improving the voter turnout, especially in our youth.

1400

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough Southwest has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened very carefully to the comments made by the members from Perth–Wellington, Timiskaming–Cochrane, Northumberland–Quinte West and Elgin–Middlesex–London. I understand the points you're trying to make.

We've introduced a bill today—it's second reading; it's the start of the debate. We'll be listening to what the opposition has to say: the comments from both the Conservative Party and the NDP and what they propose should happen. We have listened to the public. We'll also listen here in the Legislature and we'll listen when it goes to committee, because that's when we invite the public to come in and listen to what they have to say and make submissions that may or may not change the bill.

The Attorney General has laid out a very simple strategy for changing the ridings, to bring it up to 122 members. That's an increase—because presently we have 107 members—of 15 members in this House. That's more representation. We all know that the population in Ontario has grown quite a bit, especially in some of the major cities—Toronto and Ottawa—and other areas of Ontario where the population has also increased. We are following what the federal government is doing. We are keeping one extra seat up north.

The main thing is to hear from the public, finish this debate, send it to committee, and then come back here for third reading and get this into law as soon as possible.

It's a very important bill. I think it allows for more public participation, with more members representing various parts of the province here in Ontario.

I look forward to more debate, and I'll be listening very carefully.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 115 today. It modifies three different pieces of legislation.

I'll be sharing my time with the honourable member from Kitchener–Conestoga, Mr. Harris, for this leadoff debate.

By and large, we're very much in agreement with this bill. Bill 115 does what many of us have long wanted the government to initiate: to keep those electoral districts aligned with our federal counterparts for the province of Ontario. I think it was a smart move when it was first implemented back in the 1990s under the Mike Harris government, where we mirrored the provincial ridings with the federal ridings. It has worked well. In my own situation, I can say that it certainly has helped individuals understand the levels of government, helped individuals understand what the different jurisdictions are, because there is not that confusion of overlapping, as the member from the third party mentioned in his discussion of sharing the same riding with three federal counterparts. It can add complexity and confusion for people. So we're glad to see that this happens.

The basis of it, of course, is that all votes ought to be equal in influence in a representative democracy. We can

see, at the present time, that our electoral districts have populations anywhere from 50,000 up to 150,000 registered voters. When you compare those two numbers, with some ridings as low as 50,000 and others up to 150,000, you can inherently see the unfairness in that. People who live in those very heavily populated ridings—their vote is not worth as much or as influential as much as people with lower numbers. The baseline is an acceptable baseline number, where the government is looking to achieve about 100,000 voters in each riding—in every electoral district. Although it's certainly unable to achieve that perfectly, it comes very close to achieving it, with the exception of our 11 ridings in northern Ontario, where geography just doesn't allow for effective representation, in my view, of 100,000 constituents in such sparsely populated and diverse geography.

I do want to mention that the government is revising three statutes: the Election Finances Act, the Legislative Assembly Act, as well as the Representation Act. Part of this bill, as we heard from the Attorney General and her parliamentary assistant, is to address inadequacies in our representation. We know that in the 2011 election, for the very first time in a general election, we had less than 50% of the people vote. I think we got up to 54% in the 2014 election—pretty dismal numbers. Nearly half the people of Ontario don't find any value in voting and sometimes greater than half the voters don't see any value. I do think this is a missed opportunity to alter these statutes by the Attorney General, and she could do a far more effective job in helping to address those dismal voter participation numbers.

As our health critic said, there is clearly a lack of interest placed on education in our province; of helping to educate our youth in understanding their role in a representative democracy, as well as the role of elected representatives. This was an opportunity that clearly could have been undertaken, if the Attorney General really was serious and had a commitment to improving voter participation.

This role of auditing—she mentioned changes to third-party advertising. Maybe if I could get the parliamentary assistant or the minister to listen for a minute—I would like this answered in the debates—where does this auditing of third-party expenditures over \$5,000 appear? I haven't seen it in the bill. It could very well be a proposed regulatory change, but I haven't seen it in the bill. It doesn't appear. It wouldn't surprise me if this government would make a regulatory change, because of course it doesn't require any discussion or debate in this House when they do a regulatory change.

There were comments about taking the Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations. I'm going to advance to the parliamentary assistant—he seems to be a little bit more interested in hearing this debate—that having a permanent voter ID would be a great thing to do. If we're going to amend these acts, let's look at having a permanent voter ID. Every member here who has been involved in a campaign—and we all have—knows the confusion, the troubles and the problems with our voters

lists because our voters lists are taken from MPAC records. Whenever people move, change locations or whatever, it causes significant difficulties. We always see people who are missed on voters lists, whose poll locations in rural Ontario are sent hours away. A permanent voter ID would be an effective mechanism to help solve that problem.

1410

I had one person the other day—and this is of course with the federal election—who dropped in to see me because their voting location is 45 minutes away from their home in rural Ontario. They actually have to drive past three other polling stations to get to the one that has been identified for them—45 minutes one way, 45 minutes back. If we want to improve voter participation, let's improve our lists, and having a permanent voter ID would be a significant way of achieving that.

I think also, when we're talking about improving the integrity of our act, improving voter participation, our elections have come into very significant disrepute as of late with the by-election in Sudbury. We're amending the Ontario Legislative Assembly Act. While we're doing that, we could clearly improve the language in that act to prevent wrongdoing from happening and put very clear language as to what would be a breach of the Ontario Election Act when it comes to offering inducements and other favours when it comes to by-elections such as what has happened in Sudbury.

I think it's also important, while we're addressing that Legislative Assembly Act, that there has been a host of motions introduced in this House over the years to improve our representative democracy. If anybody on the Liberal side cares to pick up the orders and notices paper today, you'll see a whole series of motions in there. They've actually been in there for a couple of years. They were first introduced in the previous Parliament before the minority Parliament fell. I know they're there because a number of them are mine, and they're all to do with modifications to our standing orders and the Legislative Assembly Act, to improve representation in this House.

I could read a few of them. To ensure that regulations do not make unusual or unexpected delegations of power—that motion, motion number 39, was passed by the regulations and private bills committee back in 2013, and it still languishes on the Orders and Notices paper two years later—passed, adopted by one of our standing committees of the House, and nothing has happened. I'm not going to read them all, Speaker, but I do encourage members on the other side to take a look at some of those motions.

Another one that this House has struggled with is the motion to allow electronic petitions to be delivered in this House. There are members in this House who are on that committee, who heard hours and hours and hours of agonizing discussion and debate over electronic petitions. I see the member from Newmarket–Aurora who was in that committee. We heard from expert witnesses, but indeed the government continues to fail the people of this

province by preventing people from using technology to be engaged with their representatives and to be engaged with this Legislative Assembly.

There are 20 or 30 motions that have been tabled in this House. Many of them have been adopted and approved by standing committees, but still this government refuses to take action.

Also, Speaker, they're opening up the Election Finances Act—and thankfully; it's very important. Again, I hope that the parliamentary assistant will provide information to us about where this auditing mechanism is included in the bill.

But what about not just mirroring our electoral riding associations with the federal government; how about mirroring our election financing laws? As we know, in the federal government, only individuals can contribute to campaigns and to candidates. Businesses and unions are prevented from using their money to influence a federal campaign.

That's not the case here in Ontario, of course. In Ontario, we're just about the Wild West when it comes to allowing unions and businesses—and individuals, as well—to use their financial domination, their financial positions, to influence our actions in this Legislature. Tens of thousands of dollars can easily be funnelled to any candidate or any party at any time under our election financing rules in this province.

If the government really and truly had conviction and commitment to improving representation, that would be one of the first, if not foremost, amendments that they would do in the Election Finances Act, which is being amended by this legislation. I think it is reasonable, it is simple, it is practical and it is consistent with our understanding that our assembly, our Parliament, is for the people. We are here to represent people, not businesses, corporations and unions that have significant amounts of financial resources to use to influence legislation and public policy.

For that matter, I'll speak shortly, briefly, about the recall amendment act that I introduced. Again, if we had a truly honest conviction to improving representation, openness and accountability—every Liberal member spoke out against and voted against a bill in this House two weeks ago that would have allowed people to initiate a recall process. That was struck down.

Referendums: That's not part of this bill. It's not part of the discussion. This Liberal government has cherry-picked one element of federal jurisdiction, the riding redistribution, and has promoted it as the big safeguard, to demonstrate how big their hearts are and what a commitment they have to representative democracy. They've cherry-picked one element. It's an important one, one that I agree with, but there's far, far more that could be done if we truly wanted to see more than under half the people actually vote.

That's a condemnation on all of us in this House, in my view. When we have a general election, and nearly half the people say it's not worth getting off the couch to go and vote, that's a condemnation on us. It's a con-

demnation on this House that so many people see so little value in us. And it's not going to change by us doing the same things. We're not doing anything different. That trend line has been happening for a number of decades now. One day, we need to wake up. I would have thought it would have been in 2011, when for the first time in our history, more people stayed at home on the couch than bothered to go out to vote. That was a wake-up call, I think, or should have been a wake-up call to all of us. It should have been a clarion call to action for all members of this House when we saw those numbers.

1420

Recall, referendums, election financing reform, improving the integrity of our Election Act with better language, improving education of our youth in both elementary and secondary schools—I have gone to a number of classes to do civics classes in my community, and it is astonishing just how little effort is put forth in our education system to explain the value, the purpose and the responsibilities of elected members.

I will say that we're all here to safeguard that public interest. We safeguard the public interest by our debate and by our discussions. We do that by representing this very diverse—both geographically and demographically—province. It is important, it is essential, that the members in this House represent their constituents in their areas in the most forthright manner they can, but also by having the most effective and practical tools at our disposal to do so, such as those motions to amend the standing orders, motions such as allowing petitions and allowing regulations to be scrutinized, analyzed and evaluated by all members in this House.

In closing, I want to say to the Attorney General: I am glad you have done it, this bill. It's unfortunate you only did a little sliver of things that need to be done. I do think most members in this House will agree that there are failings, there are faults in our system, and that they could and can be corrected in a non-partisan fashion, with agreement, if they chose to, if they thought it was important, if they thought the desires and wishes of their constituents were more important than just the edicts from the corner office. If we did that, we would make this House a far more effective House, a far more valuable House, a House such that maybe more than 50% of the people would find value in going out and legitimizing our office.

I think those are important considerations. I do hope the Attorney General and the parliamentary assistant have listened and will take those words. Those words are offered in sincerity. They are offered with honesty, not in a partisan fashion. Permanent voters' ID would save people a lot of grief. It would also save all of us a lot of grief every campaign, as well, but more importantly, it would save people a lot of grief. And I am going to listen for the parliamentary assistant to offer up that information, so we can see where this auditing process comes in with this bill.

With that, I'm going to turn it over to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Kitchener–Conestoga has the floor.

Mr. Michael Harris: Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity today to speak to Bill 115. I have had the opportunity to catch the leadoff—the short leadoff that it was—from the government on Bill 115, and, of course, the comments from our critic the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. A major interest of his is electoral reform, democracy, ensuring that Ontarians get all sorts of abilities to have their say when necessary. As the member did refer just a few weeks ago, the member put forward a recall bill that many of us supported here; unfortunately, the government didn't, perhaps for self-interest, I would say.

Nevertheless, the Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015, an act that, as we have heard, will, if passed, enact the Representation Act, 2015, while repealing the Representation Act, 2005, and amending the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act, for those who didn't already know—specifically, this bill will help Ontario move towards shifting electoral boundaries set in recent years by the federal government in Ottawa in response to population shifts and growth throughout the nation.

The redrawn federal election map has changed approximately 87% of federal ridings. A number of them are in my area. Certainly, as we have seen over the years, when the feds redraw, it's time for legislators in Ontario to get out their boundary markers to follow suit. Federal decisions to readjust boundaries aren't taken lightly and are a direct response to shifts in population that our nation experiences over years and decades of growth.

Quite simply, the readjustments are based on criteria aimed at ensuring population equality so that the population of an electoral district in a given province comes as close as possible to the average population size of a district for that province. In addition, there are a few other considerations that go into the decision-making around where the lines are to be drawn, including the application of special clauses as well as the representation rule. Special clauses go into effect after the initial number of seats per province is obtained, allowing for adjustments to be made to account for the senatorial clause and the grandfather clause.

The senatorial clause guarantees that no province has fewer seats in the House of Commons than it has in the Senate, while the grandfather clause guarantees that each province will have no fewer seats than it had in 1985. As I noted earlier, the final step is the application of the representation rule, which only applies to a province whose population was overrepresented in the House of Commons at the completion of the last redistribution process. In cases where such a province would be underrepresented based on the previous calculations, it will be given extra seats so that its share of the House of Commons seats is proportional to its share of the population. For those at home, I'm hoping you're following along with that. That's about it, Speaker.

When all was said and done, following the last federal adjustment that we are looking to mirror, it meant 15 new

ridings and adjustments to many more. It meant that Ontario will now boast 121 members on Parliament Hill, which comes in at approximately 36% of the total representation in Ottawa.

In my area, the federal changes and, by extension, the related provincial changes that this bill calls for today created a lot of shifting, including two specific new ridings—or rather, one with some new names: Kitchener South–Hespeler and Waterloo—as well as small adjustments to their new neighbours.

Here’s how the boundaries break down for the people in Waterloo region. I’ll begin with one of the two new ridings that take in part of my current riding of Kitchener–Conestoga. The new riding of Kitchener South–Hespeler encompasses the south end of Kitchener as well as the north end of Cambridge. It is made up of chunks from the ridings of Kitchener–Conestoga, Cambridge and a small piece from Kitchener Centre. Specifically, it will mean a larger urban riding created from a riding that I’ve been proud to serve and represent, encompassing both rural and urban areas. The rural areas and townships will remain as Kitchener–Conestoga, as Kitchener South–Hespeler encompasses the urban centre shared between Kitchener and Cambridge. Further, the changes mean the creation of a younger riding whose median age of 36 is the lowest in Ontario outside the GTA.

1430

For those familiar with the area, the new riding is bounded by Highway 401 and New Dundee Road to the south, Fischer-Hallman Road to the west, the Conestoga Parkway, King Street bypass and Fairway Road to the north, and the Waterloo region’s eastern boundaries to the east.

Our other new federal riding is now known as Waterloo. It’s a riding previously known as Kitchener–Waterloo that has been shrunk slightly on the south end of its border.

Other changes that the province is looking to mirror with Bill 115 include some small adjustments to Kitchener Centre and Cambridge. Kitchener Centre, which has long encompassed most of central Kitchener, would shrink slightly from the west and south ends and grow slightly to the north. Kitchener–Conestoga, which I represent and referenced earlier, would continue to encompass much of Waterloo region’s rural townships, but as I mentioned earlier, would shrink to accommodate Kitchener South–Hespeler. At the same time, Kitchener–Conestoga would expand slightly into Kitchener Centre and Waterloo’s former western territory.

Finally, Speaker, Cambridge, which covers Cambridge south of Highway 401 and the township of North Dumfries, would expand south into the county of Brant while losing a north end to Kitchener South–Hespeler.

With regard to the shifts in Cambridge, I will say that not all changes come without some controversy. It does seem that the new Kitchener South–Hespeler has opened up some old wounds in Cambridge when it comes to historical names. Former ward 4 Cambridge city

councillor Ben Tucci said the new federal riding and what we are proposing here for the new provincial riding have an alienating name that may affect voter turnout. Those familiar with the area will know of the history surrounding the marriage of Hespeler, Preston and Galt to create the municipality we now know as Cambridge. Tucci noted when the changes were first proposed that, “We’ve been attempting now for many years to get over this Hespeler-Preston-Galt mentality.

“Moves like this tend to alienate people and the public and I wouldn’t be surprised if that section of our city has a low voter turnout.” He suggested a new Kitchener South–Cambridge North—maybe next time around, Speaker.

When it comes down to it, redistribution and riding boundary shifts are all about improving and strengthening our democracy. It’s about making sure that government is working at all times to do what it can to maintain the truest representation of the people that our democratic system is meant to serve. Whether it’s considering changes to the first-past-the-post system, as have been proposed by many over the years—including reference by the Attorney General in her leadoff that in 2007 it was taken to the people in a referendum and clearly they spoke that they would want the status quo—changing boundaries, or working to ensure the say of the people takes precedence over government dictates, we must always ensure that the cornerstones of our democratic system hold strong.

It is these principles that spurred me to raise my voice locally when it came to Waterloo region’s consideration of options to deal with a seat vacancy that followed the passing of regional councillor and former Ontario MPP Wayne Wettlaufer. While the decision-making did not encompass any boundary riding changes, the principles of democracy that I discussed at that time are the very same principles at the heart of the decision-making we are considering today.

As a two-term MPP, Wayne Wettlaufer left behind a strong legacy as an accountable representative, advocate of community engagement and defender of democracy. Unfortunately, we lost Wayne Wettlaufer this past summer. We remember Wayne not only in the community of the region of Waterloo, his riding of Kitchener Centre here in the Legislature—of course, Wayne was a strong advocate for German pioneers in the region of Waterloo, enacting a bill to actually recognize German Pioneers Day. We’ll be celebrating that in the coming weeks as Kitchener-Waterloo hosts Kitchener-Waterloo’s Oktoberfest. I think it will be extra special this year for sure.

But much as Wayne himself indicated in the Ontario Legislature back on June 25, 2001, “We cannot be democratic if we do not give people a choice,” it’s clear that without choice there is no democracy. It was that point that I felt was key to the local decision or discussion on the region’s vacancy. It is also key to our discussions today, as we work to ensure that people are given that choice in a way that best reflects the will of the people in our many diverse areas and ridings across Ontario and across Canada.

With regard to the municipal decision, I continue to feel it is essential, going forward, as both the Municipal Act and the Municipal Elections Act have been opened up for review, that the province give better direction on council vacancy rules. The province must always work to ensure that when the decision is between the elected council dictating through appointment versus allowing the electorate the democratic freedom of choice, the right to vote for our representatives remains paramount.

Of course, if we took the same situation of seat vacancy from a provincial or federal perspective, there would be an outcry at the offence to the democratic process should Queen's Park or Ottawa suggest appointing a non-elected member. I think the question has to be asked as to why the same principle shouldn't hold true within municipalities. We will have to wait and see whether that question will be answered and democracy is served in the ongoing municipal review.

Today we will work to ensure that questions surrounding representation and boundary shifts are answered through the lens of upholding the principles of democracy that we are all here to serve. I think most of us here today can agree that Bill 115 does that by reflecting growth, declines and population shifts so that MPPs bear an equal representation as they work on behalf of the people of Ontario.

Now, as we are all aware, we are actually in an election federally—election 42, I believe. Voters will be subject to those boundaries on October 19. And I can tell you, Speaker, as I'm sure many MPPs have, that speaking to constituents, they're frequently getting asked questions about the fact that they were unaware that the boundaries had changed. I know that our federal cousins are out campaigning now. In some areas, they believe they're voting to re-elect their current incumbent, and in fact they're going to have four to five to six new names on the ballot this time around.

So I think it's imperative, as we go through this process—obviously Ontario will have an example to follow in October, but it's of course up to the government to educate voters that come 2018—it can't come soon enough—the boundaries will reflect the new boundaries set out federally and those ridings per se in my region of Waterloo will remain just about the same.

I know there are some differences in the north, as my colleague recently stated. If there weren't, his electoral district wouldn't exist. So there are a few changes, obviously, but I think it goes to the point that the government needs to make a strong effort to educate people leading up to the 2018 election. Maybe they can run a few non-partisan commercials leading into the next election to tout something instead of their own, perhaps, political agenda.

Before I finish up here, I would remind members that while we are considering the benefits of boundary change, the decisions we are contemplating trace their roots back to the origins of this country. Ever since the conception of Upper and Lower Canada, we have had debates and considerations over how and where to draw

boundaries and create ridings to ensure the best system of representation right across our nation.

I recall when the commission was set up to review the boundaries for the upcoming election. There were several models that lumped townships like Wilmot and Wellesley with Stratford areas. You know what? We had Cambridge lumped in with Brant. But, reflecting the growth of the Waterloo region, I think they've got the best geographical lines drawn out. Of course there are some concerns down in Cambridge, with Hespeler as part of the new riding name.

1440

One quick fact: My current riding is Kitchener–Conestoga and yet one of the communities I represent is actually Conestogo. Of course, I am sure they're referring to the old Conestoga wagon. But just a little bit of a fun fact for folks today that, although my riding name is Kitchener–Conestoga, I have a small community in my riding, Conestogo, which is spelled with an O, not an A.

The Fathers of Confederation, in 1867, spent much time and effort—and a lot of debate—over how to create equal representation in the House of Commons of Canada, time guaranteeing that each region of the country had a fair say in the daily workings of the new federation. The idea of representation by population meant each province was allotted a number of seats that directly corresponded to its proportion of the total population in relation to Quebec's. It was around this principle that the formula of distributing the number of seats in the House of Commons among the provinces was originally designed.

Of course, with growth, as we see today, came more questions as to how to guarantee the best representation for the people of all provinces and territories. As more provinces entered Confederation and as some regions grew and developed more than others, a certain degree of compromise had to be built into the formula. Again, it is the centuries-old legacy from the decisions and discussions that have been taken on by representatives across Canada in the years since 1867 that brings us to the considerations we are debating today as put forward by the Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015.

While it is a historical debate and one that will be repeated in the future as our country grows and populations shift, I feel it is important that we work to move this specific debate forward as government proposes to follow the new federal map to improve democracy across Ontario, as it has across Canada.

I'll finish my remarks at that. For those in attendances today and those watching at home, I encourage all to come out on October 19 and have their democratic say and vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to add some comments here in response to the shared lead from our Conservative colleagues. This is speaking on Bill 115, An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the

Representation Act, 2005 and amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act. It sounds like it's doing a lot, Mr. Speaker.

To some of the points made by the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington and the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, this is a proposal that's going to change boundaries to match the federal boundaries, with a few exceptions in our ridings up north. I think one of the positive things that's going to come out of this, hopefully, is to minimize some confusion. We want to engage our constituents. We want to engage our friends and neighbours and make sure that they are voting, that they are engaging in our democratic process.

To that point of confusion: I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, when I ran in the last provincial election, the boundaries of my Oshawa riding were just so, and that was my riding. Now we find ourselves, as you may have heard, in a federal election. In this federal election, of course, the boundaries are different. Well, coming up—and it will be determined, soon I suppose, when the by-election for my neighbouring riding Whitby–Oshawa is going to happen. Those individuals who live in the Whitby–Oshawa riding—that section of Oshawa that has come back to Oshawa federally—will be voting in the Oshawa boundaries federally. Then they're going to be back in the Whitby–Oshawa boundaries provincially, and then they're going to switch, we'll see, in the next provincial—if I've confused you, imagine how our voters are feeling.

I think that this really does come down to improving representation, and we're glad that there will be some help towards that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to speak in support of Bill 115. As you know, this particular proposed legislation, if passed, will mean an additional 15 new seats here in the southern part of Ontario. For the city of Toronto, there's so much growth. My neighbour here from Trinity–Spadina could tell you: On every corner of his riding, there's a condominium. Maybe about 2,000 to 5,000 people live in one building. Just in one building alone there are probably thousands of potential voters.

With regard to this proposed legislation, if passed, there will be additional members of this chamber, but more importantly, it will provide fair representation and make sure there will be more inclusiveness of representation. I know my colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services could tell you that in her riding there are over 250,000 constituents. That represents maybe an entire province for some smaller provinces. It is very important that the proposed legislation needs to go forward.

Also for our colleagues in northern Ontario, in the explanatory note, it is very clear: The Attorney General very clearly stated that there are 11 northern electoral districts, the first established back in 1996, almost 20 years ago.

So it's very, very clear: We need to reflect the change and the growth of this great province of Ontario and we need to make sure there is good representation and also fair representation. It isn't fair when we have members, like my Minister of Community and Social Services, with over 250,000 constituents and others have X number. It's very, very important that we have strong representation but, more importantly, a fair and inclusive society represented here in the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: It is my pleasure to address the speeches made by the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington and the member from Kitchener–Conestoga on Bill 115, An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015.

Mr. Speaker, as you've heard, this bill—since the latest federal electoral boundary change—aligns Ontario's ridings for the next election with those newly created ridings. Of course, we've had a population increase in Ontario, so the number of ridings will be going up by some 15 ridings. As was pointed out by the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, it was Mike Harris, back in 1999, that made the Ontario provincial ridings match the federal ridings. That is fairly unique in the country.

I want to get to one point that the member made that I thought was a really good idea, and that's the idea of having a permanent voter ID card or a permanent voter list. I think we have all experienced at election time that the lists are just—generally, they're a mess. If you happen to go walk up to a house on the street, there are usually eight names listed and two that might actually be living in that particular residence. I think it is a good idea, especially with the point the member was making with regard to trying to increase voter turnout. He pointed out that less than 50% of people actually voted in the last election. I think that's an idea that has merit and should be considered—some sort of voter ID card or permanent voter ID. Perhaps it would be the individual's responsibility, as it is with your driver's licence: If you switch residences, you change your voter ID card and just keep it up to date. It would probably be a lot more accurate that way.

I can see, Mr. Speaker, that I'm out of time, so I won't make the other points I wanted to make.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in this House.

I'd like to make some comments on the members from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington and also Kitchener–Conestoga regarding Bill 115. They both brought forward interesting issues.

I listened intently about voter turnout going down, and that's something that we all face. Sometimes, it almost seems like it's on purpose, that occasionally political parties seem to do things to drive down the vote. That's

something that we should all be cognizant of and should all try to stop.

1450

Others brought forward that the voting lists are a mess. I think it's scary how big a mess they are. It is not just provincial; it's also federal.

I'll give you an example from this federal election. Someone called the office—because they live in the same house on a boundary road, a couple. One got a card to vote in one riding, and the other, living in the same house, got a card from the other riding. They called the Elections Canada office and they were told, “Well, where you live it's kind of murky, so just pick where you want to vote.” In this riding, in the last federal election, the difference between first and second was 18 votes, yet these people are told that it's kind of murky. That was later fixed when not just one party but several parties complained.

But if you think about it, in a country like ours, the democratic right to vote is very important, and for it to be taken that lackadaisically—it's the first time I've used that word here. And it is. We make complaints every election, and the next election comes around and nothing has been fixed. We've got to address that, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): One of the opposition members can now reply. I'll look to the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington to respond.

Mr. Randy Hillier: It was actually a pleasure to listen to the members who listened to the debate and then commented, as compared to the ones who didn't listen and then just made a statement, like the member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

I had asked the parliamentary assistant—or the minister—to respond to my question about this assertion by the minister that this bill would alter the third-party election advertising act. In their two-minute rebuttal, of course, they didn't. One of the reasons to have debate and have the questions-and-comments portion is that, when there is a lack of clarity or a requirement for further clarification, the members can offer that clarity. It's unfortunate that neither the minister nor the parliamentary assistant took an opportunity to clarify the questions that were posed on this side of the House. Instead, they just stood up with a talking point, a scripted response, about how great the bill is.

We're in favour of the bill. We're in favour; that's what it was all about. We've said very clearly that we're in favour of changing the riding boundaries. I haven't heard anybody opposed to it, and I'm sure I won't. What we were asking for are some of these other things, as well as offering up further suggestions and recommendations that the government could contemplate and consider incorporating in these statutes that they're revising—the Legislative Assembly Act, the Election Finances Act—such as permanent voter ID and significant changes to our election finance reform.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? I'm pleased to recognize the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: Before I begin, I believe we have unanimous consent for our party to stand down our lead.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane is, I believe, seeking unanimous consent to allow the New Democrats to stand down their lead. Agreed? Agreed.

Again, I turn to the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's once again an honour to be able to stand and speak in this House regarding an act that affects the people of my riding and affects the people of the province, and this act—as do others—does. As people who have the privilege to sit in this House, we perhaps look on it differently because we deal with politics on a daily basis. We deal with the results of elections on a daily basis in a much more hands-on manner. But for people whose interaction with politics and with democracy is voting, it comes in short bursts—sometimes too long a burst, but short bursts every three or four years. And so I tried to, as I was thinking about the comments on this bill—and the majority of this bill is about changing boundaries, and we're in favour; we're not going to say we're not in favour—to look at this from the point of view of the voter.

Firstly, I'm going to focus on my own riding for a few minutes. In northern Ontario, the ridings don't follow the federal boundaries. There's a good reason: Because people deal with provincial issues much more than federal issues, I find—I think we all find. So as ridings get bigger and bigger, it's harder and harder to actually serve the public. To their credit, the government of the day decided to hold the number of ridings in northern Ontario at 11. We agree with that. We fully support keeping it at 11. We'd like to put it up to 20, but we realize that the population doesn't merit that.

Just to clarify how things work in our part of the world—and I listened to some of the comments from the government's side about how a member had 250,000 people in their riding; and that is an incredible responsibility. If you take a riding like mine, I have about 70,000. I live in the centre of my riding, and I have five towns, five communities of interest; and to get to the northernmost, it's three hours, and to get to the southernmost, it's three hours. There is no public transportation, so it's very hard. A lot of these people don't even have Internet. It's very hard. So it's not the number. Again, I'm not downplaying the number, but you have to look at both sides, and that's why it's good that we're keeping some northern ridings.

I would like to suggest that as I read—and it's not often that Timiskaming–Cochrane gets mentioned in a bill specifically, but in this one, because it's riding boundaries, of course it gets mentioned specifically. It lays out the boundaries of Timiskaming–Cochrane. I had the opportunity this morning to talk to the member for Nipissing, who shares a boundary with me, and the member for Nickel Belt, who also shares a boundary with me. We would like to make some changes, from a voter perspective.

My riding kind of wishbones around North Bay. I have two small villages in my riding, Thorne and Eldee. We do our best to serve Thorne and Eldee, but the only way that they can get to my constituency office is to either drive through Quebec or drive right past the member for Nipissing's constituency office and go another hour to my closest one. Those people are not being served as they should. Their community of interest is not in Timiskaming-Cochrane. Their community of interest is in Nipissing. We do our best to service them, and I'm sure the member from Nipissing also services them, because that's the way we are in northern Ontario. Lots of times between elections, parties don't really mean a lot. People want service and we try to provide it. But the people in Thorne and Eldee would be better served if they were in the riding of Nipissing; that is their community of interest. That could be done here.

Another one would be, on the other side of my riding, the Wahnapiatae First Nation. They're on the other side of Lake Wanapitei. I have to drive through, again, another riding to get there, but so do they. Actually, we were talking to the member for Nickel Belt this morning. They are 10 minutes from the member for Nickel Belt's constituency office and, we calculated this morning, about five hours from mine. Again, if we are going to the time to change the boundaries—and I'm not saying we eliminate; we need the 11. But to serve the people, from the point of view of the people we serve, those two changes would make sense.

1500

I know them from my riding. I'm sure that changes like that could be made in a lot of places, and I think we should be cognizant—and in this case, in my riding, the roads just don't exist. When you draw a nice map and on one corner you have got Lake Wanapitei and you just put it on the other side of Lake Wanapitei, there's no road to get there unless you go through other ridings. In the case of Thorne, the quickest way for me to get there is through another province. Their community of interest—they're very close to North Bay.

That's the first thing that I had to talk about today: that those people would be much better served by the province of Ontario if a couple of small changes were made. That's the top-of-mind issue for me. As I was reading Bill 115, I thought, "Okay; if my constituents were reading it"—I'm reading on their behalf, but if they were reading it—"what would be the first thing they would say sticks out?" For the people of Thorne and the people of Wanapitei, that's the first thing that sticks out.

Something that this bill doesn't talk a lot about but we need to, while we're talking about elections, is that we need to fix the voters list. If we're actually going to have a serious discussion about improving democracy and improving the right to vote, we need to do something about the voters list. A Mr. Johnston came into my office, and he was quite upset because he has lived in the same house for 65 years-plus and voted in the same place. There was a poll there, but he was told to vote someplace else. Again, things like that. We are worried about

detering people from voting, and every time that we do something like that, it, in its own way, deters people from voting.

In a past federal election, there was the Pierre Poutine robocall scandal. In my part of the world, we don't need robocalls; we have the voters list. It deters enough people. That is the problem. We don't need robocalls.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: The NDP people do everything they can. They show up and vote, and that's why I'm here.

Seriously, in this day and age—and I don't know what the best vehicle would be; with all our technological capabilities, you would think that we could come up with an accurate voters list, and somehow we can't. We're following the federal boundaries in most of the province; fine. We're going through a federal election now. My office is getting lots of calls, and we send them through because it's a political issue. People close to Englehart, in Evanturel township, my old home township, have voted in Englehart forever. It's about five miles. There are still polls in Englehart, but now they have to go to Harley township, which is 20 miles. Does that make any sense? No. Why, you ask? That's a good question. Why?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I blame Kathleen Wynne.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's a federal election. I'm not going to blame anyone in the province, but it's a huge issue.

A lot of people—and this might not be a popular subject today—in rural Ontario, in northern Ontario, feel a bit threatened by the population changes, by the number of seats, because a lot of people already feel very isolated and feel that the government is in many cases out of touch. You hear this all the time in northern and rural Ontario. I think we are going to have to, as the province become more urbanized and as the Legislature becomes more urbanized—which it's going to become; I don't think anyone can deny that. That's what is going to happen. You are going to get more urban representation in the Legislature.

We have to be very cognizant that the rural voice doesn't get even more forgotten. In my four years here, my biggest challenge hasn't been to be able to talk to other MPPs, to be able to talk to ministers—it hasn't been a challenge. My biggest challenge is being able to get people to understand what happens in rural Ontario, what the differences are. When I go home to talk to people, I explain that, "Well, it would be like us sitting in Tim Hortons in New Liskeard and running Toronto. I think we'd screw it up." A lot of times, Queen's Park does the same thing to people in rural Ontario; they don't understand.

A lot of times—and I say this over and over and over—we come up with regulations that make sense here and make sense on paper, but they don't work on the ground. And if the regulations don't work, then everyone's kidding themselves. I think that's something where, as we get more urban representation in the Legislature, the voice of the people of rural Ontario is going to be

even more drowned out. That is something we are going to have to be very cognizant of. Somehow, we're going to have to make some different type of structure to represent rural Ontario or represent northern Ontario, because when there is enough electoral base in one part of the province to control the province continually, it's not a balanced government. And this isn't a partisan thing. This isn't a party thing that I'm talking about right now. I think all parties, if they were in government and had a majority of representation from only one part of the province, would run into that problem.

So that is something that we're going to have to be cognizant of. I don't know; I don't have any idea how to fix it right now. We proposed a northern committee for MPPs. I think that would be a start: a nonpartisan northern committee to be able to review bills, just to make sure that when the rubber hits the road on the ground, they actually work. Because what you are going to see—and we see it now with some of the farming communities. They are hitting back. On the neonics debate, the government has taken the decision to make that their goal, and that's their right, but they also have the obligation to make sure that the regulations they implement are going to work, and they haven't fulfilled that obligation. You haven't.

You didn't fill that with the Endangered Species Act, because a lot of those things actually hurt the species. The intention is not there, but a lot of things work on paper but don't work unless you really sit down and talk to the people who deal with those issues every day. On neonics, I'll give you an example. I might get all kinds of people in trouble, but you can ban neonics-treated seed, and what is going to happen is that people are going to spray a lot more neonic spray, and you are actually going to hurt your cause instead of help it.

Under these regulations—no, I'm going to go back to Bill 115, I think, before the Speaker or somebody else—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I think it's relevant.

Mr. John Vanthof: Oh, so do I, but I've got a few other issues about Bill 115.

Since people want to get me back on election mode, I'm going to go on election mode. Something that deters people from voting and drives down voter turnout and actually hurts our democratic process—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: NDP attack ads.

Mr. John Vanthof: —is MPP attack ads.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: No, NDP.

Mr. John Vanthof: NDP attack ads, no—is scandal, constant scandal.

Interjection: NDP scandals.

Mr. John Vanthof: I don't know. I don't know about too many NDP scandals, but it's an issue. It's a big issue.
1510

People get frustrated. You hear in the street that people say, "Why bother voting? They're all the same anyway." I don't think that's true, because in my four years here, I have spoken and worked with—I believe we're all honourable members, and we all try to do our job. But that's not coming through in the public realm,

because the way that partisan politics sometimes operates is not very good for the democratic process. We're going to have to somehow go further than just changing the boundaries and changing a few rules. We're also going to have to do quite a bit better at trying to respect the rules and enforce the rules.

Our goal here has got to be to get more people to participate in politics, get more people to participate in democracy. It's something that we don't appreciate enough, because most of us were born in a democratic country. Lots of our parents weren't, and some of us weren't. Sometimes when something is given to you, you don't appreciate what you have. For most of us, democracy was given to us. It wasn't given to our forefathers—it wasn't. They worked for it. Many died for it. But for the majority of us, it was given to us. It would be very sad if we let it get to the point where so many people believed it wasn't working for them that, in effect, we lost it in a way. Because when democracy is controlled by funders, we lose it, in a way.

Democracy should be for people, for the average person—average, but for everyone. Business needs help from government, but I truly believe that business—big business and small business—can take care of themselves. It's the people who need to be ably represented. I think that changing these boundaries—we're not against that, but there are all kinds of other things in democracy that we're going to have to be very cognizant of to make sure we all do the best job we can to represent the people of Ontario—all the people of Ontario.

I'm going to take my last minute to reiterate my point about the people in Thorne and Eldee and the Wahnapiatae First Nation. In my first campaign, I had no idea that there were parts of that riding that you couldn't even get to. Now, that does not make sense. Again, it makes sense in here. It's a nice line in here: this township, that township, that township. But from a people perspective, it doesn't make sense, and I think we have to look very strongly from a people perspective. So if we could make a couple of little changes in other ridings, especially in northern ridings—I'm sure it exists all over. We should have a look and see if we can do a couple of non-partisan things that would actually make a big difference in a few people's lives, and then we will have done our job.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: Merci, monsieur le Président, and I would like to say thank you to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for his insightful idea and suggestion.

Certainement pour moi, qui représente la circonscription d'Ottawa–Orléans, c'est tout un honneur de parler de ce projet de loi qui a été déposé ici, parce que quand on regarde la démocratie et, souvent, une croissance qui a eu lieu depuis les derniers 10 ans, je crois que ce projet de loi vient arrimer un petit peu ce qui se passe au niveau du fédéral, au niveau des nouvelles démarcations. Je pense que c'est important pour moi,

comme députée provinciale, de travailler en collaboration avec la personne qui va représenter mon comté, ma circonscription, au niveau fédéral.

Orléans, depuis les dernières années, a eu une augmentation de population de façon très significative, donc il est certain que pour moi, lorsque je regarde à représenter le mieux possible les gens de ma circonscription, ça veut dire d'être présente et de pouvoir amener leurs idées ici à Queen's Park.

En changeant un petit peu les démarcations et les frontières—il est certain que si je peux aller même sur une rue, souvent ça se retrouve que de l'autre côté de la rue, c'est mon collègue, pour qui j'ai beaucoup de respect, mais, logistiquement parlant, il ne fait plus aucun sens que ça soit lui qui les représente.

Donc, je pense qu'amener cette nouvelle démarcation, encore une fois, demande notre engagement, au niveau démocratique, de démontrer notre engagement de travailler avec le fédéral, mais aussi de travailler pour les gens que nous représentons.

Ça me fait plaisir aujourd'hui, monsieur le Président, de vous parler un petit peu sur ce projet de loi que j'espère mes collègues vont tous accepter.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Merci beaucoup. The member for Nepean—Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my great pleasure to rise for debate today, for at least two minutes, to talk about the bill before us, which talks about electoral reform and the new riding boundaries for the 2018 election, those that are currently being engaged upon and fought upon in the 42nd federal election in Canada.

I'd like to thank my colleague from Timiskaming—Cochrane for taking the time to debate his points. He made a few comments with respect to the rural-urban divide, and in his case the northern and rest-of-Ontario divide—I choose to talk about it as the rural-urban divide and it actually was in order, I thought. Those comments were really relevant to the discussion that we're having today in terms of the new electoral boundaries in the province of Ontario, and federally in Canada, because I do sense that there is a great and deepening divide that we must start to consider and concern ourselves with.

That said, my constituency of Nepean—Carleton, which I have proudly represented since 2006, has been redistributed once. After my by-election in 2006, I changed boundaries slightly in 2007. However, nothing will be as drastic as what will happen in 2018 and what is happening right now federally, where my riding splits in two and becomes Nepean and Carleton. It's a very difficult decision for me that will be made in the next number of months and years as I decide which area to represent, and I'll do so with a heavy heart. It's like choosing between your two children. I love the people I represent, and I hope they know that I have that great affection for them. It will be a difficult decision.

That said, in the seconds I have left, I have three points that I want to talk to the government about and that maybe the member from the third party can also address. On October 19, my constituents will have two

federal members of Parliament, but they will only have one MPP, and I think this assembly needs to discuss that issue. We need to have full public hearings on this bill, because it does deal with the fabric of people's communities. And my colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga did mention the fact that we need advertising and outreach leading up to this, and I couldn't agree more.

Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm glad to be able to stand again and make comments on the enlightening speech given by my colleague from Timiskaming—Cochrane. I appreciate, as I always do, that in his remarks he really put this forward in the point of view of the voter.

We talk in this Legislature about the big picture, but really we need to look at it in terms of fine tuning and specifics, because as the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane pointed out, there are some adjustments or some fine tuning that should be made when we're talking about the boundaries—the northern boundaries, in particular, as he mentioned: the communities of Thorne, Eldee and the Wahnapiatae First Nation.

Really, if we're going to do this right, then we need to do this right, to look at those boundaries and make sure that the people who are being served are being served in the best way possible, taking into account transit, roads, geography, and communities and their interests. I hope that the government is taking that under advisement and is prepared to actually take action where that's concerned.

He mentioned that we need to do something about the voters list, that in this day and age, we should have a correct and current voters list; that shouldn't be a deterrent for people. Again, that's a conversation for another time, because that's not something we see in Bill 115.

1520

An interesting point, as we see things changing in terms of the demographics, is that we're going to see a perhaps more urbanized Legislature as time goes on. There's that fear that perhaps people in this Legislature, and future members, will listen when it comes to agricultural and rural issues and northern issues, but will they understand?

I think many of us went to the International Plowing Match. That's wonderful, but that can't be the only source of inspiration to become engaged in our agricultural communities and issues. As we have more people to speak for voters, hopefully those same members are going to be able to speak with the voters and bring their voices into the Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I listened very close to the remarks from the member for Timiskaming—Cochrane. He had some very good points to bring up.

I grew up in Toronto. A lot of members here, quite a few of them, did grow up here, but the majority of the

members in this Legislature did not grow up in a major city but in rural communities.

When I first came in here, it was much different than being on Toronto council, because it covers the whole province, and it varies from one area to another. The member mentioned that to drive from one end of his riding to the other took so many hours, and I learned something from that. There are other members who also have long distances to travel. For me, it's a short drive to get home. The members from outside of Toronto, like the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane—it takes you hours, probably, to get back to your riding every weekend. So it's very different.

I listened to your comments very carefully. I hope we get to hash this out in committee and have public hearings, of course, on this matter. There are a lot of issues to be brought up here.

The bill in front of us today is basically increasing the number of seats in this Legislature, which is important. Adding or keeping that one extra seat up north—instead of having 10, having 11—is important, because we need to hear from all of the province of Ontario.

I noticed that the members from outside Toronto articulate their constituents' views very well.

Once it gets to committee—and I hope that the member will be there—we can sit and discuss the changes and hear from the public as well. That's where most of the work gets done on these bills, to come up with something that is good for everybody and for the people of the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane for his response.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to thank the members from Ottawa–Orléans and Nepean–Carleton, my colleague from Oshawa and the member from Scarborough Southwest.

I'd like to use my remaining few minutes to talk once again about the urbanization of this Legislature. Again, that's a product of population. The majority of the population of Ontario is going to be in urban centres; we realize that.

What we have to decide as a Legislature and what I think we need to do a much better job on is—there are differences between rural and urban Ontario, and we have to make sure those differences actually strengthen our province instead of weaken it. I think that's something we have to come to grips with.

We are different, very different, and we see this with our cultures. Our different cultures make this province stronger. There definitely is a rural culture, and we have to make sure that that culture actually adds to this province.

Rural people, when we hear that, yes, we're the backbone of the province and agriculture is the biggest driver—it's a nice talking point, but when we see what's happening to our small towns and we see what's happening to our schools and we see what's happening to our roads, we need to get together and see what we can

do. Maybe the status quo isn't what we need. We need to really look at how to service the rural part of our province, because without a rural structure, your divide is going to make this province much weaker. We need to use it to make it stronger.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Further debate? The government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much for recognizing me to speak on Bill 115, which is the Electoral Boundaries Act. I will be sharing my time with the member from Ottawa South, the member for Etobicoke Centre and the member from Scarborough–Rouge River.

This is a very important debate. I've been hearing some of the debate that's taking place, and I think it's heartening to have an opportunity to debate and talk about our democracy, which is such an incredible and important essence of who we are as a society.

A lot of us, at various stages in the history of our province, have come to this great province, have come to this great country, because of the freedoms that are associated with our culture and our society. The essence of those freedoms is of course our democracy, having the right to vote, having the right to elect representatives who will represent our communities, be it at the federal level, provincial level or municipal level. In that vein, I think this debate is very important, because what we are talking about in this particular bill is electoral boundaries, the size of our particular communities, and how those communities should look, what they feel like, what culture they have, what values they espouse and what kind of representatives those communities should have so that they are represented in an effective manner.

That's a key point. This province of ours is large. It's the largest province in the country. It continues to grow, which is a good thing. We are still the choice of immigrants coming from outside Canada or from within Canada to come and make Ontario their home. That is something to be proud of; that is something to cherish and celebrate. But the result of that is that our communities are growing, which means that elected representatives are increasingly, especially in urban and suburban parts of our communities, representing larger and larger groups of people.

In order to ensure that we have an effective democracy, in order to make sure that we have effective representation by representatives who are elected on behalf of their communities, we need to make sure that those communities are manageable so that we can do the work in a manner that ensures that our constituents are represented well. That is why this legislation adding 15 new seats to southern Ontario while also maintaining 11 seats, one more than what's permissible in the federal system, is a step in the right direction so that we have communities that are represented effectively and well in this chamber.

Speaker, you know that the province corresponds to or matches the ridings at the federal level. In the case of my riding of Ottawa Centre, which is a downtown commun-

ity, it is two thirds of the regional city of Ottawa before amalgamation. My community is quite densely populated. In fact, it's now growing vertically. With all the different condo towers that are starting to go up, those are vertical neighbourhoods.

I have about 123,000 people who live in my community that I have the pleasure of representing. It's more, I believe, than Prince Edward county, or Prince Edward Island; sorry—and the county as well. It's a pleasure to represent them.

Now, my riding does not get impacted that much through this legislation. There are only two boundaries that get changed, from representing both sides of the road to the middle of the road, so I probably lose, I think, about 30 homes, roughly speaking: one on Baseline Road, where the south side of Baseline will become part of Ottawa West–Nepean and I'll just maintain the north side, which is the experimental farm. It's the same thing with Fisher Avenue, where I had both sides of Fisher Avenue and now we will just have the east side of Fisher, and the west side will go as part of Ottawa West–Nepean.

I support those changes. In fact, when the boundary commission federally was doing their analysis, we presented at that process, asking for that clear delineation to erase some of the confusion that exists between those two ridings, because the boundaries used to get confusing and when you spoke to people, they weren't sure whether they were part of Ottawa Centre or Ottawa West–Nepean.

1530

But the way the riding is maintained keeps the nature and the character of the riding, the culture of the riding being the downtown community—as Ottawa Centre. I'm proud of that, that it stays the same way—and so is the name of the riding, which has been around for a long period of time.

I just wanted to say, in my limited time, that I support the changes. I think this will make our democracy that much more effective. It will allow for better voices and more diverse and representative voices being reflected in this House, when these changes come through and we have 15 more new members talking about the wishes, the desires and the aspirations of those communities, which will only mean that we have an even more inclusive and effective democracy, and a better society as a result, that we all aspire to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Continuing on, the member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: It's my pleasure to speak to Bill 115, the Electoral Boundaries Act. Of course, we're adding 15 new ridings, keeping 11 in the North. The boundaries were set by the electoral boundary commission, which I had the pleasure of presenting to a number of years ago. I made a deputation towards what is now my riding of Ottawa South—I wasn't the member then. I was pleased to make that deputation. In making that deputation, one of the arguments that I used was that it was a great riding to run an election in. The transportation routes were great, the polling stations were

great, the size was good—it's a little bit big, but you could effectively make sure you did your best to get the people out to vote and it wasn't difficult or a challenge. When we run in elections and as members, we have to be encouraging people to vote. So I felt very fortunate.

There's a very minor change. A number of houses in my riding are no longer there. But after listening to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane this morning, I'm very fortunate to be in that kind of a riding. There are larger rural ridings that have challenges; he mentioned his two communities of Thorne and Eldee and a community that was just on the side of the lake. That's a barrier to people participating in democracy as well, because it's hard to—the larger the area is, the weaker the transportation networks. It's often harder to get people to participate in democracy, and to service them as well.

People don't make distinctions on those boundaries; we have to educate them. But it doesn't really matter to them whether they live just on the other side of Ottawa South and are in Ottawa Centre. From our office, whoever comes there, we serve. We'll connect them to another office.

I do want to make a couple of comments with regard to voter turnout—something that concerns me, and since we're having this opportunity to talk about democracy, because that's what these boundaries are all about: making sure people have a voice. I want to say a few things about voter suppression. We saw in the last election a voter suppression effort around robocalls. But that's not really what I want to talk about. Voter suppression is not something new. We've all been there and we know that it is a tactic that's employed by people to make sure people don't vote. It's not in this bill, but I want to mention that right now as it is something that I think we have to take more seriously. I think, no matter what side you're on, it's a fundamental interference with people's democratic right, and I think it should be taken very seriously.

I also wanted to make one more point with regard to some of the comments from the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane around scandal. There's an interesting thing. A Ford will never say GM's cars are going to kill you, because the next thing that you get from that is that cars are going to kill you. But as a group, we attack the category. We attack each other. We impugn motives on each other at times that we know aren't accurate, and we all do it to each other. I don't think that does the voter a service. I think we have to hold each other to account on the basis of the things that we've done, but not impugn motives on people and become personal. I think the personal part of politics, when we call each other names, that's the thing that really turns people off.

We're here to work together. That's what people expect from us. They know we're not always going to agree, but when it becomes personal, that's what turns them off.

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's an honour to join the debate on this important topic.

As I have been hearing the debate, I have been thinking a little bit about some of the constituents in my community in Etobicoke Centre. Etobicoke Centre has one of the highest percentages of seniors of any riding in the province and in the country. Some of the seniors who live in my community reflect sometimes about the value of their vote, the value of their franchise, about the right to vote. Once in a while, I hear from seniors, particularly people who have come to Canada from other countries where that right is not enshrined in the way it is here in Canada, about how fortunate we are that we live in this great country and that we have the opportunity to shape the future of our community and of our country.

Something that has stuck with me in hearing from them is how important it is that we do our best to make sure that everyone has an equal right to vote and as equal an influence as possible over the decisions that are made here and that shape our future.

With that in mind, I think this bill helps to do that. The first thing it does is, of course, amend the boundaries, and it has been mentioned on a number of occasions here during this debate that the amending of those boundaries will help ensure that the riding boundaries are set in such a way that they are more representative of the population that they encompass, which ensures that the vote and voting influence within each riding is more equitably distributed. I think that's important.

The other thing that it does is requires that youth—16- to 17-year-olds—be registered in collaboration with the Chief Electoral Officer. I think that's a positive thing. Let me talk a little bit about as to why I think that is, the first reason being—and I've mentioned this a little bit—this principle of equal representation. Redistributing the boundaries will help ensure that every person's vote has more equal weight. We heard the story about one of the members on this side who has a riding with about 250,000 people in it. My community has about 115,000. That's a vast difference. Redistributing the ridings will allow that to be a little bit more equal.

The second thing I think it does is it allows for better coordination between provincial and federal members. I work closely with my counterpart. He happens to be of a different political persuasion, but we nevertheless work together on a range of issues that touch our community. I think that's an important aspect of what my role is and what our roles are as representatives. Having multiple boundaries cut across a single riding, or multiple federal ridings that cross a provincial one or vice versa, makes it really challenging to collaborate effectively, especially for those folks who end up in those areas where there are multiple ridings within your riding. This helps to coordinate and collaborate in the interests of constituents much more effectively.

To the extent that there are ridings that become quite large, like the one that was mentioned earlier with 250,000 or so people, this bill will allow those constituents to get better service from their elected official because that elected official will have a more manageable number of constituents who they serve, allow them to

respond and advocate on their behalf effectively, and invest the time with each of them as is required.

The other piece that I think is really positive about the bill is this idea of engaging young people at an earlier age. One of the favourite parts of this job for me is visiting civics classes in my community of Etobicoke Centre and talking to young people about what we do as politicians, the importance of the vote, the decisions that we make, and why it's important that they get engaged and stay engaged. My big takeaway from each of the classes that I speak to is whatever you do, when you get to 18 years old, please make sure you vote. I think this is something that will help facilitate that process, that engagement as well.

When you think about the decisions that we make here, most of the decisions take time to implement and most of the decisions are long-range in their nature. They are going to impact our young people more than anyone else, arguably, in many cases—not in all cases, but in many. Having our young people engaged is critical.

1540

I think this is a bill that helps strengthen our democracy. It helps strengthen our franchise. It helps ensure that we better coordinate with our federal counterparts. It engages the next generation of voters more effectively. I think that's all positive. Hopefully, we can get this bill passed and move on to the other matters that are important to the constituents in Ontario and my constituents of Etobicoke Centre.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Next we have the member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: It is my pleasure to join in this debate and make a few comments on Bill 115, An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015.

I listened carefully, on all sides, to what was being said all along. To be honest with you, Mr. Speaker, it's a very short bill. The lengthy part of the bill is to draw the boundaries in the north, where we have the 11 ridings that are different from the federal boundaries that are established under the federal election boundaries commission.

I think what we're doing here is exactly what we did in the middle 1990s. I remember it was done, if I remember correctly, in 2005. I ran in a by-election in 2005, and I had to run within the old boundaries. Two years later, I was running within different boundaries, which caused a lot of grief, if I could put it that way.

Again, here we are in 2015, and we're discussing it before the next election, hopefully, in 2018. But it's a necessary thing to do, because the voting public should know that their vote has an equal and, if I could say, fair representation here in the Legislature, that certain members are not disenfranchised.

As you heard, my colleague from Oak Ridges—Markham has a population of well over 200,000; she has 177,000 voters. Myself, I have only about 88,000 voters, and I've got about 132,000 residents in my area. The reason for doing this boundary change before the next election, and mirroring the image of the boundaries of the

federal government, is really to provide the public with fair representation.

I heard a couple of people across the way speak about certain things, and I want to comment on them. I heard, I believe, two or three members supportive of a permanent electors list. I have to tell you, it may work well in the north, and maybe in southern Ontario, where you don't have a lot of movement of individuals. I know my colleague from Leeds–Grenville complained that in his area, people who have never moved for 35 years, their name disappeared on the list. We've had a permanent list for quite a while, so the list is not the issue. The issue is the administration by Elections Ontario and their team in doing the proper job.

On the opposite side, in the urban centres, like my own riding, I find that the list is changing so rapidly that they can't keep up with it because of the movement of people, because we have, if I could say, compact densities, that people have to move. We have a lot of people that live in rental property, and they have to move for whatever reason. Then we have a lot of movement because of the seniors moving from their home that they have lived in for 30, 40 years into something smaller to accommodate them.

For some reason, Elections Ontario cannot keep up with these list changes. I think that's what we should focus on: why it is they can't keep up, and why it is that the list cannot be accurate. I can tell you that in my own list, I know it's well over 10% inaccurate. I've had thousands of voters on my list who have left. I've had people vote but I can't find them. This is not right.

I think one of the failures we have in the list also is, if your name is not on the list, they'll allow you to put it on on election day. If you look at the foundation of a democracy, it is set that you have to be a citizen to vote. If you look at the IDs that Elections Ontario accept, very few of them actually prove you're a citizen. To me, that's the biggest failure in the system. How can you protect the democratic institution when the one important document, which is to identify that I'm a citizen of Canada, is not there in the act?

That's a discussion of another day. Today it's the boundaries—that we should copy the federal government. I totally agree with it, and I'll be supporting this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Hearing from a number of government members speak to the bill, it's interesting how—to me it came across that they were delivering democracy to Ontario. I found it quite interesting that this is something new that they're bringing to Ontario whereas, over the past two and a half years, the federal government has worked hard to ensure that the riding distribution has been taken care of. They're basically just copying and pasting the federal legislation into a bill, with a few minor variations in northern Ontario.

It was really interesting that the member from Ottawa South brought up—and I do agree with his point about

being personal and attacks one way or another turning off people in politics. I would like to make mention again that this was the opportunity for the government—since they didn't have to do much work with this bill, just put it together—to tackle third-party advertising, which is nothing but personal, which does nothing but turn people off at the voting poll, which is nothing more than \$10 million spent to keep you guys in power. You had the opportunity. You talk a lot about third-party advertising reform, but you do nothing about it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member to make his comments directly through the Chair. Speak about the government in the third person, if you will.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Sorry, Speaker. I was so excited that I had a great point of contention with this government as they continue to bloviate—I'll use that word again—continually, and produce nothing at the end of the day. It's unfortunate that—they talk a good talk; they had the opportunity to do something to benefit Ontarians on top of redistributing. We can't argue with that. The feds have done it. We should copy what the feds have done, and maintain our presence in northern Ontario. However, they dropped the ball on this one, and it is unfortunate that Ontario is going to have to wait for another government bill to make a fix.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's a pleasure to stand in my chair today and talk about the electoral boundary reform on behalf of the citizens in Windsor–Tecumseh.

I heard the member from Ottawa South earlier. I think he made a mistake when he said that his riding of 123,000, I think he said, was larger than the population of Prince Edward Island. I think PEI's population is—not Ottawa South; Ottawa Centre—146,000. I'd love to be in PEI. I love the people from Prince Edward Island. They elect 27 members of the Legislature; 10 of them get in cabinet. They have four senators and four members of Parliament—MPs—to represent 146,000 people. As you know, it's a small island, but we have ridings—I think of Kenora–Rainy River—that are bigger than the country of France. You have to have three or four offices to keep up with all of that.

In my case, in Windsor–Tecumseh, our boundary isn't changing. I will miss my federal member of Parliament, Joe Comartin, a New Democrat—voted not once, not twice, but three times as the most knowledgeable member of Parliament; voted by his peers. We're really going to miss that. I have high hopes that our candidate, Cheryl Hardcastle, the former deputy mayor of Tecumseh, will replace him, even though those boundaries won't be changing.

To the point: From Timiskaming–Cochrane, my friend Mr. Vanthof noted that we're not a cookie cutter. We need things different in the north and in rural Ontario. We need different regulations for our schools, for our hospitals. No matter the population base, there should be other considerations taken to keep some of

those schools and hospitals open. Thank you for your time this afternoon.

1550

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions or comments?

Hon. David Zimmer: I'm pleased to add my comments on this debate on electoral boundaries reform. I would just want to make three points.

First, I do want to thank the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London, the PC member opposite, for his support of this party's maintaining the 11 northern ridings. The federal government of course will only have 10 ridings in the north but we on this side of the House—and I'm glad that the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London agrees with that, that we maintain those ridings, because the situation in the north is special, as some of the speakers have referenced. Just the sheer size, the physical size of the geographical area and the way the population is spread around—it is very, very difficult and challenging to maintain contact with a population spread around such a huge area. So thank you for that support, to the official opposition, on this. I do note that you somewhat apologized for your federal cousins by saying, "I guess my party missed this one," referencing the federal Progressive Conservatives.

With respect to Willowdale, Willowdale is being carved up a little bit. Right now there are 140,000 constituents in Willowdale. It's very dense and although it is relatively easy, in terms of dealing with the geography of Willowdale, it's a challenge dealing with 140,000 people. I am losing a corner of my riding on the southeast corner of the riding, but I'm gaining another piece on the northwest corner of the riding. The net result of that is that there will be a couple of new ridings up there. One is Don Valley North. This is going to make it easier for the MPP to represent that area.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased again to have an opportunity to respond to the speech from the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the member for Ottawa South and the member from Scarborough–Rouge River.

I guess point number one that I'll talk about is the voters list. I think there was some mention about how frustrating it is that they always seem to be so inaccurate—that's the best way I can describe it. We've probably all experienced and we've all had people contacting us after elections to tell us how frustrated they are with the state of the voters list. That's why—I think it came up earlier in debate—the idea of some sort of permanent voter's card makes sense, whether it be your health card that doubles as a voter's card, perhaps, and it's the individual's responsibility—if you change your address, you have to change your driver's licence and you have your voter's card up to date. Perhaps that would be a way of actually having accurate lists. But we can certainly do a better job than we have historically. I think that's an area that needs improvement.

In terms of Ontario maintaining 11 northern ridings, as this bill does do, as one of those 11 northern ridings, I completely support that. The fact of the matter is that the geography of northern Ontario is huge. My riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka is one of the smaller ones, and I believe it stays more or less the same with these proposed changes. But for me to go from my home to Dokis First Nation, it's a three-and-a-half-hour drive one way to get there, so obviously that makes it challenging. It's just big. I have 26 municipalities, seven First Nations that have unorganized territories, and there's only so much you can do to try to get around to provide proper representation.

As was pointed out, when you compare it to Prince Edward Island in particular, that would be one riding and one MPP in Ontario at the current state. So I do support maintaining 11 northern ridings.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): One of the members who spoke can respond. The member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the members from Elgin–Middlesex–London, Windsor–Tecumseh, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, and thank them for their comments.

I'm glad that the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London agrees that we do spend far too much time attacking each other. I don't agree with everything that he says, but I do want to thank him for giving us all a new word today: "bloviate." I'm glad that he enunciated it fairly clearly the second time around because the first time he said it I thought he said "boviate," and I thought it had something to do with cows. But now I'm sure that the word "bloviate" is going to appear in Hansard far more often now that you've introduced it into the Legislature, and I genuinely thank you for that.

To the member for Windsor–Tecumseh, I think I made similar comments. I do understand the challenges. I'm very fortunate to be in a riding that it's easy to work in. In the north, it's more difficult. As the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane described, there's a real challenge representing people in the north. If you think there is a road on the map and there isn't one, it provides a real challenge, a real barrier to people.

To the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, I don't know what the answer is on the voters list, because the reality is that it's got to be a list. It's the list that we keep. Even if you had a card, you'd have to check that card off against the list so people wouldn't have voted a couple of times. It's a challenge for all of us. We've all been there, where Mrs. Smith has been on the list for 45 years at the same address, and the next time she's not there in that election.

Mr. Speaker, I would like, on a point of order, to correct my record. Earlier, I referred to Lake—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Sorry. First, you have to request an opportunity to present your point of order, which you've done. I recognize you on a point of order.

Mr. John Fraser: Sorry, I'll get it right. I'd just like to correct my record.

Lake Wanapitei is the name of the lake, and it's the Wahnapiatae First Nation that the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane raised in his remarks. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Every member can correct their record on a point of order.

Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to address Bill 115, the Electoral—

Hon. David Zimmer: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs on a point of order.

Hon. David Zimmer: Thank you, Speaker. Just so I can follow this debate, because it's a very serious one, I'm wondering if the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London could tell me what the word "bloviate" means. I've checked the Oxford Dictionary, and there's no word there. I just want to make sure I don't miss anything in the debate—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That is not a point of order. The member for Haldimand-Norfolk has the floor.

Interjections.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to continue this debate on Bill 115, concerning electoral boundaries in the province of Ontario. I look at the bill itself, "to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the Representation Act, 2005 and amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act," and as we know, much of this legislation is certainly the southern riding boundaries as derived from federal legislation, the Canada Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.

A lot of it is about redistribution for the purpose of representation. Ontario—bear with me—is divided into the following electoral districts: the 11 northern electoral districts whose names and boundaries are set out in this legislation itself; and, almost by default, the remaining 111 southern electoral districts, whose names and boundaries are set out in the federal legislation. So this legislation really doesn't have to go into detail about rivers and roads, and changes and subtractions and additions with respect to much of the new system.

The federal electoral districts come into effect on the first dissolution of Parliament after May 1, 2014—as we know, that has already happened—and the present redistribution provincially takes effect immediately after dissolution after November 30, 2016. So we have a deadline of November 2016, and until that happens, we remain with 107 seats, or electoral districts.

1600

The system remains—and I am personally thankful for this—one member for each district. I find that's fairly simple for the people that I represent, in contrast to an idea that was floated several elections ago, the proportional representation system. In fact, after that election—and many of us spent a fair number of all-candidates'

nights discussing proportional representation. I know down my way all the parties supported that except mine, and I really was in the minority. I think we did something like 10 all-candidates' nights, 10 evenings of debating proportional representation. I was obviously in the minority and got beat up a bit on my position of first-past-the-post, one member, one vote, and one representative for each riding.

As it turns out, election day came and left and the decision was made to have the referendum, and the people rejected proportional representation. I consider that a dead issue; some may not. I see in the media talk again of bringing back that debate.

The legislation before us comes from recommendations from the Chief Electoral Officer, and this government has indicated that they are committed to addressing these recommendations and a few other things: "Moving the fixed election date from fall to spring," as described, "to help avoid overlap with federal and municipal elections"; "Engaging more young people with the voting process"—not giving them the vote, but engaging them with the process—"through provisional registration" for those who are 16 or 17, but the voting age still remains 18; "Strengthening rules on ... third-party advertising."

Just going back to having the spring election and some of the reasons given—and this is a news release from the Ontario government, I notice—to "make it easier for people to vote because the weather is usually better." I don't know about that, how we can predict the weather, spring and fall. So far we've had a pretty nice fall. Albeit much of it is in the summertime, there are great days in September, October—not November. We get a lot of rain in April, May.

Ideally, and I say this as a farmer, you get those hot, dry winds, certainly in southern Ontario—I can't speak to the north—that dry up our land so we can get corn and beans in at that time of year.

They talk about how the days are longer and, again, reducing the overlap with other elections at the provincial and at the federal level.

I will mention that I represent presently a riding that is named Haldimand-Norfolk. I was first elected in 1995, and at that time the riding was just called Norfolk, as it had been called for many, many years. I notice the photographs in the halls of this precinct of some of my predecessors who represented the riding of Norfolk, gosh, going back to the 1850s. Looking at those photographs, by and large, in many of the ridings, if you will, in many cases you did ride the riding by horseback or horse and carriage, perhaps horse and sleigh. Many of the ridings seemed to mimic or follow the county boundaries, and that really would have been a boon for people to figure out—there wasn't the access to communication we have now as far as where they live and who they vote for, municipally, provincially and federally.

My grandfather was a federal MP and he represented the riding of Norfolk back in the day, just after the Second World War. The riding that I first ran in was called Norfolk, but it encompassed Norfolk county and

the town of Tillsonburg, which is in Oxford county. I'm sure that some people, if they were serious, maybe felt it was a bit of a challenge because nobody knew me in Tillsonburg. I had worked in the Norfolk, Haldimand and Brant area for many, many years. Part of my job—I actually did more speaking engagements in the community than I seem to do now, in a sense, as a consultant. Because of the jurisdiction and the industries that I was consulting with, Tillsonburg wasn't in my area. I think I maybe knew a few people in Tillsonburg. By the same token, they would not have known who I was. That was a challenge.

Many of us like a challenge; we seek a challenge. Most of my focus was on the town of Tillsonburg at the time. The Norfolk-Tillsonburg riding boundaries had been that way for many, many years. I know that my predecessor, NDP Norm Jamison, represented that area, and the chap before him, MPP Gord Miller, a Liberal, represented Norfolk-Tillsonburg. It made sense because Tillsonburg is a unique town. It sits right on the intersection of three different counties. So, again, following county lines didn't necessarily make that much sense. How do you decide in which county Tillsonburg would land? Much of the riding distribution does seem to be out of the hands of our area. The massive ebb and flow of population across the province of Ontario over the last 200 years has had an effect on the boundaries down my way.

A number of years later, as with many MPPs, the boundaries changed again, and I ran in a riding that represented all of Norfolk county but subtracted Tillsonburg. I was able to win in a riding that encompassed a major part of Haldimand county but not Dunnville; Tim Hudak remained in the Dunnville riding even though it was part of Haldimand county. I had the good fortune to represent, as I recall, three townships in Brant county. Burford township, the town of Burford, like Tillsonburg, always seemed to be bounced from pillar to post, depending on these decisions made by the commission as far as population movements. I represented Burford township, Oakland township and Onondaga township, and many of these areas were far to the north of where I lived. Interestingly enough, the further north I went and the farther away I got from home, the more votes I got. I kind of asked myself: "What does that mean?"

The boundaries changed again in my particular area. I lost Brant county—a bit of a blessing personally because I was trying to cover three different agricultural counties. It was an awful lot of travel. You attend three different counties in one day. Much of my focus is on farm organizations. So rather than, for example, attending one meeting of, say, the Norfolk Federation of Agriculture, I would also have to attend the Haldimand Federation of Agriculture and the Brant federation, or the cattlemen's association or the dairy organizations. Rather than attending one county meeting or one annual meeting, you attend three annual meetings.

Brant county was lost, as far as the area I represented, and I gained, to my good fortune, the town of Dunnville,

which seemed to be, fortunately for me, about as Conservative as the town of Tillsonburg, which I'd lost a few years earlier.

I think my point is that changes in boundaries do have an influence, obviously, on representation, on the kind of elected representative you end up with. I suppose, looking through the lens of those of us elected here, it has a big influence on the work we do, depending on the mix of the people who have found themselves in your particular riding.

1610

Presently, there are no changes, certainly during this round, in Haldimand-Norfolk. Neighbouring areas have seen some change.

The riding redistribution review in Ontario, conducted by the electoral boundaries commission for Ontario, took a look at Niagara region—there are almost half a million people there; it's short of half a million—and made a decision that it would warrant four ridings. If you look at Niagara-Hamilton, the area I represent, and Brant-Brantford, there are about a million, all told. They created a new riding, known as Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas. People are fighting that one out, as we speak, at the federal level. It essentially encompasses north and south and the west side of Hamilton region.

In Niagara, the commission has decided that Niagara West-Glanbrook was due for a change, so during this federal election, it's now known as Niagara West. If you'll bear with me—these are the kinds of things that we read in these documents—there was an addition to this new riding of Niagara West, something we will see at the provincial level, of part of the city of St. Catharines—lying west of Louth Street, Highway 406, Third Street and Courtleigh Road—and the township of Wainfleet. That makes an awful lot of sense to me; I border Wainfleet on the east side of my riding.

There was the subtraction of Binbrook, Glanbrook, Hannon—quite honestly, this is up near my riding, but I have to admit I don't know where Hannon is, unless there's a spelling mistake here—and Mount Hope; they were all lost. This is the Tim Hudak riding. They join the new riding of Flamborough-Glanbrook.

Just to clarify that part of it—and I use this just to indicate the machinations that go on in a process like this, with well over 100 ridings in the province of Ontario—Niagara West now is still Grimsby, Lincoln, Pelham, West Lincoln and Wainfleet, as I mentioned, and part of the city of St. Catharines. We read a very detailed description of where the roads are and how that follows. It makes it very clear to me why, many years ago, we developed the concept of a map. A map describes it much better. I'm sure I would not be allowed to hold up a map; it might be considered a prop.

It's interesting: The redistribution leaves this new riding of Niagara West as smaller than the average—the population is 86,533—as part of the four ridings in Niagara, deleting, essentially, that Hamilton side of the riding. Much of this, I feel, makes sense.

Kitchener South-Hespeler: That's a new riding that has been created to form parts of the former Kitchener-

Conestoga—the member for Kitchener–Conestoga had a few things to say about that this afternoon—and the Cambridge ridings. He made mention of those old historical towns that many of us in the area are so familiar with—Galt, Preston and Hespeler—that, with the advent of regional government and regionalization, are now known as Cambridge.

It's clearly necessary every 10 years or so to revisit and revise riding boundaries. It can be confusing for the people who do the voting, those of us who have been involved for many, many years, and we can find it confusing.

In this sense, it's perhaps a good thing that we have a longer period for the federal election. A lot of people wouldn't agree with that; people are finding that annoying. But if it does one thing, it gives people more time to sort out which riding they live in and who they vote for. There are an awful lot of changes right across Canada.

They've got a bit more time, obviously, to get to know a bit about the issues but also to find out who their candidates are. A lot of those candidates are brand new, and a lot of the seasoned politicians have retired, certainly in Ontario. So you have voters who are finding themselves in a different riding altogether, or they're in the same old riding but it has a new name. These folks are going to show up at the polls—hopefully only once—to vote once on election day, on the 19th. Some people may be a little baffled that the guy or the gal that they normally vote for isn't on the ballot this time—this person might be running somewhere else, or maybe they have retired.

Very simply—and it seems simple—we mirror the federal electoral boundaries, and we add 15 new ridings to increase the size of the Legislature to 122, with that one difference. Northern Ontario will continue to follow the boundaries set out in 2004, and I think we all agree to that. At some point, there may be a case where part of rural Ontario may need some similar consideration.

Mirroring the federal boundaries: Certainly, with my history in this place, that was the idea put forward and accomplished by a former Premier, Mike Harris. Part of his goal—and that's the reason I got involved in this business back in 1994. He made a commitment to reduce the number of MPPs to 103 from 130. He did that in 1999, and he did that by electoral redistribution, a promise that was made. I remember that day very well. I know that people down in my neck of the woods—we literally cheered that night, that he was going to cut the number of politicians by 20%.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'd just like to take a quick moment here to extend a warm welcome to today's page captain, Siena Pacheco, from the great riding of Chatham–Kent.

To her parents and family members, first of all, I would like to say, “Bom dia,” and of course, to her mother, Rosmarie Pacheco; her father, Luis Pacheco; her

sister Alexia Pacheco and her grandmother, Anna Belli-Obrigado.

Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We welcome you to the Ontario Legislature. But we're now doing questions and comments.

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, electoral reform usually comes around every five to 10 years. We're adding 15 ridings to the provincial seats. But the problem with some of these changes is the fact that traditional areas in certain municipalities get split up. In other words, if you had, let's say, Winona–Stoney Creek, and they have always voted together and they have similar issues and similar wishes—these sometimes get broken up, and they have to end up voting with another group that may have a different interest and a different agenda, and they don't really feel part of the process. That's one of the disadvantages of redistribution.

When they do these realignments, a lot of the time, it's politically motivated. Whoever is doing it and decides to bring this forward—whether it be the ruling government, or whoever decides to bring the bill forward—has obviously gone over the maps and had, obviously, an advantage of where they would like to see things go, so they can win the next election and win more seats. Trust me: Those things happen, and it's unfortunate that people don't admit that that's the reason they do the boundary changes.

1620

Certainly population distribution is important too. Some people have more people to represent than others. In the North they have a lot less to represent. In the south it varies, because with all the building going on in southern Ontario, different populations change and vary. That could have a different negative or positive impact on the boundary change. I have concerns when they change the boundaries, because when I look at the maps, I see that it might favour the blue guys or it might favour the red guys, but very seldom does it favour the orange guys.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Granville Anderson: It gives me great pleasure to speak to this bill. I would like to acknowledge the member from Haldimand–Norfolk and my friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

The changes to the boundaries are never more pronounced than how it affects my riding of Durham. My riding is one of the larger ridings. It's not as large as those up north, but it takes me an hour and a half from one end to the other. I have lost portions in the west and in the east. Such a little town that I have developed a great relationship with is Uxbridge, which is to the west; to the east, I've lost Newcastle and Orono. These are areas that I've come to know very well, having grown up in that neighbourhood.

Again, I do see the need for changes. For example, 10 years ago, Bowmanville's population was roughly 45,000; now it's 95,000. Uxbridge has around 30,000.

Scugog, on the other hand, has around 25,000. So you're looking at representing 150,000 people in this area, which is manageable, but it's a bit much.

Also, another fact that I take into consideration: After this federal election, I would have had the MPs, which would be rather difficult to work with. It would make life a lot more difficult.

So although I do have apprehensions about the changes because of my relationships that I've developed within the various communities, I can see the rationale for it. It's just something that will provide better representation, I believe, for the people I do represent.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to address this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Three weeks from today, the residents of Nepean–Carleton will have two members of Parliament and one provincial MPP. In fact, my constituency has grown by 85% since the time I took office, just nine and a half years ago. That gives you a sense of why we need to address redistribution and boundary changes.

In fact, I think members would be interested to know that I will represent—according to the 2011 census, and by no means is this exhaustive, because I think the number is higher now—159,000 constituents. That was the 2011 number, and of course we've seen, as I've mentioned, the growth. To put that into context, there are four federal members of Parliament for the province of Prince Edward Island, and there are only 140,000 constituents there.

When we look at the numbers that we have here in the province of Ontario, it is important—and I know that I'm not alone in worrying about the impact that this will have on our provincial constituents, particularly after October 19, when, as my colleague from Durham noted, we will have far more MPs than MPPs. I know my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga mentioned the Minister of Community—

Hon. Helena Jaczek: —and Social Services.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —yes, Community and Social Services, who has the largest riding in Canada at this point in time.

What I would urge is that the Board of Internal Economy, over the next two and a half or three years, look at these special circumstances and the workload on our MPPs in order to ensure that we are representing our constituents to the best of our ability and to the best of the resources here at the provincial Legislature.

With that—I know I have seconds left—I cannot underscore enough in this assembly that we need to do more in order to bridge that rural-urban divide that is being exacerbated as we see high growth and development. I presently represent a high-growth community, an urban centre, as well as a rural centre. I cannot stress enough that all of us in this assembly must do better in order to bridge that gap.

Thank you so much for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to comment on some of the points that the member from Haldimand–Norfolk made during his 20-minute lead on this piece of legislation.

Listen, electoral reform is incredibly important. It's one of those institutions we need to ensure that we protect going forward. When we don't, you see our democratic rights slowly being eroded away. Electoral reform is part of that discussion, that conversation and that debate.

What is missing in this piece of legislation, though, is current relevant issues that we are facing even in the Legislature this morning—an updated piece of legislation as it relates to the bribery sections of the Election Act, for instance. If you're going to review a piece of legislation around electoral reform, why not capture the places that are being missed right now, like the bribery sections of the Election Act or the advertising component that happened in Simcoe North most recently, where an ad was placed in contravention of the Election Act. It doesn't instill confidence in voters, going forward.

I thought that the member from Haldimand–Norfolk made a really interesting point because he gave us that context of when Mike Harris promised to reduce the politicians in this place, to go from 130 to 103. There was no public consultation on that. There has not been a lot of public consultation on this expansion.

That said, though, in the riding of Kitchener–Waterloo, the riding will be distributed so that I run solely in Waterloo. I'm going to miss my Kitchener component, but as many members have commented, I'm looking forward to not being so lonely in this regard, after this next election. It is lonely being the only New Democrat in Waterloo region.

There's hope for the future when these riding boundaries are redistributed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk for his reply.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I find interesting the responses from members in talking about their own areas and their new areas. For a piece of legislation that seemed rather mundane, just drawing lines on a map, so many of the dynamics are drawn out.

I was really intrigued by the comment about the manipulation of the boundaries, something we really don't know about down in Haldimand–Norfolk; in fact, they're not being moved at all. That is the case. It's illegal in Canada and Ontario, and it's illegal in the UK and Australia, as I recall. But it does go on—and south of the border.

One of my favourite words is “gerrymandering.” A number of years ago I googled that, and there was a fellow named Gerry Mandering who owns a bar-restaurant in the Philippines. I don't know if he's still running that bar and restaurant. Again, to gerrymander: to manipulate the boundaries. It works well in a first-

past-the-post system; not so much in a proportional representation system. It always seems to work well for the incumbent, the party in power, the people who do draw the maps, the state or political groups who have the opportunity to draw the maps. It is really quite interesting. Sometimes it is done for good reasons, to avoid any kind of racial discrimination, for example, by drawing a boundary map to encompass a certain racial group within one boundary so they have a much higher chance of winning the election. This is done in many of the states in the United States.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's a pleasure to rise and speak about Bill 115. Certainly, listening to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and then this opposite opinion from the member from Haldimand–Norfolk about the lack of manipulation here in the province of Ontario and across Canada—I actually am going to speak a little bit to that, based on the federal boundary changes that happened, or were proposed to happen, in my own riding.

1630

We know the federal boundaries for the federal election have changed, and so we have a bill before us that, really, just wants to deal with the federal boundary changes, when we really should be talking not just about the numbers of voters, we should be talking about access, being able to vote. We should be talking about democracy and increasing voter turnout. When we discuss electoral boundaries, it's important to ensure that not only the electorate is onside, but that local city councils and regional councils and county councils, and community groups as well, are involved and have the opportunity to actually speak to those changes.

During the federal boundary changes back in 2012, the federal boundary commission had hearings in Niagara because it was proposing changes in Niagara, as well as changes in the Hamilton area. The federal Conservatives at the time were proposing to actually change my riding by taking out the city of Thorold and adding the city of Fort Erie, without any regard to anything else other than that they wanted Thorold, because Thorold, of course, is a stronghold for the NDP. Even when we had a Liberal government federally for 33 years, we won every poll in the town of Thorold. They proposed to take this community of about 18,000 people, a small manufacturing town—paper mills, factories—and attach this town in the east to the big rural riding of Niagara West–Glanbrook, with a little wee strip of the bottom of the minister without portfolio's riding, St. Catharines; to cut Thorold right out of our riding and then to give us Fort Erie down the road, which we'd be happy to have.

However, we didn't have similarities with the town of Fort Erie. We have many similarities with the town of Thorold. They didn't look at the fact that Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake are all border communities. They all border the United States. They all have very similar issues. But the Conservatives federally

just wanted to knock Thorold out because they thought that they might have a chance to take over the riding of Welland, which has been held by the New Democrats for 40 years this year.

There was no thought even given to the fact that we are a two-tiered government, that we have north-south or east-west bus routes. They didn't look at our regional busing system. They didn't look at any of the planning processes or reports at the Niagara region to see what kinds of plans there were for economic growth and between which municipalities in the Niagara region. None of that was taken into account. It was just clearly, "Well, we're going to try and level these numbers out and we're going to do this by attaching this little strip of a town to a completely rural riding."

It made no sense whatsoever, and so of course I went out and made presentations, as did our federal member, as did probably every mayor across the Niagara region—and some of the city councillors—to the federal boundary commission. They bought our arguments, at the end of the day. We even went into as much detail as what is long distance—because, across Niagara, the whole Niagara region cannot call each other without incurring long-distance charges. So to actually make that move and add Fort Erie to Welland would have been long distance for the constituents, where Thorold to Welland is actually not long distance. I can tell you, we've been after Bell Canada for a hundred years to actually make the whole Niagara region with no long-distance charges and they've refused to do it to date. They didn't look at the transportation corridors. They didn't do any of those things.

It was interesting, because after the boundaries commission actually made their recommendation, then the member from St. Catharines, Rick Dykstra, the MP, came back to committee and tried to get it changed again even though he had not shown up or made any presentation. So when we talk about gerrymandering or manipulating, clearly it happens. It happened in my riding.

But there's other stuff that Elections Ontario needs to look at as well. I know I've met with the elections commissioner after both of the last two elections. We talked about some of the things that certainly happened during the provincial elections in my riding—I'm sure that they happened in some of yours as well—where full streets or areas in a community didn't get voter registration cards. You know how ticked off people get when they don't get a voter registration card? They don't want to go out to vote, because that registration card tells them where they're voting, what time they're voting, when the polls are open and where the returning offices are. You know, we have a low enough voter turnout that, in fact, those small things need to be fixed.

We also need to make sure of, and this legislation could address that, the locations of where the returning offices are. I can tell you, in 2011 and in 2014 in my riding, the returning office was on the site of an old, closed factory, not on a bus route, kind of at the edge of the city, with no access for anybody to get there without a vehicle. You probably have to walk three quarters of a

kilometre from the bus stop to actually get there to vote if you don't have a car. So I talked to the elections commissioner about that issue as well. I would think that the Liberal government would be interested in getting as many voters to the polls as possible. But, in fact, we're not addressing any of that language in this particular bill.

This is the kind of work that can be done by Elections Ontario, but we need to ensure, as MPPs, that in fact we're sharing that information with the commissioner. Each and every one of us should be meeting with him after each election.

The issue of not having access to go into apartment buildings and senior centres—you don't know how many times in the last two provincial elections that I was denied access; even in the Sudbury by-election, we were denied access into an apartment building. Elections Ontario doesn't have any staff around to actually deal with those issues. When you call in to complain, they say, "Sorry, put it in your report. We don't have anybody to deal with it," so we can't get our information and you can't get your information to the voters. Then, you can't encourage people to actually go out and vote.

Then there is the issue of the photo ID piece that I think a few people actually talked about today. Certainly I come from a riding where there are many, many seniors—one of the highest senior populations, actually, in the province. Many seniors don't have any photo ID. If they don't have a driver's licence and they don't have a new health card—there are still millions of people without the new health card—then when they actually get to a voting station, they have problems actually trying to get to vote, particularly if they were one of those people who didn't get a voter registration card. Then they're being harassed by poll clerks and by DROs, these 80- and 90-year-old people who are trying to go out and actually be democratic and exercise their vote. These are the kinds of things that this bill should actually be dealing with.

Now, the federal government also ended the door-to-door census. I can tell you that I did those door-to-door censuses a few times in my lifetime when I was actually working in another career. We had to go back four and five times to make sure that we got each and every person that we thought lived in those houses and get correct information. Now, today, we get these short forms; some people fill them out and some people don't. I heard somebody say today, I think it was the member from Scarborough-Rouge River, his lists were 10% incorrect. I can tell you that in the elections I've been involved in, there have been probably 40% to 50% of the voters on the lists whose information is incorrect. They either don't live there anymore—especially if you have a lot of apartment buildings in your particular riding, because the turnover in apartment buildings is so high.

1640

I think those are some of the things that we should actually be dealing with in this bill, and I would think that the Liberals would actually want to do that. I would hope that Elections Canada and Elections Ontario would

want to be promoting and encouraging voting, especially for young people.

I live in a riding where we have a very high volume of students, as well. Niagara College is in my riding, in Welland; we have a campus in Welland. Brock University also borders on my riding. Between those two institutions, there are probably 30,000 students. But I can tell you that when we actually go out and canvass—I've experienced this in my own elections, and I've certainly experienced it in federal elections as well—these students don't get any information. They're living in student housing. They're living in rental units. They're not told that they can, in fact, vote where they're going to school or they can vote at home.

It's very difficult for them, because they need to have something, some piece of ID that actually says, "I'm residing at 40 Smith Street in Thorold." Many of them don't, because their parents signed a lease for them on their rental unit, so then when it comes time to vote, they don't have the appropriate information, the appropriate identification to go out and exercise their vote—although they want to, right? But it becomes so troublesome for them that they then decide just not to do it, unless they happen to be going home.

Now, this time around, I think that in this federal election the advance polls are happening over Thanksgiving weekend, so hopefully many of these students will be going home to their own communities and they'll have an opportunity to vote over that Thanksgiving long weekend.

It's kind of disturbing that the federal government has in place put such harsh restrictions which really prohibit and make people refrain from going out to vote. Essentially, Speaker, the "unfair elections act" that was proposed by the federal government—they call it the Fair Elections Act, but it's the "unfair elections act." I used some of my time to highlight what some of those issues are, but it's not the only piece of legislation that hurts Canadian democracy.

A bill was passed that actually prohibits people who live abroad from voting. I think we probably saw it on the news: Donald Sutherland is a famous actor who is a beloved Canadian, an officer of the Order of Canada and a recipient of the Governor General's Award, but Donald Sutherland can't vote in Canada. Wayne Gretzky, another beloved Canadian—Walter's here to see us every year—cannot vote in Canada, right?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: He doesn't live here.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I know he doesn't live here, but certainly he is a Canadian, as is Donald Sutherland. Why shouldn't they be able to exercise their right to vote in this country?

I think it's clear that, federally, the Conservatives have a bad record when it comes to respecting our election laws. We saw that with the spending violations, with Dean Del Mastro and Peter Penashue. They simply cannot be trusted when it comes to enhancing our democracy, around voting and around spending limits in election campaigns.

I see some of the same behaviour from the party across the floor here, from the government across the floor. Just last week, the OPP laid criminal charges against a Liberal senior operative, Gerry Lougheed, in the Sudbury bribery scandal. That was about Andrew Olivier, and offering bribes to Andrew Olivier. Andrew was the candidate who actually had run in the 2014 campaign and wanted to run again in the by-election. Really, he did very well in the 2014 election. He wanted to run again but, instead, he was offered a bribe by a Liberal operative, who offered him a job or an appointment.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member is obviously raising an issue that is creating a response from the other side and I would caution her on her choice of words and ask her to confine her remarks to Bill 115.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you.

Another similarity, actually, between the federal issues that I discussed and the provincial Liberals—some of the more important things that we should be talking about as opposed to electoral boundaries—was the severe cuts that are being made to social programs and the cuts to our veterans. Yesterday, I was out at the Battle of Britain. It was their 75th anniversary. That was an epic battle that lasted three to four months during World War II. Basically, it was the entry into a successful outcome of that war. There were a number of veterans there who are in their nineties now, who were actually pilots during the Battle of Britain. They talked to me about veterans' issues and the lack of some of the services, the cuts to their services. These are people in their eighties and nineties.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London on a point of order.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Yes, thanks, Speaker. I do think talking about Sudbury is more linked to this bill than talking about Canadian veterans, so I prefer you'd talk about Sudbury, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I return to the member for Welland, who has the floor.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I don't think that was a point of order, either.

But anyway, back to the veterans. These veterans have gone out and voted every time there is an election, whether it's a municipal election, a federal election, a provincial election. Clearly their message to me yesterday was that they're certainly feeling undervalued in their golden years. I think we should be dealing with some of these issues, certainly as a federal issue. I actually have a bill in to deal with veterans and long-term care that is sitting at a committee, that hasn't been dealt with. I'm hoping that someone who sits in the majority on one of these committees actually brings that bill up to the top so that here at a provincial level we can let our veterans know how much we value them and respect them.

I think that with changing the electoral boundaries, many ridings will be changing. Mine won't very much, as I let you know. But it does cause confusion to the

electorate. It also causes confusion to local representatives. And I can tell you, even with the St. Catharines riding—for example, I have a small strip of the south end of St. Catharines and I have people all the time say to me, “Oh, you're my MPP? I thought it was Mr. Bradley.” Even though that boundary has been there for many, many years, the electorate still doesn't readily have that information available to them. I'm sure that the member from Kitchener–Waterloo—I was going to speak about the split in her riding, but I'll let her do that when she actually gets up to speak.

I think I've raised a lot of issues for people to contemplate over my 20 minutes and I hope that now that the act is open the government will be interested in looking at some amendments to make sure that we have the best possible voter turnout and the best accessibility for voters in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I just wanted to comment briefly on what this act, Bill 115, actually does. It's called the Electoral Boundaries Act.

1650

Back, I guess, at the end of the Harris government, the decision was made that instead of having our own electoral boundaries commission to look at how to redistribute ridings by population, we would just simply follow the federal boundaries. Of course, what has happened is that each time the federal government changes their boundaries, we once again then need to make the decision whether we should have our own provincial distribution, or whether we should simply follow the federal boundaries. What this bill represents is the very simple decision that we will, indeed, as a province, follow the federal boundaries. I would suggest that that actually, in some ways, addresses some of the concerns that the members have been raising.

It is no doubt confusing to constituents when the boundaries change. It's doubly confusing to constituents if the boundaries change, and they change differently federally and provincially. So while the inevitability is that populations move and some places get bigger and some places get smaller, and therefore redistribution must occur so that we can respect the principle of representation by population, this is actually the simplest way for the public to deal with that change. The exception is the northern ridings where all three parties, I think, agree that we will not redistribute them because they would just become impossibly huge for the members who represent them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: You know, Speaker, change can be difficult at times, and I'm certain that that's what we're seeing here. We're changing these boundaries. The federal government is changing these boundaries, so now the provincial government wants to do that. It's always an exciting time, I think, because now we're going to have more representation in the province for the numbers of people who are here.

I certainly agree with the member from Welland that Elections Ontario has its issues. I worked at polling stations over my lifetime and have spent countless hours changing addresses and identifying people because of wrong addresses. People would come in to vote, people who I knew lived in the riding all their lives. In fact, one year we had half of them, their addresses were in the Yukon, so we had to change them all. It was incredible. Of course, we have a little town called Alma in our riding. In the riding, we also have a township called Alma. I mean, these things can be confusing. I live in Perth county, and we have a member here who lives in the town of Perth, so these things happen. I can understand that Elections Ontario needs some help.

I want to address the issue about students not voting. They usually have a low turnout. Certainly, they're moving around to universities and they're living at universities or colleges at this time of year. But there's a thing called Google which I have gotten to know about. You can Google things and find out exactly just how things work. Now, my kids, certainly, are better versed in the computer business than I am, but it's not hard. They can find out everything there is to know about world with Google. If they want to vote, go to the Elections Ontario website, go to Google, whatever, and get it done. It's there.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Listening closely to the member from Welland, I think that she raised a lot of issues that are obviously very current and very relevant for today's Legislature.

The bill, Bill 115, says this is an act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the Representation Act—as the member across has already pointed out—but it also amends the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act, so there was an opportunity for this particular piece of legislation to incorporate the latest report from the electoral officers that was just submitted last January 2015. A report like this has never been done before. He says, “No Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario has ever conducted a regulatory investigation into allegations of bribery or ever reported an apparent contravention of the home statutes of my office to the Attorney General.”

This was a precedent-setting report. This is an opportunity for them to update and modernize—that's the language that gets used a lot around here—but even in his report he says that there were complaints about the way that his office dealt with concerns from the public. There were issues around the protocol of this office. There were some complaints around the overview of the investigation and how far-reaching it should have been.

These points were raised by the member for Welland because every time a piece of legislation comes to the floor of this House, we have a duty and a responsibility to raise those issues as they pertain to the legal concerns of the public and the public concerns in general; because every time something like what happened in Sudbury

happens, it compromises trust in the electoral system, it undermines the power of our democracy, and it does impact when people are going to vote.

I think that she did a very good job of presenting an overview, and I think this is a very relevant and current conversation to be having in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member from Ottawa–Orléans.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It gives me great pleasure to speak about this bill again. I would like to thank the member from Welland and also the member from Perth–Wellington on some of the subjects that I would like to bring forward.

I used to own a retirement residence called Portobello Manor. When you talk about the ability to work with Elections Ontario and ensure that seniors actually go and vote, what we did at our site was that, because of the no pictures and no permanent address, no current driver's licence—Elections Ontario allowed our seniors to actually come to vote with a card, a business card that we created. On the back of the card we had a certification—“I solemnly swear”—where every resident had their picture, their permanent address; and as the owner of this property, I was able to sign. We laminated them. Every single senior was able to come and vote on the day. I wanted to share the importance of seniors and also our youth voting, but there are ways that we can help create—that is one thing that I was most proud to do when I was the general manager of the retirement residence in Orléans, Portobello Manor.

Having said that, I also know that it's growth: This bill is about the fact that we need representation from people of our community to ensure that we can best represent them here. Certainly, for me, living in Orléans, every day I turn around there is a new development. Having these boundaries will significantly improve the life of some residents who sometimes had to have representation from further away. My boundaries are not being split like other members', but certainly my boundaries are changing to reflect the federal boundaries.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member from Welland has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Just to recap, I don't think that election boundaries should just be about numbers. They should include things like municipal, regional planning, transportation corridors, services such as busing. It should be about accessibility, whether it is for disability issues or whether it is because you are a senior or a youth. I raised the issue about voter cards and about the denial of access into apartment buildings and condominiums, which should be a huge problem here in downtown Toronto where there are 1.3 million people, I think, living in condos, the vast majority of them here in the city of Toronto.

When I talk about geography—I heard some of the members talking about smaller geographic areas. The member from Kenora–Rainy River I think has the largest riding here in the province. It is so large that it is impossible for her to get to every municipality, every

reserve in her riding in a year, let alone in the term. But there aren't any special considerations for that, and that is something that should be looked at as well by the Legislature and perhaps by Elections Ontario.

1700

At the end of the day, I think that this should all be about democracy and about encouraging people to get out and vote. If we can address some of the issues in this legislation that I raised today and that many other members raised in their speeches, then we'll have a much more democratic province, and we'll have a lot more people weighing in to that process.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'm delighted to rise in support of Bill 115, the Electoral Boundaries Act. I will be sharing my time with the Minister of Transportation, the member for Kitchener Centre, and the member for York South–Weston.

I think we in this House can all agree that the basic precept of this bill is fair representation. Representation by population is essentially the basic principle on which our democratic institution, this Legislature, is based.

As many members have said, my riding, the great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham, is the largest by population in the country, let alone the province, with a population that we estimate at this time as over 250,000, which is larger than the whole province of Prince Edward Island. In fact, the number of electors in the last general election, 2014, from my riding was 177,255, closely followed by my colleague the member for Vaughan, who had some 136,426 electors in the last election.

Just recently, in going to Canada Post to send out my householder, I had 77,000 households that I had to send it out to—on the same global budget, I will mention, as every other member. So there are severe constraints on my ability to truly represent all the residents of my riding.

This is very true for many of us in York region. We will be moving, in York region, from essentially six and a half ridings to eight and a half—we share one with Simcoe county—so we're gaining two ridings. When October 20 comes around, after the federal election a month or so from now, I will have four MPs who will be representing my constituents. I anticipate that, no doubt, we will all do a great job representing our constituents. But this is in fact going to be a complicated process for all of us.

Some references have been made to the electoral boundaries commission that actually established the federal boundaries a couple of years ago and that we are following, with the exception, of course, of the north. I did attend the electoral boundaries commission to talk about some of the issues the member for Welland raised, those of community of interest. I found that they had an excellent, open process in terms of looking to adjust the boundaries, based on their consultation. I found it a very fair process.

I was able to argue for the maintenance of the old core of the original town of Markham, established in 1825, that that historical centre be kept together. Another issue is that many people didn't want to see the name of the new riding of Aurora–Richmond Hill that was proposed, that there be the maintenance of the term “Oak Ridges,” so that the new riding is Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill, because we would not want to lose that important reference to the moraine.

The process, I think, was a very good one. I think it makes tremendous sense that we follow these federal boundaries and that we do it quite rapidly, in time, obviously, for the next election.

We are establishing with this act that these boundaries will take effect and be in place for the next provincial election. Should a by-election be required as of December 1, 2016, they will still be with the current boundaries.

We've got important recommendations that embody the principle of representation by population. I think we should all be very supportive of these. I think that my constituents will welcome these changes and consistency with the federal boundaries, so that there's no further confusion. I urge all members of this House clearly to support this bill. It's important, and it's timely.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Next I recognize the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm delighted to have the opportunity to speak, of course in strong support of the matter we are discussing in the chamber this afternoon, Bill 115, the Electoral Boundaries Act, here at second reading. I'm also delighted to follow my good friend and colleague and, I would assert, geographical neighbour, the member from Oak Ridges–Markham, who also serves as Minister of Community and Social Services. As she mentioned, we are sharing time with some of our other colleagues this afternoon.

As I listen to the discussion of this bill on all sides of the House this afternoon, it's encouraging to see, on a matter that strikes right at the heart of our electoral democracy, that we are all doing a good job of putting partisanship aside. That's fascinating to see, and very encouraging as well.

But I wanted to actually pick up on a point that the previous member, the Minister of Community and Social Services, spoke to. She talked about the size, scope and breadth of her own electoral district of Oak Ridges–Markham, a wonderful community that literally abuts my riding of Vaughan. What she didn't mention, as she was talking about all the numbers in her riding, is that I believe, if I'm not mistaken, that this particular member received the largest number of votes in her community than in any electoral district during the last election campaign.

Of course, it should go without saying that everyone in this chamber would know about this member that this is because of her hard work, her tenacity and her advocacy for her community. But in many respects it also speaks to the fact that this is a very necessary move on the part of this government, and on the part of this Legislature, to

reconsider exactly how we draw these boundaries, to make sure that people living right across the province, but I would say particularly in fast-growing regions and communities like those that exist in York region, Peel, Durham and elsewhere—that those individuals, those families, those businesses have an equitable approach to the representation they have.

There are many, many challenges that individuals face in the communities we all represent. To make sure that we have numbers of representatives that are not only equitable but also fair, in terms of giving those individuals a voice here in this chamber as we debate, discuss, pass legislation and govern, is extremely important. So I'm very happy, Speaker, to lend my voice to this.

I had the chance, going back a number of years before I was elected to serve in this Legislature, to witness some of the other redistribution efforts that occurred. Of course, I know there has been some discussion here this afternoon about the big move that took place a number of years ago, when this Legislature went from, I believe, 130 seats down to 99 seats. That was a very large transformational move. There have been other adjustments that have occurred since that time.

But I think it is important to note, and I said it at the outset of my comments this afternoon, when you hear discussions on all sides of the House, from all three parties, all three caucuses, that even though there are, at least from what I have heard so far on this bill, some suggestions around things that should perhaps be tweaked or reconsidered—not in a fundamental way, of course, but around the margins with respect to this legislation—I think it is very clear that there is broad support for moving forward with this particular bill.

There will, of course, be additional adjustments that are brought to bear throughout the rest of the legislative process, and that is perfectly reasonable, as happens with much, if not all, the legislation that comes through this place. But it is fundamental for those we represent, whether it's in York region or in other parts of the province—the notion that we would retain what I'll call that extra seat, that 11th seat in northern Ontario, is obviously something very, very important to those individuals who live in the north.

We've heard a lot of arguments here this afternoon in terms of the ability for all of us to interact with our federal counterparts for what I'll call clarity of understanding for those we represent, so that they know they are represented by the same individuals with the same boundaries, so there's a great deal less confusion around matters like that. When you look at the totality of this bill and this legislation, and what we are undertaking with respect to making sure we get it right and move our provincial democracy forward in the most effective way possible, I believe that all members will join with us, certainly in the discussion we've seen so far here today, again understanding that there are some fairly nuanced differences of opinion around some of the specific matters. But broadly speaking, we all want to get on with the task at hand, which is to make sure that we have the most effective,

most representative government serving, here in this chamber, all of the electoral districts across the province of Ontario.

1710

Speaking as the MPP for Vaughan, representing a fast-growing community, as much as I love serving all of Vaughan, Woodbridge, Kleinburg and Maple—and I know that may change over time if we pass this legislation—it is the right thing to do. It's the right thing to do for our fast-growing communities. It's the right thing to do for the entire province. I'm very happy to support this bill this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm very pleased to join the discussion today on Bill 115, the electoral boundaries election reform act.

In my riding, Mr. Speaker—I know you're familiar with it because you live close by—in Kitchener Centre, we are mainly an urban constituency. In recent years, we have experienced a tremendous amount of growth, and we continue to grow in my riding.

We have two large new condo developments that are going up in downtown Kitchener. If you were in the House a couple of days ago, you might have heard me speaking to this. One of them is going up at the corner of Victoria and King. There is another one just a few blocks away from there, still on King Street, near city hall—another very large development going up. This one is called the City Centre condo. We're going to see thousands of people moving into downtown Kitchener.

We want to make certain that people in Kitchener are adequately represented. My constituency office is just a few blocks away from there, and I will tell you that I get about 200 inquiries every day—people who are calling, people who are emailing and people who are walking in. I know I've compared notes with some of my colleagues to find out how many inquiries they get every day. We hear about these large numbers.

We want to be able to respond to people in a very timely and effective manner. When we have these very large ridings with high populations, sometimes it becomes very challenging to do that. By adjusting our provincial boundaries to meet this shifting growth that we see in the province, it's going to make certain that all people in Ontario are going to be fairly and effectively represented.

Recently, I was very fortunate to attend an eastern leadership conference event that took place in Philadelphia. This was in August. People there were very excited as they were preparing for a visit from Pope Francis. I was very excited too because it gave me a chance to compare notes with some of the other legislators who were there. Mr. Speaker, your own colleague from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound was in attendance. There were only two of us there from Ontario; the rest were from Quebec, Nova Scotia and the eastern US states, places like New Jersey, Maine and New York.

Asking some of these other legislators, the Canadians, what their ridings were like—I asked a particular member from Nova Scotia how many people he was representing in his riding. He said 14,000, and my jaw dropped. I was quite envious. He said, “How many do you have in your riding?” I said, “Well, in Kitchener Centre, I have 120,000.” But when I hear my colleague the Minister of Social Services talk about 250,000, I guess I can’t hold a candle to you. That’s an awful lot of constituents you are trying to represent.

In my riding, I am seeing the southeast corner being shaved off as we see the creation of Kitchener South–Hespeler; you’ve heard mention of this. Considering the growth that is occurring in the core of Kitchener—I’ve mentioned this—this makes great sense. Again, it’s a capacity issue. We want to make sure that we are there to help people effectively and in a timely manner. When somebody calls or emails or walks in off the street and needs help, we want to be able to answer their questions quickly and effectively.

We are adding 15 new seats based on the new federal boundaries. Having provincial and federal boundaries that are similar is going to cause less confusion for voters.

Here are a few facts for you, for people at home who are watching and who want to know how this is going to work: If this bill is passed, consider that the new provincial boundaries are going to take effect after the first dissolution of the Legislature after November 30 of next year, 2016. The new boundaries will be in place by the next election in 2018. Any by-elections that may happen between now and then—and Mr. Speaker, you never know when that’s going to happen—we’re going to base on the current electoral map.

We’ve been asked how much this is going to cost. We’re looking at \$8.8 million to create 15 new ridings, and this is going to mean hiring more staff, renting offices, getting equipment such as accessible voting machines.

This is not a complicated bill. We want to strengthen our democracy. We want to provide effective representation for our constituents right across Ontario. We want to streamline provincial boundaries with federal boundaries. I might say to you, Mr. Speaker, that I’m happy to see my seat shrinking, but I won’t say that because it sounds a bit peculiar to say that. So I will leave it at that. I know some of you are seeing your seats shrinking too.

Interjection.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: It’s a bit peculiar.

I will be supporting Bill 115 and I strongly recommend that my fellow legislators do as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for York South–Weston.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m pleased to add my voice and to make a few comments on Bill 115, the electoral boundaries reform act. As we’ve heard this afternoon, this is a very important bill because it really highlights how the residents of Ontario will be represented here at the provincial level of government,

how they can be represented adequately, with fairness and in an effective way.

These boundaries we are considering were recommended by the federal boundaries commission. At that time, I did present a deputation. My riding’s boundaries are staying the same, although we do have a growing number of residents. I advocated to maintain the existing boundaries, because one part was to be sectioned off. My riding, as are many other ridings, is defined by what are called natural boundaries: rivers, highways, railways. The part that was to be added to another riding really wouldn’t have any access to that other riding. In other words, the residents go to school, they shop, they have their places of worship and all their transportation connections all on the side of the riding that they are next to right now. It wouldn’t have any of those connections with the new boundary, so I, together with other local elected officials, advocated to maintain these existing boundaries.

So, yes, it will be a challenge to continue to represent the residents in an effective manner, because we do have a growing population, thanks mainly to the infrastructure projects that are being built by our provincial government in my riding: projects such as the expansion of the Georgetown South line, the UP Express, the Eglinton Crosstown and the new Humber River Hospital that is being built just north of the riding. This is bringing new development to the area and, therefore, we will need to be very vigilant in order to service our constituents well.

My riding has many needs. I remember when I was first elected many years ago, speaking to one of my colleagues, I asked, “How many ODSP cases do you deal with in a week?” The other member answered, “In a week? Well, probably one or two a year.” We have at least a dozen a week that we’re dealing with. Our ridings are very different. This is what is great about Ontario, that our constituencies are so vast and so different. But they need to be attended to each one in its own way.

I also wanted to add two comments to what the member for Scarborough–Rouge River brought up and that is the electoral list. In my riding we have many residents who move; the turnaround is quite extensive from election to election and Elections Ontario will need to keep up with that. We need verification. We need quality checks in this regard. It is beneficial overall, I think, to keep the same boundaries as the federal government except for the North, which needs different attention, but at the same time, the lists would be very beneficial to try to keep track of that. That’s why I also support the provision in this bill to allow provisional registration of 16- and 17-year-olds, as recommended by the Chief Electoral Officer, because it will encourage more people to vote and also it would be easier for us to keep track of them.

1720

These are some of the reasons that I will be wholeheartedly supporting Bill 115.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure to rise once again to discuss this government bill, one that obviously is supported by our party, the Progressive Conservatives, with particular respect to boundary redefinition.

I'd like to compliment the members opposite, particularly from the high-growth areas, for understanding the need for effective representation and equal representation for all of our constituents. As I mentioned previously today, there are 146,000 people who reside in the province of Prince Edward Island. In fact, as the member for Nepean–Carleton, as of 2011 we had 159,000 people living in my constituency, and it has continued to grow over the past four years.

I know there are many members here who are going to see their riding split in two, as mine will. Nepean–Carleton will become two distinct ridings, Nepean and Carleton, three weeks from today. Therefore, we will have two federal members and only one provincial member.

That brings me, Speaker, to something I believe the Board of Internal Economy should be looking at. I know my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga and I will be drafting a letter to them and to members of this assembly to ensure that constituents in the provincial riding are treated as fairly as federal constituents, and we'll be asking for support from those members. I know the Minister of Community and Social Services spoke earlier about the high cost for us to communicate with our constituents, particularly by mail.

I just believe we need fair and open representation. We do need to support this legislation, but let's not forget for the next two and a half to three years the cost it will have on us representing our constituents in our communities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's indeed a pleasure to stand in the House this afternoon and make comments on what has been said already by the Minister of Community and Social Services, the Minister of Transportation and the members from Kitchener Centre and York South–Weston.

I was just trying to do a bit of math in my head. The member from Kitchener Centre said she gets 200 calls a day, or emails or people dropping in. There's only eight hours in the day, 480 minutes, so every two minutes—you must have a staff of 10. I have two full-time people and one half-time person. We get a lot of people coming in, but we can't deal with them in two minutes. It takes sometimes half an hour for the people dropping in, sometimes longer. But emails have to be answered; phone calls have to be listened to and returned. You have to do follow-ups. Either your people should join a union or you should hire more if they're working that hard for those eight hours a day.

The member from Nepean–Carleton—a shout-out to everybody from Prince Edward Island, because we're always talking about them. They have four MPs. They also have four senators. You forgot to mention that one. I know you have a lot of friends in the Senate.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: We don't talk about the Senate any more in the Tory party.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: You don't. Yes, you don't.

I just have to tell you that in Windsor, we went through a boundary adjustment municipally. We went from five wards with two members to 10 wards with one. We had a bit of a fight over that, but it finally worked itself out. But when I voted municipally in the last municipal election, they used these rented machines. Well, they came from the United States of America, so after you put your ballot in, up comes this big American flag that says, "Thank you for voting."

Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions or comments?

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I'm pleased to be able to rise and speak to this bill as well. I know it's very important for many folks in this room and, of course, for the citizens we represent right across our great province. I think I'm going to speak specifically to northern Ontario and the 11 ridings that we're keeping in the North which I think are truly important.

As we always try to explain, Sudbury—I'm kind of an urban MPP. I represent solely the city, provincially. As it's been explained, I'm the Timbit, and my colleague who represents the riding of Nickel Belt is the doughnut. But that doughnut is quite large. If you think about the size of that riding—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Now that's a visual.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I'm glad you like the visual.

The size of that riding, provincially, is still quite large; federally, it's even bigger.

We're talking about, in northern Ontario, some different communities of interest. If you're looking at the riding that my friend from Timiskaming–Cochrane represents, you've got the Clay Belt going up there. There's a lot of talk now about farming in that area, and that's great.

Mr. John Vanthof: More than talk.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: More than talk, as he reminds me, which is fantastic. But two or three hours away, in Sudbury, we talk a lot about mining. But in northern Ontario, you would then have to drive another 12 hours to get to the area of Thunder Bay. And then I think, if you even put it into perspective, you have to drive another four or five hours from Thunder Bay to get to Kenora. To try to start saying that, as MPPs, you need to be able to charter planes on a regular basis to get to see these people that you need to represent is something that, I think—by keeping the 11 seats, we're allowing for at least the voices to be heard of those in the North. And that's the key thing here: that we keep talking about the voices of the people of Ontario and being able to represent them here in this place, which is something I know all of us cherish.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jack MacLaren: We are here to speak about Bill 115, which is the realignment of some of the boundaries

of some of the ridings in Ontario to facilitate an enhanced democracy, as it should be; to recognize that some areas are growing. Our population is growing and, really, what I would like to speak to you about is democracy itself, because I think we are speaking pretty thoroughly about the bill and the fairly simple concept of addressing increasing population.

Democracy is the finest form of government that we have in the world. It provides us here in Ontario and in this country, and in western nations, with freedom, and freedom provides us with the opportunity to live and work in a free land; the opportunity to work and create the wealth we need to raise our families, to live in our communities and to build the wonderful country that we call Canada.

But freedom is never free. It is something that is hard won. It has been fought for in this country and in faraway lands by our soldiers in wars and on battlefields over past centuries, and debated in Parliaments such as this one over those same centuries. It is defined and preserved here by this House, by those of us who have the privilege to be here, by our Constitution, by our Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the fact that we are a land of law and order, to ensure that those rights and privileges that give us the opportunity and the freedom that we enjoy in this world are preserved for all.

Freedom is part of our British Christian heritage that dates back to the Magna Carta of 1215. It's something we should all be very proud of—certainly, I am—and remember where we came from with freedom and our Constitution, and that democracy is something that is greatly valued—and we should continue to value—and that we use to protect and preserve our freedom. That's what it's all about here today, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Transportation can reply.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin again by thanking, on this side of the House, those who shared time—obviously, the Minister of Community and Social Services, the member from Kitchener Centre and the member from York South–Weston, who spoke; in addition, the members from Nepean–Carleton, Windsor–Tecumseh and Sudbury, and last but certainly not least, the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills. I want to thank them all for their comments with respect to this important legislation. I want to thank them somewhat on behalf of the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs for making sure that, here this afternoon in this very important place, in this very important discussion, we avoided bluster, and we avoided—I believe “bloviation” is the other term. There was a sincere lack of bloviating on the part of all members on this very important topic.

1730

I know that there will be lots of other discussion and debate that will occur here this afternoon for the next approximately 30 minutes and certainly tomorrow. I'm not sure how much longer this entire chamber and all of the members who worked so hard to represent their communities in this place can avoid that unfortunate double-

barrelled combination of both bluster and bloviating. But I know, Speaker, that on this side, we are sincerely hopeful that we will continue to take this discussion very seriously, and we'll continue to press ahead with Bill 115, which is important for all the members, for all of the individuals whom we represent.

I want to finish up by referencing the member from Windsor–Tecumseh and the wonderful story that he shared with us about getting that notification. Of course, thank you for voting. That goes right to the heart of this entire idea. We are here to represent the people who sent us here. We do it with dedication, we do it with grace, and, once in a while, we do it with a little bit of levity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Before I ask for further debate, I think I have to rule on this important matter. The Speaker tries very hard to be tolerant. I would hesitate to accuse any member of bloviating during debate, but even if they did, there is very little the Speaker can do as there is no reference to that particular activity in the standing orders.

Further debate? The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you very much, Speaker. I am quite sure that you were not bloviating during that time period.

I'm very pleased to have the chance to speak to Bill 115, the Electoral Boundaries Act, the act that will repeal the Representation Act, 2005, and amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act. This is basically a redistribution that comes immediately into effect following the first dissolution of the Legislature after November 30, 2016. With it, this legislation is going to create 15 new ridings which will match the federal ridings.

I do have to point out, though, that I'm glad to support that they did fix this to the northern ridings in order to ensure that they're properly represented, and not under-represented with the changes that may have occurred if they had totally copied the federal way. In saying that, the 11 ridings in the North will stay untouched: that's Algoma–Manitoulin, Kenora–Rainy River, Nickel Belt, Nipissing, Parry Sound–Muskoka, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Thunder Bay–Atikokan, Thunder Bay–Superior North, Timiskaming–Cochrane, and Timmins–James Bay.

In fact, it spells it out for each area in this legislation, detailing the northern areas and how they're the same. So Sudbury, for instance, is consisting of “that part of the former city of Sudbury (as existed on December 31, 1996), lying north of a line described as follows: commencing at the intersection of the east limit of said former city and Highway No. 69; thence westerly along said highway to Long Lake Road; thence southerly along said road to the north limit of the geographic township of Broder; thence westerly along the north limit of said geographic township to the west limit of said former city.”

I think how they laid out Sudbury deals with the redistribution; however, they had the opportunity to

actually take a look at Sudbury closer and ensure that at the next election in the Sudbury region there is nobody from the Premier's office, allegedly under her ideas, bribing the candidates so they do not run. It's unfortunate that we have to go through this in this Legislature, when in fact we are dealing with electoral reform, which is basically copying what the federal government has done—minus the northern part—but everything else is not being dealt with. It's unfortunate, and it's a sad day in democracy when we have to have an OPP charge on top of this government to deal with election fraud.

These newly created ridings in Ontario reflect the growth in population that we have seen in many communities over the years. It's essential that all Ontarians are democratically represented.

I'm happy that this bill is going forward. After the hard work the federal government has done, this Liberal government was able to copy and paste what the federal government had done over two years of work. I do have to say, my MP, Joe Preston, was chair of the procedure committee in Ottawa, and Joe did a wonderful job guiding this bill through the Legislature. Joe is retiring after 11 years of hard work representing the people of Elgin-Middlesex-London. We wish him well as he heads off to retirement.

In my riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London, my boundaries change a little. I will be losing a little bit of south London near the White Oaks area. That part of the riding will be going over to London-Fanshawe, which is represented right now by Teresa Armstrong. I have really enjoyed dealing with the White Oaks area during my time, and it's unfortunate that I will be losing them. However, I will continue to represent the people of my riding to the best of my abilities.

My change is pretty minute compared to some of the ridings that are undergoing massive change: As the member from Nepean-Carleton has said, it's basically being split into Nepean and Carleton—and a member on the government side representing 250,000 people, which is quite a large task to do, and they will be better represented.

However, the other point that I have to make is that it's not just dealing with the people you represent; it's also dealing with the municipalities. Some ridings deal with one municipality and are able to work well with them. In my riding, I deal with 10 municipalities, and after the redistribution, I'll continue to work with 10 municipalities. I have the city of London, the city of St. Thomas, the municipality of West Elgin, the municipality of Dutton Dunwich, Central Elgin, Aylmer, Malahide, Bayham, Southwold and, of course, Thames Centre. I will continue to work with those municipalities to the fullest of my abilities. So it's not always based on the fact of the people you serve; it's also the lower level of government that you also are serving. It would be interesting to find out how that is changing in the redistribution of the ridings and if there's an increase in the amount of municipalities that members have to work with.

I enjoy very much representing my riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London; I've lived there my entire life. Back in 1999, before the first of many changes occurred, it was basically the riding of Elgin. I can just imagine the conversations they had when they discussed expanding it to Elgin-Middlesex-London for the first time. You're moving outside of Elgin county into Middlesex county and south of London. The task, they must have thought, of having to cover those areas—but I tell you, I've enjoyed every moment of getting across the three different parts of my riding and getting to know the people that live there and working to the betterment of Ontario together.

Constituency problems are different but the same throughout our communities. As I've mentioned before, the 10 different municipalities that I deal with, although we do have some common goals—like the majority of my municipalities are against the Green Energy Act crusade because they have lost the ability to make decisions as to whether or not they get windmills or solar panels—there are other discrepancies in my municipalities. For instance, the majority of my municipalities, outside of London, have been cut from OMPF funding for the last few years, which was pretty drastic to their ability to budget accordingly for the next year. However, I do have a municipality that has benefited and grown under the OMPF. So representing here at the Legislature, where the majority of my members have been hurt by the cuts to the OMPF, I have one that benefited. I do take the task very seriously in balancing how I represent all municipalities and all people in my riding. I find it quite interesting the differences in the way we are able to do so.

What was also brought up today, and I found quite interesting, is that the government talked about in their one-hour address earlier, which lasted 15 minutes, the fact that they're looking to start to collect information on 16- and 17-year-olds, pre-register them so that they're getting information to be interested in voting, so that when they do turn 18, they're more apt to vote. I applaud anything that would help our youth to vote.

I think another solution that the Minister of Education has is taking a look at our curriculum and seeing how we can change the civics classes in grades 5 and 10, or maybe even expanding more so and somehow forming an all-party committee in our areas that we represent and perhaps engaging in the schools—not just in those two grade levels but across the spectrum so they get used to understanding how the electoral system works in Ontario, and so they understand what a member of provincial Parliament does, they understand what the Speaker of the House does, and they understand the importance of government opposition and why it's important that they're not always on the same page, so that they're challenging one another continually for the betterment of Ontario.

I think maybe, in addition to sending them mail—are they all going to read that, or is it going straight to the blue box?—engaging them at the school so that they encourage themselves to grow with the electoral system

so that at the end of the day, when they turn 18, they are ready to vote for them, they want to vote for them—I'm hoping perhaps we can work towards improving our curriculum in that sense.

1740

I know that, Probably like everyone else in the Legislature, I visit grade 5 classes and high school classes that talk about civics. It opens up a great discussion. There are those students in there that are very keen on knowing more about the system. There are others that haven't really thought about it, but when you leave the classroom they have a good idea about how the system works.

It's very interesting that they talk about creating and collecting the data. I hope the data that they do collect is used appropriately and not used to send out government propaganda in the short term. I hope non-partisan information is sent out so that they learn about the system. That's waiting to be seen, going forward.

What's also interesting about this legislation—I mentioned it earlier. It's getting a lot of debate, and it's fine to have a lot of debate. Hopefully, in committee, it tours around the province so that they can hear the considerations that the member from Nepean–Carleton has brought up numerous times. But it's missing some items and maybe it could have been a better bill if we had added more into the discussion. It's not unheard of: this government adding more to a simple bill to make a better piece of legislation.

A few weeks ago, our member from Lanark–Frontenac—did I get it right?—Randy Hillier, came out with his recall legislation bill. Now, we don't all have to agree on recall legislation. I think there are some very good points that Randy brought forward. Perhaps the numbers were the deciding factor as to why the bill was defeated here in the Legislature, but the recall legislation would allow for constituents to recall their MPP if they are not doing their job. They are protected for the first year after an election and the year before an election. Maybe it's the percentage of signatures that they do have to collect in order to enact the recall legislation. I mean, the province of BC has this legislation intact, and it seems to be going well. We have seen in the United States where it worked before. It got rid of California Governor Jerry Brown, which brought in Arnold Schwarzenegger, but also in Wisconsin when they tried to pull out Governor Scott Walker; however, he was re-elected again. So we've seen both utilizations of this recall legislation used. Maybe it was something that could have been added in here; maybe we could have had more discussion about it, to strengthen up the bill and deal with electoral reform much better than we've done before.

However, the other thing I've also discussed earlier was third-party advertising. This was a great opportunity. The government talked about it in their budget, that they would consider changes to third-party advertising, but this was the opportunity. Six months after the budget passed, they have a piece of electoral reform to actually do more than what they're doing, to not prevaricate

around the issue, to go forward and actually put it into legislation. In 2007, third-party advertising was \$2.3 million; in 2011, third-party advertising was \$6.7 million; in 2014, it hit almost \$9 million. You see the upward climb. You see where it's going. Not that third-party advertising is being non-partisan in any way; it's turning into personal destruction of people who have put their careers, their lives, into doing their job. To think that we are allowing almost \$10 million to be spent to destroy people I think is sick. I think it's disgusting, and I think this government had an opportunity to fix electoral reform.

Look at the federal government. The federal government has capped spending at \$188,000. They've also prevented donations from corporations and unions; they let the people donate. I don't see why we couldn't look at changing the system so that the \$9 million that is spent, mostly without the choice of many of the members who donate the money, or who have the money taken from them—instead, maybe that money can go back to the members, who can donate to the party that they wish to and get rid of the terrible rhetoric that goes on. You look at the States and what they're going through, and it's only going to get worse, too.

I think the whole idea of how money is used inappropriately in this province to push issues—leave it up to the individual members running in each riding, and our leaders of each party, to debate it out. Actually have true, honest debate that speaks to the issues, as opposed to relying on some third-party group to spend millions upon millions of dollars to go personally at candidates.

I'm sorry, I think the government missed the boat on this. It has been six months since the budget. It's electoral reforms; it's not like we have too many electoral reform items at the Legislature. But instead, we've missed the boat, and we're going to have to wait for another electoral reform. They say they're considering it. What does that mean? There's no action behind those words.

I think the legislation is good. We support the legislation. We're glad they're taking care of northern Ontario. But they've missed the opportunity to make true, substantive changes to how the people of Ontario view politics and vote.

Hopefully, they're able to go forward and fix this legislation. Maybe in committee we can make some changes that fix it. Right now, if you did a poll of people throughout this province on what their thoughts are on politics and politicians, I bet you we'd be pretty low, with what's going on. I mean, you look. We have a government here with four OPP investigations open against them. We have one that turned out a charge that will be going to the courts.

I think that at the end of the day Ontarians deserve better. They deserve a government that's in it for the people as opposed to in it for themselves. It clearly shows, when they come up with an electoral reform like Bill 115, that they're more in the line of saying, "We've changed for democracy." Well, they've taken a piece of

legislation that the federal government took two years to create, and copied and pasted it, made the amendments to northern Ontario and passed it on, which is fine; that needed to be done. However, they've had more than enough time to make the changes I've suggested. I'm sure there are quite a few more changes that other members of this Legislature have to improve democracy in Ontario. I think that would have been the time to do so.

I wouldn't say this bill is being rushed, but we do have time before November 2016 to make the changes that—we could have had good discussion amongst the members to come up with a more substantive bill, something that we could have really worked at, taken around the province and come up with ideas for making Ontario a better place to vote and be a participant.

Maybe then, at the end of the day, voter turnout would be increased, if there's better opportunity. Maybe the younger vote would turn out more. I mean, collecting their names at 16 and 17 and sending them mailings will help. Will it help a lot? We don't know. We don't know what they're going to be taking in of what they read. Maybe, perhaps, social media is the way to go, going forward.

However, we're hoping that, through the committee process, the government will take a look at some of the ideas we've put forth, and what's coming forth from the public, and take this around Ontario. Take it into northern Ontario. Let them have their say on what they think of the ridings as they are. Take it to areas like Oak Ridges–Markham or Nepean–Carleton to hear what their concerns are with the fact that there will be multiple MPs per one MPP.

I could just imagine the federal government coming out with an announcement, and that MPP having to attend the same announcement in three different areas of their riding, even though they're three different MPs. That will be interesting to play out at the end of the day.

I'm glad I've had the opportunity to speak to this legislation, and I look forward to the questions and comments coming forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to comment on the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London as it relates to Bill 115. He has pointed out, obviously, that this is a response to what the federal government has done. He made mention that the northern ridings will be kept intact, with the one extra riding. It's worth noting, though, that some ridings—Algoma–Manitoulin currently has 37 municipalities as part of that riding, 21 First Nations, 15 local service boards—86,000 square kilometres. This is a riding the size of France, Belgium and, for good measure, Switzerland, and it's served by one MPP.

1750

With every piece of legislation that comes before us, we have the ability to comment on some of the weaknesses and the gaps in it. I think people expect people to

award the government for sort of holding the line in the north, but that's a big riding. You have to take in geography and you have to take in demographics, obviously.

Another missed opportunity with this particular legislation is addressing the rights of the homeless. This is a growing issue. There's a growing number of homeless people, and they still have the right to vote. Why not put it in a piece of legislation and protect their rights? What about the issues around students who do want to vote? Why don't we make it clear what the rules of engagement are for students to cast their ballots. If anybody should be concerned about where this province and country are going, it should be students, who are paying the highest tuition rates across the country.

For me, it's just a missed opportunity. When the electoral officers submitted their report around the apparent contraventions of the Election Act, this document was precedent-setting. It was an opportunity for the government to look at how complaints are dealt with at that office and then address it in Bill 115. It was a missed opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I'm happy to have a couple of minutes on Bill 115, which is basically confirming that the province of Ontario will be following the federal redistribution and creating 15 more ridings in the province of Ontario.

Speaker, I must say, I remember very clearly a piece of legislation that we brought into the House—2004, 2005 or 2006; I can't remember when the last redistribution occurred—which confirmed and legislatively assured that there would remain no fewer than 11 northern ridings at any time. The reason we did that legislatively was that the previously government, the Conservative government of Mike Harris, had reduced the northern ridings from 15 down to 11. Under the last federal redistribution, had we followed that, the north would have lost one further seat. We would have gone from 11 to 10. So just to put on the record, we've been very strong on that. Eleven is the lowest it can go unless someone chooses to alter that particular legislation.

I have a northern riding. I don't feel in any way aggrieved by the fact that I have a northern riding. It's large, but it's not that large. Two hours or two hours and 15 minutes to the westernmost part of my riding—seven different municipalities in the riding, local roads boards, local services boards. You service them with your constituency offices. I've had a constituency office in Atikokan. The other five municipalities are very close around the city of Thunder Bay; Oliver Paipooonge, O'Connor, Gillies, Conmee and Neebing are close. Atikokan's the farthest to the west. It's not as difficult, perhaps, as you might think. We've got great people in those ridings who help us on the ground, and I really don't feel that same challenge that's been expressed by others in terms of having an ability to adequately service and make sure people are well represented. It requires a

bit of travel, but it's not as terrible as some might make you think. We all have our challenges.

Population is a raw number. It creates its own challenges from a budgetary perspective, as we've heard, and in terms of seeing as many people as you can, as well.

Good ridings—we're proud of having maintained the 11 northern ridings through legislation some time ago.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's certainly a pleasure to stand up and make comments on the speech given by the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, who I know most people in this Legislature love listening to. He's clear, concise and gets to the point, which I appreciate. He brought up many good ideas and these ideas, certainly when this gets to committee, should be addressed.

This province is unusual, actually, compared to the United States or compared to other countries. It's so big. This province is so big. People come here and they want to see Ontario, and they take a day if they come from another country. We all know you can't see Ontario in a day. It takes a couple of days to drive from one side to the other, so it's difficult, I'm sure.

Something that the government should do is face the fact that it is different. Ridings can't be judged just from a population base; size certainly enters into it. I know, in my riding of Perth–Wellington, it's about two hours from one to the other, which isn't big. I know some of the ridings up north—

Mr. Michael Harris: Six hours by horse and buggy.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: —are further than that. My friend over here just made a comment I won't talk about.

Anyway, I think the federal government recognized this when they made the boundary changes. There are certain areas of the province that should have more members and other parts of the province that should stay the same. When this bill passes, I think it will certainly help improve the representation that we have in this Legislature for the people of the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It is indeed a pleasure to speak on what was just said by the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

I must start off by thinking about what was said previously by the Minister of Transportation, who was saying you need a sense of humour in this House.

When the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London first started, I hearkened back to the definition of "bloviate," which was "talk at length, especially in an inflated or empty way," because he spent a lot of his time talking about third-party advertising, which I found interesting, because he didn't mention the millions of

dollars that the Harper Conservative government is spending on advertising in this campaign so far.

I said to myself, "Perhaps it's not a third party. It's the government. Perhaps it's possible that he just wasn't ready to speak about the boundary changes."

But he does have nice hair, though. I couldn't turn that down, right? I mean, it was there; it was in front of me. The Minister of Transportation feels the same, I know.

It's funny: The member from Perth–Wellington was saying that you can't see all of Ontario in a day. I come from Windsor–Tecumseh. When I used to cover city hall, I'd be down around the tourist bureau. Americans would come over, and they would go into the tourist bureau and say, "Well, we're going to Halifax today and then we want to go up and see the igloos up north tomorrow, before we go back to Detroit." There's a great misunderstanding of how big the country of Canada is, let alone how big Ontario is, to a lot of our visitors who come up from the United States.

This bill is about changing the boundaries, and I think we're all in favour of it. We just like to have some fun along the way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London for his reply.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to thank the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, and the members for Perth–Wellington and Windsor–Tecumseh for their comments.

I find interesting his comments about the federal Conservatives and their advertising. However, that's not third-party advertising. In fact, that's money they've raised. I talked about fixing how the parties raise money, and going forth with their advertising. The parties themselves will be held accountable to the people of Canada, or the province. If in fact they're too negative, that will work against them at the end of the day.

I'm hoping that angry Tom doesn't get too upset at the comments that I made today.

Going forward, and maybe at the end of the day, we can emulate the federal government and change the rules of what goes on in the Legislature and outside, with regard to fundraising, and that is to end third-party advertising, or minimize it, and just see where we can go in having the parties deal with advertising, the parties having debate and making democracy work again in this province and ensuring that we get a government that serves the people and not themselves.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1759.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cookville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
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
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonnell, 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
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka 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) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	York–Simcoe 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) Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Halton 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) Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Essex 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) Potts, Arthur (LIB) Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB) Sattler, Peggy (NDP) Scott, Laurie (PC)	Perth–Wellington Beaches–East York Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord Northumberland–Quinte West Guelph London West / London-Ouest Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP) Smith, Todd (PC) Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB) Taylor, Monique (NDP) Thibeault, Glenn (LIB) Thompson, Lisa M. (PC) Vanthof, John (NDP) Vernile, Daiene (LIB) Walker, Bill (PC) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton Prince Edward–Hastings Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale Hamilton Mountain Sudbury Huron–Bruce Timiskaming–Cochrane Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Simcoe–Grey	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC) Yurek, Jeff (PC) Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) Vacant	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke Elgin–Middlesex–London Willowdale Whitby–Oshawa	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier / Greffière: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Jim McDonnell, Eleanor McMahon
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Clerk / Greffier: Vacant

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Laurie Scott
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jack MacLaren
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Steve Clark
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton
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 / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French
Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat
Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier / Greffière: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Norm Miller
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
Glenn Thibeault
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment /
Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère
sexuel**

Chair / Présidente: Daiene Vernile
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Han Dong, Sylvia Jones
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Continued from back cover

Canadian Cancer Survivor Network	
Ms. Ann Hoggarth.....	5343
Amateur sports champions	
Mr. Michael Harris.....	5344
Correctional facilities	
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	5344
Dry Stone Festival	
Ms. Sophie Kiwala.....	5344
Assistance to refugees	
Mr. Randy Pettapiece.....	5345
Ron Lenyk	
Mr. Bob Delaney.....	5345
Credit Valley Trail	
Mrs. Amrit Mangat.....	5345

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Larry Blake Limited Act, 2015, Bill Pr27, Mrs. Martow	
First reading agreed to.....	5345
Capping Top Public Sector Salaries Act, 2015, Bill 124, Mr. Bisson / Loi de 2015 sur le plafonnement des hauts traitements du secteur public, projet de loi 124, M. Bisson	
First reading agreed to.....	5346
M. Gilles Bisson.....	5346

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Hydro rates	
Mr. Bill Walker.....	5346
Renewable energy	
Mr. Todd Smith.....	5346
Privatization of public assets	
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	5346
Lung health	
Mrs. Cristina Martins.....	5346
Ontario Retirement Pension Plan	
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	5347
Privatization of public assets	
Mr. John Vanthof.....	5347
Ontario Retirement Pension Plan	
Ms. Daiene Vernile.....	5347
Concussion	
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	5347
Health care funding	
Mr. Norm Miller.....	5348

Ontario Retirement Pension Plan	
Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris.....	5348
Dental care	
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	5348
Public transit	
Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde.....	5349
Landfill	
Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5349

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015, Bill 115, Mme Meilleur / Loi de 2015 sur les limites des circonscriptions électorales, projet de loi 115, Mme Meilleur	
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur.....	5349
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	5350
Mr. Randy Pettapiece.....	5351
Mr. John Vanthof.....	5351
Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	5352
Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	5352
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	5353
Mr. Randy Hillier.....	5353
Mr. Michael Harris.....	5355
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	5357
Ms. Soo Wong.....	5358
Mr. Norm Miller.....	5358
Mr. John Vanthof.....	5358
Mr. Randy Hillier.....	5359
Mr. John Vanthof.....	5359
Mme Marie-France Lalonde.....	5361
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	5362
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	5362
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	5362
Mr. John Vanthof.....	5363
Hon. Yasir Naqvi.....	5363
Mr. John Fraser.....	5364
Mr. Yvan Baker.....	5364
Mr. Bas Balkissoon.....	5365
Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	5366
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	5366
Hon. David Zimmer.....	5367
Mr. Norm Miller.....	5367
Mr. John Fraser.....	5367
Mr. Toby Barrett.....	5368
Mr. Paul Miller.....	5370
Mr. Granville Anderson.....	5370
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	5371
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	5371
Mr. Toby Barrett.....	5371
Ms. Cindy Forster.....	5372

Hon. Liz Sandals.....	5374
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	5374
Ms. Catherine Fife	5375
Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde	5375
Ms. Cindy Forster	5375
Hon. Helena Jaczek	5376
Hon. Steven Del Duca	5376
Ms. Daiene Vernile.....	5377
Mrs. Laura Albanese.....	5378
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	5379
Mr. Percy Hatfield	5379
Mr. Glenn Thibeault	5379
Mr. Jack MacLaren.....	5379
Hon. Steven Del Duca	5380
Mr. Jeff Yurek	5380
Ms. Catherine Fife	5383
Hon. Bill Mauro.....	5383
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	5384
Mr. Percy Hatfield	5384
Mr. Jeff Yurek	5384
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	5384

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 28 September 2015 / Lundi 28 septembre 2015

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	5331
Mr. Bill Walker.....	5331
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	5331
Hon. Helena Jaczek.....	5331
Mr. Michael Harris.....	5331
Mme France Gélinas.....	5331
Hon. Eric Hoskins.....	5331
Mr. John Vanthof.....	5331
Mr. Arthur Potts.....	5331
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	5331
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	5331

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

By-election in Sudbury

Mr. Patrick Brown.....	5331
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	5331

Health care funding

Mr. Patrick Brown.....	5332
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	5332
Hon. Eric Hoskins.....	5333

By-election in Sudbury

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5333
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	5334
Hon. Yasir Naqvi.....	5334

By-election in Sudbury

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5334
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	5334
Hon. Yasir Naqvi.....	5334

Home care

Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	5335
Hon. Eric Hoskins.....	5335

Privatization of public assets

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	5335
Hon. Bob Chiarelli.....	5335

Transportation infrastructure

Mr. Vic Dhillon.....	5336
Hon. Steven Del Duca.....	5336

Health care funding

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	5336
Hon. Eric Hoskins.....	5337

By-election in Sudbury

Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	5337
Hon. Yasir Naqvi.....	5337

Senior citizens

Ms. Daiene Vernile.....	5337
Hon. Mario Sergio.....	5338

Home care

Mr. Todd Smith.....	5338
Hon. Eric Hoskins.....	5338

By-election in Sudbury

Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	5339
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	5339
Hon. Yasir Naqvi.....	5339

Mining industry

Mr. Glenn Thibeault.....	5339
Hon. Michael Gravelle.....	5339

Disaster relief

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5340
Hon. Ted McMeekin.....	5340

By-election in Sudbury

Mme France Gélinas.....	5340
Hon. Yasir Naqvi.....	5341

Climate change

Mr. John Fraser.....	5341
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	5341

Fatal traffic accident

Mr. Mike Colle.....	5342
---------------------	------

Visitors

Hon. Jeff Leal.....	5342
Ms. Eleanor McMahan.....	5342
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	5342

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act, 2015, Bill 9,

Mr. Murray / Loi de 2015 sur l'abandon du
charbon pour un air plus propre, projet de loi 9,
M. Murray

Second reading agreed to.....	5343
-------------------------------	------

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Gordie Michie

Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	5343
---------------------	------

Fort Erie Race Track

Mr. Wayne Gates.....	5343
----------------------	------

Continued on inside back cover