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Thursday 22 October 2015

Jeudi 22 octobre 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 22 October 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 22 octobre 2015

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

ATTRIBUTION DE TEMPS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 21, 2015, on the amendment to the motion for time allocation of the following bill:

Bill 112, An Act to amend the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / *Projet de loi 112, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2010 sur la protection des consommateurs d'énergie et la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.*

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I can't say it is a pleasure for me to speak on this government closure motion. I remember very clearly last summer when we sat here and listened to the throne speech, and this government used this term—I'll remember it for the rest of my life. They said they would choose "partnership over partisanship." That's what they said they would do. Time after time after time this government has rammed through pieces of legislation because they don't want the opposition's voices to be heard and they don't want the voices of Ontarians to be heard.

This is the 13th bill—the 13th bill—that this government has time-allocated. Bill 112 has only had three members from my caucus have comments on the record: Mr. Yakabuski, Mr. McNaughton—

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: You know what? If the Minister of Municipal Affairs wants to speak, I'm sure there's lots of time on the government's 40 minutes for him to speak. Let me have my time.

Three members have spoken; 24 members of the opposition have not spoken to this bill. I think the reason they don't want to take an energy bill on the road is because they don't want to hear from Ontarians. They don't want to hear from Ontarians on their November 1 increase of hydro rates for Ontarians. They don't want to hear from Ontarians about their disastrous plan to sell off Hydro One.

But don't take my word for it. Take the word of the member for St. Catharines, the member of the Legislature

who has the most experience. Let's have on the record some of his words about closure motions. I'm going to quote from Minister Bradley from November 24, 1993. This is what Jim Bradley, the member for St. Catharines, said that day: "I'm concerned about the closure motions because I think they limit legitimate debate. I recognize that a government ultimately might have the opportunity to close down a debate that's been going on a very long period of time. But as I've indicated to the House in days gone by, the purpose of these debates is to canvass public opinion, to make the public aware of what is happening."

He goes on to say: "All of us have experienced the situation where we have encountered our constituents and they've said, 'What is this particular bill all about?' or 'How did this bill get passed and I didn't know anything about it?' They are legitimate questions. One of the reasons is that the bills tend to get passed very rapidly in this House."

This is what the government is trying to do. They're trying to ram through this bill. They don't want substantive public hearings across the province; they don't want to hear from the opposition members or Ontarians about their energy policy. That's why they've put this time allocation motion, that's why they're stifling debate, and it has to stop, Speaker. It has to stop today.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I guess what I have to say is very much in line with what the previous speaker had to say when it comes to time allocation motions. When we get elected, we get elected to bring the views of the people we represent. Ontario is a big province—we're talking over 13.5 million people—and many of them have many differing views about the topic. I will be speaking about the people of Nickel Belt. These are the people I am here to represent.

When it comes to Bill 112, An Act to amend the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, we're really talking about two pieces of legislation that have been put together. The first piece of legislation has to do with the regulation of energy consumers. Basically, what we are trying to regulate with the first part of the bill is the door-to-door marketing of energy contracts.

I can tell you that this practice is very alive and well in Nickel Belt. Every couple of months they will target a different area of my riding, and then the phone calls start coming in. The problem is the delay between the time when they sign the contract and the time when they realize that they have been taken. What they were sold at

the door was not at all what ended up being on their energy bill. By the time they make their way to my office, it is often really, really hard to help them. Don't get me wrong: We have done enough of them that we know where to call and we know what to do, and we get some of them out of those contracts. But for some of them it is too late.

0910

The patterns are always the same. The way this business is conducted is that they will go and target a neighbourhood. They will knock at the door, and somebody who doesn't know what is happening opens the door. They engage in a conversation, they ask to see their energy bill and then they basically make it sound like what they are selling them is so good—that it is bulletproof, that it will save them money—that all they have to do is sign on the dotted line and then they will be fine.

I can tell you that I have dozens of families on Mattagami First Nation that have been targeted by this, that have signed those contracts and that are now paying energy bills that are out of this world. Fortunately, a few of them came to see me right away, and we were able to get them out of those contracts, but for some of them—I don't want to paint them all with the same brush, but they tend to be the elders. They tend to be people who are more trustworthy. They've lived their whole lives with, when they say something, this is what they mean, and you can hold them to their word. So when somebody comes to their door and tells them something, they assume that the person on the other side of the door is just as trustworthy as they are, but they are not. Now they are stuck with those bills that make no sense. There's very little we can do to get them out of those contracts.

Mattagami was an area that was targeted in my riding. They also targeted the valley. They targeted neighbourhoods within Chelmsford. They targeted neighbourhoods within Azilda. You can see, by the type of neighbourhoods where they put in most of their efforts, that they target people who are trustworthy. They target people who tend to stand by the words that they speak and expect everybody else to do the same, but it is not the same.

So the first part of Bill 112 is certainly something that we have no problem—I shouldn't say this. We could make that part even stronger, but the direction of that part of the bill is a direction that we support. I wish I had time to do a full debate on that because then I could really show you, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, what some of the practices are and, also, what needs to change in the bill in order to make this stronger. Unfortunately, I'm not given the opportunity to do that.

I never had a chance to speak to Bill 112. Now I have to speak to a closure motion that will mean that I will never have a chance to put on the record the good ideas that the people of Nickel Belt want to see changed in that bill. This is an opportunity lost. I don't understand why we don't want to hear from those people. I'm sure, like all 107 of us, we've all had constituents come to our constituency office with a contract from an energy marketer that they signed at the door that they wish they

could get out of. To me, it is important to get those stories out, because good ideas come from this. Some of what is in the bill is certainly good, but could we make it stronger? Yes, we could.

Speaker, a bill is not an incremental affair. It's not like this year we will go that far, and next year we'll make another step to make the bill better, and the year after we will—no. Bills get worked on, and then it is decades before they get worked on again. So why not take our time and make sure that we have an opportunity to hear from everybody who has something to say about this so that we move forward in a way so that we can be proud of the work that we have done? We can look at this piece of legislation and say together that we made this as good as it could be so that the aim of the bill, to protect consumers, is achieved in all parts of the province, because things are different. If you live on a remote First Nation, if you live in northern Ontario in a rural community that I represent or if you live in downtown Peterborough or Niagara or Essex, things are different. That's why we all come together. But when the government brings forward a closure motion—it's called a time allocation motion—basically what they are saying is that they don't want to hear from those good people, that the experience they have gone through—they're not interested in listening to the people of Ontario, which is absolutely bizarre in a democracy.

In a democracy, our parliamentary system is made so that we take the time to listen to the people of our province. But in this particular bill, we're not going to do this. I'm hoping that, through committee, we take the time to listen. There are some good ideas out there that will make this bill better. I hope we will take the time to listen to them and make changes.

The second part of the bill, the part that has to do with the Ontario Energy Board Act—this is awful; this is wrong. Why they have put two acts that really have nothing to do with one another into one single bill, I don't understand, Speaker, but this has to change. Although I would say that most of us agree that we need to strengthen consumer protection when it comes to energy contracts and door-to-door marketing and all of that—we agree with that direction—I could not tell you how opposed we are to the second part of the bill.

Basically, the second part of the bill takes away accountability. It takes away transparency. It takes away consumer protection when it comes to the Ontario Energy Board. It opens the door for offshoring. It takes away restrictions for our environment. It takes away restrictions for transmitters and distributors of energy. This part of the bill either has to be taken out of Bill 112 or needs to be completely redone in this day and age where we have a government that is bound and determined to sell Hydro. No matter if we need the money or not, no matter if we are being taken to the cleaners because the deal makes no sense, they are bound and determined to do this.

After removing all the accountability that comes with the officers of this House, that is, the Auditor General, the

Ombudsman—basically, all seven officers of this House won't have an opportunity to look at Ontario Hydro anymore—now they are even taking away the powers of the Ontario Energy Board to protect us, the consumers; to protect us, the people of Ontario. This is all that the second part of this bill does: It takes away protections from us.

Why would you time-allocate something like that; something that is in such high need of better understanding? If the government has a valid reason for the second part of the bill, they have yet to share that with us, Speaker. I can see no good coming from taking away the power of the Ontario Energy Board, when it comes to distribution and transmission of power, and they haven't explained why they are doing this. They haven't justified how this is going to be useful to the province.

On the other hand, the Conservatives and ourselves have put on the table, I would say, some pretty valid arguments as to how the work of the Ontario Energy Board protects us, but they never answered back. They never told us how our read of the bill was wrong. If our read of the bill is right, that the Ontario Energy Board will be stripped of its power to protect the consumer in the distribution and transmission of power, then why link those two together? It's still a mystery to me, and it is something that is wrong. So we are against a time allocation motion when there are still so many MPPs who haven't had a chance to speak on something that affects every single riding in our province. It is just wrong.

0920

Quand le gouvernement décide d'imposer le bâillon sur un projet de loi—un projet de loi qui affecte tous les résidents et résidentes de l'Ontario, peu importe dans laquelle des 107 circonscriptions vous demeurez—ça nous empêche de s'assurer qu'on a les bonnes résolutions pour améliorer le projet de loi afin que le projet de loi nous protège, peu importe où nous vivons en Ontario. Que nous vivions dans une communauté autochtone isolée ou en plein cœur de Toronto, les réalités sont différentes, mais le projet de loi va s'appliquer partout. Il faut trouver une balance un peu plus équitable.

En plus, le projet de loi 112, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2010 sur la protection des consommateurs d'énergie et la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario—une partie s'en va dans la bonne direction. Elle pourrait certainement être renforcée, mais elle est très bonne. Mais l'autre partie sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario n'a aucun sens et, franchement, nous met tous à risque, nous les consommateurs.

Je dois laisser un peu de temps, mais je vous assure, monsieur le Président, que nous sommes contre l'imposition du bâillon.

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

On Oct. 21, Mr. Leal moved government notice of motion number 41. Mr. Smith then moved that the motion be amended as follows:

That the paragraph starting “That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill” be struck out and replaced with:

“That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 p.m. on Thursday, November 5, 2015”; and that the third bullet be struck out and replaced with:

“—That following the deadline, the Clerk of the Committee provide the members of the subcommittee with a list of requests to appear; and

“—That the members of the subcommittee prioritize and return the list by 6 p.m. on Thursday, October 29, 2015; and

“—That the Clerk of the Committee schedule witnesses from these prioritized lists.”

We are now dealing with Mr. Smith's amendment to the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Further debate?

Mr. Leal has moved government notice of motion number 41. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it. The vote will be taken after question period.

Vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day? The Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Before I deliver this, I just wanted to say good morning. We have 25 French-language exchange students from Paris in Peterborough right now. They're leaving to go home on Saturday. I just want to give them a big good morning.

My good friend the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell wanted to say good morning to the folks in his riding.

Having said that, I move government order G85, which is an outstanding bill.

STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING GOVERNMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE RENFORCEMENT ET L'AMÉLIORATION DE LA GESTION PUBLIQUE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 20, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 85, An Act to strengthen and improve government by amending or repealing various Acts / Projet de loi 85, Loi visant à renforcer et à améliorer la gestion publique en modifiant ou en abrogeant diverses lois.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: It's always a pleasure and an honour to be able to stand in this House to speak to bills brought forward by the government and in respect to the riding that I come from, Hamilton Mountain.

This bill, the Strengthening and Improving Government Act, 2015, is a far cry from what we really thought we would see when we see a title such as that. The gov-

ernment is lacking the ability to provide the leadership in respect to presenting Bill 85 as substantive legislation when it's evidently obliged through needed regulatory changes.

To call this a "strengthening and improving" act is misleading, as the public may rightfully assume that real changes would be made to legislation, instead of minor amendments that we can say are more common sense.

This bill evidently neither strengthens nor really improves government. As has already been mentioned in debates before, it is really only housekeeping on a range of issues which, alternatively, could have been accomplished even more effectively through regulation. There are many, many, many other important issues that this government should be tackling and working hard to legislate that would benefit Ontarians. Instead, they choose to focus their attention on amending acts that, in the long run, would not have any substantial impact and will not truly impact or strengthen government.

In respect to changes to the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, this bill would amend the act in order to provide immunity from lawsuits for Ontario Medical Association, or OMA, representatives for negotiated agreements or when making recommendations to the government. This amendment implements an already approved provision of the 2012 physician services agreement between the government and OMA. This is an amendment that has been long promised to our OMA staff. However, I find it ironic that the government is suggesting amendments to the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act to protect OMA staff from lawsuits when this very same government themselves recently made cuts to the OMA.

This bill is supposed to strengthen and improve legislation, but how can this be justified when they themselves want to interfere with our health care system? I have personally heard from OMA staff in my riding of Hamilton Mountain who have been affected by these cuts. The doctors may appreciate being provided immunity from lawsuits, but they do not appreciate the mismanagement of resources and reduction in medical care funding.

In the preamble of the medicare act, it states that the act affirms that "a strong health system depends on collaboration between the community, individuals, health service providers and governments, and a common vision of shared responsibility." The common vision of shared responsibility has been skewed. The government has set the bar low in protecting our doctors so that they can say they have overachieved in providing immunity for lawsuits for them in this particular amendment.

This amendment cannot pacify the government's cuts to the OMA. A doctor emailed my constituency office in Hamilton and said, "the conditions the current government has created for physicians, mean that despite our hard work, few of us feel appreciated, instead we feel like we are seen as a problem to be managed." Another stated, "As a doctor, I don't feel respected by this government. I don't feel that the government is empowering

me to provide quality, patient-focused care. Ontarians rightly expect doctors and government to work together, that means returning to meaningful and respectful bargaining."

With a loss of respect now from the government in collaboration with the doctors, I think the government needs to reconsider what will ultimately strengthen and improve the health care system.

With respect to the Employment Standards Act, to reiterate, it would be amended to make it clear that demands for money made to third parties like banks are valid for 365 days from the day they are served. This is simply to align with tribunal rulings on already-established precedence on the collection of monies owed. The amendment that the government is suggesting does benefit the employees; however, this amendment neither significantly strengthens nor improves the government. To ensure that this amendment is effective, the Ministry of Labour requires additional staff to ensure enforcement.

0930

As mentioned before by one of my colleagues, there also needs to be a more aggressive, more transparent and more effective complaints mechanism for all employees in this province. Presently, the ministry lacks an effective system to investigate complaints and labour violations.

I recently spoke with a constituent whose husband was hired through a temp agency to work 12-hour continental shifts for almost five years now—almost half a decade, and he is technically still a temp worker. He has never seen a raise, he has no benefits, he has no pension, he has not earned any vacation time, and there is still no obligation for his employer to hire him. There is no job security for this young man, who has a family. He has some minor health issues that are affecting his performance of his job. However, he feels—or, better yet, he fears—that if his employer finds out, he will be terminated, because his employer sees him as just a temp worker. How can we expect someone who has no job security and will not complain about their health issues to their employer to have the courage to complain to the ministry if there is any violation in terms of their labour rights?

Almost 75% of temp agencies audited by the Ministry of Labour this year broke the law. There needs to be a mechanism that allows for individuals like my constituent to justly complain and notify the ministry of issues.

He is not alone in my riding or in this province. Most temporary agency workers are not given equal break times as their permanent co-workers, despite completing the same job in the same hours. Also, people who are temporary workers are often paid less and not paid on time. There are a number of issues in the area of temporary agencies, and those workers do not see a way to complain about any of the injustices without being penalized.

If we really want to improve the Ministry of Labour, as this bill semantically proposes in its title, "to strengthen and improve government," one way that my colleague the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton strongly rec-

commended was to strengthen and improve complaints mechanisms and then, most importantly, to have a vigorous system so that we make sure people are all able to enforce the rights and protections that all workers in our province have.

Again, this amendment would end up benefiting workers, but if the ministry does not do their due diligence to execute enforcement, it will prove to be insignificant. We know what it's like when it comes to enforcement from this government, Speaker, in many ministries.

While this bill looks to amend a number of ministries, the government has again missed the mark. If the government truly believed in the name of the bill, "to strengthen and improve government," they would have taken into consideration the Ministry of Energy. Sure, this bill does amend a series of acts and impacts various ministries, but what about real, meaningful changes? Instead, the government has weakened accountability and transparency with respect to the Ministry of Energy.

The government passed legislation that removed the Ombudsman from providing accountability and oversight to the energy file. Again, it is ironic that the government considers concerns put forward by the Ombudsman when it comes to amending the Highway Traffic Act to regulate private sector non-emergency stretcher transportation vehicles and their drivers, but removes oversight from the energy file. Trying to amend and strengthen one ministry while weakening another is truly counterproductive in their efforts to improve government.

The Ministry of Energy, particularly Hydro One, is one of the most complained-about areas in our government. I still get phone calls and emails from constituents upset about the government's decision.

Speaker, I'm running out of time quickly here. Jeez, 10 minutes goes fast. Wowzers.

Under the public system and under oversight, the public was able to complain about billing issues to the Ombudsman, and they had their office investigate that problem and reported it back to the government. Now with the way the government has reduced those oversight mechanisms, it's definitely not improving or strengthening our government. Again, this government puts out a great title and nothing in the bill to follow it—things that could have been done by regulation.

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

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm very happy to respond to the member opposite. But I do have to take issue with her characterization of the bill as only housekeeping and not really having any impact. One of the things that the bill does is amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to what are officially called non-emergency stretcher transportation service vehicles. These are the things that you might notice parked outside your local hospital that look almost like ambulances, but they're not really. What they really are are transfer vehicles that are run by a private company and that take people from long-term care to hospital; from hospital A to hospital B, if it's non-emergency; or from hospital to home. But what's

consistent about the people who are being transferred is that they can't really sit up in a regular taxi or a passenger car. They actually need to be on a stretcher while they're being transferred.

This is an area where, once upon a time when I was parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and looking at issues around rural and northern health care, I heard a lot about the inconsistency in the standards and performance of this particular sector. It's also something that attracted the attention of the Ombudsman, who made a number of recommendations a year or so ago about the inconsistencies in this particular sector. So what the bill would actually do is require that, in order to operate one of those companies, you would have to hold a commercial vehicle operator's registration, and vehicles, drivers and attendants would have to make specific requirements for the vehicle; contain particular equipment in case an emergency does arise; and the attendants would be required to meet minimum standards so that they have the capacity to respond. We would be addressing all of those core issues.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'd like to thank our NDP colleague for raising some valid concerns about Bill 85 because, while it's cleaning up a few items here and there, it really—I do agree with you—does nothing to improve government. I totally agree with that. It's a nice title, but it's only a name.

Bill 85 was actually introduced seven months ago, and it covers nothing significant and it makes no serious changes to our province. In the same amount of time, however, the Liberals—I think it's rather ironic, Speaker. They introduced this seven months ago and it covers nothing, as I said. It is going to really make no difference in the lives of Ontarians across the province, but on the flip side, the Liberals are saying they could get a comprehensive cap-and-trade system pulled together, introduced and implemented in the same amount of time. That makes me nervous, a little bit, in that we have a simple housekeeping bill that took seven months to come together and debate and, meanwhile, an incredibly far-reaching, comprehensive initiative that's going to touch every Ontarian gets rammed through in seven months? It doesn't make any sense.

At the end of the day, we need to be coming forward to this Legislature and introducing legislation that is going to make a difference for Ontarians. We need to be focusing on the initiatives that get down to the business of making the province profitable again, attracting investment and jobs back to Ontario, and putting more money into the pockets of the province's taxpayers, as opposed to wasting our time here on Bill 85, which is simple housecleaning. It really doesn't touch on issues that I will be glad to speak about in a few minutes' time.

0940

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was a pleasure to listen to my colleague from Hamilton Mountain about Bill 85.

The only good thing I can say about Bill 85 is it has a pretty good title: An Act to strengthen and improve government by amending or repealing various Acts. For anyone who has listened to what the member for Hamilton Mountain had to say, you will have realized that Bill 85 is really putting together six or seven different bits and pieces of bills to bring things forward. Some of those bits and pieces sort of make sense. Some of those are quite puzzling, as in, why do we need to change something that has to do with people reaching age 65 when, 10 years ago, we settled this? People want to continue working past age 65, they have been doing that since the last 10 years. But Ontario has clued in that the law changed 10 years ago and now wants to change it also.

Some of it is bizarre; some of it could have been done long ago; some of it could be done through other means; and some of it has value. But in a typical Liberal fashion, they put all this in the same pot, in the same bill, and they bring this forward. It's hard to understand.

We have a labour bill on the docket right now. Why not take schedule 4 of the Ministry of Labour and simply add it to that bill? We have a number of bills that have to do with health care right now. Why not take schedule 3 and simply add it to a health bill? We have a number of bills that—I see my time is over. It's still a weird bill.

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

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It's a pleasure to stand in this House today to talk about the Strengthening and Improving Government Act.

We all come to this House with a vast array of our past experiences and we continually draw from these experiences in order to debate, write and create government bills. We're making changes, as has already been mentioned, to several acts, including the Courts of Justice Act, the Family Law Act, the Provincial Offences Act and several others.

Each side of this House debates from its own political perspective. I don't think that it's "puzzling" or "bizarre," as has been mentioned; it's an effort to improve efficiency and improve government.

We are looking at modernizing processes and making systems easier to manage and navigate. A number of small but important measures have been designed to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of government. They are proposed amendments to existing statutes and not new pieces of stand-alone legislation.

There is no effort made to hide anything within this bill. It is, as has already been said, a housekeeping bill that cleans up a few issues.

We will always debate from our own perspective, we will always try to bring into the point of view of this House something from our riding. I think that that's a natural thing for us to do. But there's nothing in this bill that is controversial. It's a cleanup bill, and I'm very happy to lend my support to this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Hamilton Mountain. You have two minutes.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thanks to the Minister of Education, to the member from Huron–Bruce, to my wonderful colleague from Nickel Belt, and Kingston and the Islands.

As we can see here, this bill, all of these different pieces, are also confused by the government. The minister says it's not housekeeping, that it's very important; the member from Kingston and the Islands says it's housekeeping. Which one is it? Is it not housekeeping? Is it housekeeping? Can we not get down to the real business in this House that Ontarians want to hear? We want to talk about hydro. We want to talk about housing. We want to talk about important issues that are being faced in this government—accountability, oversight and the lack thereof—instead of a title that's called Strengthening and Improving Government Act. We need to talk about what really needs to be strengthened and what really needs to be improved. The things that are in this bill, other than what I've seen with the stretcher transportation—other than that, everything could have been done through regulation. It could have been the sweep of a pen and it was done. Instead, we're spending surmountable amounts of time here in this House speaking about things that really don't need to be here before us.

I would like to see oversight in a lot of areas. Children's aid societies: We're still seeing major gaps. Our hydro system: With the swipe of this government the Ombudsman has been taken out of that equation. Health care: We have a patient ombudsman, but we'll see how well that works—not as at arm's-length as the provincial Ombudsman himself is.

There's a lot of work to be done here. Hopefully, we can get this pushed forward and hopefully get on to some real business.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to be able to speak to Bill 85 because it's important that we use this bill as an example of how the government is wasting time and skirting issues that really need to be addressed.

Mr. Michael Harris: And money.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: And money. Thank you. Yes, very good point.

While it's sad to say we've seen a lot of government mismanagement here at Queen's Park over the past decade, despite that fact, at the heart of the matter, Bill 85 is really just a caretaker bill. As has been mentioned earlier, it's a housekeeping bill, and, unfortunately, it does absolutely nothing to improve government.

When we take a look at it, this bill is affecting 15 acts. For the record, I just want to read them in: the Courts of Justice Act, Family Law Act, Provincial Offences Act, Vital Statistics Act, Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, Employment Standards Act, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, City of Brantford Act, City of Hamilton Act, City of Toronto Act, Municipal Act, Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, and the Highway Traffic Act.

In particular, I'm going to focus in on how we really should be improving government. In the first swipe I want to focus in on the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Again, this is just a housekeeping bill but, clearly, day in and day out, proof comes into this House that substantiates government mismanagement. Work with me on this, Speaker, because it does tie in really nicely in the sense that just this past week, we had proof that direct impacts can happen from industrial wind turbines. That took me down a path to examine what health and safety standards, regulations and oversight we have associated with industrial wind turbines.

Even in estimates committee yesterday, in speaking to the Minister of Energy, when I asked who oversees nuclear energy—it's an impartial third party at the federal level. When I asked about who oversees hydro-electricity and natural gas, the answer was coming back as IESO. Who oversees wind, which is, according to this government, a very important component of Ontario's energy mix? It's tied tightly to the apron strings of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. We are identifying a huge gap.

With regard to occupational health and safety, in doing some of my research I came to realize that the United Kingdom has a benchmark, if you will, in terms of safety associated with turbines that I think we should seriously be considering right here in this House. I offer to work with the government right here and now to make sure that we have those standards in place.

Mr. Michael Harris: Olive branch.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes. I extend the olive branch.

For the record, I want to recognize that in the United Kingdom, there are certain items of equipment that are subject to time-based inspection schedules. These include lifting equipment and lifts, pressure systems, equipment for work at height such as fall arrest systems and other points, and fire detection and suppression systems. About four or five weeks ago, I met with a company that actually said they're concerned, in terms of occupational health and safety, at the lack of protection when it comes to safety—I could go on and on, but I need to make sure I get all of this in—also, emergency equipment, rescue and evacuation, fire detection and suppression, emergency lighting and first aid equipment. At the root of it all, when it comes to occupational health and safety associated with industrial wind turbines, asset integrity needs to be assured, especially in areas of the structure where failure could result, like we've identified this past week from reports from my riding of Huron–Bruce.

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When we talk about improving government and we go back to revisit the name of this act, the Strengthening and Improving Government Act, we could be doing so much more in securing and assuring the safety of Ontarians throughout this province.

I'd also like to focus in on another act that Bill 85 touches on, and that is the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act. Again, I beg your indulgence because I

will come full circle on this as well. Health care is something that has affected all of Ontario, as we've seen this past week in the House with regard to the frustration Ontario doctors have had, but also in terms of front-line services in Huron–Bruce. I find it frustrating that this government blusters about wanting to make improvements to a health care act, among others, when they can't even live up to the preamble of the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act.

I want to take a moment to remind the House what is said in the preamble of the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act. It says, "The people of Ontario and their government: ... Recognize that access to community-based health care, including primary health care, home care based on assessed need and community mental health care are cornerstones of an effective health care system." Well, Speaker, those cornerstones have eroded over the last decade.

Just yesterday, in meeting with representatives of PAO, the Police Association of Ontario, the root cause of many of the issues they deal with is mental health, and they are in the front of the line saying that this Ontario government today is failing people suffering from mental health. If we're going to address responsibility, we have to make sure that responsibility lies in upholding promises made to the people of Ontario.

When I speak of promises made and health care, I have to remind you, Speaker, that in August 2011 the people of Kincardine and area were promised by a former representative of the Liberal government that they were going to get a new hospital. Unfortunately, after the election of October 6, 2011, that particular minister and representative did not return to the Legislative Assembly. Guess what? The next budget absolutely stripped away the money for the Kincardine hospital. It is not fair.

My colleague from Perth–Wellington had a very important private member's initiative whereby all ridings should be treated equally, especially when the need has been identified and the promises have been made. But, unfortunately, time and again, we have exact proof that this government is playing favourites. They're playing with taxpayer dollars. Is that strengthening and improving government? Absolutely not.

Again, thinking about health care, denying Ontarians access to quality, affordable health care is not good governance. It's negligent. I've got to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that, again, I see it in my own riding. We know, across this province, the wasted money that gets poured into various scandals. In the spirit of health care, we can't ever forget about the wasted millions of dollars that the eHealth scandal evolved into, if you will. Is the eHealth scandal indicative of a strong, responsible government? I think not.

Now, it's interesting that they're planning to cut 50 medical residency spaces over the next two years, along with the cuts that they've been making to physician services. Rural Ontario is in search of more doctors. It just doesn't add up. They're cutting residency spaces, as well as money for services already conducted, as well as

access to front-line health care. Is that responsible, good government? Again, I say no, especially in light of the fact that our population is aging. If we don't start properly allocating funding that we have in terms of our scarce taxpayers' dollars, we're going to have a really rough ride of it.

These seniors paved our way. We stand here proudly in this House because of everything that seniors have done to get us to where we are today. They should be enjoying their retirement and they should be spending time with their families, but instead, on fixed incomes, they're worried about making ends meet. With escalating electricity costs, the cost of food going up—again, they are on fixed incomes. They're stressed, and it's just not right.

I've looked at Bill 85 and I've seen the amendments that they want to make, and it just doesn't mean a hill of beans in the big picture of things. I stress the fact that this caretaking bill has taken seven months to come to fruition. It makes me nervous because this was just a caretaking bill, but when it comes to cap-and-trade, they're ramming it down our throats in seven short months. We know the mess that this government made out of the Green Energy Act, and I can't help but worry about what lies ahead of us in the future.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm certainly pleased to rise on the bill. I found it very interesting that the Liberals weren't sure whether it was a housekeeping bill—because one of our colleagues was saying it's housekeeping and somebody else was saying it wasn't housekeeping. I was really surprised that the education minister wasn't sure whether it was housekeeping or not housekeeping. Maybe that will explain why we're having so much trouble in the education sector on getting collective agreements.

Today, I find it very interesting that we'll stand here and talk for an hour on a housekeeping bill, yet this morning, on time allocation of Bill 112, consumer protection and electricity system—we want to time-allocate that, on something as important as hydro. It makes absolutely no sense.

You take a look at Bill 85 and it talks a little bit about medicare. I want to say this very clearly: I only wish this government cared about health care. I'm going to tell about an area in St. Catharines and one of my colleagues, where they have CarePartners, who are out on strike, trying to get a first collective agreement.

A lady named Linda Knight has forced that situation. Here's what she's doing: She's forcing nurses who are working piecework and \$15 an hour on the picket line, yet—Mr. Speaker, think about this—she is flying nurses in from Sudbury. She's putting them up in hotels. She's paying their meals, paying their mileage, yet those poor workers in St. Catharines and our patients, our seniors who our colleague talked about, who we're supposed to care about, aren't getting the service they deserve.

I'm saying if you really care about health care, will the health minister please intervene in that strike and put

those workers back to work so we can get proper health care for our seniors?

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

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'd just like the opportunity to clarify a couple of things. I think the minister said that this is not just a housekeeping bill. Take, for example, the changes made to the Ontario child support guidelines. These are extremely important changes and they will require every person whose income is used as part of a child support calculation to provide the other parent updated financial information on an annual basis.

I'm sure that every single member in this House has had single mothers in their offices in a situation where they're dealing with child support issues. I don't think that it is at all wrong to clean up or housekeep this part of the bill to make sure that children get what they deserve. It's extremely important. So I would rather not use my time to debate a single word, whether it's housekeeping or not housekeeping. "Housekeeping" implies that you are cleaning some things up. This is a bill that will modernize and improve legislation, many pieces of legislation. That's something that we should be doing as a government. That's what we're here for.

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I think that there is no point in wasting time debating a word. I think that we need to focus on some of the details of this bill. There are some very positive improvements in the bill, and I would encourage all members to have a look at it, rather than waste time in this House debating on one word as an adjective—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to commend the member from Huron-Bruce on her remarks. I share a number of her concerns as well about Bill 85. I know there's a number of issues, and she touched on many of them, that arise from this bill. It does touch on a number of different acts—I have the bill; here it is—with a number of different schedules that are affected, whether it's health or the Ministry of the Attorney General. I know that in my office, we deal with a number of these different issues on an ongoing basis.

Family law: That's one that could certainly use some help. I don't know whether this bill here will go very far towards dealing with it, but I know my office continually deals with family responsibility issues. It certainly could use some help, so if it will go anywhere towards doing that, I would certainly applaud that. I am sure it can't go far enough to take into account all of the issues that are there.

The Ontario College of Trades: We've had our issues with the Ontario College of Trades. I know there's a number of people in my riding who have concerns with that. And even some people who supported it earlier on are now having second thoughts, because it's starting to impact on job sites and on employers as they try to conduct their work. It's an issue that we highlighted for a year or more.

The Green Energy Act: We don't need to say much about the Green Energy Act. Everybody knows those issues with the Green Energy Act as far as the imposition of wind turbines in small-town Ontario and rural Ontario, where they don't want them. They made it clear that they're unwilling hosts, but this government doesn't listen.

I'm always concerned, when there are new bills brought in, if there's not the proper oversight. So I would want to commend again and go back to the member from Huron–Bruce and the great work she did in her advocacy, in her portfolio, in her critic's role, and also in the work that she has done on criticizing this bill and pointing out where there are shortcomings.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It's an honour for me to rise on behalf of the people I represent in London West to offer some thoughts on the comments from the member from Huron–Bruce about Bill 85, the Strengthening and Improving Government Act.

As usual, as we have often seen in this place, the government has a very creative title-writer over on that side of the House, because there are many things that Ontarians would like to see to strengthen and improve government, and most of the amendments that have been included in this legislation actually do very little to strengthen and improve government.

It's kind of ironic that, in fact, we opened up the session this morning with a discussion about Bill 112, the consumer protection and electricity system oversight legislation. Really, it is oversight—it is better oversight, better transparency—that Ontarians are hankering for. We have seen that they have had no opportunity to participate in the discussion around the broadening ownership of Hydro One, the sell-off of one of Ontario's most precious assets.

This legislation really is a caretaking bill, a house-keeping bill. It just tinkers around the edges of the real needs that we have to ensure better oversight and greater transparency, which is what we actually need if we are to truly strengthen and improve government so that we can be responsive to the needs of the people that we represent in our ridings across the province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Huron–Bruce. You have two minutes.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Two minutes isn't enough to actually express my appreciation to two of my colleagues in this assembly with regard to the comments they made.

To the member from St. Catharines: I agree, Linda Knight is a wonderful lady. She hails from the little village that I grew up near: Belgrave, Ontario. She cares, and she does want to do the right thing. I agree, she needs to have assistance from the Ministry of Health in order to get the issues resolved at that level so that our seniors and our folks requiring that front-line care do have the resources at hand. It is a worry.

To the member from Kingston and the Islands and the member from Sarnia, as well as London West: You shared comments that all bring me back to the fact that we need transparency. We need to be responsive to the needs of our people. I appreciated that phrase specifically from the member from London West. The member from Kingston and the Islands also reminded us that we're here to make a difference.

That brings me to the member from Sarnia. I am, to the end of my days, going to advocate for doing right by our communities that are unwilling hosts of industrial wind turbines—the end result of a misguided, mismanaged Green Energy Act because, as we've identified this past week, there continue to be huge holes eroding and being unveiled in terms of how this has been rammed down Ontarians' throats. Green energy has contributed to the increased cost of electricity, and now we're concerned that direct impacts are happening as industrial wind farms age and continue to be put up in haste. We can do better by Ontarians. We must do better.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm glad to have a few minutes to talk about Bill 85, An Act to strengthen and improve government by amending or repealing various Acts.

I want to zero in on a part of the act that I have been pushing for, for a long time. This part is medical transportation services. We have, under this Liberal government, a push to privatize health care systems like we have never seen before. Cancer Care Ontario happened to be at public accounts two weeks ago, and we can now see that private clinics do over 50% of the work, and cancer screening is now done in private clinics.

We have seen all sorts of problems directly linked to the privatization of the health care system. So it is no surprise to you, Speaker, or anybody who follows health care, to see that the use of transportation services other than regular publicly funded ambulance services is rampant within our health care system. I would tell you that private ambulance transport—way, way more business than what is being done by real ambulances.

If I cannot stop them in privatizing everything that is not acute hospital beds, at least we will push them to regulate that industry. Why? Because everybody who has looked at this has said, "This is a disaster." It's not a disaster waiting to happen; it is a disaster that has already happened. It is a disaster where the vehicles being used are completely inappropriate, poorly maintained and poorly driven, but more troubling is that the care that is being provided to those people strapped on those stretchers in the back of those pretend ambulances—some of them have died and a lot of them have had poor care.

What do we have under this bill? We have a government who will pretend that they have regulated the patient transport industry, but all they've done is changed the transport act to say that the Ministry of Transportation will now have to inspect the vehicles. Really? After eight years of telling you that there's this woman who died, babies have been put in danger and a lot of

poor care is being provided in the back of those pretend ambulances, what do the Liberals do? They tell us, “We will make sure that your tires are not flat and that they’re wrenched on good.” What the heck is this? How could that be?

1010

Many Ministers of Health—I can remember when Smitherman was still there; I can remember when David was still there; I can remember when—she’s still a member of this House—the member from London was there. They and the present minister all said that this industry needs to be regulated.

This industry is being used more and more in Ontario. It has issues with quality of care and needs to be regulated, and the regulations that we are given are that we’re going to inspect the vehicle, make sure that it passed the Ministry of Transportation inspection. So I guess it’s not going to be emitting too much CO₂. We’ll make sure the tires are good. I’m sort of hoping that in northern Ontario, they’ll actually ask for winter tires in the winter, but we don’t even know that. All we will know is that the vehicle is safe to drive: a little step in the right direction.

If you read the report from the Ombudsman, he said those are vehicles that look like, smell like and are designed to look like ambulances, but they are not. He was not only talking about the shape of the vehicle—if it is so rusted there is a chance the stretcher is going to go straight through the back, or the vehicle is so unsafe that the back door opens up and there’s a chance the stretcher goes out the back while you’re on the highway and you are strapped in there unable to move. That was only part of it.

The bigger part of it is who is providing the care in the back of those ambulances, because if you did not need ambulance transport, you would be transported in a car or a cab. We don’t expect a cab driver to be able to provide care; that’s not what we expect. But when you call an ambulance, it’s because you’re sick; it’s because you’re frail; it’s because you’re at risk; it’s because you need care.

Don’t you think, Speaker, that the people who come and pick you up in those vehicles that look like ambulances but are not should have a minimum of knowledge as to how to care for you, should have a minimum of skills as to what you do when somebody gets sick, should have a minimum of competence to look after you if things go bad? None of that is in that bill. I waited way too long to settle for something like this.

I know exactly what they will do. They will say, “Oh, we have passed regulations. The patient medical transport services have now been regulated.” And most people who don’t dig any further will feel reassured. I can see all of those private companies that offer medical transportation services will be very happy to say, “We have now been regulated. We follow regulations. We are happy to report that we have regulated and we meet and exceed the regulations imposed by the government,” and everybody will be so proud and so happy. But it will mean nothing. It will just mean that the wheels won’t fall off

and the door won’t open up. It won’t mean that you will be getting quality care; it won’t mean that the people beside you have any sort of training whatsoever to help you if something happens. That’s a major problem with this bill.

I’m sure if I spoke to any one of my colleagues one on one and said, “Do you think that people in medical transportation services should be able to look after you if you code, if you have a heart attack, if you happen to start vomiting in the back of the ambulance, if you happen to have an epileptic seizure or if you happen to have anaphylactic shock from some medication that was just administered to you? Don’t you think that you would like the people next to you”—because there will be somebody sitting there next to you in the back of the ambulance who usually is dressed like they belong to the health profession, but it is all for show. There is no substance to this.

But if I ask my colleagues if they would like that person, everybody would say yes. Why don’t we do this? We’ve already got this bill that opens up the health care act. We already have this bill in front of us that cleans up a bunch of other acts. While the acts are open, why don’t we do the right thing and say, “Yes, we want the wheels to not fall off, we want the tires to not be flat and we want the vehicle to be acceptable to be driving on a road, and we will make sure that the person next to you is able to help you in your time of need when you are strapped onto a stretcher, unable to move.” I think that’s quite reasonable. I think that’s what we expect when the government comes forward and regulates things, but that’s not what we have here.

There are lots of other bits and pieces in that bill that are also problematic. Some of them, frankly, should be addressed in regulation and some of them are just beyond bizarre—things such as being able to file documents to the court electronically. Really? In 2015, we haven’t found a way to let people file documents electronically?

It’s easy to talk about, “Let’s save the environment,” and, “We are the most environmentally conscious government,” but we will ask you to kill trees and print a whole bunch of stuff that you could just as well file electronically, especially when you have to file six, seven and eight copies of the same document because it may go to six or seven different people. Some of it is bizarre. The whole thing is bizarre.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list draw of October 25, 2015, for private members’ public business such that Mr. Clark assumes ballot item number 10 and Ms. Scott assumes ballot item number 56.

Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1017 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I am delighted to welcome to the Ontario Legislature a teacher and class from my riding of Kitchener Centre. Mr. Scott Jones and his class are here from Forest Heights Collegiate. Welcome.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'd like to welcome to the Ontario Legislature today Mr. Stephen Martin, who is the father of page captain Samuel Martin-Chase. They're from the town of Blue Mountains in the great riding of Simcoe-Grey.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Joining us today in the chamber—I don't think they're here yet—will be a number of people from the registered nursing profession: Linda Haslam-Stroud, registered nurse and president of the Ontario Nurses' Association; Marie Kelly, the CEO-CAO of the same organization; Sheree Bond, a media officer; Lauren Snowball, the campaigns officer; and Lawrence Walter, the government relations officer; as well as RNs Rhonda Millar, from North Bay Regional Health Centre; Colleen Morrow, from Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre; Cathryn Hoy, from Kingston General Hospital; Bernadette Robinson, from St. Francis Memorial Hospital; Sandra Bolyki, from University Health Network; Kurt Weber, Headwaters Health Care Centre; Angela Preocanin, St. Joseph's Healthcare, in Hamilton; Donna Bain, St. Joseph's Healthcare, Hamilton; James Murray, London Health Sciences Centre; and Joanne Wilkinson, London Health Sciences Centre.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker and fellow colleagues, please welcome to this House the young girls from grade 5 from Holy Name of Mary, from Mississauga. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'd like to welcome my friend Liam Dutailis, who is here all the way from Newcastle, Australia. He's on an exchange from the Australian Labor Party, here to witness what we do at Queen's Park. Welcome, Liam.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the House's attention to a special birthday today. My parliamentary assistant, the member for Sudbury, Glenn Thibeault, has a birthday today.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I'd like to welcome our page captain—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sure that the other people who want to introduce somebody want people to hear.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome our page captain Soham Shah's parents today—his mother, Dipanki Shah, and father, Hetal Shah—and his aunt Ketel Shukla and grandfather, Ramesh Shah. They should be joining us in the next few minutes.

Mr. Joe Dickson: We will be welcoming this morning several grade 10 classes from J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate in Ajax. We welcome them, when they arrive.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Joining us in the Legislature today are students from MicroSkills, from Don Valley East. We welcome them to the Legislature.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It gives me great pleasure to introduce Larry McCloskey, who is in the House in our gallery today. We had the great pleasure of meeting on accessibility and the great work that Carleton University does in Ottawa.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

ANNIVERSARY OF SHOOTINGS IN OTTAWA

ANNIVERSAIRE DE LA FUSILLADE À OTTAWA

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to remember the one-year anniversary of the shootings on Parliament Hill in Ottawa and the death of Corporal Nathan Cirillo, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes, followed by a moment of silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to provide each party with up to five minutes to speak on the issue and one minute of silence afterwards. Do we agree? Agreed.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to mark the anniversary of a day that shocked and saddened our nation last year: the violent attack on Parliament Hill and at the National War Memorial in Ottawa.

Je prends la parole aujourd'hui devant l'Assemblée législative pour commémorer une journée qui a bouleversé et attristé notre nation. Je veux parler de la violente attaque survenue sur la Colline du Parlement et le Monument commémoratif de guerre du Canada à Ottawa.

The events of October 22, 2014, are burned into our collective memories. Corporal Nathan Cirillo was just 24 years old when he was killed as he stood guard at the memorial that honours the sacrifices of our soldiers. In just a few awful moments, a senseless act of violence took the life of a soldier, a father, a son and a friend. We must remember his life, his service and his sacrifice, and also the sacrifice of others who have died in the line of duty—soldiers like Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, killed in Quebec only two days before Corporal Cirillo. We must remember them because every person in uniform stands prepared to make that sacrifice every day, as so many have, so that we may continue to live in a province and a country that is safe, secure and free.

Il nous incombe de nous souvenir de la vie du caporal Cirillo et de l'adjudant Vincent, de leur service et de leur sacrifice, et de nous montrer reconnaissants que tant d'hommes et de femmes soient prêts à faire ce sacrifice au nom du Canada.

There is no doubt that what happened on October 22, 2014, will always weigh heavily on our hearts. Other people were injured, and the lives of members of Parliament, public servants and bystanders were at risk. But no

other lives were lost, and this is a tribute to the quick actions and bravery of law enforcement and security personnel at the scene.

Today, as I extend my condolences on behalf of the government of Ontario to the family and friends of Nathan Cirillo, I also join with people across the country in honouring the brave security personnel and first responders who kept Ottawa safe a year ago today and who keep all of us safe every single day.

The events of a year ago sent a ripple of fear and uncertainty across our province and our country. I want to repeat what I said in this chamber on that day: People who use violence to undermine democracy want to silence us. We refuse to be silenced. We will not be silenced. Nous refusons de nous taire, et nous ne nous tairons pas.

We will carry on with the business of this House and the business of our democratic society. Today, as we honour the life and sacrifice of Corporal Cirillo, we affirm that in the face of tragedy, all of us in this Legislature and all Ontarians will remain united and continue to uphold the ideals of democracy, freedom and peace. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Merci.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to rise today in remembrance of the Ottawa shooting at Parliament Hill a year ago today, and to the government House leader for providing this opportunity and this initiative.

Corporal Nathan Cirillo, a reservist from Hamilton, was a very proud member of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada. The cold-blooded killing of Corporal Cirillo as he stood on guard at the National War Memorial shocked the country, but it also strengthened our nation's resolve for vigilance.

On October 22, 2014, Canadians were united in sadness over this horrific and cowardly act. Corporal Cirillo was only 24 years old. As stark of a reminder as this senseless act represented of the dangers that exist in our society, we are thankful for the example of courage and compassion shown that day by private citizens and the emergency personnel who, without any regard for their own safety, came quickly to Nathan's aid in spite of the unknown circumstances. I would like to commend the RCMP, the city of Ottawa police and the House of Commons security for their swift action that fateful day.

1040

I was in the House that day as a caucus member in the government caucus room, mere feet from where the shooter travelled through the building. I am grateful to the security detail for bringing that incident to a swift resolution and for preventing any further loss of innocent lives. Certainly, there are some moments in life that you never forget, that are etched in your memory, and for me, that is one of them.

I also want to pay tribute to Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, who was killed earlier that week in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu by a man reported to have been influenced by the global jihadist movement. Warrant Officer Vincent was a 28-year veteran of the Canadian Armed

Forces and was considering retirement to become a cabinetmaker when he was killed. He was only 53 years old.

Let us never forget all our fallen heroes like Nathan and Patrice, who served in defence of our country and our province. They paid the ultimate sacrifice so we can live in a free, democratic and safe society. Today, we honour the memory of these fine men.

I remember the days that followed in Ottawa, the sense of pride there was in Canada, the sense of pride there was in Ontario, how everyone was united in the honour of that courage and the honour of their fallen. It was one of the many moments that we were tremendously proud to be Canadian.

On behalf of our PC caucus, we send our deepest sympathies to their families and to all who knew them as we express our sincere appreciation for their service to their country.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm honoured today to rise on behalf of Ontario's New Democrat caucus to pay tribute first to Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, as well as to one of Hamilton's fallen sons.

A year ago, all of Canada was shaken at the events that took place at our National War Memorial on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. We were saddened by the tragic loss of Corporal Nathan Cirillo of Hamilton's Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders regiment. I've had the pleasure of representing this part of Hamilton where that regiment is based, at the armouries, as both a city councillor and as an MPP, and I spent many, many Remembrance Days with these incredible reservists.

The outpouring of support in response to this tragedy a year ago made me proud to be a Hamiltonian and a Canadian. I was proud to witness the spontaneous outpouring of support from my community in Hamilton and across the country for Corporal Cirillo and Warrant Officer Vincent. The strength and resilience of my community, and of Canadians, is an inspiration.

A beautiful monument appeared outside the armoury in downtown Hamilton, and crowds of people gathered to witness the procession on James Street North and to show their support. Even Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was quick to write to the family and sometime later held an audience with members of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders regiment.

Corporal Cirillo's family didn't want people to mourn his death but rather to celebrate his life. So last night in Hamilton, at sunset, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders held a commemorative ceremony to celebrate Nathan's life. Many, many community members joined them.

Those who knew him say that he was fearless, that he had a passion for service, a passion for the army and, perhaps most importantly, that he was a kind and loving father. All of our thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

We are grateful for the brave women and men like these two soldiers who gave their lives in service to our

country. Their deaths are a stark reminder that our men and women in uniform put themselves in harm's way even when the risk they face is unexpected.

New Democrats across Ontario say thank you to those women and men who serve, who have served and who, in some cases, have given their lives for our country. We owe them an enormous debt of gratitude and a debt of gratitude to veterans and their families. We know that without their sacrifice, we would not be standing here today enjoying the freedoms that they fought for and which we all hold so dear.

Today, New Democrats join with all members of this House to say thank you to the loyal and courageous soldiers who have and will continue to risk their lives for our safety, for our freedom and for our democracy. We all stand in solidarity with our fellow Canadians to proudly say thank you to Corporal Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent. We will never forget your service and we will never forget your sacrifice.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their heartfelt and thoughtful comments. At this time, by the motion, I would invite all people who are able to please stand for a moment of silence in remembrance of the situation.

The House observed a moment's silence.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Bill 122 is a failure. It caused the longest teacher strike in 25 years. It caused the government to walk away from negotiations multiple times and it has now cost the people of Ontario millions of dollars to pay for this government's failed bargaining process. The Liberal government gave \$1 million to OSSTF, \$1 million to OECTA and half a million dollars to AEFO.

Interjections.

Mr. Patrick Brown: This side of the House may find that funny. I do not. Will the Premier tell the House: Where did that money come from?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm going to just take a moment to go a little bit back in history because I think it's important for everyone to understand the context. There was a time in this province when school boards had a different role to play. School boards had the opportunity to fund education at the local level. They had taxing authority. Each year, they would go to the municipality and they would express their concerns and their desires for an increase in the mill rate, and then there would be the appropriate money that would flow to the school board.

Mr. Speaker, that was all changed when the previous Conservative government took that right to allocate money—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —to raise taxes in their jurisdictions. That change—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Right after I say, "Order," somebody starts. The member for Leeds–Grenville will come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: At that time, a number of us were involved in the debates in our communities, whether as school trustees or whether as parent advocates, and we said, "You know what's going to happen now? You're going to have to have a provincial process because if the funder is only the province, then there needs to be a provincial process."

I'll follow up in the supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: I'm going to try to rephrase this in terms that are quite direct. We know that these payments are a small part of the story, but the government didn't negotiate alone. They had other groups on their side of the table against the unions. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association and ACÉPO all negotiated on behalf of the province as part of the flawed two-tiered bargaining system.

Will the Premier tell us how much money the Liberal government gave those associations to negotiate these contracts? Where did the money go to? Where did it come from? Please enlighten the House.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I need to continue to lay out this history because the chaos that the Leader of the Opposition would have experienced when he was in high school was actually created because of those changes that were made by the previous government. We were—many of us—involved, as I say, in warning the government of the day that there would have to be a provincial process to take into account the fact that the taxing authority had been taken away from the school boards.

For a number of years when we—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We're inching closer to warnings.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: For a number of years when we came into office, we were dealing with the aftermath of that reality. Everyone knows that it's very difficult to undo a structural change—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —like the one that was made by the previous government.

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a simple question.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, second time.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: So we worked closely with all of our education partners to develop the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, and that's what's important. There needed to be a provincial process. We worked with our partners to set it up.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again for the Premier: All things being equal, it's safe to assume that this government would have given other associations the same payout they gave the unions. That means the Liberal government could have spent well upwards of \$5 million for their mistakes, for their flawed bargaining process.

Will the Premier answer two simple questions? I will try again: How much money did she pay the unions and their associations for their bargaining costs? And, number two, where did that money come from? A direct question—please answer.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The fact is, what we have to do is come to an agreement. We're talking about—is it \$22 billion or \$23 billion?—a \$23-billion endeavour in Ontario. That's what publicly funded education is—

Mr. Steve Clark: Answer the question.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned.

Finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We need a working partnership with our education workers and with trustee associations—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Stormont is warned.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The legislation that we put in place helped to establish a process that was made necessary because of the changes that had been made in the structure of school board governance. That legislation formalized an informal process that had been necessary to put that provincial process in place.

In 2004, 2008 and 2012, those provincial discussion processes were different because the changes had been made. We had to create that provincial process. We did it.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is again for the Premier. Since she has no interest in talking about the \$1-million payout, let's talk about the Hydro One fire sale.

The people of northern Ontario stand to become some of the hardest hit by this sale. Small communities scattered throughout the north rely on Hydro One transmission lines to power their homes and businesses.

While those lines might not be profitable for Hydro One, the cost is offset by the profits that Hydro One was making in highly populated areas like Brampton. But this Premier has already sold off Hydro One Brampton, so the ability to subsidize for more expensive transmission is gone.

Will the Premier guarantee the residents and businesses of northern Ontario that her fire sale of Hydro One isn't going to drive hydro prices in northern Ontario through the roof?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Energy is going to want to comment on the details of the process that we're undergoing.

But I will just remind the Leader of the Opposition that the decisions we've made around broadening the ownership of Hydro One, the protections that we are putting in place, are a direct result of lessons we learned in the fire sale that that party put in place when they sold off the 407.

We made it very, very clear that we would not undergo such an initiative that would not put protections in place for the people of Ontario, and that the way hydro rates are determined is through the Ontario Energy Board. We made it very clear that we would guarantee that there would be access to reliable power across this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: What about the north?

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: To get nuclear power produced from the Darlington generators to Timmins, Ontario, power must travel over 600 kilometres. Building 600 kilometres of transmission lines is incredibly expensive, and the return on that investment for Hydro One is minimal.

If a private company is faced with a similar decision to build 600 kilometres of power lines to reach a northern community like Timmins, they may just say no. They will say no even though those transmission lines are in the best interests of northern Ontario.

My question is for the Premier: When faced with the choice between what's in the best interests of northern Ontario and what's in the best interests of a private company, if that private company chooses an approach that is not in the best interests of northern Ontario, will you do the right thing and tell them to build those transmission lines?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: There are members of the Progressive Conservative Party across this province who are wondering where this leader stands. His party has a specific policy to broaden the ownership of Ontario Power Generation, broaden the ownership of Hydro One and sell shares to the public, and it specifically says they will rely on the Ontario Energy Board to regulate rates. That is their policy.

If he is now disavowing his own party's policy, let him stand up and say so. He's talking out of both sides of his mouth, and it's about time—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have something to say, but I'm waiting until I have attention.

The minister will withdraw.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Withdraw, thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And as far as the rest of it is concerned, shouting people down is not what this place is about.

Final supplementary, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier: Ontario's economic prosperity was achieved because of successive PC governments who understood that the availability of affordable power was good public policy. The loss of majority control of Hydro One means the government loses the ability to—

Interjections.

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

Please put your question.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, I didn't realize the pitch for affordable energy would strike such a nerve.

The loss of a majority control of Hydro One means that the government loses the ability to expand transmission lines as a matter of good public policy. If a privately owned Hydro One feels that expanding transmission lines to the Ring of Fire, for example, is a bad decision for a private company, they may not do it, and that's bad news for northern Ontario. Doesn't this side get it? This is going to affect northern Ontario.

Will the Premier acknowledge to the House today that this might hamper the ability to see the Ring of Fire come to realization—that dream for northern Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, the member does not know what's going on in this House. He doesn't realize that there is a bill ready to be approved in this House that will give the cabinet the authority to designate where transmission will go—not Hydro One. We're doing that to protect the public. There are many things we are doing with respect to broadening the ownership of Hydro One that give control over planning, over what is happening in the sector. He does not know what the IESO does in terms of planning. He is not aware of the legislation that's going on in this House. He should go back and do some research.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Premier has said that deciding to sell off Hydro One was a difficult decision and that, despite overwhelming opposition from Ontarians, it was necessary because there just wasn't any other way to get the money.

The new federal government has already pledged \$2 billion for GO Transit in the GTHA and \$2.6 billion for SmartTrack, which must come as an enormous relief to the Premier, because now even she has to admit that she doesn't need to sell off Hydro One after all.

Will this Premier do what is right for Ontario: stop the sell-off of Hydro One and negotiate a fair deal for infrastructure with the federal government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, no. We have a responsibility at the provincial level of government to build infrastructure, to make investments that are necessary across the province. I would argue that is the same responsibility that the municipal governments have, and I know that municipal governments across this province are taking that responsibility very seriously.

It is terrific that we now have a federal government that understands that they need to partner with provincial and municipal governments. It's not up to one level of government. It is our responsibility to continue to implement our plan, to live up to the commitments that we made to the people of Ontario, and that is exactly what we're going to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I wish the Premier could hear herself, because she sounds ridiculous. Forty per cent of Ontario municipalities have asked this Premier to stop the sell-off of Hydro One. She used to say that but for our federal partner, she wouldn't have to—

Interjections.

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

Please ask.

1100

Ms. Andrea Horwath: She used to say that, because there was a lack of a federal partner, she had to sell off Hydro One, but now she has the federal partner, and she's still saying she has to sell off Hydro One. Speaker, it makes no sense whatsoever; 80% of Ontarians don't want her to sell off Hydro One.

I would have thought it would have come as a relief to this Premier that the federal commitments to infrastructure actually absolve her of her need to sell off Hydro One. She should be standing up for what is right for Ontario, and she should be ensuring that those federal dollars come for our infrastructure process, for our infrastructure needs, and that that money moves quickly. Does she believe that Ontario's fair share is coming?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I stand up for the people of Ontario every single day. That is exactly what I do. That's my job. It's my responsibility. I will continue to do that while I am in this job, because that is what has led us to the plan that we are now implementing. We know that the investments that are necessary in this province are investments in roads and bridges and in transit. We know that we have to invest in people's talent and skills, and draw business to this province.

Speaker, a cornerstone of that economic viability is our infrastructure investment. In the same way that, when we came into office, municipalities didn't throw up their hands and say, "Oh well, we're not going to continue to invest in our people or stand up for our communities"—they continued to do their work—we are going to continue to do our work, but now we have a partner at the federal level that's going to work with us.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Talking about standing up for Ontarians and actually standing up for Ontarians are two different things. Ontarians don't want Hydro One to be sold off. That's the standing up that this Premier should be doing. The bottom line is this: The Premier seems determined to plow ahead, despite the fact that the federal government will be providing over \$400 million annually in a new infrastructure program.

If the Premier isn't going to listen to Ontarians, then the people have to wonder who the heck she is listening to. Will she finally do what is right, stop the sell-off of Hydro One and get to work ensuring that Ontario's fair share of federal infrastructure money flows?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let's just analyze exactly what the leader of the third party is suggesting. She's suggesting that we basically go tools down on the projects that are—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The conversation that's going on between the member from Essex and the Minister of Government and Consumer Services is not helpful at all; it's distracting.

Please finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: She's suggesting that we just put tools down on the projects that are in the works. She's saying we just sit back now and abdicate our responsibility to make the investments that we have committed to the people of Ontario; that we not continue to work with the communities in the northwest of this province; that we not continue to work with the communities of the east and the southwest of the province, to invest in their infrastructure, in their roads and bridges and in their transit; but that somehow we just wait for the federal government to come to the table. They're at the table. They're going to work with us, but we have a responsibility.

NURSES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. During the last general election, the Premier and her Minister of Health said that they would not cut front-line care and that they would not cut nursing positions. In 2015, there have been 625 registered nursing positions eliminated in Ontario's nursing workforce. This amounts to the loss of more than one million hours of RN care for Ontario patients.

These aren't my numbers, Speaker, these are the numbers provided by the nurses who are here in the gallery today. Will the Premier explain to these nurses why it is that the government is breaking their promise and cutting nursing positions and hours all across the province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to speak to this in the supplementary but let me just be clear that there are 24,000 more nurses working in Ontario today than there were in 2003—24,000 more nurses. We understand that there is a transition in communities where there is more community care that is

being set up. We understand that hospitals are working and that we need to continue to work with the LHINs, with the hospitals in this province, with the community providers to make sure that people get the care that they need when they need it and where they need it.

But there are 24,000 more nurses in Ontario than there were in 2003. We have added to that complement. We will continue to increase health care funding in this province, Mr. Speaker, as we go through the transformation that is required because of the demographics in this province. That is the responsible thing to do to make our health care system sustainable and to allow it to thrive.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, Ontario patients deserve more nursing hours, not less. The scientific evidence is clear: Every nurse being cut out of our hospitals puts patient care and patients' lives at risk. We know that the government is cutting nursing hours and laying off nurses across our province. The Liberals have tried to deflect blame to our hospitals, to the LHINs, to anybody else that they can point to, but they have frozen hospital funding for the last four years—the longest unbroken period of real-dollar, public hospital cuts in Ontario's entire history.

Will this Premier commit to stopping nursing cuts and to providing Ontario's hospitals with the funding that they need to provide proper nursing levels?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I want to start by welcoming our nurses here. Linda Haslam-Stroud, representing the Ontario Nurses' Association, is here today. She has brought with her, importantly, registered nurses from right across this province. I know they had a press conference this morning to express the concerns they have with regard to retaining nurses in our hospitals and other environments, to the work that we've done but need to continue to do to stabilize the nursing workforce across the province.

We've made significant investments to help stabilize the nursing workforce, but we do know that there is much more work to do. I have reached out to Linda today and indicated—I know that she's anxious to meet with me, and I've committed to meeting with her to talk specifically about that issue of stabilization and nursing retention—the critically vital work that our nurses, our RNs, do in our hospitals, as they do right across the province. I'm prepared to talk more in the supplementary.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, registered nurses have specialized skills that are crucial to complex patient care, but the share of RNs in Ontario's nursing workforce is falling, and we have the second-worst RN ratio in Canada, with less than one registered nurse for 100 people.

Nurses are suffering from increased workloads, from epic stress, from burnout, and a deep professional concern from seeing patients not receiving the care that they need. Anybody who has been in hospital recently—over the last couple of years, in fact—and talked to the nurses

who are working in the hospitals will tell you the same thing.

Will this Premier commit to the nurses here today, and to all Ontarians, Speaker, to stopping the cuts to nurses and nursing hours across our province?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that Ontarians do understand. I've got the figures for RNs in this province right in front of me for the last five years, and in every single one of those five years, the number of nurses—the number of RNs, specifically, working in this province—has increased year over year over year, every single year in the last five years up until the most recent data, which is 2014-15, of course. And I also want to remind Ontarians that, in fact, it was under an NDP government in the 1990s where there were 3,000 fewer nurses working in this province from the beginning to the end of their tenure in government. The number of RNs in Ontario fell by almost 3,000 persons in this province under the NDP. Of course, we know the PCs fired 6,000 nurses and referred to them as obsolete hula hoops.

Mr. Speaker, I commit to working with ONA, as any responsible government should. We continue to work hard to stabilize the RN workforce. I've committed to working with Linda and her team to see how specifically we could work on this challenging issue of retention.

PROBATION SERVICES

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Premier. For weeks following the tragic deaths in the Ottawa valley, I asked the Attorney General and the Premier how they intend to act on the recommendations made by the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee. They have yet to provide a satisfactory answer.

1110

According to the chair of the local community policing advisory committee, Renfrew county's single probation officer is overloaded because of the failings of this Liberal government. The province's lack of support to probation and parole services in places like Renfrew county is the reason why repeat offenders like Mr. Borutski have not been more closely monitored.

Mr. Speaker, why has the Premier failed these victims by refusing to allocate the adequate resources to ensure that violent offenders are more closely monitored?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister responsible for women's issues.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I have received a copy of the October report on domestic violence with respect to what the coroner's work has done in this regard. It contains a number of government-wide recommendations, which I have reviewed.

As I've said before here, this is a very serious issue and should not ever be tolerated in Ontario. We all have a responsibility to find out what else we can do. The report, as I'm sure the member opposite knows, highlights the importance of public education and preventing domestic violence.

In terms of what happened in Ontario, the tragic incident that happened in Renfrew county, I did speak to the executive director of the sexual assault centre there.

While we have a number of initiatives to support women and men who face domestic violence, we know there's more to do as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to go back to the Premier. Really, it is a matter of priority. I appreciate the minister of women's issues comment about the shelters.

This is very much a serious matter, that the government has not provided the resources to ensure that Ontarians can live in their homes without fear. In 2012, your government's own report from the review committee recommended that supervision for offenders on probation would benefit from ongoing collateral contacts to confirm the status of the offender. The report also said that when an offender fails to meet the terms, progressive enforcement must align with the level of risk.

The oversight that is currently in place is just not acceptable. Three women have lost their lives because of this government's inaction—and, since, I've been asking the questions. So why does the Premier refuse to recognize the needs of the probation officers in Ontario so this doesn't happen again?

Interjections.

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

Minister responsible—

Interjections.

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

Minister responsible for women's issues.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, the needs in rural Ontario are acute and real, and that is why the Minister of Community and Social Services and her ministry have invested significantly in terms of shelters and services, an increase of 61% since 2003.

I just want to highlight, if I may, that when the PCs were in power, they cut shelter services by 29% in one year alone. They eliminated all counselling—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: That list unfortunately goes on and on in terms of the cuts that were faced by that sector.

However, our commitment is to supporting women who face sexual and domestic violence. We have our sexual violence action plan. We have a permanent round table on—

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

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. Since the beginning of the process, the Minister of Education has failed to do her job when it comes to bargain-

ing. The minister has been playing games, first with major delays, then with her own so-called confusion about what was being negotiated at each of the tables: class sizes, professional development, delays, net-zero agreements, not to mention the various different versions of the story we have heard over the past year.

The minister has no credibility anymore. The minister will say or do anything to save face. The result? Chaos in our schools.

Will the Premier admit that her Minister of Education has failed our kids and their families and that she has lost all credibility?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I would note that the Ontario Labour Relations Board actually agreed with my version of what was going on last spring, so she might reconsider that question. But I will talk to you, Speaker. What I would like to say is, we obviously have three outstanding contracts that we need to get agreement on: the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, the CUPE education workers and the OSSTF education workers. What I can say to the House is that, in each of those cases, we have either established dates or the mediator is actively working to sort out dates. People have agreed that we need dates. In all of those instances, negotiations will convene. That's how we get agreements.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: In fact, yesterday in scrum the minister said that there were six outstanding agreements, so thank you for making my point.

Speaker, back to the Premier: It's clear that these negotiations have been botched from the very beginning. Since day one, all of us in this House and across Ontario have been hearing excuse after excuse from the minister. The minister hasn't been taking negotiations seriously. She has been blaming everyone except herself—being perplexed about the facts when it comes to tough issues, forcing kids to pay the price while chaos flourished in our schools due to her inability to bargain effectively.

Speaker, the minister simply doesn't have credibility anymore. It's time for her to go. My question is simple: Will the Premier tell her Minister of Education to resign immediately?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Let's get an update on all nine of the tables here, okay? We have three tables where we have ratified collective agreements. Those are the teachers in the English Catholic, the English public secondary and both French systems—all of those teachers. We have three groups that are engaged in job action, which are the people whom I am concerned we get back to the table with. They are the elementary teachers, CUPE and the OSSTF education workers. We either have dates or we are working with the mediator on establishing dates with all three of those.

We have three other groups with whom we are continuing to negotiate. In fact, one of them is at the hotel today. The other three groups, who are all education workers, we also need to get agreements with. We are negotiating with them and we're not having job action with them. That's the update.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Chris Ballard: My question is for the Minister of Energy. I know that as we move to broaden the ownership of Hydro One, the mechanisms of oversight are changing to those that apply to publicly traded companies. As part of our government's commitment to transparency and accountability, Hydro One will be required, through legislation, to create an internal ombuds-person who would report publicly and continue to protect consumers.

The minister has previously informed us that Hydro One has been working closely with Denis Desautels, a former Auditor General of Canada, to ensure that terms of reference for the position are appropriate, that adequate resources will be provided and that the successful candidate has the prerequisite skills and experience to successfully perform this important role.

Could the minister please inform the House if there is an update on Hydro One's search for an ombuds-person?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Thank you to the member for Newmarket–Aurora for the question, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we asked Denis Desautels, former Auditor General of Canada, to oversee the establishment of the ombuds-person's office to ensure transparency and accountability for customers.

We are pleased that Hydro One has selected a very strong, professional and experienced ombuds-person in Fiona Crean, most recently the ombuds-person for the city of Toronto. As Hydro One's new ombuds-person, Ms. Crean will provide an independent and impartial perspective on matters referred to her by Hydro One customers. She will also establish an appeal process for unresolved complaints to the independent Ontario Energy Board. Ms. Crean will report directly to the board of directors in order to ensure independence and to allow the board to provide strong support for any recommendations made.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you for the update, Minister. It's great to hear that Hydro One, with the assistance of Denis Desautels, has managed to hire such an excellent and experienced candidate as Fiona Crean. It is reassuring to hear that, as Hydro One's new ombuds-person, she will report publicly in order to continue to protect consumers.

Now that Hydro One has selected Ms. Crean as its new ombuds-person, Hydro One must ensure that the office is established in such a fashion as to ensure independence and accountability. I know we've asked Denis Desautels to oversee the establishment of the ombuds-person's office to ensure transparency and accountability.

Mr. Speaker, through you, could the minister inform the House as to Ms. Crean's experience as an ombuds-person, as well as if she has any experience in establishing and setting up an ombuds-person's office?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Ms. Crean was appointed by Toronto city council as Toronto's first ombudsman in

November 2008. The office began to offer services on April 6, 2009. I might add for members that she prefers the term “ombudsman,” so henceforth I’ll refer to her as ombudsman rather than ombudsperson, by her choice.

She brings to this position decades of professional experience dedicated to fairness in government and social justice. She also established the office of ombudsman for York University and was executive director of the Ontario Ombudsman’s office. This background has given her significant experience in conflict resolution and the promotion of accountability and responsiveness by large organizations.

Ms. Crean will ensure that Hydro One customers will continue to be protected and ensure that any concerns are being heard and acted upon. An excellent choice by the board of Hydro One.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Attorney General. The minister committed to me in this House on Tuesday to bring forward my concerns to the chair of the Safety, Licensing Appeals and Standards Tribunals, SLASTO for short.

Jeffrey Ferland and Canadians for Properly Built Homes have been requesting the transcripts from a proceeding at the LAT for over a year. The request has been met with a year of prolonged silence. The apocryphal element of this story is that the LAT insisted in February that the transcript was lost, but they are also now telling the plaintiff that copies may or might be obtained by filing a freedom-of-information request.

Transcripts of testimony and evidence are essential, and they must be available or access to justice is denied. Is the minister’s tribunal purposely suppressing these documents, or are they totally incompetent and have lost the transcripts?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you for the question. The administrative tribunal hears 180,000 cases a year. It plays a vital role in Ontario’s justice system. Tribunals use their specialized expertise to adjudicate on a wide variety of disputes in an independent and impartial manner. So our government has built an effective, efficient and accessible administrative justice system.

On this side of the House, you know—if the member opposite has a problem or one of his constituents has a problem, I invite them to write directly to the chair of the tribunal. We have very competent people at the tribunal, we have a very competent chair, and they always work to improve the system.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Again to the Attorney General: I guess you didn’t hear my first question. They have met with a year of prolonged silence.

The minister disagreed with me on Tuesday when I suggested our tribunals are in dire need of fixing and modernization. She cited her confidence, once again, in her unnamed professional experts. Today, I’ve offered

you the first of a litany of examples of failings occurring at our judicial tribunals.

Can the minister commit today to having her ministry investigate SLASTO and determine if this transcript is indeed missing or if the LAT is actively suppressing information from the plaintiff? Will she act on the multitude of public complaints and commit to conducting a thorough investigation and report back to this House on the state of our broken tribunals and these people who are being denied access to justice under her watch?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, I find it strange to have this question, this concern, this morning, but sure, we’re going to look into it.

I have been visiting law firms across Ontario recently, and they always give me the model of our administrative tribunal. And do you know what? They want more rather than less. Our administrative tribunal is working. If there is concern, like I said, they can write directly to the chair of the tribunal and I’m sure she will take action.

I will come back to the member—not to the House, but to the member—about his complaint.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday we learned that the Minister of Community and Social Services has spent an additional \$21 million to fix her Social Assistance Management System since last March. The flaws of the new system created chaos for vulnerable people receiving social assistance. The minister thought the system was ready last November. She was wrong. Now she says that this time the system will work.

Can the minister guarantee that this final version of SAMS will not create more chaos for people like the last final version did?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I’m certainly pleased to give an update on the situation with SAMS. We have acknowledged that the implementation of SAMS would require additional costs for transition. As PricewaterhouseCoopers has pointed out, we’re dealing with one of the most complex delivery systems in North America. We have some 570,000 cases on social assistance. We have 11,000 users of the system in some 250 locations. We have a combination of provincial staff delivering ODSP and municipal staff delivering Ontario Works.

I would like to thank all of our partners in this endeavour for their dedication, both those on the front lines, our union partners and the project team, as well as PwC.

We have addressed the issues. We are adopting all 19 recommendations that PwC made.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: After rushing a flawed system out the door, social assistance cheques went missing and vulnerable Ontarians suffered needlessly. Yesterday, the minister released a statement that offered absolutely no apology for the chaos that she created in the system. In-

stead, her priority was to distract from her government's negligence with the claim that the new system is simply cheaper than it was to implement the old system. The minister does not understand that the new system is not cheaper for vulnerable Ontarians whose cheques go missing.

Why does the minister think that her job is to justify her own negligence instead of making sure that no more vulnerable Ontarians are harmed?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Of course, we recognize that SAMS is a system that serves the most vulnerable, and that makes this investment so important. Support for front-line workers, more training and more testing is definitely something worth investing in.

At this point, perhaps I could outline some of the great benefits we have with SAMS. People will recall that the Auditor General noted that the previous system introduced in 2001-02 by a previous government was outdated and did not allow for strict adherence to the rules related to social assistance.

What have we now? Guided by our front-line working group, we now have information that caseworkers want, in a way they want it. We have customizable home pages, case-at-a-glance screens, flexibility to respond to changing client needs and now the ability to automate tasks that had to previously be done manually. We have a stable system. We've delivered seven million payments to more than 900,000—

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

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Granville Anderson: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. As the minister knows, our government has worked very hard at growing our economy and attracting jobs to our province. We all know that Ontario can only move forward economically by being at the cutting edge of innovation.

As the auto sector is a large and important employer in our province historically and continues to employ many people in Durham, what is the minister doing to encourage innovation in that sector?

1130

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think that is an excellent question.

Today, Ontario continues to enjoy a very strong presence in the North American auto sector. It directly or indirectly employs almost half a million Ontarians, and Ontario and Michigan continue to be in the top two in terms of sub-national governments producing automobiles.

But we continue to fight for future mandates and growth in a fiercely competitive global economy. We've done well in today's auto sector, but that sector is in a state of technological disruption. We need to make sure that Ontario continues to lead as disruption courses through our auto sector. Our choice is either to lead this

disruption in Ontario or be swept up by it, and we choose to lead.

Last week, our visionary Minister of Transportation demonstrated this by announcing that Ontario roads would be open to autonomous vehicle testing—a very important decision for innovation in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to thank the minister for his answer and his continuing work on this important file.

The auto industry is incredibly important to our community in Durham, and I know that many of my constituents will be pleased to hear of our efforts to encourage innovation.

As the minister knows, Ontario is first in attracting foreign direct investment in North America, and the minister has worked hard to continue this legacy.

Can the minister provide details of his announcement in Waterloo and what it will mean to the rest of us across our great province?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, let me put it this way: Two weeks ago I returned from Silicon Valley, and every time I come back from there, I'm inspired by the growing recognition of the strength of the Toronto-Waterloo corridor, which is very much becoming a globally significant innovation driver. I can tell you that Ontario's decision to open roads to testing of autonomous vehicles was greeted with great enthusiasm by industry innovators like Tesla and Cisco in the valley. I was pleased to join our visionary Minister of Transportation and MPPs from Kitchener Centre and Cambridge in making this announcement in Waterloo last week. Waterloo really is the west anchor of our Toronto-Waterloo innovation corridor.

We're now the first province in Canada to open up our roads to the testing of autonomous vehicles. This stakes out our role as a global leader in auto, in auto innovation and in the innovation sector as a whole in North America.

HOUSING SERVICES CORP.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is for the Premier. Two weeks ago, I asked the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing twice about thousands of taxpayers' dollars which were used to purchase a luxury eight-day vacation package in South Africa instead of going to social housing as it was intended. He couldn't explain it or tell us whether there were any efforts made to get any of the money back. Perhaps that's because it actually happened under the Premier's watch when she was Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Can the Premier explain how someone was able to use social housing dollars to go on a luxury South African vacation under your watch?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Minister of Rural Affairs is going to want to add to this in the supplementary, but what I can tell the member opposite—under my watch, when I was Minister of Municipal Affairs, there were questions raised about this organization that had been set up by the previous gov-

ernment. We began to set in place guidelines, because it was important that we tighten up the processes that had actually been very loose under the previous government. Those guidelines were developed.

I know that the Minister of Rural Affairs will want to add to the comment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Back to the Premier: Premier, we're talking about a luxury package vacation, complete with winery tours and award-winning restaurants. I've read the government's independent review, and it failed to find any of these expenses or take any steps to get the money back.

On Tuesday, the co-op housing federation are coming to the Legislature, and these are people who are stretching every dollar to provide housing for people in need. This abuse is an insult to those people and 168,000 people who are waiting on the list for public housing, and the Ontario taxpayer.

Can the Premier tell us whether the government has taken any steps to recover the thousands of taxpayer dollars that were spent on luxury South African vacations under her watch?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I appreciate the supplementary from my colleague from Oxford.

When the government of Ontario learned of the situation, our government took swift action. We employed an independent third party to come in to do a comprehensive review. Our request initiated an independent review. The review has been verified with HSC and we've taken the right steps towards improving accountability and transparency.

Actions taken to date: We've refined its business activities. We've streamlined the organization structure. We've reduced overhead administrative costs and enhanced corporate reporting transparency. We revised board remuneration expense policies so they're in line with the Management Board of Cabinet directives. We've committed to invite a third-party reviewer back again in 2016 to report on the implementation and the recommendations, and provide any additional changes that our government needs to take on this issue.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Since 2009, PET scans are available to people in northern Ontario, northwestern Ontario and southern Ontario, but for patients living in northeastern Ontario, we still don't have access to PET scan technology without having to travel really long distances.

But, Speaker, I have good news: Mobile PET scanners are becoming more frequently used in Ontario and they could travel up north, but we need the minister's permission before a mobile PET scanner can come to northern Ontario.

My question is simple: When will the minister agree to let a mobile PET scanner come to Health Sciences

North in Sudbury to serve the people living in the north-east?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I want to begin by acknowledging the hard work of the member from Sudbury, in fact, on this specific issue, because earlier this year he actually invited me to Sudbury to sit down and have a meeting with health care professionals on a variety of issues, including specifically to look at this issue of the long-standing request by the citizens of Sudbury and advocates—whether it would be prudent and appropriate to invest in a PET scanner for Sudbury itself. So I want to commend him for that hard work.

It was a result of his hard work and also that meeting that I engaged the good advice and expertise of the province-wide PET scanner steering committee. It's a steering committee that exists within Cancer Care Ontario, but its role specifically is to provide that expert advice on where, when and how PET scanning facilities and provisions should be made available to Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Tonight, hundreds of people will join the Sam Bruno family and friends at the Caruso Club to raise money for a permanent PET scan for Sudbury, and to bring a mobile PET scan to our region. The mobile PET scan will not cost Health Sciences North a penny, it will not add to the provincial budget expenses, but it will bring fairness and equitable access to this technology to the people of the northeast.

The people of the northeast are ready, Speaker; Health Sciences North is ready; mobile PET scanners are standing by.

Minister, after making us wait for six years, could you please do the right thing and grant the permission for a mobile PET scan to come to Sudbury?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I think Ontarians would agree that we are doing the right thing. We're doing the responsible thing. First of all, the wait time for getting a PET scan in this province—anywhere in this province—is two weeks, so people, including in Sudbury, have access to that wait time of two weeks, or sometimes even less.

I want to acknowledge that for the residents of Sudbury, there is an additional challenge. It is a big challenge of them having to travel, often long distances, often with or without family members and in a situation where they're challenged by, perhaps, a physical illness themselves. So there is that added dimension to this, which we're taking very seriously.

I would hope the member opposite, who is a health care professional, would agree with me that we need to take a responsible approach to this. We've given the question to the PET scanner committee. I understand that recently, my ministry has received the report; they're reviewing the report and analyzing it. We'll make the decision that is in the best interest of the people of Sudbury.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Mr. Han Dong: My question is to the Minister of Research and Innovation. Minister, investing in a globally competitive life sciences sector in Ontario is a key part

of our government's plan to create the highly skilled jobs that are in demand in today's knowledge economy.

1140

Ontario's life sciences sector is currently the largest jurisdiction in Canada, with more than 50% of total Canadian life sciences economic activity. Some of the world's leading research centres, hospitals and clinics, such as the University of Toronto, the Ontario Cancer Institute, SickKids and Mount Sinai, are located right here in my riding of Trinity–Spadina.

Minister, can you please inform the House on the economic benefits of investing in life sciences, and how our government is fostering a world-renowned life sciences sector right here in Ontario?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member from Trinity–Spadina for that question. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to report that with 160,000 researchers and scientists, 300 pharmaceutical firms and 1,300 medical devices firms, our province of Ontario has emerged as a global leader in the life sciences sector in the world.

Since 2010, my ministry has made an investment in life sciences research, resulting in 1,000 new jobs and more than \$750 million of leveraged funds. In 2012, Ontario's life sciences sector generated more than \$38 billion in revenue and contributed about \$8 billion in export goods.

We will continue building Ontario up by investing in research and innovation and commercialization of research, which will put forward the foundation of economic development in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Han Dong: I want to thank the minister for that answer. It's very reassuring to know that our government remains committed to investing in an innovative, globally competitive life sciences sector in Ontario. Quite honestly, it's one of the largest job creators in my riding.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of researchers across the province, Ontario has also become a global leader in stem cell research and regenerative medicine. Ontario currently ranks third in the world in terms of significant discoveries in stem cells.

My constituents in the riding of Trinity–Spadina have friends and family suffering from chronic diseases like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and multiple sclerosis. I understand that stem cell research and regenerative medicine are allowing scientists to better understand the causes of these diseases and develop the technology needed to treat them.

Minister, can you please inform the members of this House how this funding will develop new treatments and therapies for people living with these and other degenerative diseases?

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

Mr. Speaker, as you know, stem cells were discovered in our province of Ontario by Till and McCulloch. Stem cell research is laying a pathway towards better therapies and the cures for chronic diseases.

Just recently, I was in the Ontario Institute for Regenerative Medicine, where I announced a \$25-million

investment by our government in support of research in treatments and therapies for chronic diseases such as multiple sclerosis, cancer and diabetes. This funding will support the institute in revolutionizing treatments and making Ontario a global leader in commercialization of stem cell-related products and services.

With advances in stem cell therapy, one day we could fix damaged cells in the heart, we will be able to restore vision and we will be able to activate the immune system to fight cancer. We will continue investing in research and innovation, which will be the foundation of our economic growth for tomorrow.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Maybe she'll answer me. In last year's estimates, the minister stated that SAMS would have a seamless rollout and that no one would know there was a change taking place. The transition has been anything but seamless.

Yesterday's report claims that it will be 19 months past the original date before the government will close the books on this project. The government will also spend an additional \$50 million on SAMS, all because of what the minister originally noted as a small glitch.

Minister, can you say with absolute certainty that this is the final time you will announce delays and cost overruns for this error-riddled system rollout?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I think that we should all be very clear that the decision to implement SAMS was not taken lightly. A new system was required because the old system introduced by the former government—SDMT, as it was known—was unreliable and unable to keep up with the needs of 21st-century service delivery. In fact, the Auditor General said that that technology was outdated, had serious integrity issues and did not have the ability to manage the rules that are part of Ontario's social assistance.

Not only that, the cost of introduction of that system, in 2015 dollars, was \$745 million when it was procured in 2001. In other words, it cost some \$451 million more than the total amount for the introduction of SAMS.

Mr. John Yakabuski: This is your answer? Shameful.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's never too late to get a warning.

Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's so interesting that whenever anything goes wrong with this government, they blame somebody else for it.

Under this minister, the cost of SAMS' implementation has skyrocketed to nearly \$300 million. Individuals and families have received erroneous cheques, leaving some unable to afford rent or food. Municipalities and service providers have incurred millions of dollars of cost overruns. There's no question that the SAMS implementation has been a failure.

Speaker, in March the minister said that she was truly sorry for the problems with SAMS, but yesterday's transition report shows no contrition. It's nothing but a pat on the back. What does she have to say today to the individuals whose services will have to be cut in order to pay for her government's mismanagement?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'm certainly happy to talk about some of the advantages of the new system, because apparently this is being totally overlooked. We have a modern, reliable system. It is going to do exactly what we need to do. It is stabilized. It allows for social assistance rate increases—of course, our government is actually increasing social assistance—to be processed in some two or three days, whereas the old SDMT system took months for clients' monthly benefits to reflect the change.

SAMS will now allow clients to send and receive information through a new easy-to-use online portal. SAMS will also enable the province-wide implementation of the reloadable payment card program in the next year, something that has been piloted by the city of Toronto. This would have been completely impossible with the old system. This will assist clients to access their benefit funds more conveniently.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Today I'd like to introduce two visitors from my riding of Niagara Falls. Dave Evans is a firefighter who is here with us today. Equally important is his son Ben, who came all the way from Quebec to visit his dad and see Queen's Park. Welcome, and I hope you have a great day.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on a motion, as amended, for allocation of time on Bill 112, An Act to amend the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998.

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

The division bells rang from 1148 to 1153.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On October 21, Mr. Leal moved government notice of motion number 41.

On October 22, the following amendment by Mr. Smith was declared carried:

"That the paragraph starting 'That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill' be struck out and replaced with:

"That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 p.m. on Thursday, November 5, 2015"; and

"That the third bullet be struck out and replaced with:

"—That following the deadline, the Clerk of the Committee provide the members of the subcommittee with a list of requests to appear; and

"—That the members of the subcommittee prioritize and return the list by 6 p.m. on Thursday, October 29, 2015; and

"—That the Clerk of the Committee schedule witnesses from these prioritized lists."

All those in favour of Mr. Leal's motion, as amended, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Nicholls, Rick
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Sattler, Peggy
Barrett, Toby	Hatfield, Percy	Scott, Laurie
Brown, Patrick	Hillier, Randy	Singh, Jagmeet
Campbell, Sarah	Horwath, Andrea	Tabuns, Peter
Clark, Steve	Jones, Sylvia	Taylor, Monique
Fedeli, Victor	MacLaren, Jack	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Martow, Gila	Walker, Bill
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John
Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 54; the nays are 36.

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

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

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

The House recessed from 1158 to 1300.

RICHARD PIGEAU

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I believe we have unanimous consent to rise for a minute of silence for Mr. Richard Pigeau, who was a member of Sudbury Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, Local 598, who died at Glen-core's Nickel Rim mine in my riding on Tuesday.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nickel Belt is seeking unanimous consent to rise for a moment of silence in memoriam for the miner killed in the riding of Nickel Belt. Do we agree? Agreed.

May I ask all members of this place to stand to observe a moment of silence for the dead miner.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Our thoughts and prayers to the family. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Steven Del Duca: We are joined here today in the gallery by some individuals who work very closely with the Ministry of Transportation as it relates to road and highway safety. I want to introduce Louise Logan, president and CEO of Parachute; Scott Watson, manager of government and stakeholder relations at Parachute; Val Smith, director of solutions at Parachute; Sunitha Ravi Kumar, coordinator of knowledge translation at Parachute; Zac Stevenson, public affairs adviser from State Farm; and Kailey Fisher, a public affairs specialist from State Farm.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. John Yakabuski: The Liberal government's failed energy policies have not only done egregious damage to ratepayers and families in this province, they are also hurting local distribution companies. In the LDCs' own words, they are "stuck between a rock and a hard place." When families have to make the choice between heating and eating, they're stuck between a rock and a hard place, too. That happened to a family in the Niagara region, and as a consequence, Niagara Peninsula Energy reluctantly disconnected their electricity.

In the words of Brian Wilkie, president and CEO of NPE, "The size of the bills are just getting too high and it's just getting worse. Every couple of months there is another 3% or 4% increase. I have businesses coming to me saying they just can't stay in business with some of these rates."

On a bill of about \$200 a month, the LDCs are only collecting about \$35 to \$40. The rest is mostly made up of provincial and other charges.

This is a story that is being repeated over and over and over again here in Ontario, and the worst is yet to come. Hydro prices are increasing again on November 1, and winter is just around the corner.

How many more people will be in the same situation as a result of not being able to pay their bills this winter? How many more stories just like this one will we have to hear before this Liberal government will recognize that their policies are an abject failure and they must change?

OJIBWAY PRAIRIE COMPLEX

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: As many in this chamber know, my riding of Windsor West is extraordinarily gifted, both with its active citizens and pristine nature reserves. The two go hand in hand.

An engaged group in my community, known as Save Ojibway, is currently working to protect the Ojibway Prairie Complex, an ecosystem of global significance that runs through my riding. I would like to thank Save Ojibway, their leaders, volunteers and supporters for taking on this important initiative.

Ojibway Prairie is a five-park natural heritage system totalling 350 hectares. The sites have over 100,000 visitors per year, boast one of the top butterfly counts in North America, and attract enough bird species to please even the most accomplished birdwatchers.

The sustainability of this national treasure is threatened by a proposed big box development. Speaker, this story is all too familiar to us. This week, my colleague Percy Hatfield and I have presented petitions signed by thousands of area residents calling for the protection of Ojibway Prairie Complex. The stakes are enormous, the consequences dire. We won't get a second chance to save Ojibway Prairie.

It was said that the chances of Save Ojibway successfully protecting the Ojibway Prairie are the same as for a turtle safely crossing the road. Well, Speaker, turtles do cross the road, and the members of my community want this government to help this turtle cross the road and Ojibway Shores to be saved.

ANNIVERSARY OF SHOOTINGS IN OTTAWA

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very honoured today to stand and speak about last year's shooting on Parliament Hill. At the time, I was a member of Parliament, representing the riding of Sudbury. I, like the leader of the official opposition, experienced that traumatic day, but I think if we look back, Mr. Speaker, I want to do a few things first.

The first thing, of course, is to recognize Corporal Cirillo. I know that was done today quite eloquently by the Premier, the leader of the third party and the leader of the official opposition.

But I think it's also important to recognize a few other individuals: the former Sergeant-at-Arms, Kevin Vickers, who was considered a hero that day. I'd also like to acknowledge Constable Gervais for probably one of the bravest things I've ever seen. When the bullets were flying, he ran through the caucus doors, told us to get down, turned around and held the doors—and a bullet lodged in that door. He put his life on the line for us, and that is something that I know I am truly grateful for and I know many MPs are always grateful for. That parliamentary crew of security that day did an outstanding job, and I want to acknowledge them and thank them for that.

I think it's important for us here to also thank our security staff who keep us safe each and every day, those

folks who are out there keeping us safe. It's important as well.

I'd also like to acknowledge a former member of Parliament, Ryan Cleary. He and I had a moment when we both thought we were going to die. It was kind of an unusual experience, and it's always something he and I talk about.

Of course, Mr. Speaker—I know my time is running out—we need to thank our families, because while many of us were taken out of harm's way, we couldn't reach out to let them know we were safe. As politicians, our families are always worried about us, and I think we need to acknowledge that the families had a very difficult time that day as well. I'd just like to thank all of our families for allowing us to do what we do.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise and recognize Local Government Week. It's an opportunity to raise awareness about the role and importance of municipal governments.

Across Ontario, municipalities are holding events and activities to raise awareness about how municipal government works, particularly among students. Municipalities are holding council meetings in schools and offering tours of municipal offices, as well as holding essay contests and career fairs.

I want to commend all the municipalities of Ontario both for their efforts to raise awareness this week and for the work they do for the people of their communities every day.

We know how important the services that local governments deliver are, and they do it with limited resources. Whether it's roads, water, waste disposal or assistance to people in need, municipalities provide services that people depend on every day.

We understand that they are a mature level of government and are working hard through planning and economic development to ensure a bright future for their communities. And municipalities can depend on us to be there for them. Many municipalities have told us that they need a real partner who is willing to listen to them, and we are committed to both listening and to working with them. We understand the challenges they face and that they are the experts on local government in their communities, and we value their input.

Again, as we celebrate Local Government Week, I'm pleased to commend all our municipal governments on behalf of the PC caucus and recognize them for all their hard work.

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TENDER FRUIT INDUSTRY

Mr. Wayne Gates: On Wednesday, October 14, I was pleased to attend a grant announcement at Tregunno Fruit Farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake, where the Ontario Tender Fruit Growers and the Friends of the Greenbelt Founda-

tion announced \$400,000 to support our local tender-fruit growers and the Niagara region as a whole. These funds will be used to launch a pilot project to plant tender fruit tree varieties, such as peaches and pears, to provide a financial boost to greenbelt growers and strengthen this key economic sector.

I'd like to applaud the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation for their continued work in ensuring nearly two million acres of land are preserved.

I'd also like to recognize the Ontario Tender Fruit Growers. The work they do plays a significant role in Ontario's economy.

Mr. Speaker, the Niagara Peninsula is Ontario's largest and most important fruit-growing area, and it's wonderful to see this pilot project being established in order to enhance this very significant part of Niagara's own local economy.

Now we need to ensure that these wonderful locally grown tender fruits are being sold locally. I am going to be encouraging the grocery stores in my riding and across Ontario to give prime shelf space to locally grown fruits. Putting these locally grown fruits up front means people eat fresher, better-tasting, healthier food, as we support our farmers across Ontario.

By growing locally, selling locally and eating locally, we will help strengthen not just Niagara's economy but the entire province's economy.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING WEEK

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I rise today to mark Community Health and Wellbeing Week, which is being celebrated across Ontario. During this week, Ontario's 109 community health centres, community-governed family health teams and nurse practitioner-led clinics are holding special events across the province, and are coordinated by the Association of Ontario Health Centres.

This week's theme is "Community Health and Well-being: Shift the Conversation"—creating a new kind of dialogue about health and health care that is all about addressing all of the factors in people's lives that affect their health and well-being. One of those factors is the kind of community where you live. Research tells us that when you have the opportunity to live in a caring and connected community that makes you feel valued and accepted and that makes you feel like you belong, then you are more likely to be healthy. This is why during this week, participating centres are raising awareness about community vitality and sense of belonging as critically important determinants of health. The need to support this forms a key principle in a community health centre model to promote health and well-being.

In my own riding of Cambridge, Langs Community Health Centre established a great program called Connectivity. Working with local police, the goal was to mobilize health and social services organizations to address risk factors and reduce the incidence of crime. This program has been a wonderful success in promoting

community vitality, and it has now spread to Kitchener and Guelph.

I thank all those who work in community health centres across Ontario and am proud to recognize the hard work they do and their focus on community vitality and building a sense of belonging.

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Ms. Laurie Scott: This week is Small Business Week, and we get to pay tribute to the small businesses that form the bedrock of our Canadian economy. In Ontario, nearly 98% of businesses are small businesses employing less than a hundred people.

This year, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce would like to help showcase the pivotal role that the Ontario chamber network plays in making Small Business Week one of the most anticipated celebrations. I know that throughout my areas of Kawartha Lakes, Haliburton, Durham and Peterborough, seminars, open houses and awards ceremonies have taken place all week and will continue.

As we celebrate Small Business Week, it is important to recognize the challenges that they face, and what we can do to help them prosper.

In a recent survey by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 44% of businesses said that they would reduce their payroll or hire fewer employees because of the ORPP. The government has yet to provide any assurance to businesses that the ORPP won't kill jobs and hurt competitiveness.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has consistently raised alarm bells about how rising electricity prices will impact the health of our economy. The Liberal sale of Hydro One will affect small business owners. There are no assurances that hydro rates won't skyrocket again because of the exorbitant salaries, severances and gold-plated pensions.

The CFIB estimates that the burden of red tape costs Canadian businesses \$30 billion each year in compliance alone.

The government needs to listen to small businesses, get its fiscal house in order—and once again become the best place in the world to invest and to support small businesses.

FOODSHARE TORONTO

Mrs. Cristina Martins: As the member for Davenport, I'm delighted to rise and congratulate FoodShare Toronto, a wonderful organization in my riding, on its 30th anniversary today. It was with great pleasure that I attended their celebratory breakfast this morning.

FoodShare is a not-for-profit organization that works with communities and schools to deliver healthy food and food education. Since 1985, FoodShare has pioneered innovative programs, impacted what kids eat in school and improved the way people eat and grow food. I'm proud of the work FoodShare is doing to improve

food security for children and families in my riding, in our city and, really, across the whole province.

FoodShare continues to be an invaluable advocate and provider of affordable and accessible food by helping people living in low-income communities to save money and eat healthier by improving their access to affordable vegetables and fruit.

The government of Ontario recognizes how FoodShare Toronto makes a difference. Last month, I had the honour of hosting the Honourable Deb Matthews, Ontario's minister responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy, to announce the Ontario government's commitment of up to \$112,000 to support FoodShare's programs through the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

I'm proud to have this wonderful organization in my riding of Davenport. There is no better reward than helping those who are less fortunate. I'm pleased to congratulate them. Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped build this organization from the ground up, and a special thank you to Executive Director Debbie Field for all her work, her vision, and seeing FoodShare enter its 30th year. Congratulations.

IMMIGRANTS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise today to talk about a special event that took place in Halton last week. Hundreds of people gathered in a local high school gym to watch close to 40 people take their oath of citizenship.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the honour of attending several citizenship ceremonies over the years, and I find each one to be just as moving as the first. It's energizing and inspiring to see so many people from so many different countries, backgrounds and histories taking an oath that will start them on their Canadian journey. There wasn't a dry eye in the house, and the young people on hand were clearly moved and energized by the ceremony.

As an immigrant myself, I know how much they have all sacrificed and how hard they have all worked to get to that day. These individuals wanted a new and better life in Canada. They chose a place where human rights are protected, where democracy is valued and where we can all pursue our dreams. This is a place where diversity isn't just accepted; it is celebrated. It is that diversity that makes us all strong.

We are a collection of different histories, backgrounds and personal stories, yet we all share many core values and the belief that no matter where we come from, we can all share in this extraordinary dream that is Canada.

Congratulations and welcome to all new citizens. I wish them the best as they embark on this new chapter in their lives.

VISITORS

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

Mr. Yvan Baker: Speaker, I have some guests with us here today from our student communities across

Ontario. These are leaders of student organizations from across the province who helped to craft the private member's bill we'll be debating later today. I beg your indulgence, if I could introduce them to you.

We have with us, from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, Sean Madden, their executive director; Lindsee Perkins, vice-president of OUSA and board representative from Western University; Chris Fernlund, vice-president of OUSA and board representative from Trent Durham; Armin Escher, who is an OUSA staff person.

We have a number of members from the College Student Alliance. We have Jeff Scherer, president of the College Student Alliance; Ciara Byrne; Ted Bartlett; Olivia Anderson from Fleming College; Champagne Thomson from Fleming College; Jennifer Newton from Fleming College; Rob Williams from Fleming College; and Janice Asiimwe as well.

We also have somebody who's not a student but has been a student in the past and shaped my student experience: my father, Donald Baker.

Thank you all so much for coming. Welcome.

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

I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): Your committee begs to report the following bill, without amendment:

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 2, 2015, the bill is ordered for third reading.

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MOTIONS

ESTIMATES

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice with respect to the Standing Committee on Estimates.

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

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 60 and the order of the House dated October 7, 2015, the Standing Committee on Estimates consider the 2015-16 estimates of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care on October 27, 2015; and

That the Standing Committee on Estimates consider the remaining 2015-16 estimates of the Ministry of Energy on October 28, 2015. Upon completion of consideration of the remaining 2015-16 estimates of the Ministry of Energy, the committee shall resume the consideration of the 2015-16 estimates of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Del Duca moves that, notwithstanding standing order 60 and the order of the House dated October 7, 2015, the Standing Committee on Estimates consider the 2015-16 estimates of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care on October 27, 2015; and

That the Standing Committee on Estimates consider the remaining 2015-16 estimates of the Ministry of Energy on October 28, 2015. Upon completion of consideration of the remaining 2015-16 estimates of the Ministry of Energy, the committee shall resume consideration of the 2015-16 estimates of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ROAD SAFETY

Hon. Steven Del Duca: For the past 14 years, Ontario's roads have been consistently ranked either first or second in road safety across North America. Ontario is recognized as a world-class leader in road safety because of our tough laws, our strong enforcement and the dedicated work of our many road safety partners.

We have many strong road safety partners working side by side with government, like Parachute Canada. Earlier today I did recognize that we have a number of visitors from Parachute here with us in the gallery. These organizations work closely with us and we collectively have a mission to prevent injuries and save lives. This week is Parachute's National Teen Driver Safety Week, designed to stop the clock on unnecessary teen deaths on the road by raising awareness and by seeking solutions.

The Ministry of Transportation has a valued relationship with Parachute. Staff joined them at the official launch of National Teen Driver Safety Week at Sunnybrook hospital along with our other road safety partners from Toronto police, the CAA and a number of local high schools. Their campaign this year, known as "Best

Friends Forever—Practice Safe Text,” asks teens to be a best friend and encourages peers to wait until they arrive at their destination before texting back.

Teen driver safety is an important issue. Nationally, young people represent about one quarter of all road-related injuries and fatalities, but they comprise less than 15% of all licensed drivers. It’s important in Ontario because if current trends continue, fatalities from distracted driving may exceed those from drinking and driving in the near future. Research also indicates that a driver who uses a cellphone is four times more likely to be involved in a crash, and that teen drivers are a big part of that statistic with about half admitting to texting while driving.

This year, on September 1, the Ontario government got a whole lot tougher with drivers who still aren’t getting the message on distracted driving by escalating penalties for novice drivers convicted of distracted driving, increasing the fine to \$490, and applying three demerit points upon conviction. Teenagers and all drivers need to remember to keep their hands on the wheel and their eyes on the road, and not to text or to be on their phone while driving. Keeping our roads safe for everyone—for teens, for novice or experienced drivers, passengers, cyclists and pedestrians—is a top priority for this government.

The new distracted driving measures that I mentioned are part of the Making Ontario’s Roads Safer legislation. This was legislation that was designed and implemented to reduce collisions, injuries and fatalities across Ontario, while improving the safety of all road users. Making Ontario’s Roads Safer also includes improved measures to address drivers who repeatedly drink and drive by requiring them to complete intensive alcohol education, treatment and monitoring programs. Soon we will be applying alcohol-impaired sanctions to drivers who are drug-impaired because recent statistics show that over 45% of drivers killed in Ontario were found to have drugs or a combination of drugs and alcohol in their system.

We know that these measures will have an impact on teenage drivers in particular. Teenage drivers are more likely to be found driving while affected by drugs, especially cannabis, than by alcohol. Nevertheless, as of May 31, 2015, there were 2,014 convictions issued to drivers 21 years of age and under for violating their zero blood-alcohol concentration requirements, which had taken effect in August 2010.

We were one of the first to take action on distracted driving in 2009 by banning the use of hand-held devices, and we’re going to continue to take action today and in the future. I certainly look forward to sharing more about how our government will work with all of our road safety partners to raise awareness and change behaviour relating to distracted driving or impaired driving, whether drug or alcohol, in the coming months.

We recognize that everyone, from the most vulnerable to the most seasoned, needs to feel safe and protected on our roads and highways because unsafe drivers and

vehicles have no place on Ontario’s roads. The people of Ontario and our teenage and young drivers deserve no less. We are a North American leader in road safety, and we are committed to keeping it that way.

I stand here today to mark Parachute’s National Teen Driver Safety Week, and I say to all teen drivers: Be a good best friend and don’t let your friends drive distracted.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: Any time we can spend addressing driver safety is time well spent as far as I’m concerned. This week we actually have not one, but two reasons to discuss the importance of safety on Ontario roads, as we recognize both National Teen Driver Safety Week, as the minister noted, and also School Bus Safety Week.

I think it’s important to recognize that when we’re talking about safety of any specific segment of our motorist population, we are really speaking about the safety of all drivers. The more we can do to spread awareness and prevent accidents for one group, the more we can do to prevent accidents for all of us.

To be clear, safety on our roads is a shared responsibility. That’s why, as we mark National Teen Driver Safety Week, I encourage all to join with our road safety partners at Parachute Canada in spreading the awareness message that underlines this designated week across the province. Join the social media messages, #NTDSW or #BFF, aimed at stopping the clock on unnecessary teen deaths on the road by raising awareness. Talk to your #BFF about texting while driving and encourage them to #PracticeSafeText—just wait until you’re out of the car or pulled off to the side of the road or parked before you do it.

It’s a sad and sobering thought that while young people only make up 13% of licensed drivers, they account for approximately one quarter of all road-related injuries and fatalities, often preventable injuries and deaths. I think we can all recognize that faced with those numbers, there is more to be done, more we can do as a society, as MPPs in our communities, to raise awareness and talk about the root causes that inflate teen accident ratio numbers so far out of proportion.

Certainly, the distracted driving legislation we passed this year takes a step towards addressing these numbers, but legislation is only part of the picture. We must all play a part for the concerted effort required to ensure teen driver safety, both this week and for the years to come.

I also want to take the opportunity to ask my colleagues to join me in showing support for our professional school bus drivers across the province today in recognition of School Bus Driver Appreciation week, a week when we should all “get on the bus” and reinforce the importance of student transportation and school bus safety.

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Today, we have in excess of 825,000 children transported to and from school every day using some 18,000

safe and reliable yellow school buses, travelling two million kilometres and providing 300 million safe rides during the year. That's a whole lot of safety, Speaker, and the humble bus drivers delivering that safety deserve our recognition and our respect, both this week and throughout the school year.

On behalf of all of us here and those across the province, I'd like to offer our thanks to those who ensure the safety of Ontario's children each and every day of the school year. Thank you. And thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to recognize their efforts and those creating awareness and promoting safety during National Teen Driver Safety Week.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm pleased to be able to rise and speak in response to the statement of the Minister of Transportation this afternoon.

National Teen Driver Safety Week is one of those times that your professional life comes very close to your personal life. As many of you know, I have a teen daughter, Jacqueline. She's 18. As you can all imagine, her safety is our top priority. She is one of those young drivers we are talking about today. This week is designed to stop the clock on unnecessary teen deaths on our roads by raising awareness and seeking solutions.

For me, that means working with my daughter to make sure she knows what not to do when she is driving. I also want to work with her to make sure that she passes that message along to her friends and other family members.

There's another aspect to making sure that teen drivers are safe: driving schools. In driving schools, teens learn not just how to drive but how to drive safely for themselves and for everyone else around them. They learn to respect the machine they are in and to watch out for warning signs from other drivers. Driver school is great for learning to be a safe driver. It's also great for reducing auto insurance rates, and we know how much that costs parents in the province of Ontario.

Like I said, this is an issue that is very close to home for me. I would like to encourage all of you to do the same. Go out and talk to a teen you know. Maybe it's your own child, your niece or your nephew. Maybe it's a neighbour's child or a friend's child. Whoever it is, make sure you take the opportunity this week to talk to them about being safe drivers. Do it not just for them but for all their friends and family. Do it because car accidents don't just affect people who are in them; they affect everyone who has loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest challenges facing young drivers today is, of course, distracted driving. As I mentioned a few days ago in this House, distracted driving is becoming the number one cause of accidents in this country and this province.

I also had the pleasure of meeting with some folks from CAA Niagara a few days ago, and they stressed this issue with me as well.

I know that, for me, texting and driving wouldn't work because I can barely text and stand up at the same time, but for my kids it's a different story. They live with their phones in their hands, and we need to be very strong in

telling them about the dangers of texting and driving. That is why I was very happy to see new penalties around distracted driving being brought in and why I believe we need to continue to address this issue every year.

Teen driver safety is a huge issue not just here in Ontario but right across the country. Right now, as we've heard before, our young people make up 13% of licensed drivers in this country. Even though they only make up 13% of licensed drivers, they account—think about this—for 25% of all road-related injuries and, unfortunately, fatalities.

Obviously that's just awful to hear, that 25% of the time you hear about an accident on the news, it's going to be one of our young people being affected. One of our young people and their entire family is being affected in 25% of the accidents that result in injuries and fatalities. I believe, like a lot of other people, we can prevent that. We can. Quite frankly, we must take the time, the energy and the effort that is required to put a stop to that.

There is one very simple way that we can help prevent those injuries and deaths. All it takes sometimes is a conversation. I've already said it once, but I wanted to say it again: Take the time this week to get out there and talk to young people in your life about the dangers of distracted driving, the dangers of drunk driving and the dangers of being behind the wheel in general. Take the time to encourage them to spread that message to their friends and beyond.

Again, I'd like to thank the minister for his comments on this very important issue, teen driving safety, and thank Parachute Canada.

Please, everyone, get out there and make this week count. It's all about educating our children.

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

PETITIONS

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I would like to thank very much the dental practice of Lisa Bentley in Mississauga for having submitted it. It reads as follows:

“Whereas fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean; and

“Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community water supplies is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

“Whereas dental decay is the second-most frequent condition suffered by children, and is one of the leading causes of absences from school; and

“Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking

water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, providing optimal dental health benefits, and well below the maximum acceptable concentrations; and

“Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

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

“That the ministries of the government of Ontario adopt the number one recommendation made by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health in a 2012 report on oral health in Ontario, and amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this petition and to send it with page Sebastian.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have a petition here from the great people of the Kenora–Rainy River riding, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas government cuts have a direct impact on patient care and front-line workers;

“Whereas hospital base operating budgets have been frozen for four years in a row and hospital global funding increases have been set below the rate of inflation since 2008, meaning that hospital budgets have been cut in real dollar terms ... for eight years in a row;

“Whereas Ontario government funding figures show that home care funding per client is less today than it was in 2002;

“Whereas Ontario hospital funding is the lowest in Canada;

“Whereas Ontario ranks eighth out of 10 provinces in hospital funding as a percentage of provincial GDP; and

“Whereas the government has actually refused to acknowledge that service cuts are happening;

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

“To immediately stop cuts and freezes to hospital budgets;

“To immediately cease the laying off of nurses and other front-line workers; and

“To fund hospitals adequately to ensure highest quality patient care across the province.”

I wholeheartedly support this and will give this to the page to deliver to the table.

PROTECTION DE L’ENVIRONNEMENT

M. Arthur Potts: J’ai une pétition adressée à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que les microbilles sont de petites particules de plastique de moins de 1 mm de diamètre, qui passent à

travers nos systèmes de filtration de l’eau et sont présentes dans nos rivières et dans les Grands Lacs;

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« Attendu que la présence de ces microbilles dans les Grands Lacs augmente et qu’elles contribuent à la pollution par le plastique de nos lacs et rivières d’eau douce;

« Attendu que la recherche scientifique et les données recueillies jusqu’à présent révèlent que les microbilles qui sont présentes dans notre système d’alimentation en eau stockent des toxines, que des organismes confondent ces microbilles avec des aliments et que ces microbilles peuvent se retrouver dans notre chaîne alimentaire;

« Nous, les soussignés, présentons une pétition à l’Assemblée législative aux fins suivantes :

« Mandater le gouvernement de l’Ontario pour qu’il interdise la création et l’ajout de microbilles aux produits cosmétiques et à tous les autres produits de santé et de beauté connexes et demander au ministère de l’Environnement d’effectuer une étude annuelle des Grands Lacs pour analyser les eaux et déceler la présence de microbilles. »

I agree with this petition—what I can remember of it—and I sign it and leave with page Faith.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mrs. Gila Martow: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario families and businesses have seen their hydro costs more than triple under the Liberal government since 2003;

“Whereas the Liberal government’s unaffordable Green Energy Act, the \$2 billion wasted on the smart meter program and the \$1.1 billion wasted on the cancelled gas plants will translate into a further 42% increase in hydro bills over five years;

“Whereas the Auditor General revealed that the Liberal government has collected approximately \$50 billion over the last decade through a global adjustment tax on hydro bills largely used to subsidize exorbitant green energy contracts;

“Whereas the Liberal government has allowed peak hydro rates to increase by 15% on May 1;

“Whereas the Liberal government’s elimination of the clean energy benefit will mean an average increase in hydro bills of \$137 per year;

“Whereas the Liberal government’s planned sale of a majority share of Hydro One will mean higher hydro bills;

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

“To call on the Liberal government to protect Ontario families and businesses from further hydro increases by applying all proceeds from the sale of Hydro One to the \$27-billion electricity debt and imposing a moratorium on any new industrial wind and solar projects.”

I’m happy to affix my signature and give it to page Michael.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: “To the Minister of Transportation, government of Ontario:

“Whereas the new Union-Pearson Express line continues to negatively impact residents along the corridor with excessive noise and vibration and bells, because:

“(1) Intermittent bells announcing the arrival and departure of trains at Bloor Station are causing significant stress and sleep disruption; and

“(2) There is concern that property values will decrease;

“We, the undersigned impacted residents of Toronto, Ontario, call upon the provincial government to:

“—work with federal counterparts to eliminate the use of train bells in the vicinity of Glen Lake Condominiums, located at 2495 Dundas Street West; and

“—implement a noise-mitigation plan along the UPX corridor, if construction continues.”

This is just one condominium’s worth—I absolutely agree. I’m going to give it to Cameron to be delivered to the desk.

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I have a petition that reads:

“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 that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly 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.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition. I will affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Julia.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Sarah Campbell: “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 support this petition. I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Sebastian to deliver.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the \$100 ODSP Work-Related Benefit provides a critically important source of funds to people with disabilities on ODSP who work, giving them the ability to pay for much-needed, ongoing work-related expenses such as transportation, clothing, food, personal care and hygiene items, and child care; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Community and Social Services plans to eliminate the Work-Related Benefit as part of a restructuring of OW and ODSP employment benefits, and has said that ongoing work-related expenses will not be covered by its new restructured Employment-Related Benefit; and

“Whereas eliminating the Work-Related Benefit will take approximately \$36 million annually out of the pockets of people with disabilities on ODSP who work; and

“Whereas a survey conducted by the ODSP Action Coalition between December 2014 and February 2015 shows that 18% of respondents who currently receive the Work-Related Benefit fear having to quit their jobs as a result of the loss of this important source of funds; 12.5% fear having to reduce the amount of money they spend on food, or rely on food banks; and 10% fear losing the ability to travel, due to the cost of transportation; and

“Whereas people receiving ODSP already struggle to get by, and incomes on ODSP provide them with little or no ability to cover these costs from regular benefits; and

“Whereas undermining employment among ODSP recipients would run directly counter to the ministry’s goal of increasing employment and the provincial government’s poverty reduction goal of increasing income security;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the provincial government’s plan to eliminate the ODSP Work-Related Benefit.”

We should be ashamed of how we treat those on ODSP. I definitely am going to sign this. I’m going to give it to Michael to be delivered to the table. Thank you, Michael.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Sarah Campbell: This is such an important petition, it’s worth repeating here:

“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 support this petition, and will give this to Cameron to deliver to the table.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. John Fraser: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly:

“Whereas fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean; and

“Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community water supplies is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

“Whereas dental decay is the second-most frequent condition suffered by children, and is one of the leading causes of absences from school; and

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“Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, providing optimal dental health benefits, and well below the maximum acceptable concentrations; and

“Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

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

“That the ministries of the government of Ontario adopt the number one recommendation made by the

Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health in a 2012 report on oral health in Ontario, and amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I agree with this petition, am affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Michael.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

PATHWAYS TO POST-SECONDARY EXCELLENCE ACT (POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL REPORT), 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES VOIES DE L’EXCELLENCE AU NIVEAU POSTSECONDAIRE (RAPPORT SUR L’ENSEIGNEMENT POSTSECONDAIRE)

Mr. Baker moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 127, An Act to amend the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario Act, 2005 to require the Council to collect and publish information in respect of certain educational institutions / Projet de loi 127, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2005 sur le Conseil ontarien de la qualité de l’enseignement supérieur pour exiger que le Conseil recueille et publie des renseignements concernant certains établissements d’enseignement.

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

The member for Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I’m honoured to stand in the House today to speak about private member’s Bill 127, An Act to amend the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario Act, 2005.

Before I speak to the bill, I’d just like to take a moment to recognize some of the people in the audience who are with us today and the people who have made this bill possible. The first people I’d like to acknowledge are the folks who are with us here in the east members’ gallery, student leaders from across Ontario who have made this bill possible. They advised on the bill, they were the inspiration for the bill, the students that they represent were the inspiration for the bill, and I thank you very much for all that you’ve done. All the students from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, the College Student Alliance, the Canadian Federation of Students and the Ontario Graduate Students’ Alliance: I thank you.

I would also like to thank the many students from across Ontario and the other stakeholders who provided advice on this bill but could not be with us today.

Speaker, as you know, to put together a bill like this, especially as a private member, you need a fantastic team. I’ve had the fortune of having a fantastic team since being elected to the Legislature, so I’d like to thank the staff who’ve worked on this. Sinéad Anderson, my

EA; Aashish Oberoi, my LA; Theresa Lubowitz, Domenic Bitondo and Aaron Van Tassel, I thank you.

I'd also like to thank my fellow members of caucus and MPPs from all parties who advised, who have asked questions, who've given suggestions for the bill, and staff. You all know who you are, and I thank you so much. We wouldn't be here without you.

Speaker, once in a while when I rise in the House I refer back to my family and especially to my grandparents, whom I was always very close to. With your indulgence, I'd like to tell a brief story about my family again.

As many of you know, my grandparents on my mom's side were immigrants to Canada. They were fiercely proud of their ancestral heritage, but they were also amongst the proudest Canadians I've ever known.

One of the proudest moments I remember from my grandfather and grandmother was the day my sister and I graduated from university. It stands out like it was yesterday. Later on, my sister and I decided to pursue graduate studies. By then, my grandfather had unfortunately passed, but my grandmother was with us. She was over 90 years old. She was in her early 90s and in frail health, and very rarely could she leave the house; very rarely would she travel. She certainly wouldn't fly anywhere. Even long drives were a challenge.

When my sister and I graduated from our graduate studies—we were studying far away—my grandmother not only took that long car ride, she not only got on a plane to travel to where we were graduating, but she actually went out and got a passport so that she could visit us. It was a passport she would only use that one time.

I think that reflects how proud my grandmother was. She was proud because of the importance of post-secondary education to our lives. She was proud of the work that we had done, of course, but she was also proud of the future that lay before us, I think. I think she is not an exception. She is the norm. Families—grandparents, parents, sisters, brothers—are all proud, and students are proud, of the work they are doing and of students, particularly when they graduate, and the future ahead of them.

It was not so long ago that I was a student. After being a student, I pursued a career in business, and upon graduating from my graduate studies I pursued a career in management consulting, where I was involved in recruiting students from post-secondary. During that time I also had a chance to be a part-time faculty member at York University. In these roles I have touched post-secondary education from multiple perspectives: as a student, as a faculty member and a business person.

I believe that Ontario's post-secondary institutions are some of the best in the world. We have world-class institutions. They produce incredibly talented students, and I'm proud of their success, and I'm frankly proud of the work our government has done to support both students and post-secondary excellence. Our institutions are indeed some of the best in the world.

In part because of my experience at a student, as a faculty member and as a business person, and in part because those institutions are so strong, I also believe that the choice that students make about their post-secondary program, and the institution at which they will study, is one of the most important and pivotal decisions that people make in their lives. It is one of the most significant financial investments students and families make in their lives, and the choice of post-secondary program of study is pivotal in shaping a student's future prospects and opportunities. The choice of post-secondary study shapes the path we follow in our careers, and it shapes the path we follow for the rest of our lives.

Many students rightly have high expectations with regard to their experience in college or university, and what employment or further academic opportunities they will be able to pursue post-graduation. In some cases, those expectations are met and even exceeded. But some students, however, pursue a post-secondary degree and then learn about aspects of the post-secondary experience that they would have benefited from knowing about in advance.

Sometimes they discover that there are unexpected costs related to their post-secondary studies, that the student experience is meaningfully different than what they expected that it would be, and very commonly—and I think we all know examples of students in this situation—students struggle to find a job or pursue a career in their chosen field of study post-graduation. Those graduates then either pursue a career in a different field or pursue additional post-secondary studies that support their aspirations post-graduation. I know we can think of examples of people who we've met or constituents who we've met in that situation.

I even experienced this myself. When I graduated as a student from my undergraduate program, I struggled to find a job in my chosen field. As a professor, as a business person and now as an MPP, I have spoken with a lot of young people who were in that same position, and many of them have said that if they had known when applying what they know today as students and as graduates, they might have pursued a different field of study, not because the quality of that education wasn't strong—they received a strong education—but because the program they chose didn't prepare them for their specific career path that they wanted to pursue, for the dreams that they wanted to pursue.

That is why I believe it is so important that students and families are able to access the information that they need to make an informed decision about which post-secondary institution to attend and which post-secondary program to pursue. The private member's bill that I have introduced is meant to help students and families make those informed decisions.

If passed, Bill 127 would task the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario with the collection of information and creation of an online resource that would help students make more informed choices as they decide on which university or college to attend and which program

of study to pursue. The online resource would do this by providing information relevant to students about each post-secondary program in Ontario, in an easily accessible, consistent and simple manner.

In developing this bill I have consulted broadly with students, of course, with the folks who are here today, with guidance counsellors, with colleges, with universities, with faculty and with the business community, and everyone agrees that providing relevant and up-to-date information to students is important.

What emerged from this process was an understanding for me that students and their families wanted more information on three main topics when it came to post-secondary education. The first questions centre around access to post-secondary education: What does it take to get into an institution or particular program of study? Prospective students wanted to know things like, "How much does it cost for me to go to that particular program? What ancillary fees might I encounter when I get there? What are the costs of the educational resources that I'm going to need when I get there?" These are things that can often be a surprise or unexpected.

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This bill would require that HEQCO provide this information around access to post-secondary, that it provide information about what the admission requirements are, academics, what grades a student needs to get in. What costs are they going to encounter: tuition fees, ancillary fees, educational fees? What government-funded student aid is available for that particular program? What are the class sizes, and what are the demographics of that particular institution? These are the kinds of things that people want to know as they're applying and thinking about what it takes to access an institution and a program.

Secondly, students have questions about what it is really like to be a student at a prospective school—you don't really know until you go—and are interested not only in the lived experience from the perspective of current students but also from a graduate perspective.

This bill will require that HEQCO share with students what they can expect from their student experience and how current students and graduates of the program of study they're thinking of rate that experience. It should include things like teaching quality, library resources, campus accessibility, academic and career support services, health services, mental health services, co-op work programs, extracurricular programs, facilities and residences etc.—the kinds of things that make up the student experience.

The third category: There was a desire from students and families for more information about what job or career path they could expect when they graduate. Questions I heard from students were things like: "What do students do after they graduate from that particular program? How much income can I expect to have? How much debt can I expect to have? Will I be able to pay my debt back when I graduate?" They were concerned about having information to make a long-term investment decision about their education.

This bill would require that HEQCO share with students things like the employment or educational status of graduates from a particular program: things like the location of employment and the industry or sector of employment they're working in. What are they doing after they graduate? The full-time and part-time status of employment: Are people employed full-time or part-time? And what, if any, further academic studies are they pursuing as well, because that's a path that many students consider after graduating. What is the average annual compensation of students from that program? What government-issued student debt do they hold when they graduate? What percentage of grads have defaulted on loans after a certain amount of time has elapsed after graduation? How satisfied are employers with graduates?

The bill would address the gaps that students have talked about and create a resource to help students navigate the range of choices before them.

There is a significant amount of information collected about post-secondary institutions in Ontario. Some of that information that students and families have said they need is either not gathered, or when it is gathered, it's not presented in an easy way for students to access or it's not comparable or it doesn't include colleges and universities. This is meant to help students make those choices. The private member's bill tasks HEQCO with developing this resource. HEQCO is an arm's-length agency affiliated with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities that evaluates the post-secondary sector and provides recommendations to the minister. Their areas of focus include, among others, student satisfaction and postgraduate outcomes. That's why they've been selected, because we believe they have the expertise and the experience to be able to carry this out.

To ensure that we have flexibility to add information as it is deemed relevant, as more information about post-secondary education becomes available, and as we discover there are other things we want to know about post-secondary, the bill offers quite a lot of flexibility. It allows HEQCO to add additional information and metrics as they see fit.

Bill 127 has the endorsement of each of the province's major student groups: the Canadian Federation of Students, the College Student Alliance, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance and the Ontario Graduate Students' Alliance, for which I am very grateful.

Speaker, I started today by speaking about my grandmother, and how she cherished the moment when my sister and I graduated, how proud she was and how she's an example of families and parents of students across our province. We have world-class post-secondary institutions in Ontario, and I believe that the choice a student makes about their program and institution of study is one of the most important decisions they will make in their life. It's one of the largest financial investments, and it shapes students' careers and the paths they take. That is why it is so important that they have the information they need to make an important decision.

Once implemented, I believe that this bill would lead to better decision-making by students and stronger

outcomes, and would give families of students even more to be proud of. I humbly ask all members for their support of this piece of legislation.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am absolutely delighted to stand in the House today and speak in favour of this bill, put forward by my parliamentary assistant, Yvan Baker, who I have to say is doing an extraordinary job in his position as my parliamentary assistant at Treasury Board. I want to take this opportunity to thank him for that.

I also want to say that this bill is a terrific example of a great private member's bill. It is focused, it is achievable and it demonstrates a real commitment to making government work for people.

There's an old adage that knowledge is power. But where does that knowledge come from? It comes from data. Data is power. Making data publicly available has the potential to be very powerful indeed. In my time as Minister of Health, I saw first-hand how publicly reporting on quality metrics for hospitals has driven big change. This was, at the time, a difficult thing to do because nobody wants the public and their colleagues to know, for example, that their hospital is in the lowest quartile when it comes to hospital-acquired infections or standardized mortality rates. But by definition, a quarter of our hospitals are in the lowest quartile when it comes to those quality metrics.

The fact is that the Excellent Care for All Act, which mandates public reporting of quality indicators, is driving transformation. We know that when people have data on how they are doing, especially in comparison to others, they will make changes, because we all strive to do our best, and making data public helps us to do just that. If we see others doing better, we'll find out how they did better and we'll change the way we do our work. That kind of transparency drives innovation and improvement, and that's not only better for people, but it's better for the system too.

This bill, if passed, could do for the post-secondary sector what the Excellent Care for All Act did for the health care sector. It would require that the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario collect and publish information on admission requirements, program costs, class sizes and the employment status of graduates. That increases transparency and access to information for students and for post-secondary institutions. It will help students make better decisions and it will help institutions do a better job for their students. It ensures that young people and their families have the information they need to make one of the most important decisions that they will make for their future.

We know that a good education prepares young people for success in life. It gives them the tools and the skills to find that first job and leads them on the path to a prosperous future. We know that our world-class post-secondary institutions are crucial to our economy. We do have the most highly educated workforce in the OECD,

and we're proud of that. More than 66% of adults in Ontario complete post-secondary education—more than any other country in the OECD.

Businesses come here, businesses get established here and businesses grow here, because of the talent and dedication of our workforce. For example, Shopify, a Canadian e-commerce start-up and Ontario success story, recently announced that it is expanding and opening a large new office in Waterloo. They chose to expand in Waterloo because of—what they call—the “amazing talent pool” in the region, a talent pool that is filled with graduates who have received a top-tier education from universities in the region.

It's clear how important a person's decision about their education is, both for that person's future and for the future health of our economy. That's why we need to make sure that people have access to the information they need to make an informed decision.

I applaud the member from Etobicoke Centre, I applaud the bill that he has presented and I encourage all of us to support this legislation.

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

Hon. Liz Sandals: I, too, am very pleased to support Bill 127, and I thank the members opposite for co-operating with my schedule.

The bill that is being discussed here, in my view, addresses a couple of issues that I quite often see in my role as Minister of Education. One is the problem of students who are considering post-secondary education programs not truly understanding where that program leads as a career. For example, my background happens to be in math and computer science. If you look at the whole STEM area—that is science, technology, engineering and math—there are all sorts of opportunities there, but students don't actually understand what careers may follow from post-secondary courses in that area. So this bill would help that decision-making by collecting information about the employment of graduates after they complete the program, so that students can see the track between a particular program and the employment that it leads to. That's one of the things that the data that is collected would help with.

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Another problem that I often see is the problem of students not really understanding until it's too late what the prerequisites for various post-secondary programs are. Once again, this would be a repository of the information about: If you're interested in a particular career—this is going at it the other way around—if you actually do know what career you want to follow, what program do you need and what high school credits do you need to get there?

I think about a letter I got once from a young lady who wanted to become a veterinarian. She was complaining that she had to take math in high school, that it's compulsory for a few years. She couldn't see why on earth she would need mathematics to become a veterinarian. Well, it just so happens that my husband is a veterinarian,

so I actually knew this answer off the top of my head: (1) You're going to need math as a veterinarian, as you're figuring out drug dosages, so basic math actually matters; and (2) in order to get into the program, you first need university science, and to get into university science, you need math. So it all followed back if you tracked back.

The data on this website would allow students to do that, to see connections between high school credits and future post-secondary, so I totally support this bill.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to Bill 127, the Pathways to Post-secondary Excellence Act, 2015. As we've heard, this bill will require our post-secondary institutions, through the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, to collect and publish a list of information to help students make informed decisions when plotting out their course for higher learning.

There is no doubt that the goals of this bill will find support in all corners of this province and, in fact, in this Legislature, as we can all understand the importance when making significant life choices of having a clear view of all the comparables, rather than going in with blinders on. Further, the provision of data on all the variables, including costs, class size, graduation and work placement rates, can only help to improve our post-secondary institutions and, in turn, the students' post-secondary experience across the board. It will help students in their pursuit of the best educational experience, while it encourages institutions that may be lagging behind to pull up their socks to appeal to potential pupils seeking the best fit.

Frankly, Speaker, the call for openness and transparency reflected in this bill is in fact a breath of fresh air from a government that has oft spoken of these principles but failed to live up to them time and again. The more openness and transparency the better, and if this is where it starts, then let's get on with it.

I think of the post-secondary leaders in my community: the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier, the University of Guelph and, of course, Conestoga College, institutions that will only further benefit from the publication of data and stats in one easily accessible place, that highlights the good work being done in the region of Waterloo and neighbouring Guelph when it comes to higher learning. That work is well known, not only by word-of-mouth reputation from those who have experienced it, but also because, in fact, these institutions have long made public their key performance indicators, indicators we are all very proud of where I come from.

When it comes to employment rates, for instance, six months after graduation, 87.5% of University of Waterloo graduates find work, while it's 89.1% at Laurier, both over the provincial average. After two years, the rate jumps to 93% and 94%, respectively.

Digging deeper into the Waterloo numbers, prospective students will find that the school has a full-time

enrolment of 32,900, with 7,800 degrees granted in 2014. As well, I would be remiss if I did not also note here that those students and degree earners have helped Waterloo be recognized as the most innovative university in Canada according to the annual Maclean's survey, the 21st consecutive time that Waterloo has been ranked Canada's top university for innovation.

Over at Laurier, student satisfaction numbers, which are also called for in this bill, are equally impressive: 95% of students are satisfied with their decision to attend Laurier, and 84% of first-year students evaluate their Laurier experience as "good" or "excellent." I would also note that the Laurier team has once again won the School of the Year title for the undefeated sixth year in a row and the Academic Cup for a fourth consecutive year at the JDC Central competition.

Down the road, of course, in my community of Kitchener-Conestoga, at Conestoga College, the story just continues to get better. In fact, when it comes to employment, 94.2% of Conestoga College graduates, I being one of them, who entered the labour force found employment within six months, making their graduate employment rate the best of any publicly funded college in the province and well above the provincial average of 88.9%. Over the last 10 years, the employment rate average of Conestoga College graduates is an outstanding 93.1%.

Further data on Conestoga's key performance indicators reveal that 95.1% of employers were satisfied with the quality of the education of those graduates that attended the college; 83.2% of graduates were satisfied with the usefulness of their college education in achieving their goals after graduation; and almost 80% of students were satisfied with the overall quality of services, programing and resources available to them.

This is the type of information that weighs heavily on students and their families as they make those lifelong decisions on post-secondary education. It's the type of information for all post-secondary institutions that should be readily and easily accessible to the public to compare and contrast in a one-stop-shop format as they face those choices.

In addition to the importance of graduate and employment rate information, so too is information like cost and class size important to weigh in the balance and compare against other options.

The bottom line is that we want to ensure that when the students and their families make that choice, they make the best choice. So of course we're happy to support the member's private member's bill today.

I thank you for the time.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It's a great pleasure for me to rise as MPP for London West, and also as post-secondary education critic for the Ontario NDP caucus, to speak to Bill 127, An Act to amend the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario Act, which would require the council to collect and publish information about post-secondary institutions.

Like other members have already said, I want to offer my thanks and congratulations to the member for Etobicoke Centre for taking the initiative to bring this bill forward and also for his interest in and commitment to the post-secondary sector.

From my perspective, post-secondary education is something that we don't talk about nearly enough in this chamber. We all recognize its critical importance to Ontario's economic prosperity, to the social and cultural well-being of our province, and we need to ensure that Ontario's post-secondary education is as good as it can be and that all students, regardless of where they live in this province or what kind of financial circumstances they come from, regardless of their age or other racial or ethnic backgrounds, have opportunities to participate in post-secondary education.

This bill will require all publicly assisted Ontario colleges and universities to submit data and information to HEQCO, which will be published on a central website that would be governed by HEQCO. I hope you noted my use of the term "publicly assisted" colleges and universities rather than "publicly funded." This is a nuanced change in language that the ministry itself has adopted. What this does is reflect the shift in post-secondary education funding that we have seen over the last decade or so, when public dollars are declining and private revenues are increasing in terms of sources of funding for our post-secondary institutions.

When I talk about private revenues, most of all I'm referring to tuition fees that are collected from students.

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For the first time in Ontario's history, this past year we saw public funding decline to the point where it now represents less than 50% of university revenues. Of course, what this means is that institutions have to look to collect more tuition dollars from students and also seek out more corporate donations.

Today, Ontario university students are paying the highest tuition fees in Canada. They have seen an increase of 248% over the past two decades. As a parent who has two children right now in post-secondary education, both of them living away from home, I can tell you that the costs are substantial to be able to afford post-secondary education.

When students and their families are looking at making this kind of very hefty investment, they deserve to have as much information as possible so that they can make good choices, choices that are right for them in terms of the future that they want to build for themselves. They deserve to have access to information about what kinds of programs are out there, how much these programs will cost and what kinds of outcomes they can expect if they participate in these programs. I'm talking about outcomes both in terms of the employment that, hopefully, they can go into after they graduate, but also in terms of the debt they can expect to incur.

I again congratulate the member on the support, the very enthusiastic support, that he has received from student organizations. I have talked to many of these

organizations and understand how much they appreciate the work that you did—that the member did—to consult with college students, with university undergraduate student organizations, and also with graduate students.

Certainly, in my conversations with representatives of these organizations, I heard strong support for the principle of helping students make more informed choices and the principle of improving accessibility by creating a single portal that would make information more easily and widely available.

I also consulted with other organizations in the post-secondary sector who also agreed that the intent of this bill was a good one and that it is always important to provide students with more and better information about their post-secondary choices.

I do have some concerns about the bill, however, based on the conversations that I had with stakeholders. The primary concern is the designation of HEQCO as the host agency for this information.

I want to be clear that as a former PI for several HEQCO research projects, I have the utmost respect for the quality of HEQCO's research and also for their understanding of post-secondary issues.

HEQCO exists by virtue of statute. It was created to advise the government on post-secondary education issues. Certainly, it has deep knowledge of the sector, which is incredibly valuable in its advisory role to the government. However, they do not have the in-house data expertise that would be required to build and maintain the information architecture that would be needed for a project of this scope. At least, to my knowledge, they don't have that kind of expertise.

As the member for Etobicoke Centre mentioned, most of the data that is identified in Bill 127 is already available, but it exists in various forms across many different platforms. This data includes NSSE data on student satisfaction, KPI data on student and employer satisfaction, as well as OSAP data on loans and defaults.

On the university side, the portal that is envisioned in this legislation refers to a lot of information that is already collected through the common university data online system, or CUDO, and that would include admission rates, entering averages, tuition and ancillary fees. I do want to say that information about ancillary fees is particularly important to students, because those fees can add significantly to the cost of post-secondary education.

CUDO also includes information about class size, number of instructional faculty, and full- and part-time enrolment. There is some data included already in CUDO on student satisfaction, and there is also data on employment status after six months and after two years.

This bill will consolidate all of this information that's already publicly available. However, keeping that information up to date is going to be a challenge. Making it available in an online format that would be searchable by institution, so that a student could just put in an institution they're interested in and they'd be able to pull the OSAP data, pull the KPI data and pull from these other

different data sources—that would be a massive undertaking, and it would carry significant cost implications in terms of the budget that HEQCO would require.

The second issue that I want to speak about concerns governance. If this bill proceeds and HEQCO is designated as the host agency, we think it will be critically important to have incorporated into the bill a formal data governance structure for the portal. This would ensure broad stakeholder involvement in decisions that are made about what data is collected and how it is used. It would also ensure appropriate oversight and accountability for the information.

There are provisions in the bill that make this formal data governance structure particularly important, because the bill gives HEQCO the sole authority to govern the collection of all the information that is identified in the bill. This information includes the publicly available data that I already talked about, but also new data that will be collected through a survey that is established by the regulations. The bill empowers HEQCO to govern the development of student satisfaction surveys and graduate satisfaction surveys. HEQCO is empowered to decide who's going to be surveyed, the form and manner of the survey and the timing of the survey.

The bill goes even further to allow HEQCO to prescribe any additional information that the council believes should be collected. Having been involved in provincial survey research projects, I can tell you that the costs of designing and implementing such a survey are significant, so we need to be aware that this bill does come with some major financial implications.

There are a couple of missing pieces of data that I just wanted to quickly reference. If this bill goes forward and these surveys are conducted, I want to make sure that some of this data is collected.

First of all, I've been pushing for more information about work-integrated learning programs. This bill makes reference to student satisfaction with co-op work placements, but does not address any of the other forms of work-integrated learning. We need to have that information to find out how students feel about their internship, their field placement, their practicum. I think that would add value to the dataset that is created.

Second, in addition to OSAP data about student debt, we should be collecting information about private debt that students accumulate. We know anecdotally that a lot of students are maxed out on their credit cards and unable to afford post-secondary education.

Finally, contract faculty has been an ongoing concern. We have an opportunity to collect some data included in this dataset about full-time versus contract faculty, and numbers of teaching hours by full-time profs versus contract faculty profs.

In closing, again, I support the bill and I applaud the member, but I'd like to see some changes made.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to support my colleague from Etobicoke Centre and his private member's bill, Bill 127.

Let me begin by acknowledging my background as a former nurse, as a former nursing professor and also as a former school board trustee. This bill could not be more timely. As we speak, Mr. Speaker, across the province of Ontario we have hundreds and thousands of students and international students right now trying to check out the scene: Which university or which college should they apply to for the coming year? On the timeliness of the bill, I can't speak enough to the member from Etobicoke Centre. The information that's being requested, if the bill gets passed, will ensure more consistency of information but, more importantly, transparency. We have heard the member from London West talk about the inconsistency of messages or information from the different universities and colleges.

1430

A couple of sections of the bill are very, very important in the passage of this bill. Section 8 talks about the employment and educational status of the graduates. At the end of the day, I hear—and I think other members in the House hear—consistent concerns about employment or employability after those programs. For the first time, we're going to have public data released on the university or college's website through the Higher Education Quality Council. Having that information is critically important; it allows the potential students to have that information when they make choices.

The other piece the member was very thoughtful in creating in this particular private member's bill—on page 3 of the proposed legislation—talks about the role of the privacy commissioner as well as the role of the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities: that the information is gathered; that there will be consultation with the privacy commissioner to make sure the information collected is useful but, more importantly, is protected; and that they're annually reporting to the minister about this particular information.

I'm not going to take too much time because I know my other colleagues also want to speak in support of the bill. I wanted to say thank you and congratulations to the member from Etobicoke Centre because students across the province right now are looking forward to information, and he's hopefully providing that information to all students.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to speak on Bill 127, the Pathways to Post-secondary Excellence Act.

I just wanted to recap very quickly that, basically, the bill is calling for us to collect and publish information about certain educational institutions—post-secondary education institutions—and putting this information on an easily accessible website that will allow for better, informed choice for students applying to the post-secondary institutions. This would allow students to improve the way they apply to these institutions.

I wanted to comment on a few things. Number one is that this reminds me of the HomeStars rating—if anybody has gone on to these types of websites where

you get to post a comment and a number of stars. We see it also with TripAdvisor. All of these are tools now that are incredibly powerful in changing not just the way people do business, but the way people are engaged and the way people interact with each other and share information.

In my community of Thornhill, people, in general, share a lot of information just talking, calling and on Facebook. You can see comments on Facebook saying, “Oh, no, no, no. You don’t want your kid to go to this summer camp or this university because of this reason, because of that reason.” “This is how you apply to make sure that you get the residence that you want: Apply with a friend. Apply without a friend”—that sort of advice that people make. This is taking it into a much more public forum where people who don’t actually know each other can be engaged in the sharing of information and helping each other. Sometimes it can be a little dangerous because—are these real people posting on the websites? Can they be trusted? We have to ensure that there’s definitely some accountability there and some transparency on who’s posting, who’s rating and how it’s all being done.

Again, I have always said that a lot of people spend more time buying a car than they do thinking about their career and thinking about how to go about getting that career and what institution they should go to. We all know so many people who said they got a degree and it really wasn’t worth the paper it was printed on. It wasn’t very helpful. They enjoyed going to that institution, but if they had it all to do over again, they might have done things a little differently. I’m looking forward to seeing the public getting engaged, rating and commenting on the website.

Unfortunately, we have to go back to our high schools. The ratings aren’t exactly high enough for our universities. Yes, our universities are rated very high, but unfortunately the universities themselves don’t rate the high schools very high. Maybe that should be part of the discussion. I know that at the University of Waterloo, where I graduated optometry, engineers had a very low success rate moving from first year to second year. Basically, when I asked, I was told by professors, “We found out that we couldn’t go by the high school marks at all. One high school would give students very high marks and we would take them in, and they just were not capable of doing what needed to be done. In other high schools, the students might have had lower marks. So we decided that as long as you finished high school with a 70%, we’re going to take you in. We’re going to take a starting class of 1,500 students and knock it right down to about 600 students for second year.” Well, that’s not fair to those students and those families. Those families invested a lot of money to send their students to engineering school, and the students obviously weren’t successful.

I think we have to question why those students aren’t successful. We want to see high success rates, not just in graduations from the program, but right from day one,

finishing first year in the program. We don’t want students applying for programs and being accepted to programs where they are just not capable and don’t have the background knowledge that they need in terms of the sciences and often even English writing skills.

We also want to see a level playing field, because many of the students who are taking the undergraduate programs are applying to some kind of specialty programs, and there are a lot of complaints that an 80% in physiology, the exact same course at Queen’s, is comparable to a 90% in the same course at another university. I don’t want to name universities, but it’s very difficult to obtain the high marks at Queen’s, at U of T and many of the other schools as well.

I know two of my children who graduated Western felt that it was a very fair marking system. They could go to the deans and say, “This exam question was ambiguous and this is why,” and they could get the marks that they felt they deserved. I think that is, a lot of times, where the disgruntlement comes in: that they don’t feel there’s a level playing field.

In terms of the universities, obviously we’re discussing today the OSAP loan program. There needs to be a level playing field there as well. We’ve heard about publicly assisted colleges and universities. Well, what about the private colleges and universities? In Thornhill, we have many students going to APLUS Institute for their dental hygienist program. They can’t get OSAP designation because they just missed, by one or two percentage points, the graduation rates that they need. They are being compared to publicly assisted institutions for the same program of dental hygienist without any consideration that their program is very targeted to immigrants, very targeted to immigrants who may have degrees in dentistry and medicine and who are coming here to Canada, can’t get qualified and are becoming dental hygienists. They have a lot of older population in the programs that they’re being compared on. The older population have children already, have family situations, have part-time jobs, and may have to put off their graduation because of their families, so that may temporarily affect their graduation rates. What they said to me is that they are being squeezed out for the larger publicly subsidized institutions.

I compare that to the daycare fiasco that we’re seeing. The daycare operators said the exact same thing. They feel they are being squeezed out for the larger, publicly subsidized daycare institutions, which happen to also be unionized.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course we’re here to support anything that gets the public engaged and gets the information to the public that they need and want.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for recognizing me and giving me the opportunity to speak on Bill 127, the bill that is brought forward by the member from Etobicoke Centre. In my very limited time,

let me first congratulate him on bringing a very well researched and thoughtful piece of legislation in front of this House that is going to make a very meaningful difference in the lives of our students.

You know this is a good bill when you've got all the major student groups who are supportive of the bill: the Canadian Federation of Students, the College Student Alliance, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance and the Ontario Graduate Students' Alliance, and I think representatives are here at Queen's Park with us. It's not that common that all these groups agree on one thing. I've worked with them all, so when they do agree on one thing, that means that this bill and this initiative is going to make a meaningful difference in the lives of students.

I've been a lifelong learner; I've had the opportunity to get four degrees from various universities. I can sort of relate to that experience as to how this type of information would have made a very big difference in my life if that kind of information was so rapidly available.

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Now, I admit that I went to school in the pre-Internet era, so one had to go through catalogues and whatnot to get that information. But in this age of technology, when so much information is available to us at our fingertips, through our computers, our iPads and our smart phones, I think it is a fantastic idea that we provide as much information as possible to our students in terms of programs of study, course selection, tuition fees etc., as has been presented through this bill.

I would say that this bill very much complements ecampusontario.ca, the initiative that has been launched by the province of Ontario, providing 13,000 post-secondary courses online, available for students. I think if you couple that resource, that portal, with the information that could be made available through Bill 127, we are really giving our students an incredible opportunity to succeed, to really be able to tailor-design their course selection and be able to ensure that they get quality post-secondary education not only in an established institution setting, at a college or university, but also online as well.

I very much support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I thank everyone for their comments.

I now return to the member for Etobicoke Centre: You have two minutes for your response.

Mr. Yvan Baker: First of all, I'd like to thank the members who spoke to the bill: the President of the Treasury Board, the Minister of Education, the member for Kitchener-Conestoga, the member for London West, the member for Thornhill, the member for Scarborough-Agincourt and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Thank you all very much for speaking to the bill.

I'd like to make a special mention of the opposition members who kindly deferred their time to allow a few of our speakers to step forward. Thank you for that as well.

There were a number of really important points raised by the members opposite, and I can't possibly address

them all. Let me just take a step back and try to quickly address them, but I look forward to having this bill further debated and talked about.

The decision that students make, I believe, about their post-secondary education is one of the most important decisions they will make in their lives, because of the size of the financial investment, but also because of how it affects their future career, their future academic career, their future success and their ability to achieve their potential. That's why I believe it's so important that students have the information they need to make those decisions.

I'm proud of, and I want to thank again, the student organizations that are here today that not only offered their support, but offered their support in building the bill, constructing the bill, giving me advice—pushback, feedback—to get it to this place, so thank you all once again.

A few points were raised by the members opposite, and I'll be brief. There were some excellent points. There was a comment made that there's a lot of information out there. There's absolutely no question that there is a lot of information out there. Some have tried to bring it together. The goal of this was to really make it comprehensive, to cover both colleges and universities—which is currently not available—but also to provide a resource that provides information at the program level rather than at the institution or the faculty level. That does not exist. Even where there are metrics available on some of the things that are in the bill, that's not available.

We've tried to draw a balance. We've tried to be pragmatic, remembering that this is designed for student use and student decision-making, and being conscious of the costs that could potentially be involved. That's why we've asked HEQCO to take it on. We believe they have a lot of the expertise, but more may be needed. Again, we hope that they will make it a priority.

Again, I believe that if we pass this bill, students will make better decisions that will lead to better outcomes.

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

POLICE CARDING PRACTICES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should instruct all police services in Ontario that while the law allows them to stop, detain, investigate and search individuals where there are reasonable grounds to do so, arbitrary and/or discriminatory street checks/carding violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code, have no place in Ontario, and that such practices should be immediately stopped.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Singh has moved private members' notice of motion number 59. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: To begin, the practice that has been going on across Ontario of arbitrary street checks,

or carding, have left, certainly, a deep impact on various communities across this province. Many community activists and many legal experts have said that the practice of arbitrarily stopping someone and collecting information or data sends a message that certain people in the community don't belong. That message, in and of itself, is very hurtful. It's very damaging. What it does is it impacts the self-worth and dignity of members of our community. For that reason, it is a practice that does not have a place in our province and it is a practice that this government must clearly indicate should not continue.

We must acknowledge that police officers provide an essential service in our society, and they do tremendous work. I salute their good work. In addition, police officers also have the right or the power to stop, to detain, to arrest and to search individuals where there are reasonable grounds. The problem is when the detention or the investigation occurs without any grounds. That's the story of many racialized people, many marginalized people in communities across Ontario.

In order to respect their lived experiences, the lived experiences of those who have been stopped in an unfair manner, those who have been made to feel unwelcome or unworthy in their own communities, and to respect the great work of legal experts who have raised this issue, we need, at a minimum, as a starting point, to send a message that carding and street checks, when they're arbitrary or discriminatory, should not continue in this province and should be immediately ended.

Now, as a framework for why this motion is so important, the government conducted a consultation process, and I had the honour of attending the consultation process. While I acknowledge that the government and, particularly, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services took the initiative to address an issue that, perhaps, wasn't something that he needed to address—so I acknowledge that he definitely took some initiative to address this issue—the problem with the consultation process was that the question as it was framed—and, as someone who has experienced street checks and carding that have been arbitrary and as someone who has spoken with community members—the community members themselves indicated that the starting point of the consultation process, the question that was framed, was: When you are stopped by the police, how should that interaction be governed? The problem with that question is that the community got up and said, “We don't want to be stopped in the first place.”

The consultation process started off with a premise that didn't respect the reality of the community, didn't understand the concerns of the community. That's where the government failed to respect the lived experiences of those who have been impacted by this practice. As a starting point, we need to start from the position that this practice, which many people have complained about, many people have raised issues around—we have significant data around this practice being discriminatory—as a starting point, to respect those who have gone through

this, we need to say, at least, at a minimum, that discriminatory and arbitrary practices must end.

In addition, to frame this discussion, we have seen municipalities struggle with this issue. We have seen mayors initially take a position to support carding and then take a position to end carding, leaving people with a feeling there is not a clear resolution. We have seen police boards take up the issue and champion the position of the community, but their concerns and their recommendations fell on deaf ears.

Most recently and quite disturbingly, in my region, in the Peel region, the Peel Police Services Board met, discussed this issue and voted on this issue and voted to suspend the practice of street checks in the region of Peel until the province comes forward with regulations. It seemed to be a very reasonable request. The community was very encouraged by that request. It was made by and championed by the mayors of two of the largest cities in our province: the mayor of Brampton and the mayor of Mississauga. Both pushed forward this initiative. This initiative, pushed forward by representatives representing their community, was met with by the chief of police, Chief Evans, who essentially said no. I'll use my own words. She essentially said, “I will not do this. I will not listen to the recommendation of the police board.”

1450

When we have a police board raising an issue and a police chief not following through on this issue, we know that the responsibility now falls on the Liberal government, the provincial government, to provide the leadership in this province. That's why this motion is so important. We need to send a clear message from the provincial government where policing, prosecution of criminal offences—essentially the buck stops here.

We need the province—we need this Legislative Assembly—to clearly, with one voice, indicate that this practice is not acceptable so that we can address some of the concerns that have arisen in various municipalities and police boards who have struggled with finding a resolution to this issue.

That's the context of why this motion is so important. Although it may seem very obvious to activists and to community organizers that this seems to be an obvious thing—why do we need a motion for something that's so obvious?—it hasn't been very obvious if you look at the lack of leadership on this issue and the lack of any clear guiding principles with respect to discriminatory practices like carding and street checks. That's why it's so important.

Just to provide some context of how prevalent this practice is: We've heard in the city of Toronto that there have been a great deal of incidents involving carding, and the data that's been collected indicates that black and brown people are more than three times more likely to be stopped than white people. Based on that indication of race, this is clearly a discriminatory practice which disproportionately stops racialized members of the community.

It doesn't end there. Analysis of the data also indicates that young people are stopped far more often than other

individuals. So there's also a discriminatory element with respect to age. When age and race are combined, those are the individuals that are most often stopped and made to feel like they don't belong in their own communities. In terms of talking about the personal experience, it is important that we look at the data, but there is a personal experience here too.

Desmond Cole wrote a very compelling piece in *Toronto Life* and shared the personal side to it. Though the data clearly indicates that this practice is discriminatory, it's the lived experience from the people who tell you: If you are stopped again and again and you're not doing anything in any manner that could be construed as illegal or requiring a criminal investigation—if you're stopped again and again, it literally makes you feel like you don't belong. That message has a significant impact on your potential to be successful in a career, in education and in pursuing employment. It has a debilitating impact.

In Peel region, most recently there was data collected that from 2009 to 2014, there were 160,000 street check or carding incidents. Out of that 160,000, when challenged with, "Where is the connection between the street check and the actual solving of a crime or providing some benefit to society?", Police Chief Evans was only able to provide six examples.

One hundred and sixty thousand times, people were stopped who had not committed any offence. Data was taken from them, they were questioned, and only six examples were provided. Presumably, this practice had been going on, some of the evidence suggests, as early as the 1980s; maybe even the 1970s. For over 30 years to be able to provide only six examples shows that there is not the evidentiary basis for the practice.

In terms of the suggestion that people are able to walk away, and that the province doesn't have to provide this guideline because people have the right to walk away, there is a decision from the Supreme Court of Canada which I think is quite important to highlight. In a 2009 decision, the Grant decision, the court says, "Visible minorities ... may, because of their background and experience, feel especially unable to disregard police directions, and feel that assertion of their right to walk away will itself be taken as evasive."

There is evidence that not only will racialized people be perhaps more often stopped, but if they are stopped, if a racialized person says, "I want to walk away," a court determined that they may not feel they have the ability to say that because of their experiences and maybe their power dichotomy. In addition, that act in and of itself might be construed as being evasive and be used negatively against that individual, so it's so important for us to address this issue.

This is something that is essential, because as a member of the law union—I need to indicate that there have been a number of people who worked so hard on this. I need to acknowledge the African Canadian Legal Clinic—the ACLC—the law union, the Concerned Citizens to End Carding and particularly the initiatives of

Michael Thompson and Gordon Cressy. I want to also acknowledge Knia Singh, who is a law student who has been stopped over 30 times and is now challenging this in the Superior Court.

What's important to note is that though our police officers, again, provide a tremendous service to our communities, if the practice of carding continues, it will continue to erode public trust with the police. That doesn't benefit the public and it doesn't benefit the police. If people don't feel they can trust the police, they won't be able to come forward and voluntarily provide information. While our police officers do a great job, we need to provide them with guidance. The province has a responsibility to do that, so that we can build the trust between the public and the police, so that people can come forward voluntarily, so that we have a more safe community and a safer society. We can do that. We can provide that leadership, and we can do that today by supporting this motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for recognizing me. Let me start by saying that I appreciate the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton bringing this motion forward in this House, because it reaffirms the government's position on the issue of street checks and carding. It very well encapsulates and summarizes the position that we have been articulating from the very beginning. I want to take this opportunity again to restate to the House very clearly where we stand on the issue of street checks and carding, and then also to highlight to you the steps we have taken and the next steps to come.

As I have said before, I want to start with two very important foundational standards for us in this issue. Number one, there is zero tolerance when it comes to any kind of racial profiling or discrimination in interactions that our police engage in. The Police Services Act is very clear that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code must always be complied with. We will make sure that police practices are in conformity with that requirement in the Police Services Act and, of course, the rights outlined by the charter and the Human Rights Code.

Secondly, a very important foundational piece is that we as a government stand opposed to any arbitrary or random stops by police simply to collect information when there are no grounds or reasons to do so. I, on behalf of the government and as the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, have been very clear on that point, from the very first press conference that I did when we announced that we'll be bringing regulations dealing with street checks on June 16, and then subsequently. In fact, in my conversations with the member opposite who brought this motion forward, I have restated that position many times. I think he admitted that he and I are exactly on the same page, and I appreciate that.

In fact, on September 1, 2015, of this year, I put out a statement after having extensive consultations across the

province. I think I attended about seven of those—we had seven, and I attended about five of those consultations. I was happy to see the member opposite at two of those consultations, where we heard from people and their lived experiences. It was emotional, and I will never discount anybody's lived experiences in terms of what they may have faced—not just in Toronto and not just in Peel region, but we're talking about Ottawa, London, Thunder Bay, Hamilton and other communities across the province.

As a result, because we heard very loud and clear what the people were telling us, on September 1, I put out a statement. I just want to read one part of that statement because I think it's instructive, where it says that, "We have heard from the community that street checks by definition are arbitrary as well as discriminatory and therefore cannot be regulated – they must simply be ended. The province agrees that these types of stops must end." Speaker, that is a very clear statement in terms of our intentions of stopping this unconstitutional and discriminatory practice.

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As a result of the consultations and the good advice we have received, we've been working very hard in drafting the regulation, and we've been meeting with policing partners, like the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, the Police Association of Ontario and the Toronto Police Association. Our civil liberties partners like the African Canadian Legal Clinic, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Information and Privacy Commissioner, along with the Ontario Ombudsman, have also been giving us advice.

Speaker, what we're doing through our regulation is twofold: as I mentioned earlier, banning or prohibiting the practice of street checks as an arbitrary, random way of stopping people when there is no cause or reason but simply to collect information, but we're going a step further. What we're doing is that where there are reasonable grounds, as the member opposite has said, that it is appropriate for the police to stop, when there are reasonable grounds to stop somebody because there is suspicion of some illegal activity or you want to prevent illegal activity, even those interactions, which are voluntary in nature, must take place in a rights framework; the charter and the Human Rights Code shall apply.

What are those principles around providing cautions, around receipting, how long you keep the information, what happens to that information and how you store that information, what is appropriate training when it comes to police engaging in those voluntary interactions, and of course, accountability and transparency of the information collected so that we can better understand whether this type of practice is effective or not?

Speaker, in my limited time, I want to once again be absolutely clear that the government is committed to banning street checks, or carding, as an arbitrary way of stopping people and collecting information when there is no cause. But we also want to ensure that when the police

can stop because there are reasonable grounds, the stops take place in a rights framework.

Therefore, I support the motion, because it reaffirms the position we have been saying. We have been working very hard in drafting these regulations so that the public can have access to them and police services know exactly what the rules are. In the coming weeks, we will be speaking about those regulations as well.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'm proud to speak to this motion on behalf of the PC Party and to convey our support for the motion. Speaker, and all members here in the Legislature, I'm reminded every time I walk from the main legislative building to my office in the north wing of a profound statement that is engraved on the walls of the passageway. It says, "Where minds and souls find freedom's ways."

The builders of our democracy understood, without reservation, that this institution was and is the safeguard for the freedoms and liberties of the people of Ontario. They and we all ought to understand that it is only societies and communities that safeguard the freedoms and liberties of people that are truly safe and secure. One only has to visit other countries, such as North Korea and Saudi Arabia, among many others, to know and understand first-hand that societies that arbitrarily or unduly limit people's freedoms and liberties are also places where individual safety is in jeopardy.

We as representatives have a duty to both ensure that our police officers have reasonable and proportional tools to conduct their work and protect people and property from crime, but also ensure that these tools do not contradict our constitutional safeguards of freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention.

I welcome the member's motion. The conversation and debate on the matter of street checks and carding in my view is long overdue, but it is essential and necessary. The minister's public consultations, although he spoke briefly of them, in my view have been more of a facade and not truly a reasonable and responsible approach.

The minister's assertion that he will create regulations causes me and many others great concern. It would be unwise and detrimental if the minister used his authority to create regulations without first bringing his proposals in the form of a bill to this House for our rigorous scrutiny, examination and evaluation by all members of the House.

It would also be inconceivable, Speaker, that the minister would be able to prescribe by regulation in sufficient detail the correct manner to deal with the millions of police interactions with people in such a diverse province as Ontario—such a diverse province, with communities of small rural and remote communities, of mid-sized cities and even North America's fourth-largest city.

I would also add that, whenever challenges and problems arise regarding public policy, it is always best to take a moment and study the problem through the lens of

first and primary principles. That is what we have done on this side of the House. It ought to be clear and readily understood that police do have the authority to detain and question anyone if they have reasonable and probable grounds to do so, or if there are exigent circumstances present. This is and always has been an appropriate constraint on the powers of police and a reasonable limit upon the freedoms of people. The motion by the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton is consistent with these principles.

I'd like to conclude with a passage from a former chief High Court justice of Ontario, who also presided over the Ontario Royal Commission Inquiry into Civil Rights, commissioned by Premier John Robarts in the 1970s. His name was Justice James McRuer.

“The object of the Royal Commission, over which I have the honour to preside, is to strengthen the foundations and pillars of justice by drawing blueprints for improvement of the laws of Ontario as they express the power of the state in its relation to the individual. Laws are not weapons but shields serving to protect and regulate the respective rights, freedoms and liberties of the individuals from whom the authority and power of the state is derived.”

When this comes to a vote, I hope we all leave this chamber and remember that profound statement: “Where minds and souls find freedom’s ways.”

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to be able to add my voice to this debate today. We know that police do a professional and vital job in our communities. The nature of policing has been changing as more and more responsibilities are being put at the feet of police.

Police are the only 24-hour response system and, as such, end up acting as law enforcement, social workers, counsellors, crisis management and any other role that fills a gap. Our society needs to have the resources and supports across communities so that police roles are clear and training and services can support them.

The government cannot keep cutting social services and expect the police to pick up the slack. We need strong leadership from this provincial government to provide consistent, province-wide clarity so that police can do the kind of community policing and engaging that we all need and want and so that the public can have confidence in this system.

I live in a community, as we all do, and everyone wants to feel safe and be safe in that community. I want the police in my community to be out and about interacting with and protecting members of my community. I want them to have the resources and tools they need. However, I also want my neighbours—all of them—to feel that they can participate freely in the community. I want all members of the greater community to walk freely down the street without feeling discriminated against or feeling unwelcome. I want the children of my community to grow up and be valued by what they contribute and who they are, and not how they appear. I

would like to imagine a community where no one is marginalized or fearful in their own neighbourhoods.

1510

I'm standing today to speak to an important motion brought forward by my colleague the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, who serves as our justice critic. This is a motion to end arbitrary and discriminatory street checks by police. This motion is not about taking away necessary policing tools. Street checks happen all the time, but when they happen without a reason, when they happen arbitrarily and without cause, then they shouldn't be happening. Addressing and ending arbitrary carding isn't going to solve the larger problem or close the racial divides within our society, but it is part of the picture.

I grew up with cops in my family, and an appreciation for police and the unimaginable work that they do every day. I also grew up thinking of the police in my community as the people to turn to in case of trouble. It wasn't until later in my life that I realized that life is more complicated, and different communities have different histories, different experiences and relationships with police. If there is a way to build trust between police and various communities, then we need to find it and we need to start.

I would imagine that the most important tool, the most effective tool in policing and investigations, would be trust. How many people will turn to the police with what they know or what they have seen when it comes to crime or reporting, if they don't feel that information is going to be protected, if they don't feel they are going to be protected, without that trust? When public trust is weakened, Mr. Speaker, then so is the system. We need to find a way to strengthen it.

This is an emotional and vital conversation that we're having here today, but it is part of the larger discussion about racialized communities and a systemic divide. We see discrimination and racial uneasiness across our society. Here's one example: One of my housemates years ago was a young black man, and when we were in grocery stores I would notice that people around him or employees would watch him, for no reason that I could discern. No one was following me around, no one was eyeing me suspiciously, but he was a different story and I resented it. He shrugged it off because it's his “normal,” but that shouldn't be someone's normal in Ontario. It shouldn't be someone's normal anywhere.

He also never went driving with a ball cap or a hoodie on, because he figured he would get pulled over. Well, that shouldn't be something that happens. If he was speeding, go ahead and pull him over; then he deserves it. But the point is, people need to be able to live their lives without feeling targeted or stigmatized.

I would like to share the words of my friend and neighbour Gary. Gary says, “My earliest experience with the police was not a good one. I can still remember how it felt as if it were yesterday. Anxious, nervous, scared. And for what, just walking down the street, minding my own business. My story is no different from countless males and females of colour. That feeling of ‘What have

I done now.' I really don't think that feeling goes away. That uneasiness becomes ingrained in our DNA. Mistrust, lack of communication, deep-seated fear. How do we change this feeling, this perception. I really don't think you can. We are talking about decades of mistrust. Moving forward, we need to have open and real discussions about how to deal with individuals on an individual basis and not use the same brush to condemn or vilify others based on a look or skin tone. I don't want my three girls to grow up in a society where they are judged based on their colour. I am a 44-year-old black male. I also happen to be a teacher. If I were walking down the street late at night wearing a ball cap, would you stop me?"

Arbitrarily stopping and interrogating people in our communities and recording identifying data without articulable cause is not okay. It damages the relationships between the police and members of the communities. It undermines the goal of encouraging trust and interaction between law enforcement and citizens. It infringes on our rights under the charter and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

There is a path forward, and it is up to us here, to police across the province, to community members, to community leaders, and to legal and human rights groups to find it. It needs to be a solution with the best possible conditions for law enforcement, the clearest rules for officers and the strongest protection for the rights of all Ontarians. We oppose the erosion of trust and community relationships; therefore, I stand in support of this motion.

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

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I am pleased to rise today and speak on this very important issue, private member's motion number 59. I'd like to start out by thanking my colleague the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton for introducing this motion.

We're all fortunate, Mr. Speaker, to be living in an open, accepting and diverse society, and the reason we're able to live in such a society is because this province and this country have placed a premium on individual rights and freedoms. Now, this government has been clear from the outset that our commitment to protecting human rights is unwavering, and discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated.

It's important for Ontarians to know that if you define a street check or carding as "an arbitrary or random stop without cause and for the sole purpose of collecting and storing personal information," we agree that these types of stops must end.

I can fully appreciate the need to stop this often damaging and discriminatory practice. As a journalist, I had the opportunity to speak to many people over the years who recounted troubling and disturbing stories about carding. These experiences are something no Ontarian should have to endure. They are emotional and often scarring experiences.

That's why our government has been working hard for some time now to develop a regulation that will be

mandatory and enforceable for police services across Ontario—and please remember the word "enforceable." This is a complex issue and must be dealt with adequately.

In fact, throughout the past summer, we've engaged and consulted with Ontarians across the province, encouraging feedback from stakeholders and interested parties. Why? Because we want to know the truth, and we want to make sure that we're getting the information we need in order to act appropriately.

We also encouraged MPPs, community groups and other organizations to hold their own discussions on this very important topic, and these groups were invited to present the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services with their feedback.

These consultations are vital to doing the right thing, and that's why they are so important. They're not a facade. Instead, they are important research and they make sure that we are moving forward in the right way. We have now completed these public consultations, and the government is reviewing the feedback to help develop a regulation to bring forward this fall.

Now, throughout this process, there have been two key principles driving Ontario's approach. As you heard earlier, firstly, we have to make sure that we are protecting human rights—and we take that seriously—and have zero tolerance for racism or marginalization, including any form of discrimination.

Secondly, we're opposed to stops that do not have a clear policing purpose and which are predicated solely on bias. The government has heard from the community that street checks by definition are arbitrary, as well as discriminatory and, therefore, cannot be improved or regulated. If that is how you define a street check, then our new regulation will end those types of stops. That's what we're working towards.

Our consultations have focused on developing a new rights-based approach to ensure that interactions with police officers are consistent with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Our forthcoming regulation will help to build and restore confidence—and that's very important—between police and residents who are part of the same community. Furthermore, it will help police officers by removing ambiguities and providing them with clear and easy-to-follow rules.

This motion number 59 is identical to what the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services has said on a number of occasions when asked about our forthcoming regulation, so I really don't understand what it's trying to accomplish. We're already moving on much of this.

In fact, on June 16 in the *Globe and Mail*, the minister is quoted as saying, "Our aim for this regulation is to prevent unjustifiable police stops for no reason or without cause."

To the CBC, again on June 16, the minister said, "The status quo in these cases is not acceptable and cannot continue"—or on October 12, where the minister was

quoted in the *Globe and Mail* as saying, “If the police are engaging in a process where they are stopping someone in a random and arbitrary way, there is no cause or reason to do so.... If they simply want to collect information for their database—not acceptable.”

There’s no question that our government supports the ending of discriminatory street-checking practices based solely on bias. We are already working on trying to make sure this doesn’t occur. We have supported it consistently, we have supported it strongly and we’ve been putting that support into action with the work that’s being done to bring forward a new regulation this fall.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for allowing me to speak today. I want to make sure that everyone here understands that our government and our ministry are moving forward with some very clear actions to ensure that we are doing the right consultations and we’ll move forward with an informed piece in the near future.

Thank you very much for having me here today and thank you for listening to my comments.

1520

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I rise today to speak, on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, to the private member’s motion from the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton. I welcome the member’s motion.

Carding is a practice by which police officers can stop people and request to see their personal credentials even if they are not suspected of a crime. The practice has been used by police for nearly a decade here in Toronto, creating a sizable database of recorded personal information and interaction details.

Based on data compiled by the *Toronto Star* back in 2013, black males accounted for 25% of all people carded in Toronto. Consequently, many questions have been raised about the degree to which police are targeting young black males, as data shows that black males were 17 times more likely to be carded than Caucasians.

Ontario’s former Ombudsman issued his own report on carding and called it “a form of arbitrary detention” and said that, in his opinion, it was a violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Last June, Gerry McNeilly, director of the Office of Independent Police Review, said that the issue of carding has eroded public trust in police and that the practice must be free of racial bias.

Last June, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services announced a review of the practice of carding, with a view to bringing in new legislation this fall to standardize the practice of carding across Ontario. The minister said the Liberal government would not end the practice. While it was about time that this government finally addressed the issue, I feel that the minister’s response was too little and too late.

Perhaps what finally forced the government to turn their minds to carding was the lawsuit that was launched last June by George Singh, a 40-year-old law student at York University. George is black. He says that he’s been

stopped by police 30 times. George has launched a charter challenge against the practice of carding and is asking that all police records created as a result of those 30 stops be destroyed. He says that he was never advised by the police that the answers he gave them in response to the questions they asked him when they stopped him were being kept in a database. He says that in one particular month he was stopped by police four times.

Now, our support of the member’s motion doesn’t mean that we believe that our police, who are duty bound to protect life and property, should be denied the tools to investigate criminal activity. Police departments throughout Ontario must have intelligence-led policing tools which will result in lower crimes. We’ve heard from various police services of certain instances where information gathered from street checks or community checks assisted them in solving a crime.

Speaker, it’s interesting to note: I spent some time chatting with our Chatham–Kent Police Service chief, Chief Gary Conn. He told me that from April 2014 to April 2015, 2,263 street checks, as he called them, were conducted, of which 91% were Caucasian, 7% were black and 2% were aboriginal.

Just last week, a young man was sentenced for a deadly and senseless attack six years ago that killed Christopher Skinner. The crime went unsolved for four years. According to Detective Sergeant Gallant of the Toronto Police Service homicide squad, it was information gathered from a street check that broke the case wide open, after someone came forward with the information. Gallant said, “When you are only working with limited information ... sometimes utilizing the contact cards and the information that we have in those databases is able to allow us to make connections... It led to the identity of the people involved and that furthered the investigation.”

While street checks can be a useful investigative tool, as the head of the Office of Independent Police Review director has said, they must be free of racial bias. That’s why we’re concerned with how the practice of carding has been carried out. There has been no information released by police that when individuals have been stopped, they are advised that they are under no legal obligation to answer any questions and are free to go if they wish. There has been no information released by police that when individuals do provide police with information that they are advised that the information is being kept in a database. There has been no information released by police that the race and gender of those being carded is proportionate to, and representative of, the race and gender demographics of the communities where those street checks are taking place. Without that information, the public’s confidence in policing has, unfortunately, eroded. We can’t allow that to continue.

Additionally, the motion’s wording does not ban street checks as a whole. This is something that I support, as appropriate checks are, in fact, a vital policing tool. It simply states that arbitrary or discriminatory street checks have no place in Ontario, and we agree.

We value our police and value the need for interactions, but interactions should not be based on racial

profiling. Carding for some communities has, unfortunately, fallen into that category. Therefore, I cannot support arbitrary or discriminatory stops. For these reasons, I am supporting the member's motion.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the people I represent in London West to speak in support of the motion brought forward by my colleague the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

The motion calls on the government to end the practice of arbitrary and/or discriminatory street checks, which are also known as carding. The motion highlights the need for greater clarity on the difference between random, arbitrary and unconstitutional stops of people just to collect information and stops that are legally permitted because there are reasonable grounds.

Clarity around what is permitted and what is illegal is absolutely essential to enable the police to establish and maintain public trust, which is perhaps the most important and the most effective policing tool available to ensure community safety.

This is not just an issue in the GTA, and we've heard a lot about the concerns that have been raised. It's an issue that is a concern across the province, including in my own community of London. In 2014, last year, London police conducted 8,400 street checks, which is about three times the rate in Ottawa and Hamilton—which are both larger cities than London—and about five times the rate in Windsor.

Particularly troubling to people in my community are the statistics that the police presented showing that black people and aboriginal people are disproportionately represented among the Londoners who are stopped. Black people make up only 2.2% of London's population but 7% of those who were stopped. Similarly, aboriginal people make up just 1.9% of London's population but represent 5% of those who were stopped. This is in line with the evidence from other jurisdictions: that police carding without cause disproportionately targets marginalized communities, particularly young black and brown men as well as other young people and the poor. The result has been to stigmatize racialized communities, which can lead to a breakdown in relationships between these communities and the police.

This August, about 100 people from London attended the ministry consultation on street checks that was held in my community. The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton spoke about respecting people's lived experiences. I wanted to read one of the comments that was shared at that consultation:

"If you don't live it, you don't understand. I want you to understand. We are all Canadians. We are all from London. Unfortunately, we have some police who do not work with the community. The police need the community. Police need to be trained to work hand in hand with the community. We need to work together. The community needs the police as well. They need their safety and their respect. The police have to respect. When

police are hired, they need to be trained in diversity. We need to have hand in hand respectful engagement. We need to stop the random checks."

1530

Speaker, the consultation in London opened with participants asked to define "street checks," and this, to most people in the room, underscored that there is currently no standard definition already in the police act on what constitutes a stop that does not violate human rights.

Last week, London Police Service chief John Pare made a presentation to the London Police Service board. He acknowledged that they do not have a specific, clearly defined procedure related to street checks. He also pointed to other gaps, including a lack of direction as to how street checks are to be documented and the need for greater supervisory oversight and quality control on the data collected. In response to many of the concerns that were raised at the public consultation and also a motion that was brought forward from the London Diversity and Race Relations Advisory Committee, the chief committed to developing a strict protocol subject to regular review and audit to instruct officers on how and when to conduct street checks and what documentation to complete. He's also working on a data system that would link street checks to what happens afterwards. This, as we know, is a frequent concern that is raised—to understand the relationship between a street check and whether a crime has been prevented or a crime solved.

The leadership of Chief Pare is commendable. However, what it emphasizes is the need for clear provincial direction so that police forces are not all out there on their own developing separate local protocols, and that police forces are adhering to standard procedures on the collection and use of data that is legally acquired through legal stops. Clearly, police can do the work that we expect them to do—they can maintain public safety; they can protect the public—without continuing the practice of street checks without cause.

For that, I commend the member who brought forward the motion. I commend all of the members of this House who have spoken in support of the motion today. I look forward to seeing some clear provincial direction and consistency on this issue across the province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton. You have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I want to thank all the members for joining in this debate, for sharing your concerns and sharing your thoughts.

It has been a very positive discussion and I hope that this will be one of the first steps in ensuring that the province provides clear direction and leadership on this file. Up to now, there hasn't been the voice of this Legislative Assembly clearly directing the opinion of this House in terms of what is acceptable and what is not. My hope is that now, with this motion, if it passes today—and I hope it does—it will send a clear message to the entire province that arbitrary and discriminatory carding and street checks are not acceptable and must immediately be ended.

I also want to take a brief moment and introduce some guests who have been here to support this motion: the African Canadian Legal Clinic's executive director, Margaret Parsons, as well as two youth who are involved with the ACLC, Daniel David and Nicolas Denny, and Howard Morton from the Law Union of Ontario. Thank you all for being here today.

I also want to acknowledge the work of the PAO, the Police Association of Ontario, the executive director, Mr. Reid, and the president, Mr. Chapman, who we discussed this issue with as well. I want to acknowledge their contribution.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is an important issue. We need to provide this leadership. There are jurisdictions, there are municipalities right now, that are still struggling with this issue. There are people who are citizens who are still facing the stigma of being stopped in their own communities. We need to send a clear message that they belong in their own communities and that they should not be stopped unfairly. That message begins with passing this motion today.

Again, I want to thank you all for being here. I want to thank you for your support, and I am looking forward to ensuring that we begin to push the yardstick forward to end this practice and move towards greater inclusion and greater protection for our society and our communities. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order: the Associate Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Speaker, I am very pleased to rise and welcome Margaret Parsons and the members of the African Canadian Legal Clinic. I just want to thank her for her continued advocacy on behalf of the black community.

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

We'll take the vote on that item at the end of private members' public business.

TREE PLANTING

Mr. Ted Arnott: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry should lead a coordinated effort, working with municipalities, school boards, community organizations, the business community, the forestry industry and volunteers, to take the county of Wellington's Green Legacy program province-wide, with the stated goal of planting 150 million trees as a project to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the province in Confederation in 2017.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Arnott has moved private member's notice of motion number 58. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This resolution starts from the simple premise that global warming is a fact, and if human activity in the form of greenhouse gas emissions is a contributing or accelerating factor with regard to climate change, as the vast majority of our

scientific community worldwide believes, then humankind needs to plant more trees to absorb the excess carbon in the earth's atmosphere.

It is a call to action to the Minister of Natural Resources and the government—yes—but it is also a call to action to all Ontarians who care about climate change and want more done to confront it. And it's intended to highlight how the county of Wellington has shown extraordinary leadership with its Green Legacy tree-planting program that inspires us to ask that the provincial government take Wellington county's Green Legacy program province-wide.

I have participated in this private members' ballot item process over a number of years, and believe in it. I believe it's an important aspect of our responsibilities as members, and it's an opportunity for us to raise issues that otherwise might not be raised.

I have had a number of private member's bills through the years that were either passed into law or adopted as government policy.

In 1994, I had an amendment to the Highway Traffic Act to allow volunteer firefighters to use flashing green lights on their personal vehicles when responding to an emergency. It was passed into law.

In 1998, I had a resolution encouraging the government to expand the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program so that children identified through the program who were at risk would receive the necessary services and supports they needed for their healthy growth and development. That was adopted as government policy.

In 1998, I had an amendment to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Act to allow rural municipalities to support their firefighters to the greatest extent possible when it came to workers' compensation coverage. The government passed into law a bill identical to mine.

In 2000, I had a resolution asking that the government of Canada take immediate action to fully restore the Canada health and social transfer to 1994-95 levels. I worked to establish a fair funding approach which ensured that these cash transfers would increase to keep pace with future cost pressures. That was adopted as government policy.

In 2002, I had an amendment to the fire services act to support two-hatter firefighters and uphold their right to volunteer in their home communities. It had the most hours of debate of any private member's bill in the history of the Legislature. Thirteen years later—this year—the principle of my bill has been adopted as government policy and is reflected in Bill 109, which is currently before the House.

In 2008, I had a private member's bill to recognize Emancipation Day on August 1 passed into law. It was the very first private member's bill ever introduced in the House that was co-sponsored by members from different parties.

In 2009, I had another amendment to the WSIB act to ensure that volunteer firefighters were covered under the government's presumptive legislation and treated the same as full-time firefighters. That was adopted as government.

In 2013, I had the Lincoln Alexander Day bill, which was passed into law. It was co-sponsored by members from all three parties.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Are we done bragging?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I believe in this process. I believe in these Thursday afternoons, Mr. Speaker.

I want to introduce guests we have here today: Scott Wilson, CAO of the county of Wellington, is here. Scott worked with the late Brad Whitcombe, former mayor of Puslinch township and warden of Wellington county, to develop the original vision for Green Legacy. He is joined by Mark Van Patter, the manager of planning and development, Green Legacy committee chair, county of Wellington; and Rob Johnson, Green Legacy nursery manager, county of Wellington. We have Don McCabe, the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, here, as well as my legislative assistant, Dan Roest, who is here from my Queen's Park office. He has helped me prepare for this speech this afternoon.

1540

Last May, I was at a meeting in Georgetown with the Halton Hills Cultural Roundtable group. This group is getting an early start on planning events that they want to have in Georgetown just two years away, in 2017, when across the country we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation. Our member of Parliament, newly re-elected Mike Chong, was also there. In his remarks about the federal programs that they're setting up to support these community celebrations, he looked at me and reminded all of us that not only did a confederated Canada begin on July 1, 1867, but on that same date, the province of Ontario, as part of the new federation, also came into being.

My immediate thought, of course, was, "What is the province going to do to celebrate its 150th anniversary in just two years' time? What could the province do to celebrate the 150th anniversary of its birth?" My next thought immediately was that they could follow the lead of the county of Wellington and take the Green Legacy program province-wide.

Imagine a province-wide effort to plant 150 million trees to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Ontario. Imagine an invitation to every community group, service club, school board, church, municipality, conservation authority and so on—the private and public sectors alike—indeed, every organization that seeks to do good works in the province, and every resident of Ontario who cares about the environment, greenhouse gas emissions and global warming, and the planet that we leave to the coming generations. Imagine city residents leaving the GTA for a weekend and coming to small-town and rural Ontario and northern Ontario to help out; inviting them to help out with an organized and administered Ontario Green Legacy—150 million trees to celebrate 150 years of the province of Ontario within a united Canada.

Could we do it, Mr. Speaker? Could we actually plant 150 million trees in one year? My belief is we could, if the lessons learned in the county with Green Legacy were to be employed across the province—and not just the

lessons learned. We also need the leadership, the community spirit and the inspiration and excitement of a large, publicly articulated goal and the focus that county council, staff and volunteers have shown to make Green Legacy an ongoing, permanent program and a beacon of hope and leadership for humankind.

What is the Green Legacy program in the county of Wellington? It started in 2004 as an effort to plant 150,000 trees in Wellington county for the county's 150th anniversary. The program provides free trees to conservation authorities, municipalities, community organizations, environmental groups and landowners, and it targets marginal agricultural land for reforestation, water-course buffers, living snow fences and farm windbreaks. The Green Legacy nursery was built in 2006 at Little Tract county forest, and the program has received awards from three of our local conservation authorities.

The one millionth tree was distributed in 2010. It has been recognized—in fact, in 2010—by the United Nations Billion Tree Campaign and the Lee Symmes Municipal Award from Ontario Nature in 2012. That award was given to the county of Wellington for the program. The northern nursery opened near Luther Marsh in 2012. It is a GRCA—Grand River Conservation Authority—and school board partnership. The 1,750,000th tree in the program was distributed in 2014.

Some recent stats from the 2015 Green Legacy wrap-up:

- over 1.8 million trees have been planted by the community since 2004;
- a total of 161,000 trees were distributed this spring;
- 38 elementary schools took part;
- 33 schools and 7,700 primary students planted almost 14,000 seeds in the classroom;
- 3,100 junior students visited our northern and southern nurseries;
- over 1,000 intermediate students planted over 7,000 trees in our community;
- 35 schools who had 100% participation are going to receive the Green Legacy Kids Who Care Award for the 2014-15 school year;
- over 200 tree orders were submitted by landowners;
- 5,000 trees were given to each of the seven municipalities for the Green Legacy tree distribution days.

So the value of the program—it has tremendous benefits, Mr. Speaker. We see benefits that are environmental, with respect to climate change, with respect to agriculture, safety, education and volunteerism.

I asked the legislative library to research some of the stats with respect to the reforestation trees that the forestry industry plants each year. We see that, as recently as 2009-10, nearly 82 million trees were replanted by the industry to replace trees that had been harvested. That number has been diminishing. Apparently, the most recent stats show that, in 2011-12, nearly 50 million trees were replanted. But I think that those trees that are planted as part of the forestry industry's replanting programs should be counted towards the total.

I am also aware that Trees Ontario is a partner with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources's 50 Million

Tree program, so I would acknowledge that the government is already doing good work in this regard, but we need to expand the effort dramatically. This is part of the United Nations Billion Tree Campaign. The United Nations goal, of course, is to plant one billion trees worldwide each year. Ontario is currently committed to planting 50 million trees by 2025. My proposal, of course, would represent a significant expansion in our tree-planting activities.

Mr. Speaker, I have received and been encouraged by endorsements from a number of very important community organizations and provincial organizations. I wish I had more time to read some of the comments, because they expressed their view that this is a good idea and it's something that they would like to see happen. The county of Wellington passed a resolution in support of the initiative, not surprisingly. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture indicated wholehearted support. They said that not only would this be "an important symbolic gesture and recognition of our heritage" but the resolution would provide "a practical outcome, leaving a lasting, positive legacy for generations to come. Expanding Ontario's tree cover can have positive impacts on greenhouse gases, erosion control and soil health" across the province.

The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario has also expressed support for our proposal. They say, "This initiative will involve volunteers of all ages, bringing people together at the community level. It would also create positive change long into the future of our great province. Planting and caring for trees is a way to care for our communities, promote biodiversity and care for our environment."

I received a very eloquent recommendation of endorsement from Laurent Thibault from Georgetown, who is a community leader in our community of Georgetown. He indicated this: "I am happy to add my support for Ted Arnott's idea, which would be an entirely 'made in Ontario' project with 100% local content and local impact that every Ontario resident could participate in."

"When our descendants celebrate the 250th anniversary of Ontario as a province, they will sit in the shade of 150 million magnificent hardwood trees and thank us for having that foresight and vision."

From Toni Ellis, the coordinator of NeighbourWoods on the Grand in Centre Wellington: "We are pleased to support Mr. Arnott's resolution to engage all Ontarians in tree-planting initiatives to celebrate our 150th birthday. On behalf of many urban forest NGOs, I think I can safely say we would welcome the opportunity to work with the Ministry of Natural Resources to develop a workable plan that would support this very ambitious program."

We've also received an endorsement from the executive director of the Ontario Professional Foresters Association as well as Dr. Faisal Moola, who is the director general, Ontario and northern Canada, of the David Suzuki Foundation, who has also expressed support.

So I think there's broad-based support for what we're suggesting, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask all members to consider this important initiative.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It is always an honour and a privilege that I do not take for granted, being called upon to rise in this House and speak on behalf of the residents in my riding of Windsor–Tecumseh. Today, I am delighted to be able to say a few words on the motion brought forward by my friend the member for Wellington–Halton Hills, Mr. Arnott. His is a great motion. It's full of ambition. It's inspirational and worthy of support from all members in the House. The motion proposes that we get Ontario's residents involved in an ambitious plan to plant 150 million trees as a symbolic way of celebrating Canada's 150th anniversary.

Speaker, I love the idea. I wish I would have thought of it myself.

There is a poem we all studied in grade school. "Trees" was written by Joyce Kilmer; his first name was Alfred, by the way.

1550

He was an American and wrote "Trees" in 1913, but he was killed by a sniper's bullet in France at the Second Battle of the Marne in 1918. His poem lives on, Speaker. With your permission, "Trees":

I think I shall never see
A poem as lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

We were kids when we first heard that poem. Had we planted trees the day we heard it, they would be towering above us today, keeping us cool in the shade and cleansing the air we breathe by filtering the carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, nitrous oxides, carbon monoxide and other pollutants such as ozone. By filtering these pollutants, trees reduce the conditions that cause asthma and other respiratory problems.

Just a few years ago in Ontario, close to 37,000 visits to the emergency rooms were associated with issues caused by smog or air pollution. In Ontario in 2008, nearly 10,000 people died prematurely because of air pollution. Asthma is now the leading cause of kids missing

school in Ontario, and it's the main reason our children are admitted to hospitals.

The experts tell us that asthma rates in young kids drop by 25% for every 343 trees per square kilometre. Trees are the lungs of the earth. We need them to survive and we need more of them now more than ever.

I've talked in this House several times about the need to plant more trees. I've told you how, as a proud member of the Essex Region Conservation Authority, I helped plant hundreds of trees over my seven years as a city councillor in Windsor. I still go out every Earth Day and pitch in with the authority's annual tree-planting events.

Trees make our lives more enjoyable. We're more relaxed when we're in and around trees. Trees reduce our stress levels. We all have our favourite seasons, but many of us love the fall because of the vibrant colours of the leaves. Some of us don't mind so much that we sometimes have to rake up those leaves, and maybe they're even from the neighbours. It's good exercise, raking leaves. Our kids and our grandkids love playing in them, and some of the neighbourhood dogs and cats have fun in them as well.

Trees are one of the legacies—a rich inheritance, if you will—that each of us can leave for future generations. There's a tree found in British Columbia and elsewhere, the Pacific yew. A drug taken from the bark of that tree is showing amazing results in the fight to cure ovarian cancer. One of every four pharmaceutical products used today comes from trees and plants found in tropical forests.

We can do this. We can make every effort to plant 150 million trees. It can be done. I know in my area, the Essex Region Conservation Authority has planted six million trees over the past 40 years.

We're heavily into the baseball playoffs now and heading towards the World Series, but just for a moment, let's talk football—the National Football League. The NFL, in recent Super Bowl events, was big into trees. In Detroit, the NFL planted 2,400 trees to combat greenhouse gas emissions from the events associated with the game. In Jacksonville, Florida, the NFL planted 1,000 trees for the same reason. If the NFL can get serious about trees, so can we.

More than one million of our residents have type 1 or type 2 diabetes. That's more than 8% of us, and experts tell us that the higher the incidence of smog or air pollution, the higher the rates of diabetes. I know that our tree cover rate in Windsor and Essex county is only 9%. Other parts in southern Ontario are worse off; they're closer to 5%. We should be closer to 30%, and some experts say that 40% to 50% would be better. I think our average tree cover in all of southern Ontario is about 22%.

This motion will help us all. The bottom line is: We need more trees. This is a wonderful idea that could kick-start us towards a healthier planet. It will also help us save millions of dollars because we won't be as affected by air pollution. Let's do this. We can do this. We owe it

to our children. We owe it to our grandchildren. We owe it to our residents. We owe it to ourselves. Let's all get behind this great idea.

A big thank you to the member from Wellington–Halton Hills for putting this in front of us this afternoon.

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

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Speaker, just before I begin, I'll be sharing my time with the member from St. Catharines. Were you sharing your time, member opposite?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): This is private members' time, we just go around.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm absolutely delighted to rise today to speak to this very worthy topic, and I'd like to thank the member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

I'd also like to thank the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. I knew that you were involved in ERCA and I knew you were very passionate about this topic, but you described it so eloquently. You're a tough act to follow, but I'll do my best.

It's my pleasure to stand in this House today on behalf of the people of Burlington and speak to this worthy motion, as I mentioned. It is indeed a noble idea to leverage our love for trees and our forests, and in so doing engage citizens and community groups that not only share that passion, but also understand the positive contribution that trees make to greenhouse gas mitigation.

As we all know, climate change has become one of the greatest and most complex challenges facing not only our province, but our society as a whole. To fight climate change and the loss of biodiversity in Ontario, our government is committed to enhancing the amount of forest cover in our province on both crown and private land.

As has been mentioned by members opposite, excess carbon dioxide, caused by many factors, is building up in our atmosphere and contributing to climate change. Trees absorb CO₂, removing and storing the carbon while releasing the oxygen back into the air. Trees filter particulates out of the air by trapping them on their leaves and on their bark, and shade from trees slows water evaporation from thirsty lawns. They help to prevent soil erosion. They reduce runoff by breaking rainfall and help to prevent pollutants from entering our water tables—not to mention the beauty of our trees and forests and their contribution to both our rural and urban landscapes and the beautification of our neighbourhoods and communities.

Examples such as these make a clear case that planting more trees in Ontario is a good idea indeed and should be something in which we take great pride and invest much effort and dedication. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is currently working in partnership with Forests Ontario and over 65 conservation agency partners across Ontario to deliver our government's 50 Million Tree program, which will see the planting of 50 million new trees and the establishment of new forests on suitable private rural and urban land across Ontario by 2025.

Of particular importance is the fact that we have committed to planting one million of these trees in urban areas and communities across the province. Extreme weather events can cause devastation to urban tree canopies in very short periods of time. In fact, the ice storm of 2013 destroyed around 20% of the canopy in the city of Toronto alone. Neighbourhoods that just days before boasted beautiful and majestic mature trees along their streets suddenly found themselves confronting jagged and splintered stumps and debris. In my own community of Burlington where we received more than \$1 million as part of our share of the compensation for damage caused by the ice storm, that funding went to cover costs incurred in the cleanup efforts where numerous beautiful trees were lost.

The importance of replacing and restoring urban forests and canopy, however, goes beyond our desire to simply have visually pleasing communities and areas with shade. In fact, a study published just this past summer in the journal *Scientific Reports*, and conducted in the city of Toronto, including over 30,000 residents, found that having trees around you can have positive and long-lasting effects on your health. Marc Berman, a co-author of the study and also a psychologist at the University of Chicago stated, "Controlling for income, age and education, we found a significant independent effect of trees on the street on health. It seemed like the effect was strongest for the public [trees]. Not to say the other trees don't have an impact, but we found stronger effects for the trees on the street." He goes on to say that, "having 10 more trees in a city block, on average, improves health perception in ways comparable to an increase in annual personal income of \$10,000 and moving to a neighborhood with \$10,000 higher median income or being seven years younger." Boy, we'd all like that, wouldn't we?

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This just goes to show the impact that trees can have on our everyday lives, even if we're not conscious of it. I can tell you from personal experience and from conversations with constituents in my riding just how impactful trees can be to a neighbourhood. We are very fortunate in Burlington to be surrounded by the Niagara Escarpment, and there are many areas in our community that are full of lovely, mature trees, something that the residents are proud of and something that is very important to them. In fact, in April of this year, I joined members of my community, in partnership with the city of Burlington and BurlingtonGreen, for the annual Clean Up Green Up event, during which we planted over 200 trees. In addition, through the 50 Million Tree program, Burlington has seen almost 57,000 trees planted within its boundaries since 2007.

We also encourage private landowners and public agencies to plant trees on their own to support this initiative. Not only does the 50 Million Tree program offer a subsidy that offsets costs to the landowners, but it offers professional assistance to those who are interested in tree planting. On average, between 75% and 90% of planting costs are covered through the program. Inter-

ested individuals can utilize our tree atlas, which recommends native tree species best adapted to the region in which they reside.

We cannot, however, just plant trees in the communities and municipalities in which we live. An important component of ensuring that Ontario's forests remain vibrant and healthy includes the efforts of our partners in the forestry industry. In fact, you could say that between 2003 and 2013, over a billion trees were planted by forest licence holders on crown land as part of our forest renewal program. I'm very proud of this work and the work that our government is doing overall—the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in particular—and what our partner organizations have done to increase the number of trees currently growing in Ontario. I have no doubt that we will continue to do so.

I applaud the member opposite for so passionately supporting initiatives like the county of Wellington's Green Legacy program that do so much in creating a positive community attitude towards creating and maintaining our forests. In fact, through our 50 Million Tree program, more than 750,000 trees have been planted in Wellington county. I know that officials from Wellington county are here today, and they should be very proud indeed of that statistic and their work.

As such, I'm pleased to say that I will be supporting this motion wholeheartedly, and I would encourage all of my colleagues here today to do the same. The importance of forests, whether it be urban, rural or even uninhabited areas, cannot be overstated. Trees are such a vital resource to Ontario for a myriad of reasons, and it is up to us as legislators to ensure that we leave the future generations of this province a legacy that is both clean and green.

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

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I rise today in support of the member from Wellington–Halton Hills's motion calling on the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry to lead a coordinated effort to plant 150 million trees to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the province of Ontario in Confederation in 2017.

Of the 107 million hectares of land in Ontario, 66% is forested—a land area equivalent to the size of Germany, Italy and the Netherlands combined. Ontario has approximately 85 billion trees, which comprises 17% of Canada's forests. Ontario exports \$3.6 billion of forest product per year. Trees are one of Ontario's key renewable resources. Ontario forests provide the world with countless essential products that we all use every day.

The forestry sector also provides much-needed employment opportunities in Ontario, especially in northern Ontario. Ontario's forest products sector supports over 170,000 direct and indirect jobs in over 260 communities. To that end, the Ontario Forest Industries Association is on a mission to ensure that Ontario can maximize the full potential of its renewable forestry sector. I applaud and support their mission.

Unfortunately, employment in Ontario's forestry sector has been reduced by 52% since 2005. If we want

to see increased jobs in the forestry sector and ensure we meet MPP Arnott's goal, we are going to have to change policies in order to reverse that trend.

Ontario's forestry sector is a responsible steward of the environment and can assist the provincial government in reaching this ambitious goal if properly supported. I view this initiative as an opportunity to leverage positive partnerships with forestry companies rather than engender conflict and as an opportunity to listen to and show respect to northern communities rather than dictate to them, and an opportunity to share expertise, facts and evidence rather than remain silent in the face of the spread of misinformation.

Setting an aspirational goal of planting 150 million trees in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the province of Ontario in Confederation in 2017 is an opportunity to bring together municipalities, school boards, community organizations, the business community and the forestry sector. This is the Canadian way: to celebrate our abundance, to share in our bounty and yet still come together and strive to do better. We are blessed with abundant forestry resources in Ontario; we should be proud and make the most of it.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is my privilege, as always, to stand in this House and lend my voice to the debate. Today, the member from Wellington–Halton Hills has brought forward a motion to make the world a little greener and a little better. I appreciate the chance to be a part of the conversation about conservation and about planting more trees for our future.

The member from Wellington–Halton Hills is calling for a coordinated effort to reach the goal of planting 150 million trees as a project to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the province in Confederation in 2017. That's a great goal.

Ontario is a rich and beautiful province. We are fortunate here to have vast green spaces, sprawling forests and fields, and some of the most beautiful and colourful fall foliage in the world. We are fortunate in Ontario, and I believe we really do appreciate and value our wonderful access to nature.

In many cities across the province, we see municipalities leading the way when it comes to parks and green space. We know how important it is to have outdoor community spaces. We know that those spaces need trees, flowers, benches and beauty so that our communities can have a place to come together and grow together.

In Oshawa, we have planted over 2,000 trees in about a year. Last November, in recognition of Remembrance Day, Forests Ontario, Trees for Life, the region of Durham and the city of Oshawa hosted a day of tree planting along the lakefront trail on the site of the famous and former Camp-X. Just as a side note, for those of you unfamiliar with Camp-X, it is the site of a historical and super-secret military installation that served as a spy training centre during World War II.

But back to trees: On that day, members from the community were joined by veterans, active military per-

sonnel, volunteers and, of course, politicians. We planted 400 trees that day. The member from Burlington was there, too, in her role as PA to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. She and I were just remembering how fortunate it was that planting a tree warms the heart because, as we recall, it felt like the coldest day of the year. But it was a great community event.

The Royal Canadian Army Cadets were out that day planting like champions, and they were awesome, as they always are. It was a fitting initiative for them because their motto is "Acer acerpori," which is Latin for "As the maple, so the sapling."

All of us out that day were planting more than saplings; we were planting hope and health and a strong future. It was rainy, cold and grey, but we had a wonderful day because we were planting hopes and trees together as a community.

I think this motion and its stated goal is achievable. Communities across the province are planting trees. In Durham region, the Durham Five Million Trees Program is part of the Region of Durham Community Climate Change Local Action Plan. This program and others like it are prioritizing sustainable development and tree coverage, and addressing climate change.

1610

The city of Oshawa is committed to a green and healthy city. As in other municipalities, they've had to battle the emerald ash borer, an invasive beetle that kills all true ash trees. They've also had to react to the extensive tree damage after the ice storm, as have many communities across the Golden Horseshoe.

Durham Court Park is a park in Oshawa that was totally devastated by both the emerald ash borer and the ice storm; they teamed up to destroy this park. But our community partners and community members teamed up, and we've replanted and are again enjoying this park and will for years to come.

We can measure our own journeys, if we think about it, by the trees that we plant. I'm sure we can all remember a tree that we saw when we were young and the size of it, whether we planted it ourselves or it was a tree we knew as children. When we go back and look at it as adults, we see that those trees are now tall and strong. I think we can take that moment to measure our own growth—perhaps the member from Windsor–Tecumseh and his poetry have made me a little philosophical today, maybe a bit sappy—

Interjection: Ha ha.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: —if you'll pardon the pun. Sorry. I fully intended to "leaf" tree jokes out of this and stick to the debate. I guess it's just not in my "nature."

My colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh reminded us of Joyce Kilmer's well-appreciated poem: "I think that I shall never see / A poem lovely as a tree." But it was Ogden Nash who shared:

I think that I shall never see
A billboard lovely as a tree.
Indeed, unless the billboards fall
I'll never see a tree at all.

This is a motion about what we value in our communities. If we value health, if we value hope, if we value growth and green and sustainability, and if we value the landscape we are leaving to our children, then we value and support the spirit of this motion. It is said, Mr. Speaker, that the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago and the second-best time is now. So let's get planting. We support this motion and the goal of planting 150 million trees, and I personally look forward to planting my share. Thank you very much.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm delighted to join this debate this afternoon in support of the resolution put forward by the member for Wellington–Halton Hills, not just because he's one of my favourite members of the Progressive Conservative caucus and a highly respected person—who, by the way, young as he looks, has been here since 1990—but because what our friend, whom we know as Ted Arnott, represents is moderation in politics, the ability to gather people of all political affiliations and no particular political affiliation together in support of initiatives he brings forward. In this, of course, he follows in the footsteps of his predecessor, Jack Johnson, also a good friend of mine from years gone by.

I might say as well—I will get around to the resolution itself—that I think that one of the reasons that Michael Chong, the federal member for Wellington–Halton Hills, was elected was that he has followed the pattern of the provincial member in being more moderate and less hardline in terms of his partisan political contributions.

Having said all that, I'm not voting in favour of this simply because Ted Arnott is bringing it forward; I'm doing so because it's also a very commendable resolution, and he should be justifiably proud, I think, of the county of Wellington's Green Legacy program and their representatives who are here today. This is truly an initiative that should be followed right across the province of Ontario. The suggestion in the resolution is that the Ministry of Natural Resources in fact do so in conjunction with a number of other people who are mentioned in his resolution.

Suffice to say, other members from the government side have said that the ministry is doing many, many things to plant trees in Ontario. But I think what separates this, a bit, is the fact that this is put forward as a manner in which to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation. There will be a lot of hokey things done when you have those kinds of celebrations. We know that. We've observed them over the years. But I think this is something very tangible and something that will leave a legacy. It's not something that will happen and the next week it's past and everybody had a great time when it was done. It's something that will be done and will be for the benefit of future generations in the province of Ontario.

When an individual municipality—supported by the Federation of Agriculture in this case—brings forward a

suggestion of this kind and it's brought to this House by an elected member, I think it is commendable of support from all the parties. Everyone has mentioned how important trees are to the province, not simply the look of them—and they are beautiful in this province, and in the fall of the year the turning of the colours is spectacular indeed—but it's also the health benefits and environmental benefits that they bring globally.

We've seen some instances around the world where trees have, in fact, been removed rather than being planted. This initiative here ensures that we are going to have trees planted right across the province: an initiative, again, for which the county of Wellington deserves the credit, an initiative that could be emulated right across this province. I suspect that many municipalities, as well as the Ministry of Natural Resources, will be favourably inclined to be supportive of the initiative or the provisions of this particular initiative contained within this resolution.

I suspect, although I can never speak for all members of the Legislature, that we will see unanimous support for this. I'd be very surprised if there were not unanimous support. It's not because it lacks importance or it lacks flair; it's because it is something that will benefit everyone in the province in one way or another. People of all ages, people of all backgrounds, people of different philosophies: One thing that we do come together on are issues such as this for the importance of this province.

Once again, I want to thank—we're supposed to use the riding name, Wellington–Halton Hills, but Ted has been a long-time friend—my friend Ted Arnott for bringing this forward this afternoon. I certainly urge all members of the Legislature to be supportive of this initiative, and I'm confident they will be.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, just a quick point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I just want to recognize my good friend and partner in agriculture in Ontario, the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Don McCabe, who is in the members' west gallery today.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to join the debate today in support of my colleague the member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

Mr. Bill Walker: And a great member he is.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: And a great member he is. That's absolutely right.

To give you an example of how he's able to bring all stripes together and all different aspects together, I think it's important to share with you that he even got support from the David Suzuki Foundation. He received his support through Dr. Faisal Moola. I just want to read a segment of that statement:

“The David Suzuki Foundation supports the resolution by the honourable Ted Arnott, the member from

Wellington–Halton Hills, that the province of Ontario commit to a major tree-planting initiative in celebration of the 150th anniversary of our entry into Confederation.” I think this is a significant endorsement and I wanted to make sure we had read it in and got it on record as an example of the far-reaching impact that the member has.

I'd like to continue on by saying, as the PC critic for environment and cap and trade, I can't think of a better way to celebrate this occasion than by planting 150 million trees across this province. It's interesting because the Atlantic actually published, in February 2015, that the best technology for fighting climate change is trees. It references a new report that came out from Oxford University, where researchers say, “Our best hopes might not be so complex. In fact, they are two things we already know how to do: plant trees and improve the soil,” which I'm sure the president of the OFA can appreciate.

“Both techniques, said the report, are ‘no regrets.’ They'll help the atmosphere no matter what, they're comparatively low-cost, and they carry little additional risk. Specifically, the two techniques it recommends are afforestation—planting trees where there were none before—and biochar—improving the soil by burying a layer of dense charcoal.”

Speaker, I don't have my glasses here today; I need longer arms.

“Between now and 2050”—thanks, Percy—“trees and charcoal are the ‘most promising’ technologies out there,” the report went on to conclude.

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There's much we can say about the planting of trees, but I'd be remiss if I didn't give credit where credit is due. I would like to make people aware of the fact that, leading by example and beginning back in 2004, Wellington county's Green Legacy program plants over 150,000 trees across the county each year. It's the perfect model to base this initiative on. Wellington's model has become the largest municipal tree-planting program in North America. I congratulate the leaders in the gallery today for that.

I'd also be remiss if I didn't recognize what we do locally. I think it's important to celebrate what we do in our own ridings as well. The town of Saugeen Shores has introduced a wonderful program. It's called “five for five”: a five-year tree-planting initiative that involves five different types of tree planting: in parks and trails, schools, country lanes, plantations, and green streets.

Also in the area, just south of Saugeen Shores, is a wonderful watershed called Pine River. It's an initiative that began as a group of people around a kitchen table. They have worked closely for years, and they themselves have planted almost 219,000 trees. There's so much to celebrate.

I would just like to acknowledge that we all can do something. Every year on our farm, we plant at least one species of tree. I encourage all people who can to go into their parks, go into their backyards and do the same.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you, Speaker. I am not asleep. I might appear to be asleep, but I'm not.

I certainly am pleased to rise today in support of this motion. I have the privilege of representing Wellington county alongside my colleague the member from Wellington–Halton Hills. He's an outstanding representative for his constituents, and he and his staff work tirelessly to advocate on the issues important to residents in Wellington–Halton Hills. I think that this resolution today goes to show why his constituents have such high regard for him and why they re-elect him time and time again.

This resolution is a thoughtful, creative and even visionary proposal. It recognizes the community-driven initiative taken by the county of Wellington and it builds on it. The year 2017 will mark an important milestone in Ontario's history as we celebrate our 150th anniversary as a province in Confederation. What better way to celebrate this than to plant 150 million trees? I believe that this is a wonderful goal that will benefit our natural environment and help to bring communities together.

We need to look no further than Wellington county to see how this can be accomplished. In 2004, Wellington county developed a plan to plant 150,000 trees to celebrate the county's 150-year anniversary. Through the Green Legacy program, the county has met and far exceeded that original goal. To date, almost two million trees have been planted throughout the county.

The Green Legacy program has been so successful that in 2010, it was recognized under the United Nations Billion Tree Campaign for its help in the fight against climate change.

Each year, the Green Legacy program does a special 1,000-tree planting in the home municipality of the Wellington county warden. On Monday, I was honoured to attend this tree planting in Minto with Warden George Bridge. He is an outstanding public servant, both in Minto and across the county. One thousand trees were planted at the municipal office outside of Harriston.

Perth–Wellington is well known for its environmental stewards and initiatives. The town of Minto has a unique program to offset the town's carbon footprint. Last year, council and staff developed a plan to implement a one-cent-per-litre transfer from the town fuel budget and a volunteer donation of one cent per kilometre driven on municipal business. This money goes towards Minto's Trees for Farms initiative, to be used exclusively for tree-planting programs.

An inspiration for the Minto plan was the Trees for Mapleton program. Trees for Mapleton is a community partnership with a goal of increasing the amount of forest coverage throughout the county. This program helps farmers adapt to climate change and aids in food production and durability by planting trees as windbreaks.

I would like to recognize Paul Day, the founder of Trees for Mapleton. He is a dedicated land steward and

has also served as a founding member and past chair of the Wellington County Stewardship Council, Trees for Peel and Wellington county's Green Legacy program.

I would also like to remember Ted Blowes. He was national chair of the Communities in Bloom program and a founder of environmental clubs and committees in Stratford. Each year, he helped to organize Green Week, and invited community members and students to take part in tree-planting activities.

I'm very pleased to support the motion introduced by my friend the member for Wellington–Halton Hills. Together, let's plant 150 million trees to mark our 150th anniversary as a province in 2017.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Wellington–Halton Hills. You have two minutes for your response.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I want to express my thanks to all members on all sides of this House who participated in this important debate this afternoon. I also want to, again, express my admiration for the county of Wellington for the outstanding leadership they've shown in launching their Green Legacy program and maintaining it on an ongoing basis, such that it has grown into the largest municipal tree-planting program in North America. They have shown us the way.

In our democracies around the world today, politicians are sometimes criticized for short-term thinking. It's often said of politicians that their vision extends only as far as the political cycle they're in at any given time, and then it ends. By voting for this motion today, in contrast, we are endorsing an idea that extends beyond the next election; in fact, it extends beyond our lifetimes.

My wife, Lisa, and I are proud parents of our three sons. They never cease to amaze us, and they're not alone. In fact, I have confidence that their entire generation will step forward in due course and change the world for the better. I have enormous faith in them. I believe that the future of humankind is in good hands because of the strength of the generation that will follow ours.

I've often said that I believe in the promise of the future, but I also believe that our generation, now, in our time, must do our part. Do we leave the next generation and the generations that follow an Earth that is habitable? Isn't that one of our most basic and fundamental responsibilities?

In the 25 years that I've been privileged to serve in this Legislature, I've raised countless issues in this House, but I consider the idea of taking the county of Wellington's Green Legacy program province-wide to be the initiative that could have the longest-lasting benefit if it's endorsed by the Legislature this afternoon and, in turn, embraced by the government. An Ontario green legacy program could be the legacy that all of us in this House can claim as our collective gift to the generations to come. I ask all members for their support.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

PATHWAYS TO POST-SECONDARY EXCELLENCE ACT (POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL REPORT), 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES VOIES DE L'EXCELLENCE AU NIVEAU POSTSECONDAIRE (RAPPORT SUR L'ENSEIGNEMENT POSTSECONDAIRE)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 73 standing in the name of Mr. Baker.

Mr. Baker has moved second reading of Bill 127, An Act to amend the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario Act, 2005 to require the Council to collect and publish information in respect of certain educational institutions.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to?

Mr. Yvan Baker: The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member's requesting that the bill be referred to finance and economic affairs. Agreed? Agreed.

POLICE CARDING PRACTICES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Singh has moved private member's notice of motion number 59.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

TREE PLANTING

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Arnott has moved private member's notice of motion number 58.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES LIMITES DES CIRCONSCRIPTIONS ÉLECTORALES

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 28, 2015, on the motion for 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 Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

1630

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is always my pleasure to rise in this House on behalf of the people I represent in London West. Today, I am pleased to join the debate on Bill 115, the Electoral Boundaries Act.

Bill 115 amends the Representation Act, the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act in order to create 15 new ridings and increase the total number of seats in the Ontario Legislature from 107 to 122. It aligns southern Ontario provincial electoral boundaries with their federal counterparts but maintains the current riding boundaries in northern Ontario. The new riding boundaries will take effect following the first dissolution of the Legislature after November 30, 2016, and the redistributed ridings will be renamed to correspond with the federal names.

I want to congratulate the government on the title of this bill: the Electoral Boundaries Act. Unlike some of the grandiose titles we're used to seeing for most government bills, this title reflects quite accurately what the bill is about. But even despite the bill's narrow scope, it was interesting to read the comments from the minister and the parliamentary assistant when the bill was introduced. They made sweeping statements about this bill getting at "the heart of the most cherished values we have as citizens of a democratic society...." This bill does several things, but it's a bit of a stretch to see how it does that.

When she spoke to the bill, the minister focused on her government's commitment to ensuring fair representation. She mentioned, with some pride, the Liberal government's referendum on electoral reform that was undertaken in 2007, which did not, in the end, pass. She did not mention that the referendum was rejected by voters because the Liberals made almost no effort to explain and promote the benefits of proportional representation. She did not mention that with a majority Liberal government, they had a vested interest in seeing the referendum fail, which is why they put it to a referendum in the first place.

Sometimes it's hard not to be cynical when you see governments doing things like that. Ontarians who remember the 2007 provincial referendum will be watching the new prime minister, Justin Trudeau, very closely to see if he delivers on his pledge to introduce electoral reform and end first-past-the-post. First-past-the-post is a system that makes people feel that their votes don't count. It encourages negative and adversarial campaigning, and it produces legislatures that do not reflect the diversity of the people that legislators represent.

The clear solution to the flaws associated with first-past-the-post is proportional representation. Compared to

first-past-the-post, countries that use proportional voting systems, like Germany, Scotland and New Zealand, have much higher voter turnout and much higher numbers of women elected. They have government policies that are more reflective of the median voter and citizens who feel more satisfied with their democracy, even if their candidate or party is not elected. These are the results that were reported in a study of 36 democracies over a 55-year period.

We'll see what happens federally, but this kind of electoral reform does not appear imminent for Ontario. Instead, we have before us Bill 115, the purpose of which is to ensure representation by population. Now, rep-by-pop is a principle that is enshrined in our democracy since our nation was founded almost 150 years ago, so certainly I have no quarrel with the government for making these adjustments. Rep-by-pop requires that ridings be relatively similar in population size, so that every person's vote counts equally.

In the decade since riding boundaries were last redistributed in Ontario, there has been significant population growth, particularly in the GTA. To address this growth, Bill 115 creates 15 new ridings in southern Ontario and aligns those ridings with the federal electoral districts. This change will increase the total number of southern Ontario ridings from 96 to 111. Most of the new ridings will be in the GTA, in the rapidly growing communities of Toronto, Peel, York and Durham, as well as in Ottawa.

At the same time, Bill 115 recognizes the uniqueness of northern Ontario communities and the vast distances they cover. Instead of aligning northern boundaries with the federal riding map, the bill maintains current riding boundaries for the 11 northern ridings, compared to the 10 federal northern ridings.

Certainly, New Democrats support the changes that are proposed in this bill. We are fully supportive of ensuring that people who live in northern Ontario continue to have a strong voice in the provincial Legislature, and we hope that they will continue to be represented by fine MPPs like the member for Nickel Belt, the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane, the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, the member for Timmins-James Bay and the member for Kenora-Rainy River.

While this particular bill is not controversial, the process of redrawing riding boundaries certainly can be. When I was a trustee on the Thames Valley District School Board, every municipal election we were required to approve a board motion to identify the wards that would be represented by each trustee. In 2006, the city of London had doubled the number of city wards from seven to 14, and with six London trustees for the city, there was a lot of discussion and debate about how to group the wards together to ensure similar population and keep families of schools intact. There were public presentations to the board about which wards should be grouped together, with strong views expressed about one grouping versus another.

In advance of this year's federal election, the country went through a redistribution process which changed

approximately 87% of federal ridings. In some areas these changes were highly contentious, leading to charges of outright gerrymandering.

Unlike some other ridings that were divided right down the middle that other MPPs who have spoken to this Legislature described, in London West, redistribution did not make a huge difference. A section of the riding north of the river and east of Wonderland Road was redrawn to London North Centre. Certainly I will miss this section of my riding if I have the honour of continuing to represent London West, especially my friends at 85 Walnut, the London-Middlesex housing high-rise, but on the whole, London West remains generally the same.

The only issue related to riding redistribution that was raised at my office concerned an area just outside my riding, the area south of Southdale Road. That is a part of the city that is experiencing a boom in new residential development; however, it is included in the boundaries of Elgin-Middlesex-London. I am sure that the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London provides fine representation, but some of his constituents contacted me to ask why they were not part of London West. They see their issues and their concerns more closely aligned with London West than with Elgin-Middlesex-London, which is perhaps an inevitable by-product of rep by pop.

When I was reading the comments that were made on the bill by the minister and the parliamentary assistant, I was struck by the fact that they spent almost as much time talking about what wasn't in the bill as what was. They talked about provisional registration of 16- and 17-year-olds, so that when they turn 18 they will already be on the voters' list and will receive a voter's card. They also talked about new rules to limit third-party advertising. Since this bill already amends the Election Act and the Election Finances Act, one wonders why these issues weren't addressed in Bill 115.

Frequently in this House, MPPs on this side of the floor raise concerns about the omnibus bills that are brought in by the government. Usually these bills include a poison pill wrapped inside some worthwhile and long-overdue changes. Bill 115, however, is an example where an omnibus bill would have made sense. But the Liberals decided not to go that way; they decided instead to do things one piece of legislation at a time.

Two of the issues that the minister says will be addressed in future legislation, the provisional registration of young voters and third-party advertising, were identified as recommendations in the 2014 post-election report of the Chief Electoral Officer.

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At this point, we have not been given any indication about what is happening to the other recommendations that were made by the Chief Electoral Officer. For example, the officer identified the need to do something to improve the accuracy of the voters list. When the voters list is not accurate, people don't get a voter's card in the mail. They don't go out to vote because they don't know where to vote, what time to vote, where the

advance polls are located and when the advance polls are open, and, if they can't go to the advance poll, how to get to the returning officer.

The Elections Ontario report on the 2014 election said that only 77% of electors had received a correct notice of registration card. That means that almost one quarter of electors did not receive a card. Even so, Elections Ontario described the 2014 list of electors as the most comprehensive and thorough in its history. Clearly, there is a lot of work that remains to be done to address the challenges with the accuracy of the voters list. If we are serious about improving democracy and increasing participation in the electoral process, taking steps to fix the voters list is one of the first things we should do.

We also have to work harder to remove barriers to voting. After the 2014 election, Elections Ontario commissioned Ipsos Reid to conduct a survey of electors. The survey found that awareness of changes to the voting process was much lower among youth aged 18 to 24, aboriginal people, Ontarians abroad and Ontarians with disabilities, compared to other electors. This was the case even with regard to the changes that were specifically designed to help these special groups of electors vote.

Only 41% of youth aged 18 to 24 were aware that students could apply to designate a temporary residence so that they could vote while they were at school. Only 22% of electors with disabilities were aware of the option to have a home visit ballot. Only 36% of electors with disabilities were aware that they could vote independently and didn't need a proxy. Only 30% of electors abroad were aware that they did not need to register again.

We have to do a lot more to create awareness, particularly with groups of voters who may not be able to engage as easily with the electoral process, about the kinds of options that are available to them to make voting more accessible.

The Ipsos Reid survey following the 2014 election also found that aboriginal people and youth aged 18 to 24 were less satisfied with the information provided by Elections Ontario than other electors, and that 64% of aboriginal people and 71% of youth did not know what ID they needed to bring to the polls in order to vote. Both of these groups, aboriginal people and young people aged 18 to 24, were less likely to have received the notice of registration card, and more than half of the youth who were surveyed believed that they had to have a card in order to vote. Youth were also less receptive to traditional outreach methods and had low levels of recall for any of the messaging that was put out by Elections Ontario.

There was a very interesting op-ed in the Toronto Star earlier this week, and I hope other MPPs caught it. It was called "Politicians Take Note: Young People Aren't All the Same." The author pointed out that some youth are much less likely to turn out to vote than others, and that voter turnout "among young people without a high school diploma has decreased more than 50 percentage points." She argues that improving youth engagement "depends on reaching less educated youth." These are youth who are intimidated not just by the technical

aspects of voting but by how to decide who to vote for. They are alienated by party platforms that do not speak to their issues and that don't seem to care what matters to them. Finding a way to reach these youth and to engage them in the political process will be much more challenging than simply setting up the campus polling stations that we saw in the last federal election. These were, by the way, highly successful in increasing voter turnout among more educated young people.

In addition to these issues that I've already talked about, which represent missed opportunities, I think, that could have been included in the bill, another missed opportunity is clarifying the provisions in the Election Act around offering inducements and making promises to candidates. We know that there are various pieces of legislation that are being opened up in Bill 115, including the Election Act and the Election Finances Act, so this would have been an ideal opportunity to introduce some clarity.

In his report following the Sudbury by-election, the Chief Electoral Officer issued the unprecedented finding that an "apparent contravention of the Election Act" had taken place because of the actions of Gerry Lougheed and Pat Sorbara. Now, Bill 115 was introduced after that report was tabled, after the Chief Electoral Officer brought that finding to the House, so certainly there was ample time for the Liberals to have looked at that report from the Chief Electoral Officer and looked at the provisions of the Election Act, the Election Finances Act, and tried to figure out a way that some of the concerns that had been raised during that whole Sudbury by-election process could have been addressed in this bill. It would have been, as I said, an ideal time to review and strengthen the bribery sections of the Election Act.

Speaker, strengthening democracy and improving voter participation requires, first and foremost, that we ensure the integrity of the voting process. The Chief Electoral Officer's report and the OPP charges that were subsequently laid against Gerry Lougheed have compromised people's trust in the electoral system. These are the kind of things that undermine democracy and weaken people's faith in the democratic process. It will take a lot more to restore the confidence of Ontarians in the integrity of the electoral process than the redistribution of provincial ridings that is set out in Bill 115.

That said, Bill 115, aligning provincial boundaries with federal riding boundaries, makes some sense. Certainly, if we can address some of the gaps in the legislation that I pointed out today, if we can make some meaningful changes to encourage more people to participate in the electoral process—in particular more young people, less-educated young people, First Nations people, people with disabilities, people who have historically experienced barriers to voting—then we will have a much stronger bill and a much more democratic Ontario.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I listened very carefully to the remarks from the member for London West. She had some good points to make here.

But the main thing about this bill is that we are aligning our provincial boundaries to mirror the federal boundaries that recently changed—with one exception, of course. In the north, we're going to keep 11 seats instead of 10. That's a commitment our government made a long time ago to make sure that the north is represented and that we have 11 members in this Legislature from northern Ontario.

Of course, the population across Ontario has grown quite a bit, so we're following the number of ridings across Ontario that the federal government has, after doing some consultation and outreach to the community. This bill has a long way to go still, but the thrust of the bill is to follow the federal boundaries but to keep one extra seat in the north.

Beyond that, we certainly support the idea of representation by population. We need new members, and we'll have new members here after the next election in 2018.

Also, this bill still goes to committee after second reading debate here; amendments are made and proposed. This is not etched in concrete. I mean, if the opposition members have some good amendments they want to make to the bill, we can do that at committee, or even the government, if they wanted to make some changes to the bill, can do that as well. We always have committee meetings on bills. Discussions take place, public hearings are held, and then we discuss it amongst the committee members and bring it back up here for third reading debate. We are basically doing what the federal government is doing across Canada, realizing that there are more people. The member mentioned the GTA, the greater Toronto area; the population has just exploded in that area, and we want to make sure that the people there are represented with more ridings. I appreciate the comments, and hopefully we will get this bill to committee at some point in time.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I am honoured to join in the debate. I want to acknowledge my colleague's comments with respect to this bill, and particularly I think it's important to talk about—while we're talking about changing the electoral boundaries, it also raises the question around what we can do to encourage more participation. The member from London brought up issues around encouraging youth to vote more.

I think one of the most important things we can do as legislators is to create a climate to encourage more participation in our democracy. I think it's deeply troubling that we see the type of voter turnouts that we see. It is incumbent upon us as members of this House to do everything possible to ensure that it's easier to vote and that people are more encouraged to vote. We need to come up with strategies around that, particularly with the traditional groups that aren't voting as often, and youth is one of those particular groups.

We need to ensure that access is not a barrier to voting, that people don't vote because it's just simply difficult to vote. We have seen in this previous election

that having an increased number of advance voting days allowed for more voter turnout. That was a positive initiative, but we need to do more to target, specifically, young people, whether that's through making it easier to vote through finding better mechanisms for voting, allowing more awareness around the benefit of voting, reaching out through various initiatives, perhaps non-profit organizations that encourage voter participation. I think it's essential. If we talk about increasing the number of members in this province, we also need to look at how we can increase the participation from our citizens.

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

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I think that the strength of our democracy is at the heart of the fair and inclusive society that we're so proud to call Ontario. Today, we're seeking to proceed with proposals that would ensure Ontarians are represented fairly in this Legislature.

Coming from a growth riding, I understand how important it is for us to have effective representation that's proportional by population. I think that we need to have these new boundaries come into play so that we can fairly represent and have equal areas across the province. We've seen the ridings in Brampton grow over the last few years, so much that sometimes it becomes difficult to manage all of the constituents that you have, so it would be so much better if we could have fair, proportionate boundaries for everybody.

Representation by population is a core democratic principle. We are adjusting Ontario's provincial boundaries in light of our population shifts and growth to ensure that Ontarians are represented fairly and effectively. This means that we'll be adding 15 new ridings in southern Ontario based on the new federal boundaries, which would increase the number from 96 to 111. However, we would maintain the existing 11 provincial ridings in northern Ontario to maintain fair representation in northern Ontario.

As we saw in the federal election this week, we still had large ridings to cover. I know I was out canvassing quite a bit for our local representatives and our local candidates, and covering ground was—even with a 78-day campaign, it wasn't easy to cover as much ground as we have.

The population in some of these areas continues to grow, so we need to take that into consideration when we follow through on having the same riding representations as we do federally. It also makes it easier for our constituents. I come from a riding where, right now, I'm Brampton–Springdale, whereas my federal counterpart is Brampton North, and there was already confusion with us going out to canvass. They need to be aligned with the federal boundaries. It is the best thing, and it's in the best interests of us and our constituents.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I keep imagining that there's going to be somebody else from my caucus getting up.

My riding actually changed as well. Many of the constituents who are in the new riding are actually very upset. They feel they weren't consulted. They felt that they were part of a community, and now the president of the EDA, the federal riding association, is in fact not in the riding. She's going to stay on as president, but I think it does sometimes create difficulty. So I think there has to be a lot of thought put into it.

I don't know that there is any way to have public engagement, necessarily, in terms of riding boundary changes, but I definitely was a little surprised at the fact that Thornhill riding, the way it exists now provincially, not federally, goes along Steeles to 404, along Highway 7 from the east to Highway 400—everybody can imagine that—and then dips up and has this extra little piece north of Highway 7. I would have imagined, if they were cutting the riding down, that they would have taken the piece that's on the north side of the highway and kept it a perfect rectangle. Instead, they lopped off a part, so it's still an oddly shaped riding, crossing between communities.

There's obviously a lot more to it than just looking at one riding. I think they had to look at the entire area, and you can't just take a piece of one riding to make that riding maybe work perfectly; you have to also look at all the surrounding ridings. But as my colleague just said, I think that we as parliamentarians have to recognize that our voices do get a bit diminished when there are more of us in the House. Perhaps there will be more people to speak on certain things, and that's less work for us, but then there will be fewer opportunities for us as well.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: They'll all be New Democrats.

Mrs. Gila Martow: All the new ones will be New Democrat—wishful thinking.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for London West. You have two minutes.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank the member from Scarborough Southwest, the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, the member from Brampton–Springdale and the member from Thornhill for offering some thoughts on the remarks I made on Bill 115.

I was encouraged by the comment by the member for Scarborough Southwest, in his acknowledgment that they do have a long way to go to achieve true and meaningful electoral reform. Certainly, as I said in my comments, and others have noted, representation by population is a core value of a democratic society and is important, but there is so much more that we need to do to strengthen our democracy.

I liked the comments by the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, when he talked about the need for targeted initiatives to encourage more participation among voters, particularly among youth. Perhaps I didn't say enough about the remarks that were made by the minister and the parliamentary assistant about the coming provisional registration initiative, because that is certainly a useful tool to create a habit of democracy among young people: getting 16- and 17-year-olds excited about the opportu-

ity to vote; getting them to start thinking about the issues that matter to them and which party they might be interested in supporting; and just preparing them to become citizens of our democracy, to participate in our electoral process and to choose the future they want by marking an X on their ballot.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: It is my pleasure to rise and speak about Bill 115, the Electoral Boundaries Act, and participate in second reading debate this afternoon. I will be sharing my time with the members from Davenport, Eglinton–Lawrence and Trinity–Spadina—so a team effort, for sure.

I think there has been quite a bit of discussion today—good discussion—about what this act is really about in terms of the changes to boundaries. I think the principle of representation by population is something we're hearing from all sides. Of course, we just had the federal election, so now it is time for the province to consider moving forward with adopting those boundaries, for the most part, with the exception in the North, as other members have talked about.

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I think the member for Brampton–Springdale hit it on the head in her remarks: There's going to be confusion for a while, because now we have these new federal boundaries, but, in Ontario, we are still operating under the current boundaries. However, it will take time to get ready for that official change in 2018.

In my riding of Pickering–Scarborough East, to be frank, I kind of like it the way it is. I have a community in the very east end of Toronto and a community in the very west side of Durham. People go back and forth all the time. There are now shared transit systems. People live and shop and worship in both parts of the riding. I've really enjoyed and will continue to enjoy serving that community until the boundaries change. At an emotional level, it's a little hard for me to see the riding split in two.

I know, in other cases, such as in the case of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, her riding is splitting potentially in four. She has a bigger dispersement of her riding. There will be a transition period. How we all communicate that is going to be very important as we go forward.

One part I wanted to touch on briefly—and it was just mentioned in the wrap-up from the NDP—is the potential with this bill to engage younger people earlier. I'm sensing a consensus around how important that is, Speaker. I think engagement of people sooner in the process is, hopefully, going to continue to increase voter turnout of our young people.

This provincial registration provision in the act, that will allow 16- and 17-year-olds to become more engaged, I think, is very, very important. Hopefully, it will make it easier for them to vote when they do turn 18 and, hopefully, build that greater tie between themselves as youth and the election process.

I have two kids who went off to college and university this fall. Although they're 17—they're not turning 18

until next month—they really could feel the on-campus effort this year to get the youth vote out. They were provided with all kinds of opportunities to vote on campus, to meet with candidates, and the outreach was quite incredible. This was at McMaster University, where my daughter is, and at Mohawk College, where my son is. Unfortunately, they couldn't vote, because their birthday is not until December, but they certainly became aware.

There are my 17-year-olds getting engaged already, even though they couldn't vote. So when the registration provision of this bill comes forward, they will already be aware because there has been such tremendous outreach at our colleges and universities in Ontario, and I think that's fantastic. I'm having conversations with them about what it means to vote, and what it means to our democracy.

I think this is a very important piece of this bill. I know there are other important provisions around election advertising and so on, and potentially changing the fixed date of elections.

I know that these riding changes are important to our democracy. I know, even in my own riding, that I'm very attached to, there's a certain logic about splitting Pickering–Scarborough East into Scarborough–Rouge Park and Pickering–Uxbridge, based on regional government boundaries and based on population growth. It absolutely makes sense.

I think the challenge for all of us is just to get ready for that, and I look forward to this bill going forward to committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Davenport.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I'm pleased to rise today and speak about the importance of Bill 115.

We have heard that the strength of our democracy is at the heart of the fair and inclusive society we are so proud of here in Ontario, and nothing could be more true. In fact, democracy is at the heart of our province and our country. Whether you're a Canadian here in Ontario or in any other province across this great country of ours, fair representation in a democracy is what we all believe in, and it's a value that exists in my riding of Davenport too.

The simple act of voting, which was once a privilege given only to those affluent enough to own land or pay taxes, has become a right of citizenship enjoyed by Canadians. With this recent federal election, we saw an increase in voter turnout: 68.5%, a number we hadn't seen since 1993.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the newly elected MP for Davenport, Julie Dzerowicz, and thank the outgoing MP, Andrew Cash, for his years of service and for serving the constituents of Davenport.

Our citizens see voting not only as a treasured right but also as a civic obligation, a way of acting on our commitment to democratic principles and protecting our stake in our country's political life. Representation by population is a core democratic principle. Through Bill

115, we are proposing to adjust Ontario's provincial boundaries in light of our population shifts and growth to ensure that Ontarians are represented fairly and effectively. This means adding 15 new ridings in southern Ontario, based on the new federal boundaries, which would increase the number from 96 to 111. The bill would maintain the existing 11 provincial ridings in northern Ontario. The new federal boundaries were put in place for the recent federal election. I know that we are taking steps to ensure that the new boundaries are in place for the next scheduled provincial election in 2018.

Speaker, I've met so many Canadians, Ontarians and amazing people in Davenport, all from different walks of life, various backgrounds, and each having unique values. But the one value I've noticed they share in common is the desire for democracy and fair representation. I know that with the recent federal election, my office assisted a number of new Canadians to this country to register and vote for the first time in this election. I know that our government recognizes the importance of giving every man and woman from all backgrounds the chance to be heard through their right to vote. Whether you're a new immigrant to Ontario or a second- or third-generation Canadian, it means something to belong to a democracy and to be fairly represented. That's why I'm pleased to stand up in the House today and support this bill. Ontario should be represented fairly in our Legislature, and the Electoral Boundaries Act would do just that.

I remember, when I was seeking to get elected to this House, how many doors I knocked on in Davenport where my constituents told me personally that they value the right to participate in our democracy and the right to vote. They know it's not a right that exists in every country in the world but exists here in Ontario and Canada, and they are proud that it does. That's why I gladly lend my support to this bill and its initiative in expanding the voice of Ontarians.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: Thanks, Speaker. Speaking to Bill 115, we had some discussions about electoral reform at one point. I said that there's one country where they have the perfect system. Maybe we should have a parliamentary trip there. They claim to have the best system. That's North Korea. North Korea claims to have the perfect democracy. They've made the system bullet-proof—no pun intended.

The search for this elusive dream of the perfect boundaries and the perfect system—you're never going to find it. But I think, over the years, we've tried to make it as reasonable as possible. I think that the Ontario electoral boundaries, or the federal, and the systems of voting are pretty darn good. I know some of them always say, "In New Zealand, they've got a great system," and they always say, "Sweden has a fantastic system." Well, none of these systems are perfect. We've got a pretty good one here. There are a lot of parts that could be fixed, and that's what I think we should be doing: con-

tinue to improve it. That's where people would appreciate the fixing of the system that we have. To give them some utopia, again, as I said, there's only one utopia, and we don't want to go there.

It's interesting to note that in my own riding of Eglinton–Lawrence, we had a 72% turnout—a really high turnout. People were—I've never seen them so excited to vote. Really, in all my years provincially, municipally or federally, this was an all-time high of an enthusiasm on the part of everybody of all ages. Young people, they're just—again, I've never seen them so engaged, which was great to see.

Also, in terms of the changes that are made, one of the things that really drives me crazy—and some of you have served provincially and municipally—is that they change the polling stations all the time. This drives people crazy. So you have the municipal polling station here, and then the provincials are here, and then the federal is totally different. Then the provincial polling stations go according to accessibility rules, while the feds don't have any accessibility rules. Is it that difficult in this age of computers to have the same polling stations, God forbid, for all three elections so that people would know we go there to the local church to vote, to the local school to vote?

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Then you've got the situation in the schools this election. We had one in a Toronto community housing building. The doors were locked because they have to be locked. You can't get in. People going to vote in the morning—they couldn't get in all day. We had to phone and say, "Please, have someone stand at the door." "Oh, we don't have enough staff to open the doors." Anyway, this kind of nonsense really frustrates people, and it shouldn't be.

My pet peeve, I'll tell you—those stupid voting cards. Okay? I go crazy every time I see the voting cards. You can't read them. They're so small, the writing of where—right, Tim? You see the writing—I can't see. Where do I go to vote? A lot of seniors—and the writing is so small, the advance poll writing is so small, and then, as you know, now in the mail all you get is that junk mail with the cards. This card comes in with all the other junk mail. It all goes in the garbage. The poor voter gets so frustrated. I go and say, "Do you want to vote?" He says, "Well, I don't have the card. I lost the card."

How many thousands of people lose those stupid cards that are just impossible to read, or go to the wrong address? The person's moved. The husband gets the card; the wife doesn't get the card. Then the kids don't get the card; the mother gets the card. A person who's been living in a house for 30 or 40 years doesn't get a card; the person who just moved in has a card. I mean, those voting cards are a disaster, always have been—municipally, federally, provincially. You think these people we pay big money to—Elections Ontario and Elections Canada, can they figure out the simple voting card, what to do to fix that and to have polling stations?

In polling stations federally, this is the other thing that happened. I don't know if it happened in your ridings.

There were no signs to tell you where the polling station was. The signs were inside the polling station. I said, "What good are they inside the polling station? You can't afford a little Coroplast sign to put on the front lawn of the school to say you vote in there?" "No, we can't do that. The school won't allow signs on the property." This is the kind of nonsense—you know, before we come up with our utopian system of the best way to vote, let's just fix the basics first of all.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: How about an updated voters list?

Mr. Mike Colle: Oh, the voters list. There's no such thing. You might as well work door-to-door without lists, because the lists will drive you crazy, will drive the volunteers crazy, and then the people will say, "My name isn't on the list. How do I get on the list?" "Well, you've got to email now. Go to your computer." And the person says, "I don't have a computer. How I do get on the list?" Then you go on voicemail hell, trying to get back and forth, "Who do I call? Where do I go?"

Anyway, let's fix the fundamentals. I know that's not sexy and it doesn't make columns in the *Globe* or *Toronto Star*. The talking heads on CBC don't talk about this kind of stuff, because most of them have never done the practical door-to-door stuff like we have, to see the pain and agony of ordinary people trying to vote. Let's fix the fundamentals before we go ahead and find this utopian system that exists in only one country, and we don't want to go there.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Han Dong: I'm very happy to speak to this bill as this bill is a very important bill. It embraces the democratic system that we all enjoy here.

As an immigrant, you can only imagine how excited I was when I first became a Canadian citizen. This past summer, one of the activities was to go to the CNE to attend their annual swearing-in ceremony where I saw many new Canadians. The first thing they said to me after they were sworn in was, "I'm so happy I can vote this October."

I'm very pleased to be able to debate this bill, and that our government is actually moving forward with the boundary changes.

To me, there are three things that I want to bring up for the boundary change act. First of all, it's necessary. It's necessary where now we have the federal boundaries changed and in my riding it's very significant. The downtown, we used to have two ridings: Trinity–Spadina and Toronto Centre at the federal level. Now we have three ridings: University–Rosedale, Spadina–Fort York and Toronto Centre.

I have to say that I was worried, at first, how people would understand and not be confused about these new boundaries. For example, in my riding Chinatown now gets cut in half by Dundas Street. North of Dundas goes to University–Rosedale and south of Dundas goes to Spadina–Fort York. I was honestly quite worried that people wouldn't have a chance to get informed where

they are going to be voting and who they would be voting for.

I have to say that observing the whole period of 78 days of campaigning, I'm quite pleased that the candidates had done an excellent job of informing of the new boundary changes, where we see that overall, voter turnout has gone up. I'm quite proud of the turnout in my riding. Both ridings had well exceeded 70%, which we haven't seen in a long while.

The second thing is that it is necessary to address the population growth of the downtown core. We've all seen the buildup and all the construction going on in the city of Toronto and in my riding, whether it's CityPlace, whether it's Liberty Village, whether it's parts of College Park. We can't go by a major street without seeing cranes and construction taking place. So this is necessary to make sure that residents are fairly represented and that they receive quality service from their elected officials.

To be honest, people see politicians attending events all the time and they say to us, "You work very hard," but we know, in fact, our staff works very hard, especially at the constituency level. In the areas where we have faced tremendous growth, the demand for service has grown so much. I think it's necessary, and I think staff at the constituency office will be glad to hear of boundary changes, especially for my area.

Third, I think the youth engagement piece is very important. I want to share with the House a little story. There was an international student first, and then he became a permanent resident. I think it was the week before October 19, he got his citizenship. He beat the registration deadline by two hours. He was so excited that he could vote for the first time during this election. So I want to see this kind of enthusiasm amongst the young voters when it comes to voicing their opinion via ballot.

I share with the member from Eglinton–Lawrence some of the frustrations and challenges, I will say, that we still see at the operation portion of the election. The turnover in my riding is about 10% every year. So we have 10% of new residents in the riding. So to reconcile their list with the new voters and register the new voters is a challenge. I hope to see some innovative new ways to capture that so everyone can go through a very smooth voting process on election day.

I'm very happy to debate this bill, and I'll be supporting this bill wholeheartedly.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I think that we're all very committed to seeing voter engagement. This subject sort of has evolved to getting voters engaged when we were really initially focused on the actual changes in the electoral districts. But that is part of the engagement: people knowing, number one, what riding they're in. I think we all experience here, especially in the more urban ridings, where there are so many ridings and they're so close together that people are quite shocked that from one block to another block, they're in a different riding—they're quite taken aback.

1720

We would like everybody to be very engaged, to want to vote and understand not just who their MPP or their MP is but what that person is doing. With social media, it's certainly making our lives more interesting—"May you live in interesting times," and all that—in terms of getting the voters to be a little bit engaged not just with us and what we're doing here in the Legislature—and yes, it's late on a Thursday. People are wondering how the schedules are done. I wonder if people outside of Queen's Park understand what it is we are doing in here, debating and not going to events, which is what they see on social media.

People want to know that they can vote. I totally agree with the member opposite about the size of printing. As an optometrist, I struggle with this all the time. We demand bilingual literature. We often demand things to be available for people who have all kinds of accessibility difficulties. Vision: All we have to do is have a better font, not dark grey on light grey. Maybe that's something we can be debating next week, another time, when we're done debating electoral reform and boundary changes.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise and respond to some of the remarks that were offered by the Minister of Community and Social Services, the member for Eglinton–Lawrence and the member for Trinity–Spadina.

Interesting, Speaker, that most of the comments that were offered actually didn't refer to the bill. They referred to what is coming next after this bill. I really appreciated the passion that was shown by the member for Eglinton–Lawrence and his desire to fix that voters list and do something about those—

Mr. Mike Colle: Frustration. It's frustration.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Yes, his frustration about voter registration cards. I hope he takes that passion with him as the Liberal government looks to develop the next step of its electoral reform process.

Similarly, the Minister of Community and Social Services—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Not community and social services.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Oh, sorry. It's children and youth services. Sorry. The Minister of Children and Youth Services spoke about the importance of engaging youth and the value of provisional registration. I fully agree, Speaker, but this bill doesn't say a thing about engaging youth—unless perhaps there will be some engagement by the tweaking of the electoral boundaries, but I doubt it, frankly. We'll have to wait until the next step, until we see some action on this recommendation for provisional registration that was brought by the Chief Electoral Officer.

All of the things that we've been discussing today are great. Unfortunately, as a result of this debate, we'll only be able to move ahead on one of them, and that is the boundary changes. It sounds like there is some consensus, so I look forward to seeing that bill move forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Etobicoke North.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: With regard to the recent election outcome, I would simply say, "Free at last. Free at last. Thank God almighty, we are free at last."

Speaker, Ontario had to fight for the extra 15 seats coming to the province of Ontario because the outgoing government was going to extend a disproportionate number of extra seats to Alberta. We had to fight for those seats.

This, I'm sorry to say, is part of the outgoing government's very strategic decisions and programs and initiatives to disenfranchise more and more voters, whether it's the elimination of the long-form census; whether it's, for example, increasing the PR citizenship requirement time from three years to four years; whether it's reducing the number of immigrants from 50,000 to 5,000 regarding bringing parents; whether it's the elimination of more than a million expatriate Canadians from the voters list; whether it's by way of removing immigration physicians who spoke Gujarati, Arabic, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Hindi and Tamil or, for example, choosing immigrants based on religious criteria as opposed to their human plight. Even, by the way, some of you might have seen some of the information: In British Columbia—google it now if you don't believe me—there were ballots that were preprinted, pre-selected, for Tory candidates that were released in British Columbia—no doubt a printing error.

Now, whether these are all random acts of kindness or whether these are actually part of some—let's call it what it is—American strategic plan to disenfranchise voters, to go with the old-stock Canadians and not the others who may come subsequently, that, Speaker, I leave to you.

This electoral boundary issue is very important. Ontario had to fight for those 15 seats, and we welcome them.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: We saw an example of what they term the "Harper derangement syndrome" just now. I'd say to my colleague from Etobicoke: Doctor, heal thyself. That was a bit over the top. I'd put the tinfoil hat back in the desk, and we'll go back to debate here.

Let me just say this: I sense my friends across the floor are excited about the election results from Monday—just my guess, Speaker. When you're talking to the new Prime Minister Trudeau, tell him, "Don't change the electoral system in this great country, Canada." Many of you celebrated how Canada—and I do, too, as a grandson of immigrants—attracts people from across the world. We're to be emulated, not tossed aside to try, as my friend from Eglinton–Lawrence suggested, the latest model du jour, whether it be Sweden or New Zealand or, as he made a joke, North Korea. I'm with him. We've got a great system right here. Why would you toss it out the window? Why is Canada the envy of the world? This is part of it.

Whatever you do, tell the Prime Minister, "Do not go to some sort of mixed-member proportional or someplace

where members are off of a list to get elected.” I know my friend from Eglinton–Lawrence; I see him working, when I’m in Toronto, in the riding. He’s there, and that’s why he has been re-elected many times. I know my new colleagues are back in their ridings, because you’re accountable. The member from Huron–Bruce is driving three hours now home tonight after debate because she wants to be back in her riding tonight, to be in her office tomorrow morning with constituents.

If somebody gets appointed from a list, they’re going to do that? Are you kidding me? All they’re going to care about is being as close as possible to the leader and those around him. That’s not healthy for our democratic system. There is nothing like the discipline of having to go back home to face the voters, to be in the grocery store, the gas station, your church, your synagogue—whatever, Speaker—to say, “This is how I voted, and talk to me.” That is not going to happen when you come off a list.

Keep Canada strong and free: direct representation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. You have two minutes for a response.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Well, I think we had a great, passionate discussion this afternoon about this bill. We had seven MPPs speak to this, and I want to acknowledge their contributions: the members from Davenport, Eglinton–Lawrence to my right, Trinity–Spadina, Thornhill, London West, Etobicoke North and Niagara West–Glanbrook. I think everyone’s on the same page that we need to move this bill forward, and I heard some other suggestions, too, that I think are definitely worthy of consideration.

Speaker, one thing I’d like to do, if I may, during this last minute of my time is to thank the outgoing member for Pickering–Scarborough East, the Conservative member, Corneliu Chisu, whom I’ve worked with for four years. He is a professional, kind, co-operative person and I really enjoyed working with him on many, many non-partisan events in our community. Mr. Chisu, until, I think, Minister O’Toole came along, was the only federal member with active service in Afghanistan. He speaks seven languages. He’s an engineer. He has a great background and he’s a great Canadian. I thank him for his service to our country and to the riding of Pickering–Scarborough East.

I’d also like, of course, to congratulate the two new members in my riding, which has split, as I outlined earlier. On the Scarborough–Rouge Park side, we have Gary Anandasangaree. He is our new MP for that riding. In Pickering–Uxbridge, we have Jennifer O’Connell, the former deputy mayor for the city of Pickering and a regional councillor. I’m really looking forward to working with both of them as we go forward, and again would like to thank MP Chisu for his work in our riding. I wish him much health and happiness as he goes forward, and I thank all the members for participating in this debate.

1730

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I’m pleased to rise in support of Bill 115, Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015. I want to say I’m supporting this because anytime—I want to be encouraging—the government members are carrying out a Mike Harris PC government policy, I want to congratulate them. It’s good to see. You’ve come around. You’re coming around. It’s all right.

My colleagues—some who have been here a bit longer than others—will remember this was actually brought in in 1996. At the time, it was called the Fewer Politicians Act of 1996.

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, no. We matched the federal boundaries; you’re increasing politicians by this act. We reduced them; it’s true. We campaigned on that, if you remember—saved taxpayers money, made sure the provincial boundaries were the same as the federal boundaries. You’re keeping the Mike Harris principle intact of matching the federal boundaries, which I appreciate and I commend you for it. I’m just trying to pay you a compliment, I say to my colleague across the floor.

Bill 81, Fewer Politicians Act, 1996: “An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation.”

I thought this made a lot of sense. I ran on it. It always seemed to me to be sensible. I have heard a number of you use these arguments here this evening as well, that it just seems sensible and transparent to voters and those that we work with, whether stakeholders, municipal leaders etc., to have the same boundaries provincially as we do federally. It also eliminates the ugly temptation, over time, for our politicians to gerrymander ridings. It takes that temptation away altogether. That’s why I thought it was a good idea then, and I think it’s a good idea today.

In 1955, there was actually a similar number of seats both provincially and federally. The number of those in the assembly resembled the number of representatives from Ontario who took their seats in Parliament. Just after 1955, the federal representation of Ontario increased by 14 seats, but paradoxically, Ontario added 40 new members. So 1955 was probably the Leslie Frost government. If the member from York Centre were here, I could ask him directly if that was the case or not, but it was, I believe, the Frost government. I’m not sure what the reasons were at the particular time, but it caused a phenomenon to occur post-1955 where there were more provincial members than there were federal members.

Now, I’d probably agree, and I think that my colleagues here would say the same—and we’d have a fun debate with our federal colleagues—I think provincial members work harder. There are more issues that are more pertinent to the everyday life of an MPP than an MP when you’re in—

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Pardon me?

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: We do get paid less. We don't have the same retirement program that the federal members do, either.

Mr. Mike Colle: That's another Mike Harris bill.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I think you voted for it, though. I think you voted for that one.

Nonetheless, I do think—I know there are federal members who work extremely hard. They have a lot of travel; they do a lot of international travel and such, but I think in terms of the work that's relevant and front facing to average folks—education, health care, transportation, policing, the environment—

Mr. Robert Bailey: WSIB.

Mr. Tim Hudak: WSIB. My colleague from Sarnia-Lambton says that a lot of our constituency work is WSIB cases, sadly.

Interjection: FRO.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The FRO, the Family Responsibility Office.

I would put the hours of work of an MPP and his or her staff on constituency matters at the federal level. Nonetheless, my colleague from St. Catharines pointed out there's a difference in pay and benefits, but that's not the debate today. But I think we'd all agree there are demands on MPPs unlike their federal cousins.

Nonetheless, I don't think that argues to increase the number of MPPs beyond federal representation. I still think that matching boundaries trumps other considerations, and I'm pleased to see that continue.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Even in the North, Tim?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Pardon me?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Even in the North?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, we do have the one additional seat in the North. I know my colleague from Windsor asked me about that—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would urge the speaker to address the Chair.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I am, like I said, supporting the bill, but you're right.

So in 2003, the representation order reduced the number of federal electoral boundaries to 10 from 11 and increased the number of electoral districts in southern Ontario from 92 to 96.

So while the original act would have matched the federal northern boundaries for the 2007 election campaign, Premier McGuinty at the time brought in the Representation Act of 2005. That moved us from 106 to 107 ridings, including an additional northern riding.

I think the principle is clear: It's appropriate, fair, transparent and honest to match those federal boundaries. This act does not, as far as I know, make it automatic. It means that every time the federal boundaries change, we have to come back and debate the same principles again, and I think, in all likelihood, past that—but it would be better, I think, if it was an automatic result.

What happened back in 1996 when this bill was brought in? It reduced the number of MPPs and their staff by 27 members. That means that their expenses

were reduced as well. It saved about \$11 million each and every year.

I supported that bill. I look back on the debate. John Baird, who, I think, by the way, was one of the most impactful foreign affairs ministers in my lifetime—I'm proud to count him as a friend. I'm glad to see he's doing well in the real world of the private sector now. John Baird at the time said, "Rather, we believe that if we're going to get ourselves out of the hole we're in with respect to deficits, we have to lead by example. We have to say that the leadership is going to start with a smaller cabinet and a smaller Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and that's very, very important."

I can't remember what the two opposition parties did at the time. I think they may have opposed that act. I'm not sure.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Say it ain't so.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Let's look back. My colleague from the NDP said, "Say it ain't so." What do you guess? Do you think the NDP supported or voted against?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I wasn't here.

Mr. Tim Hudak: You were, basically, maybe an early college student at the time, I think, in 1996.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the speaker again: no cross-dialogue. Speak to the Chair.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Does the Speaker disagree?

Len Wood, an NDP member, called it a silly bill.

Liberal Mario Sergio—remember Mario Sergio? A big shock of curly hair on his head—a young fellow back in 1996.

Hon. Mario Sergio: You remember my curly hair?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I do. I admired it. I was jealous. I'm never going to have that.

Hon. Mario Sergio: There you go.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Mr. Sergio said, "How can we deliver?"—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We've had a great day, and all this cross-talk did not exist. I did not have to intervene. So can we finish the day nicely?

Hon. Mario Sergio: We never had a chance, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'd ask you to behave until 6 o'clock. After that, you'll be free.

Carry on. I'd ask you to keep it to the Chair.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Certainly, Speaker. And in defence of my colleagues, I am provoking them. I will admit it.

Mr. Sergio at the time said, "How can we deliver better representation and better services when you are diminishing exactly that?"

Liberal MPP Jim Bradley, the member for St. Catharines—you'll find this one interesting—said, "I know one of the concerns he would have is that there be a sufficient number of members in the Legislature to prevent the privatization of the LCBO."

Hon. Jeff Leal: Well, that's true.

Mr. Tim Hudak: —talking at the time. "Because he would know, as others know, that the LCBO provides a safe, secure and controlled way of retailing alcoholic beverages in this province...."

Some things don't change. I bet the member would probably say similar things today.

NDP member David Cooke, Windsor–Riverside: “I intend to vote against this bill because I stand firm with my Liberal colleagues in saying that the Chrétien government really messed up these boundaries. I had to say that.” He said, “I think it is fundamentally wrong” to match the federal boundaries.

Jean-Marc Lalonde: “It’s impossible to try and compare the MPPs and the MPs. That’s impossible.” Strong language here from Monsieur Lalonde. “Federal MPs have very little to look” out for in a rural area. “Provincial matters are everything.”

PC member Derwyn Shea—the late Rev. Derwyn Shea, an honourable member, I think, very well liked and respected on all sides of the floor—said, “In addition to the dollar savings and so forth that this bill represents—and that’s not unimportant to the taxpayers of this province—it’s more important that we understand the politics of our ridings and who represents whom. The fact is that in my riding, I have a total of 14 politicians. The people in the community are getting sick and tired of not knowing who represents what area any longer. Neighbourhoods are being divided, and that’s most inappropriate.

“This bill tries to give some consistency. It says an area is an area, and within that you’ll know who your representatives are, you’ll know how to access the power and the responsibilities of government ... effectively.... It finally makes sense out of a process and a structure that right now are totally incomprehensible to everybody.”

There’s a bit of a refresher, Speaker. I remember that debate—some quotes at the time. Ironically, the then opposition parties voted against the bill. We brought it in, but now, 20 years later, you’ve seen the light, and that’s a good thing, and I’ll support your initiative.

1740

Hon. Jeff Leal: But you know, Tim, it was interesting. That bill set up the—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister of Agriculture, would you come to order.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The member has a good point.

So the second part—because I had said that would be about 10 minutes, and then the next 10 minutes of my remarks would be, what were the impacts of that? The member from Peterborough is right, and he remembers that there were, as a result, a number of politicians—and it was the right thing to do. We campaigned on it, we carried it out and we did it. It did mean there were a lot of Conservative-versus-Conservative battles. We were in the majority; we had 82 members. I sat back there; I don’t even know if my seat is still around, if there’s an impression on the floor in that back corner.

So there were 82 of us at the time and then there were some member-against-member—so you’re right. Chris Stockwell, who had been—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Ford nation versus the Stockwell nation.

Mr. Tim Hudak: And interestingly, who won that one? Do you remember?

Hon. Jeff Leal: Stockwell.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Chris Stockwell won that nomination.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Minister of Agriculture, you’re warned.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I am baiting him.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): And you might get the next warning.

Mr. Tim Hudak: It’s Thursday afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I know.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I was elected in Niagara South in 1995. Niagara South was my riding in 1995: my hometown, Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Wainfleet and the slice of Niagara Falls south of McLeod Road. My riding, by the way, had—you remember that one? The member before me had been Ray Haggerty for some time, a very solid member. He’d actually represented the riding, a Liberal member, since 1967. The riding was Liberal since before I was born, as a matter of fact. It did go NDP in—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: How old were you?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, I was born in 1967, a centennial baby, so the same year the Leafs last won the cup.

I won that riding in a squeaker, with 38% of the vote. I won by 1,200 votes the first time—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Wow.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Yes, for sure. I remember Aubrey Foley was the Liberal candidate at the time. Ray had retired. There were stories in the Niagara Falls Review about the coming Aubrey Foley dynasty in Niagara South because Ray Haggerty had been there for 20-some years. I remember election night, too. Mr. Foley went around in a limousine with a nice boutonniere on his lapel to his polling stations, shaking hands with all his polling workers. I had borrowed my parents’ van, in a pair of jeans that I ripped getting out of the van, and had gone around the polling stations thanking my workers. So we probably had a different sort of style.

I won in a squeaker—1,200 votes in 1995, 38% of the vote.

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I know.

You work hard. You try to develop a good reputation. You keep track of the work that you do. You help people out. You get four years. You try to do better.

In 1999, the boundaries changed because of that act, because of, similar to what we’re doing today, a bigger, more dramatic change. So where I had been, Niagara South, and Erie came together with Lincoln. The member for Lincoln was?

Hon. Jeff Leal: Ross Hall?

Mr. Tim Hudak: He was previously; Frank Sheehan this time around. Frank Sheehan was a real leader in the insurance industry, a strong businessman, really a colourful, outspoken politician. Premier Harris made him the chair of the Red Tape Commission. I think he was the perfect guy for it; he was pretty tough. He had a heart of gold, Frank—very, very generous. But if you saw him publicly, and my colleague from St. Catharines would

agree, he was very rough and tumble, a scrapper. He made that Fighting Irishman, the Notre Dame symbol, look like a slacker, I think, Frank, when he got his ire up.

Frank, sadly, passed away just over a year or so ago—a good long life. He left a very loving family. His son carries on with the business. He was an outstanding member. So Frank and I could have scored off—Erie versus Lincoln—for that riding. It seemed a better Conservative riding. I remember Frank saying to me, “You know what, kid? You might have a future in politics and in the PC Party. I’m going to run in Niagara Centre.”

Niagara Centre meant he was going to take on Peter Kormos—a legend, right? Nobody could beat Kormos. Frank took him on. They had just some colourful debates. I remember the stories in the media; it was great, great politics. You had two real street-fighting politicians from different sides of the political spectrum squaring off in that Niagara Centre riding, which at the time was Pelham, Welland and Port Colborne. And Frank did well. Kormos ended up winning with about 4,000 votes, but it was a closer margin than we’d seen in that riding in a long, long time, which Kormos had taken in a by-election back in the mid- to late 1980s, about 1987 or 1988, I think it was.

Peter was an extraordinary member, and he’ll be remembered a long, long time in this place and certainly in Niagara for his great work. And if you wanted to take on Kormos, that was pretty brave. Frank did that, instead of facing off against me for Erie–Lincoln.

Erie–Lincoln was good to me. In 1999, I won by 6,000 votes. Vance Badawey was the member I had taken on at the time. Vance was then mayor of Port Colborne and is now the new MP for the Niagara Centre riding. Logically, if I had lost to Vance Badawey, I’d be a federal Liberal MP now under Justin Trudeau. Does that make sense? Maybe not. Congratulations to Vance; he’s now the MP for the Niagara Centre riding.

We did the redistribution. We had to learn the new areas. In 1999, I won the riding by 6,000 votes in Erie–Lincoln—and, I will say, the one and only MPP ever for Erie–Lincoln, because then in 2007, the riding boundaries changed once more into Niagara West–Glanbrook. In Niagara West–Glanbrook, by the way, I didn’t have to face anybody for the nomination. The riding actually worked out well. It was largely part of the Lincoln riding. I told you I started with 38%. I won by about 1,200 votes.

So here’s 2007, and 2007 was when my daughter was born, during the campaign. I was off the campaign trail for a little bit—I think the last seven to 10 days of the campaign. There were some complications in the hospital, so I left the campaign trail. Ironically, I had the biggest margin of victory yet. My father, who was my campaign manager that election campaign, said, “Next election campaign, Tim, you’re not going to knock on a single door. You do better when you’re not there.” Cute story.

So that was Niagara West–Glanbrook, which now I’m going to lose under the new boundary redistributions. It

will become now the Niagara West riding, which Dean Allison—and congratulations to Dean for his strong victory there in the federal election recently. So I’ll miss Glanbrook, I’ll miss upper Stoney Creek—areas of my riding that actually are kind of like the GTA of Hamilton, if you will: rapid development for that area, a lot of new single-family homes, young families that want to get a home of their own, pay off the mortgage, maybe raise kids. They have growth pressure issues. So I think of that part of my riding as more or less the 905 of the Hamilton area. I’ve had the honour of serving the folks in that area since the 2007 campaign.

I’ll miss my riding president as well, John Demik, who did a hell of a job for me: great leader, small businessman, construction, giving to his church and his community and certainly his family. I’ll miss the Binbrook Fair. Maybe they’ll have me back. We have the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum as well there, which has a remarkable Remembrance Day ceremony, the second-biggest in the nation, I understand. They just pack that place. If you’ve been there, you’ll know what I’m talking about. If not, I encourage you to visit the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum in the new boundary of Niagara West.

Another quick story. I actually—this is a secret to success, maybe, for those of you who are relatively new in this place. You want to be like Hudak? Today, I don’t represent a single inch that I was first elected to in 1995. How did I do that? I kept changing boundaries as they got to know me. That ensured I got re-elected. Honest to God. Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Wainfleet and a slice of Niagara Falls—I don’t represent a single inch anymore because the boundaries kept changing and I moved farther and farther west.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Very nomadic.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, maybe so, and that’s maybe how I won, right? They didn’t get tired of me.

I moved. I lived in Fort Erie, and then Deb and I bought a home in Wellandport in the old riding of Erie–Lincoln because it was right in the middle. It’s not as big as my northern colleagues’, not by a long shot, but it’s a pretty good size for southern Ontario. I figured Fort Erie to Dunnville was quite a trip, so we moved and bought a house in Wellandport, kind of smack dab in the middle. And then the boundaries changed on me again, so I ended up being in the farthest southeastern corner of the riding.

The good news? With Wainfleet being added and Stoney Creek and Glanbrook leaving, I’m back in the middle again. That cuts down on my mileage. I’m looking forward to an opportunity to represent the folks of Wainfleet again. They’re good people. They’re right across the Welland River from me. To quote Sarah Palin—I know you always say that here in the Legislative Assembly—I can see Wainfleet from my back porch, right there across the Welland River. I look forward, voters willing, to having an opportunity to represent the good people of Wainfleet and the southern and western part of the Niagara Peninsula once more.

As I wrap up just this little walk that I’ve been through the last number of election campaigns, boundaries have

changed. They change with the census. They change with populations. I think that's actually a good thing. And I think it's also a good thing when we match up our federal boundaries with our provincial boundaries. I just think that is sensible, it's transparent, it's fair. It eliminates the temptation of gerrymandering, as I said.

I do remain convinced, and I will defend it with any federal colleague, that there's a greater demand on provincial members and their staffs. I get that. Some may argue, then, there should be more of us relative to the federal government. They made that decision back in 1955, as I spoke about in my remarks. I don't think so. That does mean we work harder for less money than our federal colleagues, but I do think it's the right move under this bill to match those federal boundaries.

1750

For me personally, I'm getting back closer to the roots where I started from. I'll have a chance to do this down the road, but I thank the people from Niagara West–Glanbrook and Glanbrook–Upper Stoney Creek for putting their faith in me—a great honour to be from that part of the province. I know they'll be in good hands down the road when this does happen, but it's like coming back home.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to add my two cents in my two minutes on the heels of the comments from the member from Niagara–Glanbrook—excuse me—Niagara West–Glanbrook, although with all the stories of the various boundary changes, you can understand why I might get a bit tangled there.

I appreciate hearing the history of the issue. Today has been an interesting opportunity to appreciate the across-the-floor reminiscing and remembering things. I won't tell the member what I was doing back in 1996 or how old I was, but I wasn't as engaged as I am now in the political process. I was just about voting age at that point, but not quite.

I think, though, that the conversation about fewer elected representatives leads us to a bigger and important part of this issue, which is about how those elected representatives do their work; how they work for and advocate for their communities.

Discussing Bill 115 and electoral boundaries, aligning provincial and federal boundaries, as we've heard, with the exception of up north: It's an important piece that all of these representatives need to be in touch with their communities and make sure they are really representing them in the best way, that it isn't just about having more people to represent voters; it's about having more people to speak with those voters.

For example, the northern boundaries—my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane has brought to the attention of people here the communities of Thorne and Eldee and Wahnapiatae First Nation, that maybe there are still slight adjustments that need to be made to best represent the community. So let's make sure that when we're talking about having the more the merrier, it is more engaged. I think that needs to be our priority.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: I want to thank the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook for bringing us down memory lane in the Niagara Peninsula. He has obviously found the secret of success by keeping moving—a moving target. You might call that the political rope-a-dope, as he went from one boundary to the other until they could catch up to him. Certainly he has been successful over the years. He follows in the footsteps of his parents in terms of their contribution to public life in the Niagara Peninsula.

I do want to mention, for the rural members here—because I love doing this—that the biggest losers when you diminished the number of seats in the province of Ontario from 130 to 103 were rural Ontario. You lost your influence, and yet you have been loyal to a large extent in rewarding those who took away that influence—just a note that I have noted to my rural friends over the years, some of whom understand that.

One of the great advantages, by the way, of our system is to compare it with the United States. There's gerrymandering going on to a great extent; that is, boundaries based on partisan political considerations. I've had people ask me over the years, “Do you think these are fairly done? The federal government did this. Don't you think they tried to rig the system?” The answer is no. These are done by independent commissions, and these are extremely beneficial to the people of this province and to our country. So I congratulate those who have done that over the years.

I appreciated the member mentioning the workload of MPPs and MPs and how they compare. As you know, MPPs are in a seven-year pay freeze and do not have a defined benefit pension plan. Our federal colleagues have accepted raises year after year and have a defined benefit pension plan, but I'm certainly not complaining about that.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to, obviously, chime in on my colleague from Niagara West–Glanbrook's history lesson today for a lot of us new members. We don't often get to hear some of those perspectives as he has learned over the years.

Of course, the Minister without Portfolio will have mentioned the workload that we have. In my region now are five MPs representing the area that is represented by four MPPs, so we'll need two MPs to do the amount of work that one MPP does in the region of Waterloo, where I'm from: Kitchener–Conestoga, Kitchener South–Hespeler.

I think it's appropriate, when I've got a minute or so left, to thank those outgoing members who served the folks in the region of Waterloo: Peter Braid from Waterloo, PA to Infrastructure, the member who brought in, for those who contributed annually, the tax deduction; Stephen Woodworth, Kitchener Centre, who also served a couple of terms, served on the environment committee and was one of those guys that the Conservatives loved

in committee, kind of behind the scenes but there, of course; Minister Gary Goodyear in Cambridge–North Dumfries, having been the first member elected in the region, back in 2004, I believe, and who served as Minister of State for Science and Technology—of course, we thank him for his service. And my colleague federally, Harold Albrecht—having hung on to his seat, I’m happy to have Harold. I’m a four-year member. We get along great and we work together and now we’re both opposition members holding respective Liberal governments to account.

I’ll conclude with those remarks and look forward to my colleague wrapping up for his two minutes. Thank you, Speaker, for the time.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I want to thank the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook for his journey over the political landscape. I hadn’t thought before that there was the possibility of jumping from ice floe to ice floe to survive politically over time, but I guess if you’re from the Niagara region, the idea of the ice floes going towards the Falls at a good clip gives you that inspiration to keep moving, keep nimble.

My colleague from London West talked earlier about the bill that’s before this House. She talked about some of the issues that she had hoped would be addressed by this bill. Certainly, when the minister presented the bill initially, there were great statements about all the different issues that would be addressed. There are many issues that do need to be addressed in this bill that aren’t being addressed.

My colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane talked about some of the adjustments in northern boundaries—if we’re not going to follow the federal boundaries, that would make sense to people who currently have to travel five hours to see him in his constituency office, as opposed to the fact that they’re 10 minutes’ travel away from the constituency office of my colleague from Nickel Belt.

It may be a bit much for us to take on, but I think it would make sense, given that we’re redrawing these boundaries, reshaping the boundaries, if we’re going to maintain the number of ridings in the North that we have—and I think it’s a good idea to do that; I think it’s fair, given the workload that’s presented by the great distances—that we should look at rationalizing some of those boundaries so that people are better served. I felt that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane was quite correct in saying that if he read this bill as one of his

constituents, he would be guided by their concern that they not have huge impositions placed on them in terms of travel to be in touch with their representatives.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook. You have two minutes.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I’d like to thank my colleagues. It was a fun way to end on a Thursday evening and I appreciate the analogy, whether it was jumping from ice floe to ice floe or, as my colleague from St. Catharines said, the secret of success, at least for me, is to keep on moving—almost sounds like a Johnny Cash song. That got me through. So I’m moving again, moving again.

Look, we’re supporting the act. I think it’s the right thing to do. There’s a long history here, but I think it ultimately resides on the right principle of matching the boundaries.

I’ll end the evening, as we’re heading back to our ridings, on a point that I began with half an hour ago or so.

You’re going back to your ridings. We’re leaving here in the assembly. You are going back home. You’re heading to your ridings, just thinking about what your day looks like on Friday, Saturday and Sunday before you come back. Then picture somebody sitting next to you who now is done for the day, who has no riding to go to, does not have to be held accountable to voters for decisions or what they said in debate. Proportional representation and party lists mean that the son or daughter of a big donor, some party hack who couldn’t get elected to save their life, is going to sit next to you as an equal colleague. Is that good for democracy? What incentive does that send, as MPPs? Is that good for our country?

I’ve had the honour of serving since 1995. If I have the honour of being re-elected, I’ll have been in four different boundaries. My God, it puts a discipline on you to get back home, to show up and to listen. If you detach that, our country is not going to be the place that it has been. I just can’t imagine somebody sitting next to me who doesn’t have to work back in their riding—only working with the insiders. I’ve been there; I’ve been head insider.

I respect members who get elected, who actually have to go back, work and win the battles to get here time and time again.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): This House stands adjourned until October 26 at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1801.

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

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Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith
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Soo Wong
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Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Jim McDonnell, Eleanor McMahon
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece
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la justice**

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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: Tonia Grannum

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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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**

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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
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**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
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**Pathways to Post-secondary Excellence Act (Post-
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