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Thursday 29 October 2015

Jeudi 29 octobre 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Thursday 29 October 2015

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Jeudi 29 octobre 2015

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR STATUTE
LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2015**

**LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'EMPLOI
ET LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL**

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 28, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et les relations de travail.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for allowing me to speak to Bill 109 here today. As with every bill this Liberal government puts forward these days, there are quite a few changes across a number of laws that are being pushed through under one piece of legislation. We started to see that some of these bills contain some provisions and changes that are good for hard-working men and women in Ontario, alongside policies that simply make no sense. Bill 109 is no different.

I'm going to touch on several different aspects of the bill during my time. Hopefully, I can cover what makes sense in this bill and what needs to be removed or split into separate bills.

I'd like to first touch on how this bill affects our first responders—our local professional and volunteer firefighters. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, one of the major roles of the bill is to amend the 1997 Fire Protection and Prevention Act. I have stood up in this House many times before and talked about the importance of our first responders and, frankly, I'm happy to do it again. I don't think anyone here would disagree with me when I talk about how important our first responders are to all our communities. I certainly hope that the work they do for us isn't lost on anyone in this chamber or anyone watching at home. It's incredible, it's heroic and it deserves to be recognized.

When the unthinkable happens in our communities, it is those first responders who keep us safe. They are the ones who put their lives on the line to make sure that our loved ones are all right. Taking a look at these numbers, Mr. Speaker, all 11,000 professional firefighters and 19,000 volunteer firefighters in this province are normal, everyday people like you and me, who take on this great responsibility. Across the province, I am proud to say that they do an incredible job, and I'm even prouder to call many of them my friends.

Briefly, I would like to focus on just one group of these first responders. If I had enough time to talk about all of them, I would; honestly, they all deserve our recognition. In my riding of Niagara Falls, the firefighters, whether they are full-time or volunteer, are an integral part of our community.

These brave men and women already give our communities such an incredible gift that I don't believe they owe us anything—and yet they continue to give and be the cornerstones of our neighbourhoods. Take the professional firefighters in Niagara Falls, for example: Just last week in Niagara Falls, the local firefighters held their annual haunted house, which brought in donations to our local food bank, Project Share. They were there using their spare time to get donations for those who need it the most. Despite the fact that many of them had spent the previous week working hard throughout the night to ensure that we could sleep well, they still came out for a great cause.

This is no different than the fundraising efforts of the volunteer forces in smaller communities: in Fort Erie, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Stevensville, Crystal Beach and Ridgeway. I would be here all day if I tried to list all the dinners and fundraisers these people put on to help our community. Not one of these groups of dedicated men and women have ever felt that they were only first responders. They all give back to our communities, and they all do an incredible job.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm trying to get at here is that these men and women give so much to us that it's our obligation to ensure that they are taken care of. We've had some movement on recognizing that the unique cancers they face in their workplace need to be covered. But there is still work to do, especially around the issue of making sure post-traumatic stress disorder treatments are taken care of. When it comes to issues of mental health protection for our first responders, this province needs to move forward more quickly and ensure that we are not leaving any first responder behind.

I'm happy to see some pieces of legislation coming in to protect our first responders, but more needs to be done. I've seen first-hand in my riding where firefighters have died because of workplace cancers or hazards. Simply put, this is something that our province needs to make sure they have support for.

In my riding, there was a firefighter named Tim Hoday who served the force for 32 years. In April of this year, Tim passed away at the age of 55 after battling leukemia that he contracted during his work years. It was a sad day for the force and, really, for all of Niagara Falls. Clearly, this is an issue that is ongoing and one that needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

In Bill 109, I see that we're bringing a number of protections that exist under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act into the Labour Relations Act. It is my understanding that this would make the grievance arbitration process move more quickly. So long as firefighters aren't losing any protection—and I don't believe, with the way this is written, that they will—then this is something I can say is worthy of support. When I read about procedures to ensure we can have a quick grievance arbitration, I see that other unionized workers have this in their collective agreements—and have had it for decades. So it's time that we expand these procedures to our firefighters. I understand that they've been extremely frustrated in the past by the lengthy nature of the arbitration process, so I'm glad to see it's being fixed. If other workers have these rights and the Ontario Labour Relations Board can handle these issues quicker than the Ontario courts, then in my mind it makes sense to bring the two together.

0910

Mr. Speaker, we need to ensure that every single man and woman who wakes up in the morning and goes to work is fully protected, under the laws of this province, and goes to work in a safe workplace. That means we have to ensure that laws exist that keep them safe and that those laws are Unifor—uniform—across the province.

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Sorry about that. Hey, it happens.

In a lot of workplaces where there are gaps in these laws, it's unions who step in to protect workers. They work language into collective agreements that provides safety training, safety regulations and protections in case of injuries. We need to do everything we can to ensure that every worker in this province has the protection they require to do their job safely and to be secure if the worse should happen.

When a bill of this nature comes forward, I always like to ask my first responders how they feel about it. It's very important to me to ensure that I bring these bills back to my community, discuss them and bring them back here. That's the way we should get community input. It is my hope that when we bring these recommendations back to the House, they get implemented when bills go to committee. The Liberals may have a majority government, but they still have a responsibility to represent everyone in the province of Ontario.

When I brought this bill to the local firefighters, they said they were happy with the language that was in it. So I can say I am also happy to know that they will receive the protection afforded to them and other workers under the Labour Relations Act.

I'm also happy to know that grievances can be dealt with in a more efficient manner. We all know that the wheels of justice turn slowly, and there is no need to get these complex cases caught up in the Ontario courts. If there is a way for other workers to solve their problems quickly and cleanly, then our firefighters' associations should have that same process.

I'd like to touch briefly on section 3 of this bill as well, which amends the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997. The bill adds some provisions which will ensure that employers do not try to stop a worker from reporting a workplace injury. I think I stand with both workers and even employers in this province when I say that this is important. I look at the businesses in my riding, and I know that those employers want their workers to be as safe as they can be.

No one wants to see anyone hurt on the job, or even killed. People in my riding are just honest, hard-working people. Employers do want to help their employees get ahead and live good lives, and they want them to do it safely. So when we write this kind of legislation, I believe it targets very few employers; the kind of people who do not have the health of their employees in mind. It's unfortunate, but sometimes that happens in the workplace. I don't believe any single man or woman should have to wake up in the morning and worry about whether or not they will come home at night.

I've worked in manufacturing plants where there was quite a bit of danger. I've seen workers take up the cause of health and safety themselves. It's important to them, and it needs to be important to us. As legislators, it is important for us to support them, and it's the right thing to do.

Frankly, there are reasons that accident reporting needs to happen. If a worker is injured on the job, they may need compensation to recover, or they may need to report an area of the workplace that needs to have safety checks immediately before someone else gets hurt. Any employer who tries to discourage reporting workplace injuries not only shows disregard for their own employees but also for their own business.

I see that Bill 109 also increases penalties against employers who try to break their obligation to keep employees safe and to ensure that they have adequate compensation if they are injured. I'm happy to see that these penalties are being increased. Last year, there were more than 230,000 claims filed with the WSIB. We need to do everything we can to ensure that those people are getting the support they need.

The sad reality of this province is that there are a lot of people living from paycheque to paycheque—far too many people, in fact. In a province as rich as Ontario, this should never happen, but unfortunately it does.

Too many families are struggling to make ends meet. It breaks my heart, but I even see it in my riding: good,

hard-working people who just want a chance to put in an honest day's work and yet can't find a place to do it. So when they do get a job, they're worried about reporting a workplace safety violation because they're worried about losing their jobs.

When workers don't have proper protection in the workplace, these kinds of things happen. It's not hard to imagine. Picture a young person, maybe 20 years old, working their first full-time job. It's easy to see how someone like that might be convinced not to report an accident. As a province, we need to do everything we can in our power to ensure those situations never happen. No one should wake up in the morning and worry about whether or not they're ever going to see their family again.

I believe this section of Bill 109 moves towards addressing that, but the NDP has offered many other positive ideas for workplace safety that need to be implemented. These are the steps the government must take to protect the working people who drive our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn my attention to where I see the problems in this bill, particularly section 2. Section 2 talks about collective bargaining rights when two unionized workplaces merge. Right now, when two unionized workplaces merge, the membership of the new unit holds a vote, and whichever representative wins that vote earns the right to bargain on behalf of the employees. For some reason, which I hope the Liberals can explain, the Liberal government has decided to remove that right. They have decided to add another exception into when these votes happen, which will alter the way these mergers work.

I have seen this happen in workplaces. Workplaces are changing all the time. Sometimes they are growing, but unfortunately today they are shrinking. When this happens, the representatives of the workers have to adapt, too. There are a lot of benefits that come from combining representation in two workplaces. It allows for the union to be diverse and well-represented. I'd like the Liberals to listen to this: For example, Mr. Speaker—I have to go through the Speaker—when I was president of my local union, Unifor Local 199, which I think I mentioned earlier, we represented workers who had been working in auto plants for decades but also workers in credit unions, security officers, even textbook shipping.

At the time, the name of the union was the Canadian Auto Workers. Some people found it odd that the Auto Workers union had such a large and diverse membership. But if you get past the confusion of the name, you can see why the local's diversity was a good thing. It meant that our union was well-rounded, that we represented people from all walks of life, not just one sector. It meant that people from all over the community came together for one purpose: securing rights in their workplace. It meant that when we went to bargain on behalf of the workers, we knew the impacts that our collective agreements would have on the entire community, not just a certain sector. Everyone who was part of the union offered a great insight that helped to make our decisions.

What I'm getting at here is that mergers happen frequently, and typically they are for good reason. So for decades, when these mergers happened, it was simple: Let the workers decide who they want to represent them. That seems pretty simple to me, and in fact it's something that we should all embrace; it's actually called democracy. Let the men and women working on the floor decide who they want to speak for them instead of government. When you put it that way, I really don't see how anyone can justify taking that away from them, yet that's exactly what Bill 109 does.

In a lot of cases, the larger union wins the vote because it has more resources to draw on to represent the workers. But at least—and this is what's important to listen to, everybody in this room—the workers had a choice. It's actually our constitutional right. You can find it in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in section 2(d), where it says everyone has the fundamental right of freedom of association. That association means the right to freely choose who you associate yourself with and who represents you. It's a right that those in the labour movement hold very highly, especially when they feel like their rights in the workplace are under attack.

0920

This section of Bill 109 will fundamentally alter how that right of collective bargaining is carried out. Like I mentioned, these mergers aren't that rare, and this is something we see impacts all of Ontario. I understand that some associations may want this to speed up the process for certifying a workplace, but it is clear there needs to be more discussion on this section.

There needs to be more discussion about whether or not this removes a person's right to associate, and there needs to be a discussion about how this will impact working people and their representatives. When these discussions happen, we need to have the representatives of working people present—the ones on the ground who actually deal with this.

I've only got a minute left and I'm going to talk about CarePartners, but I'll do that in my two-minute wrap-up. When you talk about labour and you want to make changes to labour to make it better for workers in the province of Ontario, there is no better example of how government should get involved than when people are on strike for six months, when a private company called CarePartners is taking on a union to break the union in a workplace in St. Catharines, when nurses are on strike for six months, when they're getting paid \$15 an hour. Guess who is replacing those workers so a private company can make money at the expense of nurses in the province of Ontario? If you're going to be serious about labour, we have to talk about what's going on in communities right across Ontario. No scabs should be replacing nurses in the province of Ontario and certainly not in my good friend's riding of St. Catharines.

I see my time is just about up. I'll touch on that a little further in my comments. Thank you very much for giving me a chance to speak this morning.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: I appreciated the very thoughtful and experienced comments from my colleague from Niagara Falls. I think he offers a very good analysis of this bill and some very good suggestions that I hope the government will certainly look into through the committee process, that these will definitely be examined.

As he said, the big change in this legislation is that for the first time we are placing the firefighters, who are covered by this piece of legislation, which governs firefighters, the fire protection act—before, that wasn't under the Ontario Labour Relations Act. Now it's been folded in under the Ontario Labour Relations Act. That means that firefighters will now also have all the protections under the Ontario Labour Relations Act, which is something that they've asked for.

One of the main benefits of this is, hopefully, that the cumbersome and very awkward arbitration process is going to be expedited, because it can drag on for months and years. This is one of the advantages of doing this.

Also, in terms of this legislation, there is another important part of the legislation. There is the fair practices commission that's going to be instituted, which gets rid of all the unnecessary delays in resolving workplace disputes between the employer and employee.

This act is a step forward. Again, it's an ongoing attempt to improve the plight of workers and their protections. Hopefully, together we can make this a very good, helpful piece of legislation.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I think that we're all very concerned about workplace safety, not just for our first responders, but for our doctors and nurses as well. We're hearing a lot more reports about assaults in hospitals and nursing homes and things like that. Everybody deserves to work in a safe work environment: safety in terms of physical trauma, but also safety in terms of emotional stresses.

I think that we have to come up with a better plan. It's not enough just to recognize the dangers. This is a good start, Bill 109, to address a lot of the problems, but we also need to address the fact that some jobs are so physically and emotionally demanding that, really, we have to have people who can kind of take a break the way university professors take a break—every seven years, they have a year of sabbatical where they do research or concentrate on something else.

I'm sure it wasn't meant to be a break from the classroom; it was meant to be a time to focus on the research. But a lot of the professors that I know say, "You know what? I look forward to that break every seven years. It keeps me, in some ways, mentally strong. It makes me a better professor because, in some ways, I miss it when I have that year off." I think that that's maybe something that we have to do.

We have to recognize that we need to keep our first responders emotionally strong and that, perhaps, they have to have a certain time of the year—I'm not saying every seven years; maybe one month of the year—where

they're doing something else: they're going into classrooms, speaking to students, and it's not one person's job that they have for their whole life and somebody else's job to actually go into burning buildings or get people out of difficult car accidents, which we've heard of a lot lately, especially near my riding of Thornhill, just north. We've had some horrific car accidents.

So I think we can all appreciate what our first responders have to go through and that there's a lot more we can do to support them.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was a pleasure to listen to my colleague from Niagara Falls go through the different parts of the bills and really show the parts that add value and the parts that are really problematic with this bill, and try to understand why they're all put together.

While he was talking, I couldn't help but remember a good friend of mine, Dennis Pietrobbon, who was with the Sudbury fire department. He started just before my husband started at the fire department. They grew up through the ranks together. He was a firefighter for many years. He became a captain at one of the stations in Sudbury, and he went on to become platoon chief.

Unfortunately, Dennis is also one of those statistics from the fire department where he did contract a deadly cancer. He retired from the Sudbury fire department as a platoon chief and died really shortly thereafter from a disease he had contracted at work. It was at a time when we were trying to get some of those cancers recognized, and it was a tough go. It was a really difficult thing for his wife, Claire, who is still around with us.

Dennis was from Sudbury. His entire family, his children, all live in and around Sudbury. It was a tough time for the entire service. Unfortunately, Dennis is not the only one who contracted a deadly disease at work. There are a number of other firefighters in Sudbury who work with my husband who are also facing cancers, but things are a little bit easier because the laws got easier.

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

Mr. Grant Crack: Good morning. I'd also like to commend the member from Niagara Falls on his introductory remarks. He's obviously a very knowledgeable individual when it comes to labour relations.

Bill 109, if it's passed, is going to amend three acts, as has already been indicated: the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, as well as the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act. These acts came into effect in 1997.

So here we are 18 years later, and, obviously, times have changed. It's great that this government is moving to update some of the legislation to come in line with current situations that are happening in labour across the province of Ontario.

I want to just speak specifically about our firefighters because I have a lot of good firefighter friends back in my hometown and many throughout my riding. These are 2013 numbers: There are 11,122 full-time firefighters;

there are 19,219 volunteer firefighters; and there are 214 part-time firefighters.

0930

We recognize the good work that our first responders do, and our firefighters, the role that they play, not only in fire prevention. They've got some of the most difficult jobs, being, obviously, the majority of the time, first on the scene at any incident, especially related to car accidents.

The amendments that we're proposing to those particular acts would come in greater alignment with the Labour Relations Act of Ontario. So I think it's important that we give labour the tools to more easily resolve disputes. We know that court costs are quite high—when things get to the courts—but this will make it a little bit easier; it's a streamlined process. I look forward to further discussion.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Niagara Falls. You have two minutes for your reply.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank all my colleagues for their comments.

Because the Liberals are really hitting on the firefighters, let's be clear: We agree with the firefighters. I've talked to the firefighters, and they said they just want their issues taken care of. They don't want to get caught in the weeds on this bill, and there are some weeds in this bill that we have to make sure don't put them in that thing.

So let's be clear: The full-time firefighters, the volunteer firefighters, our first responders, agree with what you are doing in this bill. We agree with what you're doing. The Conservatives agree with what you're doing. We agree that WSIB has to be taken care of. I know because of my workplace, what I've done over a number of years, that a lot of workers would go to a worker when he got hurt on the job and say, "Hey, you know, we're going to lose the \$50 bonus we get every month if you report the injury. Why don't you just get a paper, go sit in the office and don't report the injury." We know that goes on. And it goes on with big employers. Surprisingly, yesterday, my colleague from Welland said that it happened in the NHS, and it went on for years and years. So we understand that the WSIB has to be taken care of.

What we don't understand is why you're attacking the fundamental right of workers to decide who they want to represent them as a union. Why are you pitting the firefighters against unions across the province of Ontario? I say to the unions out there that want this bill that I've always felt the worker should have the choice. If they don't want Unifor to represent them, or if they don't want Wayne Gates to be their president, they have a mechanism in place to choose. They have the right to choose. What I've always said to unions is that if you service your employees and the membership that you represent, you never have to worry about that happening. They will never leave you because they're being serviced. So why are we doing this at the expense of the firefighters? Why are we doing this at the expense of WSIB?

So I'm asking the Liberal government to, please, pull that part of the bill out. Let workers choose who they want to represent them. They have a fundamental right to do that; it's their democratic right to do it. Please, pull it out.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to talk a little bit about the bill, and I just want to talk about something that we don't get to talk about here, which I think is the importance of organized labour and labour unions to the civility of our society, because we often forget the fundamentals about why we're doing that.

Just to say, I'm sharing my time today with three of my colleagues: the member for Beaches–East York, the member for Sudbury and the member for Kingston and the Islands.

In my mayor days, I think anyone—and I know there are other mayors, former mayors or recovering mayors in the House. I think one of the hardest duties we had—I know the member for Welland is smiling at me because I think she knows what I'm about to say. All of us go to funerals for firefighters, and we see the children. Mr. Speaker, it has always been, for me, particularly sad when you see the family of firefighters who have spent their whole life protecting other families so that moms and dads and children can grow old together. I think one of the hardest things I ever did when I was a mayor was having to spend time—it was a bittersweet thing—with moms, often, and sometimes dads, and children whose fathers were taken at far too young an age by a whole raft of horrible diseases. I always made a point of going to those funerals, but more importantly, following up with the families after. I don't think anyone who has ever been in local politics, who has seen the sheer numbers of Canadians who have been firefighters who have died with these diseases—removing a lot of the obstacles that we're removing today is just basic respect for them and their families.

So I'm very proud of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, and obviously a little emotional. But it's also just a moment to remind us of the importance of labour. I remember my grandfather worked at the Angus yards in Montreal. He had a stroke. He had nine children; two of them died in childbirth because of our health care system. We didn't have medicare back then. I remember my grandmother, this incredible Ukrainian woman, who spoke hardly a word of English, raising seven kids with a husband at home who had had a stroke and who could not work. She got involved with the union to get that works yard unionized. It was only after the Angus yards were unionized that they got pensions. Her daughter, my great aunt, my Aunt Ann, was married to a mine worker, a miner in Sudbury. She was one of those union maids, brave women who took Inco all the way to the Supreme Court to win widows' pensions and protect the hard-working women whose husbands all died of respiratory illnesses. My uncles in Sudbury, all three of them, died in their fifties, at very young ages, because of the air quality

issues that they had that today we would think of as outrageous, but at that time—

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: She is still alive. She's 98 years old now, hanging in there, and still a force to be reckoned with.

I remember, it was that tradition of those two great women, that mine labour activism—in the early AIDS epidemic, we were running a clinic that we had to fund ourselves. The federal health minister, who was Conservative, said AIDS was a moral issue, not a health issue. I spent more time raising money to provide basic clinical support—we went to our provincial NDP government to get a billing number for our nurses and doctors, and they wouldn't give us one. So we had no federal money, we couldn't get a billing number, and our docs and our nurses worked for free with young men dying of AIDS at a time when we didn't know how that virus was transmitted. It was almost all volunteer-given health care. People would throw up and bleed on you, and many mainstream health care institutions were afraid to treat people in those early days of the epidemic.

Then I joined CUPE, and I organized my workshop through CUPE. It was only after the labour movement and the Winnipeg Labour Council got on our side that we finally got financial support. All of that came from unions, including the firefighters, who understood public service.

There's a lot of detail in this bill that my colleagues, I'm sure, will speak about. I'm very proud to be part of a government—and I know we're not the only people in this House; I agree with what the member from Niagara Falls said. But we should not get so picky about this. My own view is that firefighters deserve our respect and our support, and they're getting that today, but so do all kinds of other workers in precarious and vulnerable situations out there who don't have the rights of firefighters. So I hope that all of us who stand in this House who have been active in labour and come from labour families, who know that the laws we have weren't created so much by Legislatures but were often hard fought in courts and by union activism, will see this as a beginning for a much more activist agenda around labour, which I'm very committed to.

I think that beyond partisan politics, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more work to do, because there are a lot of people out there who would love to have some of these rights and who don't yet have them. There's a bigger conversation to be had. Labour has been in decline in membership, and that concerns me as someone who knows that my rights—and my family is in this country and healthy because of labour unions.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's a pleasure for me to speak to Bill 109 as well, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act. It's always a pleasure to follow the member for Toronto Centre, who brings that emotional piece to our debate so often, reminding us how import-

ant it is, the work we are doing; how important it is, putting a face to what is in black and white in statute changes, a face to the fundamental impacts that we will be having on people's lives.

The member from Niagara Falls spoke at length about the firefighter piece. We are delighted to hear that we're getting the firefighter piece very much right, according to him and his analysis. Particularly, what we're doing with this piece of legislation is that we're streamlining the procedures for what firefighters currently do in their own labour relations environment with the Ontario Labour Relations Act.

This is a very particular personal moment for me because my stepson, Devon Kerr, my partner Lisa Martin's son, has recently qualified to be a firefighter and has taken his first position up in Bala, Ontario, as a part-time firefighter and is looking forward to a very long career in this field. I know the kinds of protections that we're bringing in will be of benefit to him. He is, of course, following in his father's footsteps, who was a captain in Toronto Fire Services, and we wish them both extremely well in their continuing work—those brave men and women who do front-line emergency service for us every year.

0940

As many of you will recall, I have a master's background in labour management relations. I taught at Seneca for a number of years and I consulted in the field. It's an old adage in labour relations that when you bring amendments forward, you want to make everybody unhappy, the reason being that you don't want to be over-balancing in favour of one party or the other. So you inevitably, in most labour relations situations, make all parties a little unhappy. If one party is too happy, maybe the balance has gone too far the other way. I believe that this legislation is striking the appropriate balance.

I know that the member for Niagara Falls was a trade union representative. I was typically on the other side of the fence as a management representative in some of the work I did as a consultant. It was always the experience that in previous administrations, we used to call the minister not the Minister of Labour but the minister for labour because maybe the balance was going the wrong way. I'm pleased to see that our ministry and our government are getting the balance right here.

I used to teach at Seneca about how important this balance is. I would teach, in the general labour relations field, about how important it is to get proper procedures in place for unfair labour practices and to have expedited arbitration processes and that we have the proper union security and the duty of fair representation that's contained in the act so that for the employer, the trade union and the employees it strikes the right balance so we have expedited processes and we're not tied up in court processes. I would teach this from the perspective of general labour relations. I wouldn't get into the weeds on the Fire Protection and Prevention Act; that wasn't part of our program.

Now what we're seeing is that those pieces that were missing in the original draft of the Fire Protection and

Prevention Act are now coming in under the Labour Relations Act, where we have, since the mid-1940s—post-war—first initiated this type of legislation for collective bargaining, which constitutionally recognizes the right of employees to come together, to unionize, to be certified, and to collectively represent themselves in their discussions with employers. So this is really important.

What we're also seeing in this piece of legislation is giving the power to arbitrators to enforce a written grievance settlement—it brings those powers forward—or for an arbitration decision from either party to be able to take to the Superior Court of Justice so it can be enforced as an order under the court. Likewise, the Ontario Labour Relations Board will have an opportunity, where necessary, to grant interim orders against parties, which will provide more stability and streamline labour relations processes.

I wanted to speak specifically to that aspect of the bill because I do think we're getting the balance right. But we will be taking a look more closely at some of the issues that were raised by the member for Niagara Falls. I recognize him and respect him as an expert from that point of view. I look forward very much to delving more into those details as we go forward with the debate of this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Sudbury.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I'm pleased to follow my colleagues the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and, of course, my colleague from Beaches–East York.

As I stand today to talk to Bill 109, we've had a lot of focus right now on the firefighters, which I think is an important piece and I'll get to that in my presentation as well, but we're also looking at the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997, and, as I said, the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997. I think my colleague from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell said earlier that it's 18 years later; it's 18 years now that we're looking at trying to update some of our laws. I think it's important that we talk about how things and times have changed in those 18 years, Mr. Speaker.

For us, I think it's important that we try to talk about all of the positive things that we're trying to put in place, Mr. Speaker, and also debate the ones that some see as contentious.

I know it has been brought up a couple of times—it may not necessarily have been brought up this morning. As I've been sitting here listening to the hours of debate that relate to this bill, we've talked about some of the amendments. Some people were talking about the amendments on claims suppression. I think, Mr. Speaker, it is important to put on record that not reporting a workplace accident is a violation of the WSIA. The WSIB uses a zero-tolerance strategy to try and stop claims suppression.

I know that our government's proposed change aims to strengthen the WSIB's efforts by legislating stronger deterrents against employers engaged in any activities to suppress or impede the reporting of a work-related injury

or illness to the WSIB by a worker. I think I heard earlier my honourable colleague from the third party talking about schemes that are happening in some workplaces in relation to trying to get a worker not to report an injury or not reporting an illness. I think it's important that it be recognized that that shouldn't be happening. We need to ensure that the WSIB has stronger legislation to be able to try and stop these claim suppressions.

I think, if we're looking at claim suppressions, it can include a range of activities, from an informal agreement between the employer and the worker for paid leave as an inducement for not reporting, to more aggressive approaches such as threatening dismissal or other employment-related penalties upon the worker. Our proposal would add a specific prohibition in the WSI Act against employers engaging. No employer should engage in any activity with the intent to impede a worker from reporting a claim with the WSIB or induce them to withdraw a claim that has already been filed.

If any employer does engage in these activities, they will be subject to administrative penalties and/or prosecution. I think that's an important aspect to ensure that we get on the record today, to talk about some of the benefits and some of the proposals that are coming out in this bill.

Also, I know the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change spoke about firefighters who he has dealt with, both as a recovering mayor, as he said, and again as an MPP and a minister. My colleague from Beaches–East York and colleagues from the opposition have spoken about this as well.

If you'll bear with me, Mr. Speaker, I had a great opportunity a few years back. I know my colleague from Nickel Belt attended this as well. It was called Firefighters 101, where SPFFA Local 527 in Greater Sudbury put together an opportunity for community leaders to learn a little bit about their job. They geared us all up and we went through many exercises—many difficult exercises—to learn what their job is like.

Even though I knew I was in a safe environment, when they brought us into this firehouse where flames were rolling over the top of the roof—you know you're in a secure environment, but it's still very intimidating and scary. Imagine not being able to see your hand in front of your own face. It's one of those things where you're really grateful for the work that our firefighters do each and every day, because when we're running out, they're running in. We need to do everything we can to acknowledge that and thank them for that.

For the last seven years, I've been holding a barbecue in my riding to say thank you to all our emergency services workers: police, fire and paramedics. For firefighters specifically, it's one of those where, with these changes that we're putting in place, I think it's important for us to make sure that we get it right for our firefighters and to make sure that, as we say, we provide them with the tools to resolve disputes in the fire sector, because they've got the tools to keep us safe.

With that, we say thank you to them, and I'd like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for being able to stand today and be part of this presentation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Kingston and the Islands.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It's a real honour to speak to this bill, Bill 109, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015, along with my colleagues. We've had a very wholesome discussion from all sides, and I would like to thank the members from the opposition and the third party for their comments as well. One thing that becomes very clear to me is that we're all very passionate about this bill, and we are passionate about protecting the rights of workers.

The member from Niagara Falls mentioned something about being serious about labour, and the one thing I can say wholeheartedly is that each and every member in this House—particularly in this party, because I don't speak for others except my own party—is very serious about labour.

It's a comprehensive bill. It's bringing together three acts, as has already been discussed.

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I would also like to commend the member from Nickel Belt for her comments talking about the survivor benefits. This is one area that is of great concern to me as well: the issue with how the WSIB calculates survivor benefits for a worker who dies of an occupational disease and who had no or low earnings on the date of the diagnosis because they were retired. This situation can arise because of the long latency period before the onset of many work-related diseases such as cancer. The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change has also very eloquently spoken to that as well, so I thank him for his comments.

One of the reasons why that particular piece of the legislation is very important to me is because I've worked in a constituency office; I have seen individuals who have gone through this process and who don't have enough protection built into legislation, so I'm very pleased that we are bringing this forward. I'm also very impressed by the Minister of Labour. He has visited Kingston and the Islands, and we have had some discussions with the paramedics. We've discussed a number of issues with them.

Just to go back to the survivor benefits section of this bill: Right now, in situations where a worker dies of an occupational disease and has no or low earnings at the time of their diagnosis because they were retired, the WSIB's operational practice is to calculate survivor benefits based on whichever is greater, the average amount of annual earnings of a worker engaged in the same trade in which the worker's disease was contracted, or the worker's annual earnings in the 12 months prior to the date of diagnosis, rather than the statutory minimum provided under the WSIA. Now, I know that that's not always appropriate. I think that it's extremely important that this proposed amendment will allow them to continue their practice, which has been challenged on appeal.

I'm pleased that the Minister of Labour has brought forward this very comprehensive bill. It's an honour to speak to it. I thank my colleagues in the House for bringing their thoughtful comments forward as well.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: I know there were 10 seconds left there of the government's 20 minutes. There were about five members that spoke to it. I thought maybe a sixth would get up and use those 10 seconds. It's their portion to speak to this very comprehensive bill—most speaking for probably only three or four minutes on what they've claimed is very comprehensive and important; however, they've only spent three or four minutes.

I will comment on the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change's comments—a very passionate discussion on his personal experience with firefighters. I would like to thank our critic, obviously, Ted Arnott, the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, for his work with this, but also, going back some years ago, recognizing the hard work, dedication, and importance of double-hatters in communities. They are full-time employees or workers for the day but volunteer and give to their local departments at all hours of the day—recognizing the importance that they bring to small, rural communities.

Of course, I'll have a greater opportunity to speak to this bill at length, and I will of course take the full allotted time to do so, because I want to talk a lot about some of the recent issues we've had in my community, in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga, when it comes to WSIB benefits and the potential for the presumptive cancer legislation as it pertains to benefits and payouts, should either a double-hatter or a full-time, part-time or volunteer firefighter—God forbid they are diagnosed with a presumptive cancer.

I look forward to my briefing today with the Ministry of Labour on this particular bill. I did work with them previously, alongside the critic from Wellington–Halton Hills, on this issue in the last session. I look forward to taking my 10 to 20 minutes because it is a comprehensive bill, and I think that's the time that needs to be used to speak effectively to this bill. Thank you for the time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Welland.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you, Speaker. I just want to address some comments that were made by some of the members from the government. First, the Minister of the Environment, the member from Toronto Centre, talked about being supportive of firefighters and supportive of labour. I believe he is being genuine in his remarks. However, he also talked about the importance of unions, addressing issues like precarious labour and low-paid jobs and their long history in this province and across this country of being advocates in all kinds of policy improvements in government. But at the same time, this government is interfering with the basic rights of workers in this same bill. He didn't address that, that in fact they want to take away the right to choose which union would represent you at the end of the day. If you supported labour, you wouldn't be doing that. You wouldn't be pitting firefighters against every other public sector union and some private sector unions here in the province of Ontario.

The other thing is that the member from Beaches–East York talked about his labour management training and consulting, and that the balance is to make everybody unhappy at the end of the day, to kind of keep everybody off balance. I don't know; in my 40 years of negotiating, we tried to get win-wins, so that everybody was happy, not lose-lose. So I don't think I'd be hiring him as a consultant.

My third point—I'm glad the Minister of Health is here, because you know what? If this government really cared about workers, we would not have nurses from CarePartners on strike for eight months. The government would be intervening and making sure that for-profit companies that are hired by this government through the LHIN to look after patients in this province were actually back working and not on a picket line in this province of Ontario. That's what you should be doing for the workers.

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

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand today to speak to Bill 109, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015.

Our firefighters sacrifice so much to help keep Ontarians safe, and we are grateful for the work that they do. In return, it is up to us to ensure that they, too, are protected. Firefighters deserve and should have the rights and protections afforded by the Labour Relations Act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that before I came to this House and before I started working with government, I was a journalist. As a beat reporter, that meant, on occasion, going out to fires, going out to accidents on highways and going out to crime scenes before anybody else really arrived. A lot of times we were there just with the first responders.

I have seen first-hand the work, the hard, tough, courageous work that our firefighters do. I have seen them go in and out of buildings, coming back, making sure that they're being cooled down, making sure that they're getting on respirators to help them breathe, putting their suits back on again and going back in. I've seen this in warm weather, and I have seen it in minus-40-degree weather. I've been out there watching and having nothing but praise and confidence in these people who put their lives on the line for all of us to help keep us safe and secure in our homes, buildings and places of work.

So I have the utmost respect for our firefighters and for the people Bill 109 would be trying to safeguard. It is trying to bring greater safeguards to all workers in the province through making changes to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act doing four main things: ensuring that workers know that it is their right to file a WSIB claim and that it is their right to be protected. Secondly, we must do all that we can to make sure that these workers are protected by proposing an increase in maximum corporate penalties for conviction of an offence under WSIA. We also have to provide greater fairness for survivors in cases of work-related deaths.

Those are just some of the things. As a whole and individually, these proposed amendments, if passed through Bill 109, would protect the people of this province and also protect those who work to help keep us safe. Thank you so much.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to have this opportunity this morning to respond to the government members who spoke on Bill 109 at second reading, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, the member for Beaches–East York, the member for Sudbury and the member for Kingston and the Islands.

I think it's also important to point out that the government side had 20 minutes to make a presentation this morning on this bill. We go in rotation, as you well know, Mr. Speaker. Four government members spoke in that 20-minute slot.

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We know what's coming, based on the way the government is handling legislation through this House. At some point, after a few hours of debate on Bill 109, the government House leader will become impatient with the progress in the debate, even though there will be countless members of the opposition who will want to speak to this bill. At some point, the government, most likely, based on what they're doing on a number of other important pieces of legislation, will stand up and start saying, "X number of members have spoken to this bill." They actually have four members speaking to this bill in one 20-minute slot in order to inflate that number and suggest that everybody has had a chance to speak.

The fact is, there will be, I expect, a significant number of opposition members who will want to speak to this bill. I would urge the minister responsible, the Minister of Labour, to use his influence to encourage the government House leader to allow the opposition members to do their job. There will be members of the Legislature on the opposition side who will want to speak about the fire services in their ridings and provide input from their ridings as to what's happening in their respective constituencies, and they should be allowed to do that. I know that there will be a significant number of members who will want to discuss this bill, and I would urge the government to make that possible.

In terms of my response, I've had a chance to speak for an hour on this bill, so I'm not complaining about my own situation. I had ample opportunity, but I will continue to respond to questions and comments as Bill 109 continues to be debated.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I return to the government side. The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I will be forever indebted to the member for Wellington–Halton Hills. I think this is the first time someone has actually suggested I didn't speak long enough. You are my dearest friend now, sir.

I also want to thank the member for Niagara Falls. He raised a very difficult issue, because this has been a

debate in labour: whether unions that have 60% or more automatically assume, as the majority membership, or whether it should be a vote. While he may disagree with the government, he is probably aware, as am I, that this is a very active debate amongst our brothers and sisters in different unions. There isn't a consensus, at least certainly in the representations I've seen. But I do appreciate him raising it. There's a coffee shop downstairs, and I'm always open to be educated; I'm happy to do that.

I just want to reflect on members on all sides. I thought this was a thoughtful debate. We often slip easily into partisan roles or forget we're people who all came here hoping to honour our parents and our grandparents, to make sure our kids inherit something better than we inherited from our parents. Given our inheritance, it's pretty tough to leave a better legacy than our moms and grandmoms gave us. I want to thank members as we go forward on this bill.

I hope, as the member for Welland said, that we can take time to look at other opportunities. I don't say that flippantly. There are constraints as we get back to balance, obviously, but that doesn't stop us from doing a lot of human rights things and a lot of advancement of things that don't cost money.

We both come from parties—and all of us have different traditions and experiences, sometimes in more than one party, and share some common roots, and I think a lot of people elect us hoping that we'll be more collaborative and co-operative and be Ontarians before we're partisans.

I think this debate was emblematic, and I thank all members for honouring our firefighters with such a mature debate.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to be able to add a few comments to this debate on Bill 109.

First of all, I think we need to give people an understanding of the main tenets of Bill 109. It encompasses three areas that, while they each have to do with labour, are completely different in their response to a particular issue in areas of labour. When you put together three areas, as this piece of legislation does, you get the same problem: that there's a poison pill or there is something there that you are fully supportive of but something that you're equally concerned about. This has nothing to do with which government—governments of all stripes in the last few decades have tended to do this. But what effect it has, then, is to cast everything with the same brush, because at the end of the day, it's only one vote. You are either for it or against it.

I see this as a problem that is obviously to the benefit of the executive area of government, because they can move this piece of legislation and its various parts along and it makes it easier for them, but it diminishes the job of the legislator, and that is the fact that they are faced with the same dilemma in terms of their response to three separate issues that have been put together. I say this in the spirit of, as I said, governments of all stripes, but as

members of the Legislature, we should remember that we owe a duty to our constituents in being able to discuss these issues.

The areas are quite different. I certainly want to comment on the first segment of the bill, which deals with changes to the firefighters. I have stood alongside those members of the House—again, in all parties—who have recognized the value of and the past injustices to the double-hatter. Representing a constituency which I think still relies, in all cases—there's a volunteer component to each of the firefighting stations in my riding, in my communities. It has always been an issue that I've felt very strongly about, that when someone is prepared to offer their volunteer professional time, the communities are the beneficiaries.

I've spoken at firefighters' appreciation evenings where I've been able to remind the public of the kind of training—and the hours and hours of upgrading of training—that volunteer firefighters must perform before they get on a truck. I think it's really important that the legislation, as we see here today, recognizes the legitimacy and puts that problem, that issue, behind us. I think that that's particularly valuable.

However, the part of the bill that I think requires greater attention is the third part, on the WSIB. The WSIB, in the time that I've been in this Legislature, sort of comes and goes in terms of issues of legislation, directives or changes in policy.

I think that there are a few principles that one has to keep in mind when you're looking at issues around the WSIB. Obviously, it has to be just. I look at some of the members of my community who, frankly, have suffered a great deal through injury at work, through no fault of their own. In establishing those principles, obviously you want something that is fair and just for people who have received, in some cases, lifelong encumbrances and problems with the accidents that they've had. So, justice and balance.

The attitude of most employers is obviously that it's good business to have a safe place, and they work very hard at providing opportunities for training and things like that, to make sure that there is that balance on the employer side. The other area, of course, is the cost of what is being provided.

The final point is that it has to be evidence-based. I found, when I started looking at this part of the bill, that there was an issue that seemed to be one of long standing, and that was the one of claim suppression. I know that others have spoken about it in their comments, but this is something that strikes me as very difficult, because of the fact that you have to prove that something happened. You also have to prove some kind of intent.

There has been quite a lot of work done over the years on this issue of claim suppression. Obviously, no one with any sense of fairness wants to witness this or be involved in it; that's not the issue. The issue is providing the research on this particular issue, so I did a bit of looking around and found that this isn't the first time claim suppression has shown up as something of interest in

legislation. There have been a number of studies that have been done to try to come to some understanding and agreement on this.

You can't base laws on anecdotal information. In June 2005, the report of the Institute of Work and Health, *Assessing the Effects of Experience Rating in Ontario*, came up with a couple of comments. The study found that "the large majority of employees stated that they are being encouraged to report accidents and incidents and are being offered suitable modified and early return to work if injured."

The 2005 report also found, "Our research indicates that experience rating encourages prevention and contributes to positive workplace health and safety practices." So there are some studies, then, going back 10 years, that have looked at this kind of thing.

In more recent times, the WSIB commissioned a Prism economic analysis and looked at some of the information there. The Prism report defines claim suppression: "For the purpose of this research, 'claim suppression' means actions taken by an employer to induce a worker not to report an injury or illness or alternatively to under-report the severity of an injury or illness or the amount of lost time attributable to that injury or illness. The inducement may be coercive, i.e., the inducement may involve an actual or perceived threat of sanctions. Alternatively the inducement may be accommodating, i.e., the employer may offer the worker benefits in lieu of workers' compensation, if full WSIB benefits, especially lost time benefits, are not claimed."

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have the opportunity to pick up later, and I'd like to stay at this particular part of my presentation, if I might.

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

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

REPORT, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a report from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario, *An Assessment of the Financial Impact of the Partial Sale of Hydro One*.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Steve Clark: I just want to take this opportunity to wish the member for Nepean–Carleton a happy birthday.

Mr. John Fraser: We have some people joining us from the Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists. We have Beth Linkewich, the president; she's joined by

Christine Brenchley, a director; and as well, Lesya Dyk is here today. They have a reception at 11:30 in room 228. I hope you all can join us.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to introduce page Victoria Gates's family who are here today: her mother, Jacqueline Gates; her father, Jeff Gates; grandparents Scott and Sharon Gates; and her grandmother Sandra Armstrong. Thank you for joining us today at Queen's Park.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I would like to welcome grade 10 students and staff from St. Marcellinus Secondary School in my great riding of Mississauga–Brampton South. They are visiting Queen's Park today. I wish them a very pleasant and educational time here.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's my great pleasure to welcome His Excellency the consul general of Turkey, Mr. Erdeniz Sen, and the members of the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations who are here today. We are celebrating the 92nd anniversary of the Turkish republic. There will be a flag-raising at the south grounds, and I invite all members of the House to participate in this wonderful event.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you, and welcome. I hope the wind is not too bad for you at noon hour.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to introduce Sebastian Lingertat from my riding of St. Paul's who is our page captain today. I'd also like to introduce his grandparents James and Irene VanLeeuwen, and his aunt Annette, who are here with us today in the gallery.

M^{me} France Gélinas: My intern from OLIP just made her way in. Ça me fait plaisir de vous présenter Olivia Labonté, qui est dans mon bureau pour cette session. Welcome, Olivia.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm delighted to introduce Derek and Robyn Shepherd, who are in the east gallery today, parents of our page captain Gavin Shepherd, who is a student at Bowmore in Beaches–East York. Welcome.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: On behalf of the MPP from Oxford, Ernie Hardeman, and on behalf of page Abby Moreside, I'd like to welcome her mother, Kathy Moreside, and her grandmother Gerda Stefan, who will be in the members' gallery this morning.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'm not sure if he's here yet, but I'd like to introduce Lorne Kenney, a former candidate in the riding of Simcoe–Grey.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Acting Premier. The Premier got caught. She got caught giving away millions of dollars to teachers' unions with nothing in return. Then her government came up with a multitude of excuses. Let's go over the timeline. On Wednesday it was "business as usual." Last Thursday it was, "We don't

need receipts.” Monday it was, “This is certainly not business as usual.” Tuesday it was, “It will never happen again.” Yesterday it was, “The unions must produce receipts.” Every day is a different storyline. Even open soap operas have longer storylines than this government. Seriously, Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable.

Will the Acting Premier confirm that the government’s position hasn’t changed again today, because there have been six positions in a week?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think what we have demonstrated is a firm commitment to the well-being of students in our classrooms and we have demonstrated evidence of the success of students. This process has been successful. Students have remained in the classroom. They are getting the education that they need to be successful.

So let’s just remember, these negotiations have been difficult. It is in line with our net-zero bargaining process that I would hope the Leader of the Opposition would support—a net-zero bargaining process. We have done this without making any cuts to the classroom whatsoever.

This new process did require resources. We are in a time of transition so that in future, negotiations will go much more smoothly and require much less time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: The only commitment this government has demonstrated is to the Liberal Party. The government said \$2.5 million was to go for pizza parties and sleepovers. If that excuse was real, the government would have asked for receipts from the start, even though the public now suspects the money was really just for the government’s own purposes, for their own partisan purposes. The arrogance is astounding. This government is eroding public confidence in the education system.

Does the Premier not understand that her multi-million-dollar union payouts have undermined the integrity of our education system and the people who work in it?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It’s becoming increasingly clear that what this party and what this leader wants to do is continue the attack on our partners in education—the unions and federations. For him to ridicule the bargaining process and describe it as a sleepover and pizza party demonstrates as clearly as anything he said that he has no respect whatsoever for the collective bargaining process or for the federations that represent our teachers.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: This party values our educators. What we will not stand for is the attacks on the classroom. And do you know what? If this government doesn’t want to listen to the public, if they don’t want to listen to the constructive advice of the official opposition, well maybe you can listen to the Toronto Star. The Toronto Star op-ed yesterday said, “If the payments made from the government to the unions really were necessary, then there is no reason they should have been kept hidden from the public.”

“Payments of \$2.5 million, which were kept hidden from the public ... seem almost impossible to defend.” The payments are impossible to defend because they were made for political purposes.

Will the deputy leader of the Ontario Liberal Party commit to giving back the millions of dollars she has taken from Ontario’s classrooms? No more spin, no more excuses. Yes or no? Will you pay the money back?

Interjections.

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

Deputy Premier?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member opposite talks about his party’s commitment to the classroom. Well, let me just remind the third party of what their record was when we took office back in 2003. At that time, one out of every three kids was not graduating from high school. One in three high school students did not graduate. We have been able to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shouting down is not helpful, nor is other heckling from the government side helpful.

Please finish.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We have been able to raise the graduation rate to 84% and we continue to improve programs there.

So let’s make it very clear: The cost of this successful process with unions was offset by savings in the collective agreement, including early discounted payment of retirement gratuities, lowering the cost of sick leave and making the delivery of professional development more efficient. We’re getting—

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

1040

TEACHERS’ COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Acting Premier. Can the Acting Premier, with a straight face, guarantee us today that not one red cent of the millions of dollars funnelled to teachers’ unions was spent on third-party election ads, to the benefit of the Liberal Party?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Yes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Speaker, she can’t guarantee us because she’s part—

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: We’ll see how their votes are on Wednesday when the auditor is asked to look at these transactions, or the Financial Accountability Officer this morning when it comes to trust of their government. She’s part of the chain that sees teachers’ unions spend millions on election ads one year and receive millions back to cover hotel and pizza costs the next. “You scratch my back; I’ll scratch yours,” leading to questions of tax-

payers' money funding election ads. Yet, just this month, her government again reminded us that the Liberal Party will "be strengthening Ontario's rules on third-party advertising," only minutes before rejecting our call on proposed strengthening restrictions.

Speaker, they understand there's a problem. It seems that the only ones who don't understand that there's something inherently wrong here is them. If she can't guarantee where our money's been spent, will the Acting Premier deliver on the promise—

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Yes, thank you. I'd like to remind everyone that where this whole discussion started was on the implementation of a new collective bargaining act. The bargaining under that act in question actually has led to three successful, ratified collective agreements with the English Catholic teachers, with the secondary teachers in the English public system and with the French teachers in both the French public and French Catholic systems.

Those were long processes because we were working through a new process. And, yes, we were pleased to invest in making sure that process happened. As the Premier said yesterday, there will be accountability.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: It also led to millions of dollars to unions to run election ads that benefited the Liberal Party. Even the Toronto Star is calling on the Premier to "deliver on that pledge and ensure no future government will be tainted by the suspicion of unfairly funding lavish third-party campaigns." We agree, Speaker, yet instead the Premier refuses to live up to her word and diverts attention to flip-flop on the need for receipts just to justify those continued payouts. Just follow the money, Speaker, and she'll know what's on those receipts: millions of dollars-plus in partisan, third-party election advertising bills. It's time to end this tired taxpayer-funded charade.

Will the Acting Premier tell us if we will see the promised new regulations to halt potential government payouts for third-party advertising before any further millions are handed over to those unions?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I would like to repeat that what we have done is transform the collective bargaining system. We were able to get net zero. As the Premier said, the particular payments in question have not yet flowed. There will be an accountability process. As I said yesterday, there will be accountability. There will be a schedule of permissible things, which certainly do not include third-party advertising—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Liz Sandals: —and that there will be verification required of those permissible payments that are allowed.

I think what we need to understand is that, in fact, that is part of our net zero, and the net-zero payments and increases to compensation are offset by early discounted payout of retirement gratuities, lowering the cost of sick leave—

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

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This morning's FAO report—sorry, to the Acting Premier, Speaker. This morning's FAO report shows what New Democrats have been saying all along. We have been saying it for months: the sell-off of Hydro One is a bad deal for the families and businesses of this province. While the Premier has been telling Ontarians over and over again that the sell-off will raise \$4 billion for infrastructure and transit, the FAO report shows that the sell-off could raise as little as \$1.4 billion—a fraction of what she has been promising. Will this Premier and her government stop the unnecessary and short-sighted sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I do want to take this opportunity to thank the Financial Accountability Officer, Stephen LeClair, for his report. I welcome his assessment of our plan to broaden the ownership of Hydro One.

Let's not forget, Speaker, that this is all about building infrastructure. We're making historic investments in infrastructure: \$130 billion over the next 10 years to build that badly needed infrastructure right across the province. We need to build that infrastructure. Broadening the ownership of Hydro One allows us to make those investments today, not 10 years down the road. Experts have called for an increase in infrastructure spending—up to 5% of our GDP. This will help us get there.

I think the member also has to recognize that not making investments in infrastructure has a cost as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier has been claiming that the sell-off of Hydro One will raise \$4 billion for transit and infrastructure, but the FAO clearly shows today that the sell-off could generate just \$1.4 billion. Speaker, \$1.4 billion is just 1%—1%—of the Premier's \$130 billion of infrastructure and transit promises, and yet the Premier would have the people of Ontario believe that it is essential for her to sell off our most public, our most trusted, most important public asset for that 1%. Just 1%, and the Premier wants us to lose control of our electricity system and put the future of Ontario's financial well-being in jeopardy. This is a terrible deal and it makes no sense whatsoever. Will the Premier and her government stop this insane sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Clearly, what the leader of the third party does not understand is that there is a link between broadening the ownership of Hydro One and investments in infrastructure. Investing in infrastructure has a payoff as well, Speaker. The Conference Board of Canada says that for every \$100 million invested in infrastructure, about \$114 million is produced in real GDP, a

payoff of 14%. That is a real return on investment. That is a return on investment that benefits all Ontarians. We do need to make investments in infrastructure. The leader of the third party has a couple of ideas, neither of which hold water. We're moving forward with our plan to build up Ontario. We're moving forward with our plan to build badly needed infrastructure. The people of Ontario support that infrastructure investment.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The FAO report provides Ontarians with the very first independent analysis of this Premier's wrong-headed sell-off. At \$4 billion, this sell-off was unnecessary in the first place. It was a bad deal at \$4 billion; at \$1.4 billion, it is ludicrous that the Premier would even consider it. Speaker, \$1.4 billion works out to \$140 million per year over 10 years. If the Premier cannot find \$140 million from other sources, then she and her Minister of Finance and her Minister of Energy and her chair of Treasury Board should just step aside.

Will this Premier and her Liberal government commit to Ontarians today to stop the unnecessary sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'd like to thank the Financial Accountability Officer for his report. I recognize how important it is for us to have that open and transparent engagement. We've had a strong and positive relationship with the FAO, and it is indeed the first such report by any province, recognizing that we're building on the very things that we've enacted. Furthermore, it is also important to note that the Financial Accountability Officer made no reference—and he purposely said so—in terms of the net benefit that comes from the broadening of ownership and the reinvestment of those dollars into new investments and new issues to stimulate the economy.

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Nor does it talk about the appreciation of the value of this company, because we recognize that Hydro One has been underperforming and can do better—which, by the way, we will continue to own and still benefit from dividends over time.

This is going forward for the benefit of the people and for the reinvestment—

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

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Acting Premier. The FAO report shows once again the contempt that this Liberal government and this Premier have for the people of Ontario. It has been repeated by this finance minister and by this chair of Treasury Board just this morning.

They have been promising \$4 billion from the sell-off of Hydro One at every opportunity. Yet we now learn that they could get \$1.4 billion spread over 10 years. That \$140 million a year is only 0.001% of the province's

budget. That's gross incompetency if you cannot find room in your budget, without selling Hydro One, to fund \$140 million each year over 10 years.

Will this Acting Premier commit today to stopping the sell-off of Hydro One and finding a better way to raise that money?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the report very clearly states and affirms that the valuation of Hydro One is going to net the province a substantive amount of dollars to reinvest in infrastructure. The member opposite is speculating on the valuation of Hydro One, which we'll know in short order, because the market will bear that price. But more importantly—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins–James Bay.

Finish, please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we are on track. We are on track to provide over \$9 billion in receipts to this government, of which \$5 billion will go towards debt and the additional \$4 billion will be reinvested in infrastructure. What we want to ensure is that we build without borrowing—

Interjection.

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

Finish, please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: We're taking a very careful and staged approach by broadening the ownership of Hydro One, unlike the reckless plan that was proposed by the official opposition. We recognize that these things are important, and we have a greater benefit for society—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The NDP demanded the creation of the Financial Accountability Office so that we could catch Liberal scandals before they actually happened. It is a good thing that we did, Speaker. Without the FAO, Ontarians would never have known that the sell-off of Hydro One would earn billions of dollars less than what the Premier has promised.

This time, we can actually stop another bad deal before it costs Ontario families and businesses billions and billions of dollars.

Will this Acting Premier commit today to stopping the unnecessary, the wrong-headed, the financially inappropriate sell-off of Hydro One before it's—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Trinity–Spadina and the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, would you please come to order while the question is being put, and the answer, subsequently?

Minister of Finance

Hon. Charles Sousa: This is one of the largest investment transactions in the history of our province. It is because we recognize that this asset is underperforming and we know it can do better. That is why we proceeded in this way. We're taking only a 15% stake so we can see

and exactly assess its value. We are taking a proper and careful approach, and we're on track to achieve the results.

But what this is about is investing in Hamilton, investing in public transit and investing in families so that they can get to and from home more quickly and more safely. It is about making us more competitive in the long term. That is what we're doing.

We're ensuring that we continue to build without borrowing. The member opposite and the champagne socialists would prefer us to borrow in perpetuity. We cannot do that. We've got to be fiscally responsible and we are doing so here.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would remind all of us, but I'd like to acknowledge to the minister, that those are the kinds of things that don't help or engage in good dialogue and good debate. I would challenge all of us to race to the top and not to the bottom.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll wait. Start the clock.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: When the Premier formed her privatization panel, she said that the process would be "transparent ... and independently validated." It has been anything but transparent. Even now, the government is withholding documents from the Financial Accountability Officer. Now, the first independent analysis, even without those documents, has been done, and it clearly says that this is a bad deal for Ontarians and that the Premier should keep Hydro public.

Will this Liberal government follow the advice of the Financial Accountability Officer and commit today to stopping the sell-off of Hydro One before this project that the Liberals have on their docket actually turns into the next Liberal boondoggle, a billion-dollar Liberal boondoggle, for the province of Ontario?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We've acted in accordance and consistent with the 2013 Financial Accountability Officer Act, which we brought forward and which was agreed to by this entire House unanimously, to ensure that the confidentiality of cabinet documents is upheld. I will not break the law that I'm entitled to report to, and we will continue to abide by that.

More importantly, we are investing in the things that matter most to Ontarians. We are taking an asset that is underperforming, recognizing that we can do better, and ensuring that we protect others. We're going to be competing with Hydro One and Horizon, as well as Brampton hydro, all of which are actually performing much better than Toronto Hydro. This is an opportunity for us to provide greater discipline and, in the end, more value for that operation, greater dividends to shareholders, of which we will own 85% after the first tranche.

The member opposite is actually suggesting that regulated companies should be owned by the province. In that regard, we might as well buy Enbridge Gas.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Acting Premier. Not only is the sell-off of Hydro One the worst deal in the province's history, it's resulted in another scandal this morning. Speaker, you'd think this government would have learned this week about doing things behind closed doors, but I guess some people never learn.

We learned from the Financial Accountability Officer this morning, in his report to the Legislature, that the FAO cannot reproduce the council's estimate because the province has deemed this methodology to be a cabinet record and has chosen not to release it.

Once again this week, a member of the opposition has to stand up here in the Legislature and ask the government what it is hiding. Why is there so much information the government doesn't want the public to have? I guess I'm asking the minister responsible for Ornge this question this morning.

Will the Acting Premier commit to turning over all of the cabinet documents related to the sale of Hydro One to the Financial Accountability Officer?

Interjections.

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

Deputy Premier?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: If we're going to talk about the worst deal in the history of Ontario, I would like to nominate the Highway 407 sell-off.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm reminded that the 407 was valued at about \$12 billion, and I believe you sold it—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We'll do it again. When I said if it continues, I'll stand again. It's your time.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It was sold for a fraction of its value, maybe about 25% of its value. It was sold once, the whole thing, 100%. As my colleague likes to say, first we paid to pave it, now we pay to drive all over it—the worst deal ever.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: Speaker, I know that asking this government to be transparent is quite an ask, and asking them to be transparent is kind of like taking business ethics lessons from Bernie Madoff. That's what this is like, asking you guys to be transparent.

In his report this morning, the FAO goes on to state that the FAO has requested more information on the calculation of future net income, but the province has determined this information to be a cabinet record and has chosen not to release it.

It turns out that if you work for the Financial Accountability Officer, the government doesn't want to give you any information, but they can't slip it to their

friends in the media fast enough. Asked about the leak to the Toronto Star this morning, the FAO said he would have to rethink releasing documents to the government 48 hours before the public. Even officers of the Legislature can't trust these guys.

Speaker, will the minister commit to releasing all cabinet documents about the sale of Hydro One to the public? Or is she actually going to stand in her place and tell the public—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, three important numbers here: 407. They put the 0 in 407. We got squat. We got a doughnut out of that deal.

What we're doing going forward: We've been very open and transparent. We've worked very closely with the FAO throughout this process to the extent that we can by law. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, we do have a prospectus. We have full information that's outlined for the benefit of the entire public. As a result of the quiet period, we must also abide by the OSC.

The members opposite want us to break the law. We will not do that. We're protecting the interests of the public and we're going to reinvest all of the money, dollar for dollar, for the benefit of new—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order please. New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Acting Premier. Mr. Speaker, the Premier has stubbornly stood by her plan to sell Hydro One. Because of today's report of the Financial Accountability Officer on the Premier's plan to sell Hydro One, Ontarians now know that the province's finances will actually be harmed by the sale. Is that why the Premier chose to prevent the Financial Accountability Officer from accessing information needed to assess the province's estimate of the market value of Hydro One, citing cabinet confidentiality?

Can the Acting Premier tell Ontarians why she chose not to disclose information about her privatization plan either from the Ministry of Finance, from energy, from Mr. Ed Clark's panel, or even the \$7.5 million in consultant reports that the people of this province already paid for?

Hydro One belongs to the people of this province. They have a right to know what's going on.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the FAO makes reference to the flow of funds, recognizing that the province will net a tremendous amount of appreciation in its value with a broadening of its ownership. Deferred tax benefits and the net proceeds will be invested dollar for dollar into the Trillium Trust. The amount of the book

value goes to pay off debt, which I know the third party loves to increase, but we are not going to borrow to keep building. We must find ways to improve the net benefit as we proceed forward.

The forgone revenue that the member opposite talks about doesn't recognize the reinvestment value and the increased dividends that are appreciated from the ongoing operations of this company, which we will continue to own, Mr. Speaker. That will provide greater benefit overall.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: The FAO was very clear this morning. The net debt will eventually be higher. He also said that it's a question of simple math. Clearly, this finance minister does not get that.

Mr. Speaker, the Financial Accountability Officer's role is to provide independent financial analysis about the province's finances to the people of this province. This is one of the reasons why it's so important that we now have this office. This government needs all the help that they can get.

If the Acting Premier has so much confidence in her plan to sell off Hydro One, why does she need to rely on cabinet confidentiality to shield it from the people of this province? What is she hiding?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we've responded to this effect. We do have confidentiality requirements within the cabinet as, also, established in the FAO act, which we all agreed to. We also recognize that we have a prospectus and we have to abide by the OSC in regard to what we do next.

So we have a quiet period, but, at the same time, we want to maximize the net benefit on this transaction. That would be harmed based on what this member is asking us to do. Furthermore, what we do want in the end is to maximize the long-term revenues, stimulate the economy, improve our net benefit by reinvesting it. The FAO makes it very clear that he did not assess the net benefits or the ongoing opportunity; just the existence of the company as it stands today.

We know, and he has admitted, that this deal will have a positive effect for the province immediately, and the net benefit can be had as we proceed forward in reinvesting dollar for dollar in other assets to appreciate greater value for all of Ontario.

COMMUNITY POLICING

Ms. Harinder Malhi: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The police officers in my community of Brampton-Springdale have a difficult job to do and work very hard every day to keep us safe. I often hear about the interactions between police officers and my community members, many of which are positive.

However, over the last several months, we have also heard from many Ontarians in communities across the province about the impact of street checks in their lives.

I had the opportunity to attend one of the street check consultations, which was held in my community of

Brampton–Springdale, where many people shared their lived experiences with these interactions. From these stories, I could appreciate just how deep the impact of street checks goes, and I could see that this is an issue that affects not just the people of my community, but people across our province.

Mr. Speaker, through you, can the minister please explain what he is doing to resolve this important and ongoing concern?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the member for asking a very important and relevant question.

I would like to, first, thank the hundreds of people who came out to the consultations that we hosted across the province, those who provided their feedback and submissions through the online process, and, most importantly, the young people I got the opportunity to meet with, who shared their lived experiences during this entire process. Speaker, I'm going to be very honest with you: Those were very difficult conversations, and they were very emotional conversations. I want to thank them for coming forward and sharing their stories with us.

We heard very clearly from the community that carding or street checks, by definition, are arbitrary as well as discriminatory and therefore cannot be improved or regulated; they simply must be ended. That is why our regulations have some important features that I will present to you during the supplementary.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Thank you to the minister for that answer. I'm glad that the voices of my community and communities across our province have been heard and that you're taking action to prohibit random and arbitrary stops. This is an important step in ensuring bias-free policing in Ontario and in helping to build trust between our police officers and the communities that they serve. I know that police officers in my community will be able to continue to do the excellent work that they do keeping us safe, while having clear and consistent rules to follow when engaging in public interactions.

But, Mr. Speaker, the changes that the minister is proposing as part of the draft regulations are considerable, and Ontarians need to have confidence that the officers will have the necessary skills to adhere to them. Ontarians also need to know whether this training has been effective in removing bias from policing.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain the training that the officers will undergo and what will be done to study the outcomes?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: We had the opportunity to work, of course, with our policing partners and our community, human rights and civil liberty partners.

There are three key parts to this regulation. Number one, there is an express prohibition on random and arbitrary collection of personal information by the police. We are also introducing new rules to protect civil liberties during voluntary police-public interactions where there is a valid policing reason, such as informing individuals that they are not legally required to provide their information to the police officer. As the member mentioned, we are also requiring new training, data management,

reporting and other requirements to strengthen accountability and public confidence.

Speaker, we are asking the Ontario Police College to develop this new and mandatory training. We'll also be creating a panel of experts made up of police, human rights experts and racial issues experts who will work with the Ontario Police College in developing that training.

We are also launching a multi-year study to look into the effectiveness of this practice.

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PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Minister of Finance. The Financial Accountability Officer confirmed today that the Hydro One fire sale is a terrible deal for Ontario. Stephen LeClair told us, "You will have immediate gains, but a loss of revenue over the long term." He was very clear that "the province would realize a permanent deterioration in budget balance as a result of the transaction." Further, he said that "the province would experience an ongoing negative impact on budget balance from forgone net income and payments-in-lieu of taxes from Hydro One."

It cannot be any clearer than this. Minister, the jury is in. Will you advise the Premier to stop this rock-headed fire sale?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: Wow, this is great, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite comes from the party that was proposing to sell 100% of this company, which would have been a reckless plan. As I mentioned before—and they have a history of doing so. In fact—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: Furthermore, they actually filled in holes on infrastructure projects that would have been of great benefit to our society and our community today. We will not be wrong-headed and we're not going to put our heads in that sand—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I don't intend to shout over people that are shouting, but I will get attention and I'll ask the member from Simcoe–Grey to come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The FAO validates our approach in a staged and careful way to ensure that we protect the interests of the parties of concern.

Interjections.

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

Finish, please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The FAO makes it clear that we are reducing debt, we are paying down debt and we're retaining a substantive amount for reinvestment to produce new assets. The FAO didn't go on to the issues around

what those assets may be. He didn't talk about the fact that forgone revenue will be replaced with new investments, new revenue, stronger dividends and a stronger company. That benefits everyone—

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: To the minister: I don't know what report that minister read, but Stephen LeClair told us that this will create "permanent deterioration" in the budget. This is strictly a financing decision; nothing to do with infrastructure.

Now their plan is clear. The actual proceeds from this Hydro One sale are very little. But it's just enough to make their books look good for a couple of years, bringing us to the next election. Then it all goes downhill for Ontario from there.

The minister and the Premier have been exposed yet again. So I ask: Will you put an end to this charade and stop the fire sale of Hydro One?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we are going to build. And we're not going to keep borrowing to build; we're going to make sure that we reinvest assets that we own, and we can do better.

We looked at a number of assets. We said very clearly in the budget that we would. We realized that some of our assets and properties actually have tremendous value—we wouldn't be able to get a greater net benefit, but for this one we can. He knows we can because they evaluated and they recognized that we can do better than what Hydro One is doing right now. That's exactly why we're taking a very careful, staged approach to ensure greater value for that operation and reinvest dollar for dollar into our economy.

The FAO makes it clear that he did not assess what those reinvestments would accrue to the province—that stimulus that would be created. He also didn't assess the valuation of those dividends over time, nor should we speculate at this time because it's a quiet period. But we know because a lot of people recognize that Toronto Hydro, Horizon and Enersource have greater value than Hydro One.

REPORT, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, you know that the Financial Accountability Officer works for this House. You know that the Financial Accountability Officer tables his report here in the Legislature. Why? Because he works for us, the members.

Imagine the surprise of many this morning when they wake up to find out in the paper that the entire content of his report has been leaked to the paper. It begs the question, because we know the Financial Accountability Officer said he didn't leak the information. He said so at the press conference this morning.

So who is it in your government who leaked that information to the paper? Will you come clean and tell us who that is?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: We're very concerned about that report having been leaked as well. I can assure this member—I can assure everyone—that the Minister of Energy, the Minister of Finance or our offices did not leak the report. We did not walk the halls of Queen's Park yesterday. We are very sensitive to that secrecy. We respect the FAO. We respect his position. We want to ensure that we continue to operate in the appropriate manner and we want to ensure that that doesn't happen again, because that is confidential information, which we respect in this House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Somehow, I think most of the people in this province would tend to trust that the Financial Accountability Officer didn't leak the report. So somebody in your government leaked that report because they're the only people who got the copy.

I'm going to say it again: You're denying that you're the guys who did it. If it wasn't the FAO, the only person it could have been is somebody within the Ministry of Energy or somebody within your own ministry.

Will you come clean and find out who that person is and let us know who leaked that report out to the public?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Energy did not leak the report. We want to make certain that those practices are indeed protected. I have no interest in investigating—

Interjections.

Mr. Paul Miller: The tooth fairy did it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll ask the third time—the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek come to order, second time.

Finish, please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I have no interest in investigating the media on this as well. The member opposite is making accusations I find offensive, because that is not the practice of this House.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. As the member for Halton and as a daily commuter, I know well just how important transit and transportation are to those living in my community. In fact, I often hear from my friends, neighbours and local residents about the impact their community has on their lives. My constituents want accessible and reliable transit at convenient times. They want to get to work quicker in the mornings and they want to get home faster at night so they can spend more time with their friends and families.

This is good for families. This is also good for our economy. With this in mind, can the minister please tell members of this House how our government is investing in transit and transportation in Halton and elsewhere to make the commute easier for Halton residents?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by thanking the member from Halton for her strong representation for her community. Of course, this government continues to make key investments in transit and transportation infrastructure in Halton.

Since 2004, we have committed over \$5 million through the gas tax fund to the town of Milton to help improve and expand its transit services. As part of budget 2015, our government announced an investment of \$13.5 billion to increase transit ridership and reduce travel times across the GO network. This would include service every 15 minutes or better during the morning and afternoon peak periods along the Milton corridor. On top of these investments, we've committed over \$540 million in Halton region to improve and expand local highways, like the 401.

We know the importance of investing in transit and transportation infrastructure, and we'll continue to make sure that these investments count for the people of Halton.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I want to thank the minister for his response. I'm pleased to hear about the investments our government is making for those living in my community and our province. These investments will significantly improve the daily lives of commuters, riders and their families.

Over the summer, I was lucky to have a number of opportunities to speak with my constituents about the issues that matter to them. I heard about the need for increased GO service for those travelling from Halton to Toronto. People want more train trips, more bus trips and more comprehensive service. I also heard about the need for more parking for commuters using GO Transit. As a commuter myself, I know first-hand just how important this issue is.

Can the minister please tell members of this House how we can address some of the challenges those in my community are currently facing?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, I thank the member for her question. We understand the challenges that those in Halton are facing, whether it be the need for increased GO service or for additional parking. We have identified the potential for an additional 600 to 800 spaces at the Milton GO station and we're currently undertaking feasibility studies to determine how these might be accommodated. These are concrete steps.

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I also certainly look forward to being in Milton later this evening with the member from that community at a town hall meeting. This will give me the opportunity to hear from residents about the concerns they have on a wide variety of transportation issues.

But more than anything else, I am extremely proud to serve alongside this member, and all members on this side of the House, because we understand the importance of building the province up. The members opposite from both opposition parties could take a page out of our book when it comes to making hard decisions to invest in building this province up.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Acting Premier. All along, this government has been spinning a tale that the sale of Hydro One would bring in \$9 billion of new money. Today's report from the Financial Accountability Officer puts a stop to that government spin. Mr. LeClair confirmed that \$2.2 billion of that \$9-billion figure is not new money.

How can the government be so short-sighted? At best, they're going to get a temporary boost of \$1 billion to \$2 billion, but they're losing an asset that produces \$700 million a year in revenue for years going on.

Mr. Speaker, will the Acting Premier finally admit that they have not been giving the people of Ontario the straight goods on this bad fire sale?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: In fact, the Financial Accountability Officer today affirms our valuation of Hydro One. We are on track to realizing our \$9-billion target through the broadening of ownership of Hydro One.

But I really think it's important that we look at the lessons we learned from the mistakes you made when you were in government, particularly with regard to the 407 lease. The government of the day did not implement any regulations for price-setting, for example. In fact, Hydro One does not set its own rates. It will continue to be set by the independent Ontario Energy Board, and we will introduce legislation to strengthen the regulatory oversight authority of the Ontario Energy Board to protect ratepayers.

The province does not receive any ongoing direct financial benefit from the 407 lease. In contrast, with Hydro One, the province does continue to receive revenue from Hydro One.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Acting Premier: Dodge, deflect, deny. How many governments in the past can you blame? Are you going to go back to Mitch Hepburn and John Robarts? Can we just try to stick to this decade?

This government has known all along that the most they could get was limited new money on the fire sale of Hydro One. When you deduct the \$5 billion that this government committed to putting towards hydro debt, it only leaves \$1.4 billion in new money. It makes no sense to sell an asset that will only net \$1.4 billion while you lose an asset that brings in \$700 million each and every year.

Will the Acting Premier stop this madness and put an immediate stop to the sale of Hydro One? If there is ever a day to stop; if there is ever a day to pause and recognize, given the facts, that this is not in the best interests of Ontario—do the right thing. Stop the fire sale.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: We talk about transparency. We recognize and remember that when this government came into power, there was a \$5.6-billion hidden deficit that they hid from accountability. We are going to ensure that that never happens again. We work closely with the Financial Accountability Officer—

Interjections.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Furthermore, as we put forward legislation to protect the interests of the public by being more open—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: So we've taken those steps. In fact, we've brought forward the Financial Accountability Officer to provide information prior to these assessments. One thing is critically important that the opposition never talks about, and that's the fact that we are going to retain 85% ownership of this company after the first tranche. We'll assess effectively what that means going forward.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Acting Premier. This morning's FAO report shows that the sell-off of Hydro One is a bad deal for Ontario businesses, but this Liberal government continues to ignore that. In fact, Speaker, if they were listening, they would have heard that Ontario businesses cite soaring electricity costs as the number one factor hurting business competitiveness. This government sell-off won't even ensure relief from the debt retirement charge for these businesses, and, on top of that, businesses are going to lose the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit.

Will the Acting Premier finally listen to the people of this province and stop the sale of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: There's a myth that the third party is trying to perpetuate across this province, and that myth is that Hydro One sets its own rates. In fact, the truth is, Hydro One does not and will not set its own rates. Anyone who is drawing the link between the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One and increased rates is simply trying to create—I'm being careful, Speaker, in the choice of my words—they are creating a myth that actually is false. The OEB sets the rates for utilities. The OEB sets the rates now; the OEB will set the rates in the future. As Hydro One becomes a stronger, better company, that will actually reduce the upward pressure on rates.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: We already know that because of the rising cost of electricity, nearly 40% of Ontario businesses will delay or cancel investment in the province. This morning's report confirms that businesses will continue to face increasing expenses because of this government's reckless and short-sighted decision to sell off Hydro One.

Business competitiveness is hurting in this province. Will the Acting Premier finally do something about this and stop the sale of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think that anyone who does business in this province will tell us that investment in infrastructure is one of the most important things we can do to improve our productivity. What the revenue from Hydro One will allow us to do is build the infrastructure that is desperately needed.

There is a real cost to not investing in infrastructure. As I said earlier, for every \$100 million invested in public infrastructure, there's an increase in real GDP of \$114 million. So, Speaker, we're making investments. We're taking some assets and putting them into other assets that will yield an important return on investment fiscally and also significantly improve the quality of life of people who are asking for improvements in our infrastructure.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Last year, students from across Ontario participated in the Ministry of Labour's "It's Your Job" video contest. In fact, Pranay Noel and Martin Czachor, two students from St. Francis Xavier Catholic Secondary School in my riding, won first prize for their video on workplace safety. They worked hard and dedicated their time to plan, film and direct their video, and learned a great deal about workplace safety.

Contests like this one are a great way to engage our students and empower them to learn about workplace hazards and safety. This year, I hope that even more students participate in this contest. Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide more information so that students can start preparing for this year's contest?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for that very important question about engaging young people in health and safety.

I was able to visit St. Francis last year and personally congratulate Pranay and Martin. I want to congratulate all of the winners from last year and all those students who took time to create the videos.

I would also like to mention that our second-place winners, who came from Trenton High School in the member from Northumberland–Quinte West's riding, went on to win first place in the all-Canada national contest.

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You can still see these videos on the website at the Ministry of Labour. They're really well done. I'm really impressed by the quality of the videos and the knowledge and awareness that students demonstrated about workplace safety.

I'm happy to announce today that the student video contest is taking place all over again this year. I'd ask all members of this House to encourage students in their own ridings to participate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Minister. I'm happy to hear that the Ministry of Labour continues to emphasize the importance of our students learning about workplace health and safety. Young workers need to know that they are protected against workplace health and safety hazards now and even after school.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Ministry of Labour is always looking to promote workplace health and safety. How is this ministry working with people after they leave

school to ensure that they understand health and safety in the workplace?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thanks again to the member for that great question. I'd ask all members of the House to assist me in getting the message out to young people, because we must ensure that Ontarians, including our young workers, know that they've got rights to protect them against workplace health and safety hazards. It's an important part of our job at the Ministry of Labour. Last July, we made basic health and safety awareness training mandatory in this province for all workers and for all supervisors.

Last night, I was really proud to attend the fifth annual Canada's Safest Employers Awards gala in Toronto. It recognizes those companies, from right across Canada, that have outstanding accomplishments in promoting the health and safety of our workers.

I really want to say that if we start with the young people, we end up with results like this. I was happy to see so many Ontario workplaces, such as the Sault Area Hospital and the Residence Inn by Marriott Downtown London, take home gold awards, last night, in safety.

We can all learn at a young age, continue it on, and get health and safety results that all Ontarians can be proud of.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mrs. Gila Martow: My question is to the Minister of Education. Former Liberal finance minister Greg Sorbara appeared on *The Agenda* with Steve Paikin this week. When asked about the millions of dollars that this government promised to the teachers' unions, he said, "The way it was done, it doesn't feel good, it doesn't look good and there is a better way of doing it." Mr. Sorbara suggested that a better way would be to say, "Let's put our expenses before an independent third party and that independent third party will come up with a number, and it will be transparent, open."

Is the minister prepared to take her former colleague's advice and designate a third party to review this apparent misappropriation of education tax dollars?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I've heard this a couple of times. I'm just going to make a comment on it. The use of some words could imply something different. I would caution the member to make sure that she stays on the other side of the withdrawal issue.

Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: First off, I think it's important to understand that we have said repeatedly that because negotiations are ongoing, we will not discuss the details of contracts. In fact, the mediator has actually imposed a blackout on the discussions that are going on this week.

The reason that I mention this is because we have always said that we would be quite happy to explain the net-zero construct in the collective agreements, once we have finished the negotiations. The payments in question

are part of the net-zero construct, and I remain committed to that.

However, with respect to accountability, as both the Premier and I said yesterday, the money has not—

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: Again, we're hearing new spin—this is a new one—and we've been hearing it about the OPP investigations. We're often being told, "It's ongoing investigations, so we can't comment." Now, we're hearing that it's ongoing negotiations, so they can't comment.

We know that net zero means the money came from somewhere, and that money is coming from the classrooms. The public works long hours to make the money they contribute to government revenue. They deserve assurances that their education tax dollars go to direct education costs. They expect teacher union dues to cover the cost of negotiations as much as possible, and should the education ministry need to cover any costs, that receipts will be submitted.

Former finance minister Sorbara seems to agree when he said, "Put it in front of a third party. Get the receipts in there so that one can report fully on what happened."

Is the minister going to show us the receipts for all expenses not already covered by the ministry?

Hon. Liz Sandals: As the Premier said yesterday, as I said yesterday, the money has not flowed. There will be an accountability process, as I explained yesterday. There will be a schedule of allowable expenditure areas and we will be verifying that. In fact, we are going to go through an accountability and verification process.

But I repeat: This was part of net zero. We have already said repeatedly that as part of that net-zero construct, we actually do have offsets in terms of early discount retirement gratuity payouts, reductions in sick leave usage, more efficient delivery of professional development, and we will discuss that more fully when bargaining is complete and the blackout period is over.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: With today's shocking revelations through the report from the FAO that the fire sale of Hydro One—

Interjection: Who is the question to?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: To the Acting Premier. Thank you very much.

With today's shocking revelation through the report from the FAO that the fire sale of Hydro One will only net \$1.4 billion for government coffers for infrastructure planning going forward, will you do the right thing? Will you listen to the report of the FAO? Will you reverse the decision to sell Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, I guess my question to the member opposite is will you read the report of the FAO, because he actually says that we're on track to achieve the \$9 billion in revenue. I know there is a narrative that they are trying to drive, and I think it's really important that the public in Ontario understands that this

is a decision that allows us to build important infrastructure across this province.

The FAO did his job, did a report, but it's incumbent upon every member of this Legislature to actually understand what he said and not misconstrue the findings of the FAO.

VISITORS

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It gives me great pleasure to introduce my sister Danielle Gélinas and her husband, John Eydt, who just made it to catch the end of question period. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): One moment, please. It is the last day for somebody who has been sitting in here for a long time. Richard Brennan from the Star is leaving. I think maybe we should say goodbye to him.

Being from Brantford, I would hope I would get one good line out of the guy out of these years.

The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: A point of order: We're very pleased today that the page captain Sebastian Lingertat is from Peterborough, and in the members' east gallery he's joined by his grandfather Dr. James VanLeeuwen, his grandmother Irene VanLeeuwen and his aunt Annette VanLeeuwen. We certainly welcome them to Queen's Park today.

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I missed it earlier. I just wanted to say that page Abby Moreside's grandmother is in the gallery, and we'd like to welcome Gerda Stefan here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1:00 p.m.

The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm very pleased this afternoon to welcome some of my guests who are here today: Scarborough author Barbara Dickson; her husband, David Dickson; Stan MacDonald, better known as the father of one of the "Bomb Boys"; Brenda Hodgson, who's a friend of Barbara; as well as Emilie Heron. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

EVAN WELLWOOD

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, traditionally Speakers don't give members' statements, so I just wanted to share this story with you today in the Legislature. I know that the Speaker, yourself, is incredibly proud of your riding of Brant and of course of all of the communities that you represent.

When it comes to the town of St. George, you can understand why he is so proud. Evan Wellwood has been battling brain cancer most of his life. At the suggestion of doctors, his family set out to celebrate Christmas in October. Before long, the whole community and the world took notice. Evan's family set up a page to raise funds, called One Last Christmas. It had a target of \$1,500. They raised more than \$44,000. Two months before Christmas, hundreds of homes were fully decorated in the little town of St. George. Shopkeepers and residents began stringing lights, wrapping presents and unrolling fake snow on Evan's lawn. Carollers started going door to door.

On Friday, Evan was made an honorary officer by the Brantford police, complete with a badge and uniform. Evan had always wanted to be a police officer.

On Saturday, about 7,000 people joined the celebrations. That's more than double the town's population. More than 25 floats made their way along Evan's street, and the thousands on hand cheered and waved as he rode by on Santa's sleigh. Batman, the Grinch and Evan's favourite character, SpongeBob, also showed up to wish him a merry Christmas.

Speaker, the outpouring of love and support for Evan and his family by the people of St. George represents the best of Ontario and the best of humanity. From all of us here at the Ontario Legislature, merry Christmas, Evan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. You can take all the time you want.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Vanthof: High hydro rates are one of the most important issues for my folks at home. In northern Ontario, we have people who have to choose between how much they eat and how much they heat. We have very severe weather conditions. Actually, there are lots of nights now where we're below zero already. A lot of people burn wood, but as you get older, you can't burn wood. These people are concerned.

Today, we've had the report from the Financial Accountability Officer. His role is to take an impartial view of government plans and give an impartial opinion. There has been lots of debate this morning about that opinion, but the basic fact of the matter is—I'd like my folks at home to know—that if Hydro One is sold, the likely income will be \$1.5 billion that can be used by the government. But the loss, because Hydro One brings dividends to the government, will be maybe \$500 million a year. So by year four, it will be a net loss to the province, a loss that could be used to help people face their hydro bills or a loss that could be used to build the infrastructure they keep talking about.

My question to the finance minister is: Can he add?

TURKISH REPUBLIC DAY

Mr. Mike Colle: Today, we're joined by leaders of the Ontario Turkish community as they raise the Turkish

flag here at the Legislature. I would like to welcome them here today.

Today, October 29, marks the creation of the Turkish republic in 1923. It is Turkish Republic Day today. After Turkey's victory in the war of independence, the Turkish Parliament proclaimed the new Turkish state as a republic. A new constitution, which the Parliament adopted on October 29, 1923, replaced the constitution of the Ottoman Empire. The leader in the Turkish war of independence, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, became the country's first president on the same day.

Following the founding of the Republic of Turkey, Atatürk embarked on a wide-ranging set of unprecedented reforms in the political, economic and cultural aspects of Turkish society. These reforms have left a lasting legacy of which the peoples of Turkish heritage are proud: the transformation of the newly founded republic into today's modern, democratic and secular Turkish state. Turkish women in particular gained many civil rights from these reforms, such as voting rights and the ability to practise many occupations and hold political posts.

There are approximately 25,000 Turkish Ontarians who will be celebrating this important day. To celebrate, many people go to local stadiums to watch performances dedicated to this important day. Such performances usually consist of theatre sketches, poetry readings and traditional Turkish dances. Many schoolchildren participate in these performances. Many people lay wreaths to Atatürk, the great founder of Turkey, or visit Atatürk's mausoleum in the country's capital, Ankara.

Happy Turkish Republic Day and long live Canadian Turkish friendship.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It seems very appropriate for me to share this statement today. On October 6, the town of Caledon passed a resolution that stated:

"Whereas the public electricity system in Ontario is a critical asset to the economy and vital to the living standard and well-being of all Ontarians; and

"Whereas it is essential that Ontarians maintain public control and public decision-making with respect to electricity; and

"Whereas experience in other jurisdictions shows that privatization typically means consumers pay more for electricity; and

"Whereas a privatized Hydro One will no longer be subject to scrutiny by the Auditor General, the Ombudsman, the Financial Accountability Officer or the Integrity Commissioner, and will no longer be required to provide information or services to citizens under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, or the French Language Services Act; and

"Whereas the sale of shares in Hydro One will provide a short-term financial gain for the province in exchange for a much larger long-term financial loss; and

"Whereas the provincial government has no mandate from voters to sell any part of Hydro One,

"Therefore be it resolved that the town of Caledon call on the provincial government to halt the sale of any part of Hydro One, and maintain Hydro One as a public asset for the benefit of all Ontarians and to respect the autonomy and local decision-making powers of local distribution companies by not forcing these companies into mergers or sales...."

Speaker, the government needs to finally listen to the concerns, like those of the town of Caledon and the Financial Accountability Officer, regarding the Hydro One sell-off.

HATE CRIMES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I rise today to raise some concerns from my constituents, many of whom have strong ties to Punjab. In Punjab, there was a desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib. This constitutes the embodiments of all the Sikh spiritual teachings. This desecration occurred, and it represents, essentially, a hate crime against an already marginalized Sikh community.

Peaceful protesters organized in defiance of this hate crime and called on the government to take action against the perpetrators of this desecration, this hate crime. In response, the state didn't respond and actually assist the protesters. Instead, the state attacked peaceful protesters, two of whom were killed, many of whom were arrested, simply for raising their concerns.

Hate crimes against any community, anywhere in the world, have no place in our society, and I stand with those who have called on the government for justice.

In addition, constituents have raised concerns about the independent decision-making of the leadership of Sikh institutions in relation to these events. Maintaining the sovereignty of Sikh institutions is vitally important, as Sikh leadership in Punjab makes decisions that impact people across the world and, in fact, many residents in my community.

I am encouraged by the movement towards greater accountability for Sikh leadership, and I call on the government to investigate human rights violations against peaceful protesters. As well, I call on the Sikh community to increase their movement toward greater unity in order to maintain the sovereignty of Sikh institutions.

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MANUFACTURING JOBS

Ms. Daiene Vernile: October is Manufacturing Month in Ontario. I'd like to share with you an update on the state of manufacturing in my riding of Kitchener Centre and the greater region of Waterloo. In our province, manufacturing jobs make up about 10% of the workforce. But in my community, it is twice that figure: 20%, or one in five jobs. The head of our Workforce Planning Board, Carol Simpson, tells me that we have 1,840 manufacturing businesses, employing over 54,000 people. Here is an astounding figure: currently there are over 2,000 jobs posted in manufacturing in Waterloo

region. The board, along with Employment Ontario agencies, is working to fill this growing demand in employment.

Without a doubt, my region was hit hard in the last decade by manufacturing job losses. We saw a number of big employers pack up and leave town. But since then, there has been a remarkable recovery. We can look to innovators and our government's Southwestern Ontario Development Fund. Some of these success stories include Ontario Drive and Gear, Ball Service Group, DC Foods, Christie Digital, Colonial Cookies, Conestoga Meat Packers, Toyota, COM DEV, BlackBerry and ATS. It's a very long list.

Manufacturing is alive and well in Waterloo region, and I salute all of the people who are supporting this very vibrant sector.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Michael Harris: For three days now, elementary students in my riding have joined together to protest the impacts of this government's inability to come to an agreement with their teachers. Hundreds of students at about a dozen public schools stayed out of classes to raise their voices against the loss of "after-school clubs and sports" like volleyball, "field trips, and report cards, while teachers withdraw services to press for a new contract." As the Waterloo Region Record reports today, "Students sat in hallways or lunch rooms or gymnasiums. Some made placards, taped to lockers or placed on floors."

Yesterday at Doon Public School in Kitchener, students walked out of class immediately after announcements and paced the halls before heading into the gym, where they continued their peaceful protest throughout the day while teachers remained in their classrooms. As students protesting in the halls of Forest Glen school wrote to me yesterday, "We don't want, we need our extracurriculars," noting that "some kids feel they don't belong, but with extracurriculars they feel they finally fit in," and adding, "It's not fair that you use our extracurriculars to bargain with teachers ... we are important."

That, they are, Speaker, and more than that, they are our future. I think it is incumbent on this government to end this waiting game. Allow our students to enjoy the full educational experience, including extracurriculars that they deserve and that the Ontario taxpayers have paid for.

DURHAM FARM CONNECTIONS

Mr. Granville Anderson: The fall harvest season has given me plenty of opportunities this year to talk about the great farming community in Durham, but I'm going to tell the House one more time, and I will continue to tell the House, about the hard-working and innovative farmers in our community.

Tonight marks the second annual Durham Farm Connections' Celebrate Agriculture Gala, with the goal of supporting agricultural awareness in Durham region. Of course, I spoke just a few weeks ago in favour of the

motion from the member for Huron–Bruce with much the same goal, so I am looking forward to talking more about it this evening.

Durham's agricultural community will come together to discuss strategies and about how the season went, and to honour community members with awards for farm family, spirit of agriculture, and leadership. We will focus on sustainability, innovation and spreading the message of stewardship and our agriculturally driven local economy to everyone in Durham. I am looking forward to this evening.

GECO MUNITIONS FACTORY

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to recognize October as Women's History Month in Canada, and also to recognize a group of trail-blazing women who make extraordinary contributions to the Allied victory in the Second World War.

Most Ontarians are unaware that during the Second World War the Canadian government built the General Engineering Company—known as GECO—munitions factory. This 346-acre munitions plant was built in Scarborough, which at the time was a rural community, complete with over four kilometres of tunnels and 172 buildings. For four years, the plant was open 24 hours a day, six days a week. Remarkably, this plant was built in five months and employed over 21,000 workers, who were predominantly women. To support the war effort, over 265 million munitions were filled by these women.

Scarborough resident and author Barbara Dickson recently released her book, *Bomb Girls: Trading Aprons for Ammo*. Barbara provides a first-hand account of Canada's largest fuse-filling munitions plant, including technical records, photographic evidence and business documentation. The women who worked at GECO were known as Bomb Girls, risking their lives daily, and they showed great resolve in a time women working outside the home defied cultural norms.

Today in the Legislature, I want to again welcome my guests: Barbara Dickson, her husband, David, as well as Stan MacDonald, whose father was a manager at GECO.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like all of us to recognize the contributions of the brave men and women who worked at GECO and their dedicated efforts to help win the Second World War.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Of course, we welcome our guests and thank you for joining us.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRATION IMMIGRATION FRANCOPHONE

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, once in a while someone will ask me the following question: "Parlez-vous français?" Regrettably, my answer is no.

Having said that, I do want to inform you, Speaker, that in the House here we have one individual who is very passionate and very committed in terms of promoting the French culture, French language and French heritage. She is, of course, our minister responsible for francophone affairs, Minister Meilleur.

Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues that next week, November 1 through 7, is National Francophone Immigration Week. Célébrons ensemble. This will be the third annual celebration of the contributions made by francophone immigrants to the health and vitality of so many communities in this country. It's also a celebration of the communities themselves and the tremendous work they do in attracting and welcoming these newcomers.

Here in Ontario, we have good reason to join in this national celebration. Our province has had a rich French-language tradition for more than 400 years. Today, francophones make up 4.8% of our population. That's more than 600,000 Ontarians, and we are fortunate that this number continues to increase.

Outside Quebec, we are the leading destination in Canada for French-speaking immigrants. Currently, francophones make up approximately 2% of immigrants to Ontario. As I'm sure this House is aware, our government's immigration strategy has set a target of 5% francophone immigration, and we are determined to reach that goal.

This is why, two years ago, we launched a dedicated francophone municipal immigration web portal to help our municipalities with francophone communities attract more skilled French-speaking immigrants to grow those communities.

It is why earlier this year, we launched the French-speaking skilled worker stream under the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program to attract French-speaking skilled workers who want to live and work permanently in Ontario. It's why we have doubled the number of francophone service providers to help settle francophone newcomers.

Finally, reaching that 5% goal is why we have assembled the group of experts on francophone immigration. These 11 people come from different sectors, regions and areas of expertise. What they bring to the table, together, is an understanding of immigration, community building and the francophone experience in Ontario. They are currently looking into how best to promote, recruit, welcome and retain francophone immigrants in Ontario. This group of experts will be delivering their advice by next spring on how to achieve our 5% target.

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Speaker, our francophone communities help make our province the magnificent, diverse, vibrant place that it is today. We are committed to preserving and growing these communities. They are a big part of Ontario's glorious past and a big part of our brighter future. Thank you. Merci beaucoup, Speaker.

Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac): Merci beaucoup. It's now time for responses.

M^{me} Gila Martow: Monsieur le Président, je suis heureuse de prendre la parole sur l'immigration francophone en Ontario. Il est important de reconnaître les contributions que les immigrants francophones apportent à notre province alors que nous célébrons la troisième Semaine nationale de l'immigration francophone, du 1^{er} au 7 novembre, sous le thème de cette année : Une diversité qui nous unit! »

Comme beaucoup d'entre nous ici, je suis une enfant d'immigrants. Mon père est né en Pologne, et il est arrivé à Montréal quand il avait cinq ans. À ce moment, il ne parlait seulement que le yiddish. Il a rapidement appris l'anglais, et comme un adulte qui travaillait pour le gouvernement fédéral comme météorologue, il était déterminé à maîtriser le français. Depuis que le gouvernement fédéral a offert un enseignement gratuit, il se consacre à la tâche et a encouragé ses enfants à maîtriser le français aussi.

Bien sûr, l'apprentissage et la conservation de la maîtrise de la langue française est une question assez simple si vous vivez au Québec comme je l'ai fait jusqu'à la fin des années 1980. Les nouveaux immigrants au Québec s'attendent à communiquer en français.

En Ontario, les communautés francophones veulent également voir la maîtrise de la langue française se poursuivre pour des générations à venir. Par contre, elles sont concernées quand il y a seulement une très petite partie des immigrants en Ontario qui sont en mesure de converser en français.

C'est pour cette raison que les communautés francophones ont encouragé le gouvernement de l'Ontario à s'engager à un objectif de 5 % d'immigration francophone. Ceci est un enjeu et, plus spécifiquement, à la réponse du gouvernement, qui a consenti au principe de se doter d'un comité composé de la communauté et d'experts gouvernementaux et autres pour élaborer une véritable stratégie afin d'obtenir ce 5 % d'immigration francophone dans la province. Pour aller avec cela, il ne faut pas oublier également d'obtenir une stratégie pour établir comment, une fois que les gens sont rendus ici, ils seraient pris en charge au niveau de l'accueil, de la formation et de l'intégration dans les communautés où ils choisissent de vivre en Ontario.

Quand je participe à des événements avec nos communautés francophones, tels que le grand rassemblement francophone de la semaine dernière à Toronto avec l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario; la célébration de la journée francophone avec l'AFRY, l'Association des francophones de la région de York, à Markham, le mois dernier; et même la journée de la francophonie, que j'ai animée lors de l'Exposition nationale canadienne à Toronto, je suis convaincue que les nouveaux arrivants francophones sont chaleureusement accueillis et appréciés.

Cependant, il ne suffit pas simplement d'avoir des objectifs arbitraires fixés. Nous devons trouver des

façons de travailler avec les consultants en immigration et avec nos partenaires parlementaires dans les régions francophones pour encourager le tourisme, le commerce et l'immigration.

Je tiens à souligner que l'apprentissage et l'amélioration des compétences linguistiques en français sont soutenus par les nouveaux Canadiens des régions non-francophones, comme le prouve le nombre d'inscriptions dans des écoles d'immersion française. Après tout, les nouveaux arrivants apprécient rapidement que le Canada est un pays bilingue et que la maîtrise du français est un atout précieux.

Dans ma circonscription de Thornhill, le français est souvent entendu parlé par les nouveaux Canadiens en provenance du Maroc et de la France. Beaucoup de Juifs séfarades au centre Kehila de Thornhill me remercient de les saluer en français, tout en me rappelant que beaucoup de gens dans leur communauté parlent également l'espagnol.

Pour terminer, je serais ravie d'apprendre l'espagnol. Par contre, comme porte-parole aux affaires francophones du Parti PC de l'Ontario, je pense que je vais devoir améliorer mon français. Merci beaucoup.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I would like to recognize that there are a few members in our caucus who are Franco-Ontarian and so I would like to thank them for their hard work and representation of this strong community.

My colleague from Nickel Belt is a strong advocate on many health issues, with a deep interest in health services in northern Ontario, where many Franco-Ontarians live.

My colleague from Algoma–Manitoulin has been on the front lines of many important issues, including development of the Ring of Fire.

Finally, my colleague from Timmins–James Bay cares deeply for workers' rights and advocacy.

Mr. Speaker, approximately 14% of Franco-Ontarians are born outside Canada. This means that immigration is central and important to the vitality of the French-speaking community of the province. Therefore, our party is pleased with the express 5% target of francophone immigration. But according to the annual report published by the French language commissioner, there is a need for the Ontario government to establish transparent accountability mechanisms for francophone immigration.

There is often little to no awareness of the challenges that francophones may face when they immigrate to Canada. Some believe that Canada is an entirely bilingual country, only to arrive and realize that many services are not offered in their native language.

According to the annual report published by the French language commissioner, when newcomers arrive in the province, they are sometimes referred to English or bilingual settlement services that know little or nothing about francophone communities and institutions. Nineteen stakeholders also point to the uneven nature of services provided by bilingual organizations. New-

comers' unfamiliarity with services available in French or the presence of francophone communities and institutions in their new region is often cited as a challenge.

Mr. Speaker, French Canadians make up a large percentage of our population here in Ontario and across the country. Those who identify as French Canadian, French, Québécois and Acadian make up 11.9 million people, or 33.78% of the Canadian population. From the arts and entrepreneurship to education and politics, we are so fortunate to have such engaged Ontarians of French heritage, vital to the fabric of our province and our country.

But as I stated before, there is work to be done in order to support French-speaking people with their needs and to incorporate them into our immensely diverse and multicultural society. There are many organizations across the province that work towards the well-being and the representation of Franco-Canadians. Young people need to understand their culture, heritage and language, so I am so proud of organizations such as the Regroupement étudiant franco-ontarien, la Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française, et l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, which all do outstanding work on behalf of and for the young francophone community in our province.

In my riding of London–Fanshawe, there is a strong Franco-Ontarian community and I am proud that we have three French schools in the city. These schools are: École élémentaire Marie-Curie, Académie de la Tamise and École secondaire Gabriel-Dumont. I am also very excited for the new school that will be opening its doors in September 2016.

Building stronger and more acceptable francophone communities should be a part of this government's plans, but I am proud of our current active and vibrant Franco-Ontarian community here and in London.

Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to respond to the minister today.

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

It is now time for petitions.

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PETITIONS

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: "Planning for Ontario's future.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this, and I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Michael.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

“Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water.

“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 am pleased to sign and to support this petition and to send it down with page Julia.

PROTECTION DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

M^{me} Cristina Martins: J'ai une pétition ici qui est dirigée 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;

« 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. »

Je suis d'accord avec cette pétition. Je vais y affixer mon nom et je l'envoie à la table avec Vanessa.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It gives me great pleasure to affix my signature and provide it to page Victoria.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Blessed Cardinal Newman Catholic secondary school continues to inspire students to succeed by developing programs which integrate Catholic values and teachings into the curriculum. Innovation is a part of the tradition at Newman; the school continues to thrive because of its tradition of providing a caring educational, social and spiritual environment for its students.

“Whereas the current Blessed Cardinal Newman facility, located at 100 Brimley South, cannot accommodate the current and projected future student population;

“Whereas Blessed Cardinal Newman is Toronto Catholic District School Board’s number one capital priority needs project;

“Whereas the current lease agreement with the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corp. will expire in 2018 and will require a more effective long-term solution for the current and future students attending Blessed Cardinal Newman;

“Whereas ministry inspections in 2013 indicated that 70% of the building is in need of repair, requiring replacements to major components of the facility;

“Whereas the current Blessed Cardinal Newman site houses 20 portables and cannot accommodate more due to constrained site size;

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

“That the Ministry of Education provide funding for a 1,100 replacement facility to more effectively serve the current and future Blessed Cardinal Newman student population.”

I affix my name to this petition and give it to page John.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Privatizing Hydro One: Another Wrong Choice.

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

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

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

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

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative 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 sign this petition and give it to page Abby.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I’m pleased to present this petition that has been signed by hundreds of folks from my area, from Windsor and Essex county, which reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas wait times are rising to 80+ days for an MRI in southwestern Ontario;

“Whereas experienced and qualified technologists are available to fill positions in this field, but lack of funding to hospitals only allows limited hours of operation;

“Whereas by allowing independent health facilities the licence to have MRI as an added modality, it would drastically cut wait times and create much-needed jobs;

“Whereas as a new open MRI would accommodate more patients with claustrophobia and larger size and keep tax dollars in our community;

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

“Decrease MRI wait times and create jobs by increasing the funding for MRI services and implement a plan to allow MRI as a modality in independent health facilities in southwestern Ontario.”

I appreciate this petition, and I’ll send it to the Clerks’ table via page John.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I have another page fully signed with signatures, similar to the last petition. It’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the current Blessed Cardinal Newman facility, located at 100 Brimley South, cannot accommodate the current and projected future student population;

“Whereas Blessed Cardinal Newman is Toronto Catholic District School Board’s number one capital priority needs project;

“Whereas the current lease agreement with the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corp. will expire in 2018 and will require a more effective long-term solution for the current and future students attending Blessed Cardinal Newman;

“Whereas ministry inspections in 2013 indicated that 70% of the building is in need of repair, requiring replacements to major components of the facility;

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“Whereas the current Blessed Cardinal Newman site houses 20 portables and cannot accommodate more due to constrained site size;

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

“That the Ministry of Education provide funding for a 1,100 replacement facility to more effectively serve the current and future Blessed Cardinal Newman student population.”

I’m going to affix my signature to this petition and give it to page Nicole.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas repeated cuts to health care funding under the present government are having a negative impact on the residents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, including seniors, diabetics and those suffering from eye or cardiovascular conditions; and

“Whereas the heart rehabilitation program at the Seaway Valley Health Centre provided a valuable service for many residents; and

“Whereas it is in everyone’s interest to help all Ontarians stay healthy and prevent the occurrence of acute and dangerous conditions, such as heart failure; and

“Whereas this interest is best served through adequate funding to programs that have proven their value;

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

“To take all necessary actions to restore the heart rehab program at the Seaway Valley Health Centre.”

I agree with this petition and will be passing it off to page Samuel.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas mental illness affects people of all ages, educational and income levels, and cultures; and

“Whereas one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime and only one third of those who need mental health services in Canada actually receive them; and

“Whereas mental illness is the second leading cause of human disability and premature death in Canada; and

“Whereas the cost of mental health and addictions to the Ontario economy is \$34 billion; and

“Whereas the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions made 22 recommendations in their final report; and

“Whereas the Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act, 2015, seeks to implement all 22 of these recommendations;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act, 2015, which:

“(1) Brings all mental health services in the province under one ministry, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

“(2) Establishes a single body to design, manage and coordinate all mental health and addictions systems throughout the province;

“(3) Ensures that programs and services are delivered consistently and comprehensively across Ontario;

“(4) Grants the Ombudsman full powers to audit or investigate providers of mental health and addictions services in Ontario.”

I fully agree with this petition, sign my signature, and give it to Abby to deliver.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Three is the lucky charm. I have another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Blessed Cardinal Newman Catholic secondary school continues to inspire students to succeed by developing programs which integrate Catholic values and teachings into the curriculum. Innovation is a part of the tradition at Newman; the school continues to thrive because of its

tradition of providing a caring educational, social and spiritual environment for its students.

“Whereas the current Blessed Cardinal Newman facility, located at 100 Brimley South, cannot accommodate the current and projected future student population;

“Whereas Blessed Cardinal Newman is Toronto Catholic District School Board’s number one capital priority needs project;

“Whereas the current lease agreement with the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corp. will expire in 2018 and will require a more effective long-term solution for the current and future students attending Blessed Cardinal Newman;

“Whereas ministry inspections in 2013 indicated that 70% of the building is in need of repair, requiring replacements to major components of the facility;

“Whereas the current Blessed Cardinal Newman site houses 20 portables and cannot accommodate more due to constrained site size;

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

“That the Ministry of Education provide funding for a 1,100 replacement facility to more effectively serve the current and future Blessed Cardinal Newman student population.”

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

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Winchester District Memorial Hospital provides essential health services to the residents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and was awarded ‘accreditation with exemplary standing’—the highest award by Accreditation Canada earlier this year; and

“Whereas the projected increase in Ontario’s senior population demands that facilities have the resources and capacity required to accommodate increasing demand; and

“Whereas Ontarians cherish access to high-quality local health care; and

“Whereas the recent closure of 14 beds at the WDMH and the loss of over nine full-time skilled staff positions at a time when Ontario has experienced unemployment above the national average for over seven consecutive years are the result of ongoing silent funding cuts that are threatening our cherished health care system;

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

“To immediately reinstate adequate funding levels for the Winchester District Memorial Hospital that would allow the reopening of local beds and the rehiring of local qualified front-line health staff.”

I agree with this and will be passing it to page Sam.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**BUSINESS CORPORATIONS
AMENDMENT ACT (MEETINGS
OF SHAREHOLDERS AND EXECUTIVE
COMPENSATION), 2015
LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES SOCIÉTÉS PAR ACTIONS
(ASSEMBLÉES DES ACTIONNAIRES
ET RÉTRIBUTION DES MEMBRES
DE LA DIRECTION)**

Mr. Takhar moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 128, An Act to amend the Business Corporations Act with respect to meetings of shareholders and the adoption of an executive compensation policy / *Projet de loi 128, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les sociétés par actions en ce qui concerne les assemblées des actionnaires et l'adoption d'une politique relative à la rétribution des membres de la direction.*

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

The member for Mississauga–Erindale.

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, investors take incredible risks to invest their hard-earned money in shares of public and private corporations. Shareholders are the real owners of these companies. Their share ownership in these companies provides them with one key, fundamental right, and that is to elect directors to provide leadership to the companies on their behalf.

However, Mr. Speaker, the current provisions of the Ontario Business Corporations Act are not very clear and/or are being misused as far as the nomination process and voting for the election of directors are concerned. As a result, the shareholders end up compromising the very basic and fundamental right and ability to elect directors. We need a major overhaul of our current and outdated system and relevant rules and regulations.

Mr. Speaker, let me quote from the editorial of the July 16 edition of the *Globe and Mail* this year:

“When we think of elections where voters have no choice and the winners are predetermined, we think of repressive dictatorship and not modern democratic Canada.

“Yet directors of Canadian companies come to office after ‘elections’ that take place under rules designed to fix the results. Shareholders are given the choice to either vote in favour of candidates put forward by the company—a roster that exactly matches the number of available seats—or to ‘withhold’ their votes. There is no way to vote against a director. At the extreme, it means a director can be elected if only one shareholder—say, the director himself—votes in favour, even if everyone else withholds their votes. So much for shareholder democracy.

“This voting process is not the product of some nefarious corporate manipulation. It is the system laid out in Canada’s federal and provincial business statutes. They are in sore need of a major overhaul.”

Mr. Speaker, it is clear from the editorial, as well as from our own research, that there are two fundamental issues: Number one is why shareholders have no role in nominating directors, and number two is why shareholders are not given the opportunity to vote against the directors being nominated. Let me discuss each of these issues.

Normally, the governance committee or nomination committee of the board is assigned the task of selecting candidates to be nominated at the annual general meeting of the shareholders. Shareholders are normally not represented on these committees and, as a result, have no input in nominating director candidates. The nominating committee usually recommends candidates who are either known to directors or to senior management.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, under the current rules, the chair of the board normally chairs the meeting of the shareholders. This poses a significant problem when the shareholders try to propose a nominee for the director’s position or try to add a new item for consideration at the meeting. These items are generally overruled, based on technicalities, by the chair. This makes it hard for shareholders to raise their issues and concerns at their own meetings.

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Mr. Speaker, as you can see, currently the shareholders normally can only vote for directors who are being nominated by the nomination committee. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the shareholders to make meaningful input to this process.

This gets even worse. Under the current system, the shareholders are asked to vote either in favour or to withhold votes when voting on electing directors. Withholding votes are not considered votes against any particular director nominee. As a result, even when the majority of the votes being withheld are far greater than the votes cast in favour of any particular director nominee, the nominee still gets elected. In essence, the director nominee can just get elected with one vote, even if all the other shareholders withheld votes for that director.

Mr. Speaker, let me just give you an example. Can you imagine a process where, during our provincial election, each of us gives our constituents the option that they can either vote for you or they can withhold their vote, but they have no choice given to them to vote against you? This will mean that everyone in this House will get elected every time, as long as we choose to serve. This is exactly the current situation with the election of directors in corporations.

To counter this measure, some corporations have adopted a majority voting policy. What this really means is, that if the votes withheld for a director nominee are more than in favour of the director, the director is expected to resign. Again, the decision to accept or reject

the resignation is made by the same board who recommends the director nominee in the first place. Normally, these resignations are rejected, again overriding the will of the shareholders.

This definitely raises the question: What recourse is available to the shareholders under the current legislation, if they're unhappy with the election, selection and/or leadership direction of the directors? This leaves the shareholder with only one option; that is, to call a special meeting of the shareholders, if they're unhappy with the current directors. However, the threshold for calling this special meeting is currently set at 5% in the legislation, which is not normally easy to achieve in a public company.

In addition, the current legislation also requires that the shareholder must be a registered shareholder with the corporation to be eligible to call the special meeting of the shareholders. In this day and age, when the majority of the shares are either bought through brokers or purchased online, the shares often are not registered in the name of a beneficial shareholder. This creates a serious problem and a key hindrance to calling a special meeting of the shareholders, as the shareholders' meeting can only be requisitioned by registered shareholders.

The amendments being proposed in this legislation will lower the current ownership threshold required, from 5% to 2%, to call a special meeting of the shareholders. This amendment will definitely provide shareholders the ability to nominate directors of their choice, rather than just accept the nominees being proposed by the directors or the corporation. The amendment will further provide greater certainty that the shareholders can nominate director nominees at the shareholders' meeting.

Mr. Speaker, the other amendment being proposed in this legislation will allow shareholders to elect their own chair to preside over the shareholders' meeting. This will assist the shareholders to speak freely and raise their concerns, as well as provide needed input.

The amendments being proposed to section 97 will ensure that the directors can only be elected if they receive a plurality of the votes cast in their favour and not just by one vote. This amendment will go a long way to respect the wishes of the shareholders.

The proposed amendment to section 105(1) takes into account the current shares-trading practices in the industry. It will provide beneficial owners the same rights as registered owners of the shares.

The proposed amendment to section 110 is really important, as it provides clear direction as to whether the shareholder is voting in favour or against a director nominee. The current practice of withholding votes is very confusing and serves no real purpose to express the wishes of the shareholders. The shareholders need to send a clear message by clearly indicating if they are voting for or against a director nominee.

Mr. Speaker, the same editorial from the *Globe and Mail* further states that Canada's largest shareholder coalition, the Canadian Coalition for Good Governance—normally called CCGG—has lobbied hard for

voting reform, arguing Canada and the United States are outliers in a world where most major countries have allowed shareholders to vote against directors.

This editorial further states: "The CCGG are urging regulators to consider additional changes that will allow large shareholders to propose nominees whose names would be added to the proxy ballot. The question today is not whether majority voting should be legislated—it should be—but why governments aren't going further to strengthen shareholder democracy, and give shareholders a real vote on their board of representatives." This says it all.

As I said at the very outset, the shareholders are the owners of the companies in which they invest. The amendments being proposed in this legislation, if passed, will enhance shareholders' fundamental rights.

I want to touch on another issue. The other issue that has recently received major attention is the ability of the directors to approve unreasonable compensation packages for the senior management and directors at the expense of the shareholders. Recently, this issue has made headlines in Canadian newspapers when the CEOs have been paid huge bonuses even though the company and/or the industry was not doing well. This forced the directors to retract the approved bonuses.

The proposed amendment to section 137 would require remuneration of the directors and officers of the corporation to be in accordance with the executive compensation policy approved by the shareholders.

The proposed amendment to section 169.1 would allow a registered holder of shares or beneficial owners of shares who are entitled to vote to make proposals to adopt, amend or repeal an executive compensation policy. The amendment proposed will help increase the accountability, transparency and performance linkage of executive pay. This proposed change will put pressure on the boards to follow compensation policies and the better alignment of pay to company performance.

In February 2015, the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services invited a volunteer panel of experts in corporate and commercial law to develop recommendations and reform priorities to over 20 pieces of legislation. The recommendations made by this panel included reviewing and updating the Business Corporations Act. Some of the proposed recommendations by the panel are in line with amendments being proposed in this legislation today, such as allowing shareholders to effectively determine the composition of the board of directors by eliminating certain legislative requirements, and determining how best to make available to the ultimate investors in shares of a corporation the rights and remedies available to the registered holders of these shares.

To conclude, the proposed legislation would help create a meaningful process for receiving shareholders' input on a regular basis regarding the nomination process, the election of directors, executive compensation, as well as making the proxy method far more transparent to enable shareholders to express their wishes and desires.

These measures will assist in making boards more accountable and ultimately strengthen shareholder democracy.

Mr. Speaker, as always, I'm open to any and all constructive suggestions from my colleagues to make this bill more effective and ensure that companies are well managed and accountable to their shareholders.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I did listen intently to the member when he put forward his recommendation, and he used some very strong language, like “nefarious” and “dictatorship” and basically it sounded like the sky is falling if we keep things as they are in terms of how companies deal with nominations and elections of directors, and how shareholders can be involved and have their voices heard.

I would equate the shareholders, in a way, with taxpayers. The directors of the companies very much operate according to whatever rules of governance are in place and have to follow their own constitution and do things properly.

There is always room for improvement, so I'm happy to hear any specific suggestions of where improvements can be found. But mostly I just heard criticisms about how things are done right now. Concerns were raised but I didn't really hear suggestions of what the member and his government plan to do to make the necessary changes. Certainly I didn't hear a lot of mention of examples here in Ontario of specific companies or specific problems or things that went on. He did mention that in the United States there were huge bonuses given even when companies underperformed or, in his words, didn't do well.

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I would remind the member that we just had the Pan Am Games this summer, and yes, people had a lot of fun, but they didn't exactly show a profit. So in terms of a company, if they were running the games, they wouldn't be considered to be doing very well if they don't show a profit. They kept raising the budget, so it's very easy to reach budget targets when that budget keeps getting raised all the time. If I'm given a budget for something, say a home renovation of \$20,000 to renovate a basement—I guess you can't do it for \$20,000; I guess now it's more like a bathroom. If you're renovating for \$20,000 and somebody says to me, “I'm going to give you a bonus of”—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the member if you would speak to the bill that's in front of us, rather than straying off topic.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Okay. I'm trying to draw an analogy, but you can see what I mean, that—

Mr. Tim Hudak: That's a very good analogy—

Mrs. Gila Martow: If I'm a home renovator and I have to get the project done within a certain budget, if that budget gets raised, I don't think I deserve the bonus, is what I'm trying to say.

Last night, we heard an excellent speaker on the Magna Carta and really a lot of his focus—it was very interesting, the member—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the member again: I need to see and hear that you're tying this to the bill that's in front of us. So far, I don't see any relationship. If you could quickly do that, I'd appreciate it.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we know, the essence of democracy is about freedom, and that's what the British parliamentary system was built upon. The election of directors, shareholders—it's all part of the parliamentary process, I guess is what I would call it, and if shareholders need to have a say, I think that's very important. I think it's very important for shareholders to be able to have a say in nominating directors.

But I have to be a little bit suspicious and have to wonder what the meaning is of the presentation. If you're talking about addressing the bill, well, I didn't hear the member addressing the bill particularly in his presentation. I just heard a lot of criticism, I heard a lot of concerns being raised by the member. He mentioned dictatorships. Well, the public entrusts all of us here with their valuable taxpayer dollars that they work hard to contribute, just as shareholders contribute to a company with their investments. When shareholders are agitated and concerned about how that investment is going, that's when they come to the government and ask for support to make the changes in how the directors are nominated and elected. That's what they are really concerned about. They are concerned about their investment.

We are talking very much in this House this week and leading up to the last few months even—even since the last election, we've been talking a lot about the sale of Hydro One. My concern is that with changes—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would say to the member that this is my last warning, and I'll move to the next speaker.

I do object to your criticism that the member did not speak to the bill. I was listening very carefully and he addressed many sections of the bill and made references. If you would do a similar deputation, I'd appreciate it.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Point of order, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member from—you've got me there.

Mr. Tim Hudak: No problem; it keeps changing: Niagara West—Glanbrook.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Niagara West—Glanbrook.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Speaker, I appreciate your point. As we know, Hydro One is going through an IPO process, so there are going to be directors named. There are going to be shareholders, an IPO done of the stock down the road, so I think this is actually very relevant to the debate—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would say to you that's not a point of order, so I would go back to the speaker and remind her of my comments.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Okay. I appreciate the member for his support.

I'll just wrap up on that, which is what my concern is, that we are very concerned on this side of the House with how the sale of Hydro One will proceed and how the directors will—

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: Well, this bill will affect—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Point of order, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order.

Mr. Tim Hudak: She's talking about the future shareholders of Hydro One and how this bill will impact their ability to set compensation—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Are you challenging the Speaker's decision?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Speaker, I was explaining what she was talking about, which is 100% relevant to the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you very much. I just want to start off with Hydro.

Laughter.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm just trying to loosen the mood here, Speaker. I'm just trying to help you out. First of all, I'd like to thank the Speaker for allowing me to speak.

The bill we have before us today, the Business Corporations Amendment Act, follows the same path that too many other bills from across the aisle have been following lately. The intent of the bill is good; namely, increasing shareholder participation in board decisions. However, in dealing with this very complex issue, which absolutely—absolutely—deserves our attention, this bill is too simplistic and falls short of achieving its intent.

I certainly agree that we need to be increasing shareholder participation and ensuring that corporate boards are accountable to their shareholders. If someone is willing to invest their money in a company, then they should have a say in how that company is run and how decisions are made.

As it stands right now, there are numerous problems with the system that is currently in place. For example, in the current system most shareholder meetings use a single voting system. This single voting system means that each shareholder with voting rights either votes for something or withholds their vote. The result of this is that in the case of a director election—now, listen to this; I think it's important for all the Liberals to understand this and my Conservative colleagues over here as well—one vote cast for the director would be enough to elect that individual. How many in this room would like to get elected with one vote?

Clearly, this is not an ideal situation, and the Canadian Coalition for Good Governance, which my colleague across spoke about—the voice of shareholders in Canada—has called for a majority voting system to be

put in place. Similarly, a report commissioned by the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, titled *Business Law Agenda: Priority Findings and Recommendations Report*, also recommended that a majority voting system be used, which probably makes a lot of sense to all of us, although I'm not sure the Liberals got—I'll just leave it at that.

Unfortunately, this is one of the areas where Bill 128 falls short of achieving its goal. Bill 128 falls short in this area because it uses contradictory language when it comes to whether or not a majority voting system should be used. For example, when electing a director to a board, the bill says that majority voting should be used for proxies voting on behalf of shareholders, but for shareholders who are present, the single voting system continues to be in force. How does that make any sense? Why should a shareholder who appoints a proxy be treated differently than one who is able to attend the meeting on his own?

I know that some of this stuff is a little complicated. That's why I'm doing it slowly. What if the shareholder had to appoint a proxy because they are physically unable to attend the meeting? Would this bill then be discriminating against that individual because of their condition?

1410

Hon. Michael Coteau: A little bit slower; I can't understand you.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm doing that for you, pal. I hope you appreciate it.

These are very important questions—to the member across—that, unfortunately, are created by a lack of clear language around voting procedures in Bill 128.

There are other issues with this bill as well. One of those other issues that I would like to address today is some of the concessions being made to shareholders unnecessarily. Again, I absolutely believe that it is important for us to ensure that shareholders are engaged in the practices of the board. However, in an attempt to engage shareholders, Bill 128 creates a much more difficult and lengthy process for boards.

For example: By extending the number of shareholders who are able to call a meeting, the bill creates a situation where meetings can be called, at a cost to the board, by only a very small percentage of shareholders. Again—and this is important to listen to—the Canadian Coalition for Good Governance recommends that the share percentage cut-off for calling a meeting remain at 5% for public companies with a market value of less than \$1 billion. In the case of larger companies, the Coalition recommends that a 3% threshold be used, to align with US companies.

Mr. Speaker, it surprises me that this government would go out of its way to create a more difficult process for boards than the one that currently exists in the United States. Given how often we hear that raising corporate taxes would hurt our competitiveness and how we need to compete with our neighbours to the south, you would think that we would want to make the process less

difficult, rather than more. I think you would agree with that, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 128, the Business Corporations Amendment Act, covers an important topic and has good intentions. But maybe what they are doing here is a shift for the party opposite. Maybe this shows that they now understand that raising corporate taxes to pay for infrastructure rather than selling off a public asset is the way to go. Maybe, but, Mr. Speaker, I doubt it.

By helping boards, we will ensure more realistic compensation packages, more diversity on corporate boards and more accountability to shareholders. Unfortunately—to the member across—this bill falls short in meeting those intentions because of its contradictory language, its simplistic solutions to complex issues and problems, and its unnecessary measures that no one here seems to be asking for.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I want to thank the speaker for staying on the bill.

Before we carry the debate further, I would remind everyone that we're in private members' public business. If you have a concern with the bill, you can always direct a question to the member who spoke first. It's his bill, and he has two minutes at the end to respond. He may answer your question.

Further debate?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak in support of Bill 128, an act to amend the Business Corporations Act. Our government is committed to growing the economy and helping to create good jobs now and into the future. In order to meet our commitments, we must support business and ensure Ontario has modern laws that facilitate an efficient market and a prosperous business climate.

The governing legislation for Ontario business corporations is the Ontario Business Corporations Act. It provides, among other things, incorporation, director and officer responsibilities, shareholder rights, offences and penalties. As with all government legislation, this act should be reviewed and updated when necessary to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of business. That is what my colleague the member from Mississauga—Erindale is proposing with Bill 128.

The first issue I will address is shareholders' involvement in the nomination process of the board of directors. Currently, shareholders have the choice to either vote in favour of the candidates put forward by the company or to withhold their vote, which means they are not counted in the vote tally. The results of this are that a director can be elected to the board even if a majority of shareholders withhold their votes. Advocates of business investors have long been asking for legal changes which would allow shareholders to vote against candidates for seats on the board of directors or otherwise making voting truly democratic.

Current best practices in Canada suggest that nominees for a board of directors should be chosen by an independent nominating committee of the board. The nominee slate, however, often tends to reflect the board's

or, in some instances, the CEO's network of relationships and prospects. Even when prospective candidates are found through the services of an independent search firm, the parameters of the search firm's mandate, as well as the production of their list of recommendations, can be determined by the members of the nominating committee or the CEO.

Earlier this year, the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, David Oraziotti, announced that a government-appointed panel of legal experts had tabled a series of reform proposals to modernize Ontario's business legislation. One of these proposals was to allow shareholders to vote no in the election of directors, to make it easier for investors to reject unwanted members of the board. The committee's recommendations have been available for public comment until earlier this month. Now the ministry will review the issues and decide how to proceed with legislative reforms.

Shareholders should have the ability to effectively choose their boards and be entitled to vote against candidates for election to the board. In fact, in October 2014, a discussion paper by the UN, Principles for Responsible Investment, notes that a stronger nomination process is fundamental to board effectiveness and shareholders should have an active role in the process. In addition to encouraging boards to engage with their shareholders in regard to the composition of the board, it's the belief that large shareholders should be allowed to propose nominees whose names would be added to the ballot, thereby eliminating a closed slate of directors suggested by the company and allowing a greater choice.

Another change which Bill 128 proposes is one of majority voting. As I spoke of earlier, the current practice for elections to a board of directors under the Canadian legislation is based on the plurality system rather than a majority system. Again, shareholders are allowed to vote either in favour of a nominee or to withhold their vote, which means no vote, for or against. In this system, a director can technically be elected to a board with only one vote in his or her favour. Bill 128 proposes a policy that would require directors who have been nominated for re-election to submit their resignation if they receive a majority of withheld votes, creating, in effect, an indirect form of a no vote. The board can then decide whether to accept the resignation.

Canada has already seen how this new voting process can work. Despite the absence of legislative reform, many companies in Canada have adopted the majority voting policy on their own. Last year, the Toronto Stock Exchange adopted a rule requiring all of its listed companies to adopt a majority voting policy. This ensured that a core group of major Canadian companies are now offering their shareholders a mechanism to try to vote out unpopular or unwanted directors.

The underlying idea behind an enhanced ability for shareholders to have a meaningful say in the nomination of the board of directors is a benefit to the corporation and a fundamental belief in shareholder democracy. A slate of nominees in a non-contested election for a board

of directors, where the number of nominees equals the number of openings on the board and with all nominees having been selected by the existing board, often with input from the CEO, without equal or balanced input into the composition by voting participants, is not a true shareholder democracy. Shareholders are, in fact, the owners of the company, so why shouldn't they have the option to remove members of the board who are ineffective?

1420

So far, shareholders who do have the option of majority voting have used the power sparingly. I could find only one example: a director from the Quebecor Inc. board who had lost a vote. He offered his resignation, but the board did not accept it. This highlights the weakness of the current system. The director at Quebecor has very low support from shareholders, yet remains on the board. Shareholders voted, but their votes were ignored by the board, proving the majority voting policy to be too indirect a tool.

Only legislative reform can ensure a new voting system is preserved in law.

The third point I'd like to discuss is in regard to shareholder involvement in directors' and management compensation. Investors are becoming much more assertive in regard to the lack of connection between executive remuneration and company performance. The current system in Canada has been criticized for having little control over the compensation structure, with concerns raised over salaries and bonuses paid annually to executives, despite falling company performance and share prices.

Bill 128 proposes adopting a say-on-pay policy that would provide shareholders to fully understand the organization's philosophy and policies used in regard to its approach to executive pay decisions, and to have an advisory vote on their approach. The purpose of the say-on-pay advisory vote is to provide accountability to shareholders for the board's compensation decisions by giving shareholders an opportunity to offer their views. Companies would include an annual advisory proposal where shareholders can vote for or against the executive compensation plan proposed by the company. The advisory vote would provide shareholders an opportunity to express their satisfaction with the board's approach to executive compensation in the years that payments have been made, as well as over a longer period of time.

The company's approach to compensation should reinforce the links between compensation and its strategic objectives and risk management processes, using financial and non-financial measures of the achievement of the company's goals over a number of years.

While shareholders will provide their collective advisory vote, the board of directors remains fully responsible for their decisions on compensation and are not relieved of their responsibilities by a positive advisory vote from the shareholders.

Establishing a reasonable approach to conducting say-on-pay votes and continually acting on the outcome, the

say-on-pay process can offer companies a unique opportunity to better connect with their shareholders and the general investment community. Offering a practical mechanism that would make the shareholders' right to elect directors meaningful will ultimately strengthen shareholder democracy and modernize and strengthen Ontario's position in the global marketplace.

I support legislation that will strengthen boards and their effectiveness and, through them, strengthen the companies that they govern, and I support the changes to business laws which will make voting truly democratic. I am pleased, therefore, to support my colleague in his attempt to amend the Business Corporations Act.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I am pleased to rise in debate on the bill before us today. I want to start out by commending the member for a couple of things. I've known him personally for some time here in the Legislature. He has obviously done his homework. This is a serious bill for our contemplation. It has in it some significant structural changes to the way that shares work, the notification of shareholders, proxy votes and the employment of directors. I commend the member for bringing forward a weighty piece of legislation.

I know, from listening to the member's speech, a bit about his biography, too. He has been a successful businessman, which is always good to see, because that's a sacrifice from some of the income you can make in the private sector to serve the people in the Ontario Legislature. He knows of what he speaks because he's also a successful investor. I think that, at the core of his remarks here, he is trying to enable ordinary shareholders to have a greater say in the way that a company is run.

I'll make a guess here. I, too, have some investments, but I'm going to guess that they're not as extensive as the member's. There was a colleague—probably one of the most loved members of the assembly in my time here: Al Palladini. God rest his soul: a great man; a strong business leader; a great Canadian immigration story as well. He served as transportation and economic development minister. He, sadly, passed away. I remember, when the member for York-Simcoe and I were in office, that tragic caucus meeting when Premier Harris announced that Al had passed away while on vacation. But I used to joke with Al, saying that his suits were worth more than my entire investments and savings that I had. He earned it the good old-fashioned way.

I appreciate what the member is saying about proxy forms as well. I certainly get them in the mail. I'm always wondering if I just randomly cross out two directors, because I want to do that—and see what happens as a result. But as he points out, that's not allowed. I think there has to be a better way than the current process that we have.

I know as well that, recently, the ministry brought forward a document that looked at modernizing the Business Corporations Act of Ontario, the OBCA—the Priority Findings and Recommendations Report. It's relatively

recent, too: June 2015. I know the member has read through it. Some of his items are in this bill; some are not.

Shortly, we'll be addressing my private member's bill as well on the sharing economy. Just the advent of technology and communications and democratizing decisions that we make in the marketplace or in shareholder offerings I think opens up new avenues for a lot of us as shareholders to actually participate in the governance of companies, whether it's their pay packages—a significant part of Mr. Takhar's bill today, how that is determined—to who sits on boards of directors.

I want to point out that recommendation 2(a)(i) talks about contemplating electronic meetings and communications. I think it's important to read into the record for the debate, and I know my colleague will have more to say in his wrap-up comments after we've all had a chance to speak on the bill. Perhaps he could comment on how he sees this moving forward as well.

But subsection (i) says that "Information technology has become a key driver of operational efficiency and an accepted means of communications in most circumstances." I think we would all agree with that; it's a good thing. "The OBCA currently creates barriers to efficient communications. For example, it requires consent from directors to have that meeting held by telephone or other electronic means and requires various notices to be delivered by prepaid mail." That certainly reflects that the OBCA is dramatically out of date and will probably sideline a significant number of retail investors who want to participate in the future governance of where their investments are. I know my colleague would probably have some more experience in this, but it seems to be sensible. We want to try to clear some of those things aside to allow more electronic communication participation, even by telephone.

I certainly remember convening meetings of some tens of thousands of Ontarians from time to time on the telephone. I know the member for St. Catharines avidly listened to those conversations and enjoyed participating when he got those calls. Look, if we could do that as a commonplace practice in our own work in politics, surely there must be means to hear directly from shareholders through electronic means.

Sub (iii): I know the member speaks to this in his bill as well—"Allowing shareholders to effectively determine the composition of their boards of directors by eliminating certain legislative requirements.

"Shareholders should have the ability to effectively choose their boards." We would agree with that. We certainly have to go through a relatively arduous process to find our place here. "For example, they should be entitled to vote against candidates for election to the board"—individual candidates, not the whole slate, Speaker. "Moreover, the OBCA should no longer limit the global reach of Ontario business through outdated concepts such as Canadian residency requirements for boards of directors. Canadian residency requirements in the OBCA drive businesses away from Ontario to

incorporate in other ... jurisdictions that" don't have these stringent requirements.

The world's become a smaller place with a lot of talent, and talent is mobile. I think that subsection 2(a)(iii) is a very important suggestion. Hopefully, it will be adopted. I don't think it's in this bill, but if it goes to committee there are opportunities to expand what my colleague is trying to do. I want to see the best talent on those boards. If they don't live in Ontario—look, that impacts another corporation setting up shop here, so let's get on with it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I thank you for speaking to the bill.

Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I commend the member from Mississauga–Erindale for his bill. What he's essentially calling for is a further democratization of the process of dealing with boards of directors in private companies. Of course, it does beg the question, in those companies owned by the public, how is that democracy exercised? Certainly, we have a glaring example in the province of Ontario right now where the public owns a company, and one could assume that to garner the votes of that community, one would look at a referendum perhaps, or simply a polling of what that community thinks.

In Ontario right now, we have over 80% of Ontarians who oppose the sale of Hydro One, which is a company owned by us. I would suggest to the member that not only is he correct about privately held companies, but he is also correct about publicly owned ones, in the true sense, where we publicly own a resource at our disposal.

In this particular instance, the cabinet would be like the board of directors; the Premier, like the CEO. What the public is saying to them is very clear, backed up, of course, today, by the FAO. They're saying, "Do not sell this company. Won't you listen to us? It makes no sense. It makes us no money. Don't do it."

I would respectfully suggest to the member opposite that he apply his own solution to the government's problem, and that is the sell-off of one of our most valuable resources.

1430

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

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: I want to thank all the members who participated in the discussion. I am especially very thankful to the member from Niagara West, actually, who has made some very thoughtful comments.

Let me address some of the issues. The member from Thornhill actually said that I used strong words. If she had listened, I really quoted words from a Globe and Mail editorial. Those were not my words; those were the words that were in the newspaper. She said I used some US examples. I'm not sure where I used a US example, because there is nothing in my notes that talks about that.

The member from Niagara Falls made some good comments. I'm very thankful to him, but I want to tell

him this: This legislation is advocating majority voting. Even for proxy holders, it is majority voting.

This legislation applies to both public companies and private companies, so that issue is being addressed.

I am really a little bit puzzled by these comments that we are trying to reduce the threshold, which gives, actually, the shareholders more power to influence the board of directors. So why the member from the NDP would object to that, I really don't understand. That issue is a good issue for the shareholders to have—a low threshold so they can call a meeting of the shareholders whenever they are not satisfied with the current directors. That is their prerogative; they own the companies. If they own the companies, they should be able to call a meeting of the shareholders. If that means an expense, it's their expense because they own the companies.

I am very thankful to my colleague from Brampton–Springdale, who made an even better presentation than I did. She has made some very, very good comments.

And then, again, the member Parkdale–High Park: I want to say that this legislation is actually amending the Business Corporations Act, and the Business Corporations Act applies to both public companies and private companies. I think the core issue here is what powers the shareholders should have, because they made an investment; they own the companies. What kind of powers do they need to have in order to make the directors accountable so that they can manage the companies on their behalf, the way they want it? One of the main rights that they have is actually electing directors. If they cannot influence the election of directors, if they cannot choose the directors of their own choice, then their investment in this company is being handled by people who are not aligned to their issues.

The other issue in this legislation is about controlling the pay of the directors and the senior officers. It is important that the pay of senior officers and directors should be in accordance with the policy that is approved by the shareholders. If it is not being followed, then they should be able to have the chance to retract it and change that policy.

So, Mr. Speaker, this legislation actually makes a lot sense and addresses a lot of the issues that even the Minister of Government and Consumer Services—the panel that he appointed has made recommendations. It also addresses the issues that have been raised by various authorities with regard to giving more power to the shareholders and enforcing their rights.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Mississauga–Erindale is now entitled to two more minutes for a response to the entire debate.

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that it has been a good debate. As I've always said, I am prepared to look at some good recommendations that will come forward from my colleagues.

The member from Niagara West suggested, I think, that maybe we should make more use of electronic voting and so on. On that point, I want to say that corporation bylaws sometimes allow voting to be held or meetings to

be held by telephone or through electronic means. If that is not working, we could definitely include it as part of the legislation. I'm all for any good suggestions that come that can actually enhance shareholder democracy.

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

OPPORTUNITY IN THE SHARING ECONOMY ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES POSSIBILITÉS OFFERTES PAR L'ÉCONOMIE DE PARTAGE

Mr. Hudak moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 131, An Act to enact two new Acts and to amend other Acts to regulate transportation network vehicles, to provide freedom for individual residential property owners to share their property for consideration with others and to deal with the expenses of public sector employees and contractors in that connection / Projet de loi 131, Loi visant à édicter deux nouvelles lois et à modifier d'autres lois pour réglementer les véhicules de réseau numérique de transport, pour donner aux particuliers propriétaires de biens résidentiels la liberté de partager leur bien avec d'autres moyennant contrepartie et pour traiter des dépenses des employés et entrepreneurs du secteur public en lien avec ces questions.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'll call it the Opportunity in the Sharing Economy Act, because the other title is a bit more than a mouthful.

Speaker, there are two commodities in life that we don't have nearly enough of: time and money. Through the use of modern consumer technology—the simple push on the pad on your smart phone—you could have a bit more of both. It also makes life a lot more convenient. I certainly see that in our own family, and I know that my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga sees it with his three little ones. We certainly do with Miller and Maitland as well. We'd love to have a little bit of both of those commodities: time and a bit more money. Let me tell you why that is relevant to my bill on the sharing economy.

Right now across Ontario, so many people are struggling just to make ends meet. The Bank of Montreal's recent Rainy Day Survey, as they called it, looked at the status of not just Ontarians but Canadians. It found that more than half of Canadians do not even have \$10,000 in savings that they could access as a rainy day fund. Say, sadly due to weather, your roof caves in, or you have a major accident, more than half would be hard pressed to find the money to address that. In fact, a quarter of Canadians are living from paycheque to paycheque with no money whatsoever being put away for savings.

We have larger debates in this assembly about the level of taxation. We have larger debates about how we can spur the economy and create jobs in general. Here's something we can do right away, and that is to empower people to earn a little bit more money from assets they already own—in my bill, their home, their car and their parking space.

So the Opportunity in the Sharing Economy Act has, really, four major parts that I'll address in the time I have, and then look forward to comments from my colleagues in all three parties about this exciting new opportunity for Ontarians, and a chance for us to lead when it comes to embracing new consumer technologies to create new jobs in our province.

Right off the top, I want to say one particular thanks, and that is to Michael Wood. Michael Wood works for all of us as a drafter—I think he's actually employed in the Attorney General's office. My colleagues have probably had Michael helping write their own private members' bills. He did an outstanding job. This bill is 42 pages long. It is relatively complex for what we often consider, and I want to send a debt of gratitude to Michael for his extraordinary work in the ambition of the bill and making it a reality by going through a series of different laws. He showed incredible patience, had very good judgment and gave me some helpful advice.

1440

We heard from a lot of stakeholders as well, from mayors, from industry leaders, whether the Ubers, the Airbnbs or the Rovers, to the hotel industry, to the taxi industry. I spoke with mayors and civil servants from all the major cities in the province where Uber is currently present. They said, "You know what? These technology improvements are upon us, and consumers are reacting." Unfortunately, government is not reacting. We're having a debate, almost a guerrilla warfare, on a municipality-by-municipality-by-municipality basis. I'll explain why that's harmful to the bigger picture and why we need to take action.

I think it's time that we had this conversation. It's time that we had the debate. It's time that we actually took action to empower people to make more money from things that they own, to free up consumers to improve their quality of life by having more time and more money on their hands through these innovative technologies, and to send a signal that Ontario is open for business, entrepreneurship and innovation.

I want to, as well, in the introductory part of my comments commend the member from Kitchener-Conestoga, Michael Harris. He was a trailblazer on this. He brought forward the first motion on transportation network companies back in May 2015. Good for him; he got the ball rolling. I'll continue pushing it up that hill.

Part one: If government wants to encourage an activity, there should probably be a customer. We've got all kinds of labs and incubators. I've certainly visited the DMZ at Ryerson—a great one; Communitech in Kitchener-Waterloo; and the MaRS Innovation centre. One thing they've found in other places that worked, and

worked well, in New York City and London, is to make sure that there is a customer at the end of the line. You can get all the mentors in the world you want—it's the customer that's actually going to get you focused on selling your product and improving its quality.

There are calls across the broader public service for equivalency; basically, that there should be no bias towards the built economy and against the new sharing economy. The sharing economy, by the way, is also called collaborative consumption, peer-to-peer, the chance to lend or borrow or purchase from peers goods or services. The biggest ones we hear about: Uber and Airbnb. I talk about Rover a lot here in Toronto. Task-Rabbit—there are literally hundreds of them; thousands of them.

What I do in the bill is I say that across government, you need to treat the two equivalently. A taxicab receipt for expenses, if you're allowed that, would be treated the same way as an Uber receipt. A receipt at an Airbnb or a HomeAway or a VRBO location would be treated the same way as a hotel; that a parking receipt at a Green P be the same as Rover, for example. I think government can send an important signal that they're open to the sharing economy, that they support the initiative and they support innovation by declaring that equivalency across the board.

The other part of that, by the way, is a five-year sunset review. I think, particularly when you're talking about technology, it's important to have a sunset review. That's part one.

Part two, ride sharing: Certainly, we've seen a lot of debate in our major cities in the province, and I hope that it comes to Niagara because I think it would be helpful to my riding and the constituents that I represent in neighbouring areas, and that's the issue around Uber versus the existing taxi companies. What I usually hear from people is that they actually like the service. They like the convenience. It's more affordable. I also hear people say, "You've got to level the playing field. There should be some sort of consumer protection or public safety rules around it."

As I said: My team, we did our homework. We looked at the best jurisdictions around the world, including those here in Ontario, and came up with a plan. I won't list them all; they're all in the bill. But here's the quid pro quo: You license a transportation network company and allow it to exist. They give people a chance to earn a bit more income. The average Uber driver in Ontario, by the way: about \$3,000 a year in income. One gentleman I had the other day: He was driving Uber, I think it was, about four to six hours a week to help pay for tuition for his son. He's an electrician, and his son is becoming an electrical engineer. It's not cheap. He's proud of his son, so he works on Uber on the side to help pay for that tuition and see his own son's success. I want to see more of that. I want to empower that.

What's the quid pro quo? In return, the transportation network company would have to guarantee that there is insurance. That's where the Ontario government comes

in. We run the regulatory system, through FSCO, for insurance. There has got to be insurance: for the driver, for the passenger, for the vehicle. In the bill, we would set the level. In return for a transportation network licence, the drivers would have to have clean driving records: no more than three moving violations in the last three years—three strikes and you're out—a zero tolerance policy for the use of drugs or alcohol when you're behind the wheel, and criminal background checks. There would also be consumer protection mechanisms, like making sure you know what the ride is going to cost before you get in, how they calculate the fare, a chance to review the driver and—guess what?—those drivers review you, too. They told me I'm a 4.9, so I've got to continue behaving myself. That's part two.

Part three: home sharing. Look, I'm like a lot of families across the province. I have two little girls; one is a little bit past the infant stage. When you go on vacation, on a trip, Speaker, you have two choices. You can rent out two hotels rooms, one for the parents and one for the kids—that's pretty expensive—or you can rent out one single hotel room and pack them all in and everybody is miserable and nobody gets any sleep. You've been there, Speaker.

So what have we done on the last couple of trips? We actually went through HomeAway and we rented a cottage. You had a kitchen, you had a living room and you had separate rooms. There wasn't some big government check mark that said, "You can go here." We relied on the advice of those who had been there before, people like us: what did they say about the place, pictures. We interacted with the owner. We've done this seven years in a row with great success. So why not empower more of this right here in Ontario? Do you know what? Ontario, the city of Toronto, Niagara—enormous potential—Parry Sound—Muskoka, I think, for sure, too; they're beautiful places to visit. Why not allow people to share part of their home? If they're away, they could have people stay at their house for compensation. If you've got an extra room in your place, a place above the garage, why not?

In Chicago, where this is done, the average income for a family has been about \$8,500. That's all right. I would compare ourselves in Toronto to Chicago a lot. In fact, Toronto now has about 7,000 listings alone. Canadians are adopting this technology quickly. It's a chance for a lot of people to make a few extra dollars and then show off their neighbourhoods. In Austin, Texas, they have found that yes, although hotel revenue did decline a little bit, particularly at the lower end of the market, it also brought new tourists to Austin, Texas, those who might not have gone because they couldn't afford it, or a new bunch of tourists—a lot of millennials. Although slightly older, I'm a pre-millennial. They would get to stay in neighbourhoods where there aren't hotels and they have found that awfully attractive.

So why not? Let's get going and empower Ontarians to make a little bit more money through services like Airbnb. It also gives you more choice as a consumer. So let's get going.

Part number four: parking sharing. Here is where it all wraps together. Right here in Toronto, in the province of Ontario, there's a new app called Rover. Rover will basically connect you with somebody who wants to rent out their parking spot. It may not be as much use in Beamsville or Smithville, but in Toronto and Ottawa, and maybe in downtown Kitchener, it could be of great use. Say you have a place at Yonge and Eglinton and you've got a driveway or a lot that you own behind it. You could actually rent out that spot by the hour, by the day, a little extra income coming in for that rainy day fund. It also helps to relieve congestion. One study recently said that up to 30% of traffic downtown can be people roving around looking for a parking spot. So let's allow that to happen, too. It's a great benefit on the public policy side, addressing some environmental issues through empowering this type of technology and setting rules around it.

Here's what I worry about: If we continue to throw up barriers, if we continue to say to new ideas, "You've got to fight every municipality across the province one at a time," if we want to close our doors, put our heads in the sand, think in the past—whatever analogy you want to mash together—the signal it's going to send is that Ontario is not open for business. If we want that next Uber or Airbnb to be an export industry from the province of Ontario, we need to open our doors. We need to say that this is a good thing for people, it's a good thing for technology and it's a good thing for jobs.

I want to see Rover expand here in Ontario, create jobs and export their product. I don't want to see them pack up in frustration and head down to San Francisco, California, where the other two are from.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's a pleasure to rise, of course, always, and I want to commend the member for addressing a really interesting topic, one that we know is evolving each and every day, given the technology that is upon us. More and more people are making these new considerations and new choices within our economy to take a different approach to what traditional methodologies would be. We're seeing it evolving in every facet, whether it's the grocery store and the way that we access food or our transportation system. Life, by and large, is getting more convenient due to the emerging technology. We can only expect that it's going to get better. We hope that it will.

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Certainly, government has a role to play to ensure that those technologies are promoted and supported and advanced when they do provide a benefit to consumers. It is, however, also our responsibility to ensure that these technologies are regulated and that they offer the set protections on behalf of consumers. It is our ultimate job here to ensure public protection, even in such a subject as parking. It may seem innocuous at first blush, but there are questions that arise within a parking spot. What types of vehicles will be parking there? Are the vehicles containing hazardous materials? I know that there are lots

of regulations that are imposed on businesses in terms of parking their own vehicles in their own private parking spots. Let's ensure that we're providing our due diligence, but let's also realize that the times they are a-changing. We certainly have to move along with technology and support those advancements.

We do indeed promote R&D and IT in this province to an extent in which we should and hope to be leaders. There are certainly some shining examples out of Kitchener-Waterloo, where we are the world leaders in information technology and the sharing economy.

Speaker, our leader, Andrea Horwath, had the opportunity to speak in Niagara just yesterday at the economic summit about the sharing economy. What she emphasized, and what we do as a party is emphasize that the sharing economy also has to be a fair economy. We can share, but let's ensure that it is fair.

There are many in the industries that are outlined in this bill who have provided good-quality services throughout the years. They have subscribed to the rules and complied with the rules and regulations. I speak specifically around the taxicab industry. These are folks who work hard for their money. They put in tremendous hours. They ensure the safety and the welfare of riders. They comply with the regulations; they make sure that their vehicles are compliant as well, and we ask them to do that. It is quite a regulatory burden, and one that I think many taxicab drivers would like to see a little bit of a reduction on. Nevertheless, they comply. They understand that their ultimate role is to get the person from point A to point B in a safe and effective manner.

The prominence of Uber opens up a whole new world of transportation and that modality. In full disclosure, I've never used Uber. I know what it is; I understand the technology, but I've never used it. I've never used Airbnb. At some point, I'll have to check out first-hand what these services are. So it's difficult for me to relay a personal experience, but I do know what they are. I see Uber, of course, as a matter of convenience and something that can run parallel to a traditional system, but I see it as a virtual hitchhiking type of system at this moment, where you used to stand along the road and stick your thumb up and hope that someone was kind enough to pick you up and bring you close to where your destination was. You also hoped that their vehicle was in good working order. You hoped that they weren't under the influence. You hoped that they had insurance. You hoped that they weren't going to veer off the road and take you somewhere you didn't want to go and harm you. These are things that we all took into consideration when we stuck our thumb up, and I certainly did that as an adolescent.

We have to ensure that these types of new technologies are regulated. There's a lot of foresight that's put into it. I think that we also have to do our due diligence in consulting with the various jurisdictions that will be affected by them, mainly municipalities. My colleague referenced that Uber exists in certain municipalities. In fact, Uber exists everywhere now. If you have a smart

phone, Uber exists. It can't be said that it only exists in large urban settings. It can exist in a town like Belle River, where I come from. If you have a cellphone and a car, Uber is there now. That dialogue with that municipality has to happen. This is a new consideration. I hope our municipal leaders are taking a look at it. I know that they would like to have a seat at the table when legislation is brought up that affects them. This piece of legislation specifically excludes them from talking about Uber, or bringing in municipal regulations around Uber. That's a massive, glaring omission to the bill.

Speaker, there's another thing that I think everyone in general should be concerned about and it is the fact that in our economy and through matters of commerce, we do business transactions and there are also levies attached to those transactions which we call, in this House, taxes. Taxes, in these specific sharing economy sectors—

Interjection.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Okay, one more minute—traditional providers like hotels and taxis collect HST, and right now these are not; these are excluded. We have to ensure that those businesses that are operating are also contributing to the roads that they will be driving on.

That's my final point. I'm proud to share my time with my colleague from Parkdale-High Park, and I appreciate your time, Speaker.

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

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the citizens in Cambridge to offer good debate. I wanted to thank the member for Niagara West-Glanbrook for introducing this private member's bill and having more conversation amongst all three parties about this subject.

My interest in the sharing economy is due in part because I live in Waterloo region. I'm sure my colleague across the way would agree that Waterloo region is renowned now as the tech hub in Canada. We have seen many innovative companies. We've seen just an absolute explosion in the IT sector and a number of different new emerging companies that are coming out of Waterloo region. It's an important conversation that needs to happen across the province when it comes to this emerging sector.

The purchasing of goods and services between consumers is nothing new. When you think back to 100, 150 years ago, many new employees moving to a new city went to boarding houses and rented a room in a home where all of the space wasn't being used, for instance. The sharing of underused assets or personal time on a rental basis is another part of it. Much like the member across the way, I have also taken part in home-sharing vacation properties. My husband was on a conference in Europe and we did actually rent an apartment so we could come and go from there, because we were there for some amount of time. It was certainly something that I have gone ahead and used myself.

In another instance, in terms of parking, when we visited my husband's niece in London, England, she was

talking then about people who didn't own cars but had parking spots on their property in London, and they were renting out those parking spots—for a huge amount of money, I might add. So this is nothing new.

We also know with any opportunities there are certainly new challenges as well, Mr. Speaker. I know that our government recognizes this and also the significant opportunities in the sharing economy that need to be explored. It's something that we first addressed in the 2015 budget. I must say I'm proud of the work that our government has been doing on this issue, so it's timely that we're now at a point where we can talk about it in the House.

If this bill moves forward to committee, there will be an opportunity to further consider the questions that are raised because of this emerging technology. We know that this bill would have a significant impact on a variety of sectors, and it's important that we work with all of our partners in order to get this right. When it comes to the sharing economy, we need to take a balanced approach. It's important that we drive innovation, but at the same time protect both the safety and the choice of Ontario's consumers. Consumers are at the heart of the emerging sharing economy, and our focus remains on consumer safety, consumer protection and consumer choice in the marketplace. In particular, Speaker, the sharing economy raises some questions that our government really needs to answer for those who may be precariously employed, or for those more vulnerable communities.

We know that the right regulatory and tax environment can help innovation thrive. It's important to recognize that aspects of the regulatory and taxation environment may need to adapt to new and previously unconsidered business models. That innovation drives competition in the marketplace, and competition ultimately benefits consumers. Our government understands this and remains committed to protecting both the safety and choice of Ontario's consumers in a rapidly changing marketplace.

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You know, Speaker, just before I came here I'd gone to the round table that the Ministry of Transportation is putting on this afternoon regarding autonomous vehicles—self-driving vehicles. That's another example, not of the sharing economy, but of emerging technologies that are changing the way we do business in Ontario.

There needs to be a fair balance between existing business and new operators. Indeed, we need to ensure that issues around consumer protection, insurance, taxation and the impact on the labour market are addressed. These are all subjects that I think bear a lot more discussion, not only here in the House, but at the committee level. I would like to see this bill move forward to committee so that we can start discussing some of these issues.

I know that our government is actively working with industry stakeholders in determining the right regulatory and tax environment so that we, as I said before, can help innovation thrive and maintain a level playing field for

businesses while balancing that with protecting the public interest.

We also understand that as part of a growing shift to a sharing economy, new technologies are disrupting existing business models. Therein lies the reason why we need to have a much larger discussion across government of how these new technologies and these new business models are going to affect what we currently have in Ontario. New, software-driven applications often involve thousands of individual operators, and those operators are often in the field fairly quickly. That's why we need to address this.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I really do support seeing this bill move forward into committee. I think that these kinds of conversations and the work that we're doing in government about the sharing economy can help vibrant, emerging sectors to thrive. We'll be committed to continuing to work with firms and industries to help them comply with existing obligations and to consult on an ongoing basis to make sure those obligations reflect a changing economy. Again, I myself would like to see this move forward to committee and be further discussed.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm very pleased to be speaking today to this thoughtful and comprehensive legislation put forward by my friend and colleague from Niagara West—Glanbrook. In fact, it's so comprehensive, as we heard moments ago, that it's 42 pages long. It's very well researched, thoughtful and necessary, and I commend my colleague for bringing this forward.

The Opportunity in the Sharing Economy Act provides an excellent legal framework that protects consumers while supporting innovations that save people time and money, as well as giving others the opportunity to supplement their income.

As I said, this is much-needed legislation here in the province of Ontario, Mr. Speaker. Our laws clearly have not kept pace with technology. Unfortunately, we only get a short allotment of time to discuss this very comprehensive bill. I'm sure there are a lot of well-formed opinions in this House on the sharing economy, and it's a discussion that has been a long time coming. Hopefully we can get this bill to committee so the discussion can continue there. It's great to hear government members speaking in favour of getting this bill to committee as well.

People in this province, Mr. Speaker, are using and offering these services. They deserve clarity on where the government actually stands. Many companies find themselves competing with these new technologies, and they deserve to have the rules of engagement clearly defined. The ambiguity of the current situation is detrimental to everyone involved. This act is about facilitating the innovation and progress for a modern economy that this province desperately needs.

We need to convey to the world that Ontario is a place to turn ideas into useful new products, services and ways of doing things. The Internet has made it cheaper and

easier than ever to aggregate supply and demand, and we should be capitalizing on this instead of fighting the inevitable changes we're seeing in the marketplace.

I would also like to point out that most of the discussion of ride-sharing and home-sharing services revolves around cities and how these services operate in an urban context, but they have the potential to fulfill a real need in rural Ontario. Outside of large cities, taxis and hotels are not always easy to find and there is very little competition. The sharing economy business model could sustain the feast-or-famine demand that occurs in towns that experience large influxes of people during a particular season, or perhaps only a few days a year during fairs, tournaments and festivals.

Government cannot continue to stand in the way of progress or defer to a patchwork system of regulation by municipalities that creates challenges for everyone—innovators, consumers and our legal system—participating in the sharing economy. This government has to help Ontario families improve their financial situation. Personally, I applaud the entrepreneurial spirit that underpins the sharing economy, and I believe that we should be empowering people to seize these new and exciting opportunities.

Consumer demand for sharing-economy services is undeniable. The convenience, affordability and choice they offer have made many of these services extremely popular, even in the face of legal ambiguities. Turning a blind eye and not bringing in legislation is negligent. We need the protections this act entails as much as we need the progress it allows.

I think the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook has done an excellent job on this bill in including measures that ensure the safety and quality of service without creating a lot of red tape that overburdens companies or service providers. Embracing the progress these new technologies bring will benefit Ontario. Innovation drives economic growth. If we stifle innovation, we stifle our economic activity, the creation of wealth and growth of jobs. The economy of this province needs to recover from the loss of manufacturing, the decimation of our auto sector, the high price of electricity and other taxes.

Ontario is struggling, and we need to change how we do things here in the province of Ontario. I'd like to see the government take action, support my colleague's bill today and embrace the sharing economy and opportunities for people who want to earn a little extra income in the province of Ontario.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of my colleague from Niagara West–Glanbrook. He has worked hard to bring forward this thoughtful and comprehensive legislation. I hope that everyone in this House will support it so we can get it to committee. Let's send a signal to the world that we stand on the side of innovation, competition and a modern economy.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's always a privilege to rise in this House and represent the folks in my riding and in Ontario generally.

Uber has been a real source of contention at Toronto city council and, really, when I speak, I'm going to be borrowing largely from a wonderful city councillor, ward 14 representative Gord Perks, in a column that he wrote for the *Globe and Mail*.

Suffice to say that yes, absolutely, the sharing economy is with us. But simply because a sharing economy moves along doesn't mean that we have to embrace everything that it stands for. Absolutely, Uber, Airbnb and all the sharing economy needs regulation; there's no question about it.

But let's, for a minute, just talk about who we're talking about when we talk about Uber. There are other app-based companies that also work in various jurisdictions that don't have the record Uber has. What is Uber's record? Uber refused, in 2014, to even pay the \$300 required fee, and routinely ignores regulations that Toronto city council puts before it.

It has been sued. A San Francisco family is suing Uber after a driver struck and killed their child. Uber says that it is not its problem; the driver wasn't on the clock. Yet, in Toronto, licensed drivers carry commercial insurance so they're covered when they're cruising.

Driver screening: It's claimed that the San Francisco driver had prior convictions. Toronto screens criminal and driving records before issuing a taxi licence. Uber doesn't do that.

Also, it uses surge pricing. For example, at 3 o'clock in the morning on a winter day when the weather is awful, our licensed taxi drivers know that the price stays the same. Uber's does not. Uber charges what the market will bear. That sometimes means leaving a 16-year-old young woman standing on corner.

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Customer safety: Because Toronto grants, and can revoke, licences, we can keep bad drivers off the streets. By using unlicensed drivers, Uber takes that public power away.

Denial of service: We have instances where Uber drivers have denied service to people and have also exhibited some problems. You know what? This is about protecting Uber drivers, because the real issue here is about precarious employment.

The member from Niagara West–Glanbrook talked about an individual who made an extra \$3,000 a year. How many hours did he work for that \$3,000? How do we regulate that? Is he taking \$2 an hour driving for Uber? How do we know? Is Uber paying taxes? How do we know? How do we regulate, and how do we actually enforce those regulations?

Not only that, there are privacy concerns. Taxicab drivers have your credit card, your phone number; they know where you live and where you travel. US Senator Al Franken recently wrote Uber asking about their privacy safeguards. Uber hasn't yet replied. You're giving this information to people, and you don't know who they are.

There have been all sorts of documented problems with Uber. CNN reported that Uber affiliates have placed

thousands of fake orders with a rival taxi company. Far from improving competition, this tactic aims to break competitors and regulators alike.

Again, let's look at who we're dealing with. This is a \$17-billion multinational company. There should be some controls over how it operates in our jurisdictions—there's no question about that—and there should be labour controls on how it operates in our jurisdictions as well. I wanted to point those things out.

Three very quick things: Auto insurance—absolutely, it's critical to have it. We don't have it now for either homes or drivers, where the sharing economy is concerned.

Two, there is no mechanism in place for taxation and the collection of taxes. When you have one regulated industry up against another unregulated industry, you don't have that control.

Three, a critical one—we already have the city of Toronto weighing in on this; they should have been consulted—municipalities need their say. We can't impose regulations and stipulations on our municipalities unilaterally without having them at the table. That is absolutely critical, and that, again, is where I differ with the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook.

We have an issue here. We have to deal with it. We have to deal with it in a transparent way, in a consultative way and in a way that protects both those who are employed by the industry—the taxi industry, the ride-sharing industry and the home and hotel industry—and we have to do it with our partners.

I don't have a lot of time. Just a few words: Again, no doubt we're on the tipping point of a brand new technology. It doesn't mean we have to abrogate our responsibility to look after those who are affected by it.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to start by commending the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook for raising a very substantive and important issue. I think it speaks to his thoughtfulness as a member in this House. It is these kinds of things—you've heard me say many times that I always like to get House duty. I think I'd scream and cry and have a tantrum if someone tried to take Thursday afternoon away from me, because I find that this is the time when we actually get to be members of Parliament, and I've always said that I think the things we debate are very deserving of our constituents.

I actually find this an issue with huge opportunity and huge challenges and concerns, and I dare say that I am not alone in that. It has certainly been an issue for the government. For those of you who love to read budgets, page 103 of our budget, Supporting the Sharing Economy, goes on to talk about—I won't read it all. It goes on to talk, very similarly to this bill, about the huge emerging challenge and opportunity for people to make money and improve quality of life, and also the challenges associated with it.

Then, on page 112 of our budget, we talk about reviewing labour laws to enhance security and competitive-

ness, some of the issues that the member from Parkdale—High Park raised—that was very much in here.

Then we talked about, “Dramatic technological change has become common in the workplace, affecting many routine-based jobs”—shifting to service sectors and an increase in non-standard employment and Internet-based and related employment, which this very much is. Our labour laws right now don't really address income security for precarious people. I talked earlier today about the labour movement and how important that is. It's very hard, in some of these cases, to ensure benefits and security.

I will support this because I think it needs to go to committee. To actually support this legislation, I would hope that the committee would take time to fully debate it because I think there is a great deal more complexity here, and it needs a really thorough hearing.

I want to recommend a couple of documents. One that argues very favourably for the sharing economy is the Ontario Chamber of Commerce's piece called Harnessing the Power of the Sharing Economy. It's a very, very thoughtful piece that they've done. It looks at risks. It looks at assessments. I'm sure the member is familiar with it. I think it's something that all of us should read.

I would also recommend to folks an article in Fortune magazine. It's not exactly the Walrus or Mother Jones, but Fortune magazine spends a lot of time looking at the experience of Uber in the Netherlands and the tax-avoidance schemes that have gone on. For every \$20 they get from the average drive in that country—for larger drives, they transfer it to a company called BV in Bermuda and then a company called CV, which has no employees. On every single \$20 that they make in revenue, which is a typical fee, they pay less than one cent in taxes. No other corporate company has that kind of challenge.

I have not used Uber. I live in a community with Beck and other folks. The three largest companies in Ontario spent \$2.5 million in Toronto on HST alone. These are hard-working families, often first-generation, often highly educated and skilled and underemployed, and in somewhat precarious employment who, quite frankly—I had a private member's bill. I didn't get a chance to do it. It was on the taxi industry and how taxi drivers are treated. I think they work very hard for very little remuneration and are charged all kinds of things. I talked to those taxi drivers a lot about what this means to them, and I've heard a variety of opinions. Some of them are very upset. I'm not prepared to support a bill that doesn't actually look also at the conditions of people, broadly, in the transportation sector. I've had others say that they're very happy with Uber, even though they're driving for Beck. I asked them why, and they say it's because they think it's usury fees they're charged and licence fees—and the little bit of money they make—and the huge rental fees have actually dropped. One driver said he makes \$300 or \$400 more a week because the competition from Uber has forced his employer, the owner of the licence, to actually reduce it. I've had others

tell me the opposite story. I've even been in a cab where the driver was actually double-timing, doing Uber calls as well as traditional dispatch calls.

So I learned one thing about this: There is no easy narrative here, and there's a lot at stake.

I come from a couple of generations of working-class Canadians. My grandmother was a char and cleaned. I have huge respect for people who do service work.

So while I think there are opportunities for many here for greater income and security, there are huge risks. As our budget said, we're trying to balance those things. On page 103, we make the case for advancing technology. On page 113, there's a cautionary tale that the government also has to bring forward labour legislation to do that. I think we need both. This is one piece. I will support it, but we need the second piece as well.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: Thank you for the opportunity today to speak to this forward-thinking bill that my colleague from Niagara West—Glanbrook has introduced to address a series of societal and economic benefits resulting from a province-wide approach to the sharing economy.

While the member's proposal covers a wide range of opportunities related to the sharing economy, I would like to provide some thoughts specifically relating to the ride-sharing aspect of the bill.

I'm a frequent Uber customer. I've had numerous opportunities and experiences to realize the long list of benefits that have accompanied the consumer-driven ride-sharing approach to getting around the city of Toronto and, recently, in the region of Waterloo, in my constituency. Whether it's e-hailing my ride on my BlackBerry, tracking it on the Uber map, rating my driver or electronic payments, it's easy to see how consumer demand for more efficient, affordable, reliable and enjoyable means of travel has led to the emergence of ride-sharing as a viable and oft-times preferable option.

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More than that, the whole range of Uber-related options that have accompanied the ride-sharing experience only further highlights the limitless opportunities represented by the sharing economy.

Have you had a chance to order an Uber lunch to your door, or order an Uber puppy to share some time with? Why, just yesterday, Uber customers were given the opportunity to "Clear your calendars—the kittens are coming." Customers were given the option to open their app between 11 and 3 today—I think we may have a few minutes left, Speaker, in fact; not quite—request the "kittens" option, and for 30 bucks, you'll get to enjoy 15 minutes of kitten playtime. In turn, Uber would help support Annex Cat Rescue, Just Paws Cat Rescue and the Etobicoke Humane Society—all for a great cause. Now that's innovation meeting consumer demand, Speaker. That's why apps like Uber have become so popular here in Ontario cities, across Canada and in fact across the world.

More to my colleague's overall point, it's why similar concepts like home and parking-spot sharing have taken hold in many jurisdictions. Consumers demand efficiencies, affordability, reliability and new, innovative options, and they are finding them in this new sharing economy frontier.

It's also why I feel we must listen to the member's call that recognizes the fact that as technology and new economies evolve, our legislation must also evolve with them. Bottom line, government regulations and laws should reflect what's on the market, not stifle innovative business. Further, the call for a province-wide approach would help put a stop to the piecemeal, patchwork jurisdictional regulatory schemes that have seemed to leave everyone spinning their wheels while consumer demand is simply being ignored.

Much as I attempted to engage government in the provincial ride-sharing conversation with a motion earlier, I am encouraged to see this approach to the sharing economy continue to gain ground through the legislation we are considering here today.

I commend my colleague for the work he has done to address the concerns of those leery of the change that the sharing economy represents. Specifically, today's bill calls for ride-sharing regulations that would require drivers to have a clean driving record, proper insurance and no criminal record whatsoever.

Further, the bill allows for both municipal and provincial licensing of a transportation network company, setting minimum standards around drivers, vehicles, consumer protection and safety. Drivers, of course, would be required to meet minimum standards, including proper licensing and proof of registration. It calls for a zero-tolerance policy for drugs or alcohol, and would allow municipalities stronger enforcement tools, including the use of demerit points for those with multiple offences, such as bandit cabs.

At the same time, the member has gone a step further, including an accessible vehicle fund that encourages more fully accessible vehicles to be on the road—again, forward-thinking concepts to meet the demand of consumers, demand that has truly driven the rise of the sharing economy in the first place.

Speaker, we've gotten a glimpse of the future, and it's a future that includes the sharing economy. Jurisdictions across the world need to be, and are, getting on board, or become at risk of being left behind.

With regard to ride sharing specifically, to date, close to half of the US states have passed legislation to govern ride-sharing. Here in Ontario, ride-sharing has been debated in almost all of our major cities, but we have yet to have that fulsome conversation at the provincial level here at Queen's Park—that is, until today.

I want to be clear in my call to support today's bill underlining government support for innovation, competition and consumer choice to ensure both public safety and better service for consumers in the province of Ontario.

Not only does this meet the emerging and evolving demands of consumers, a province-wide approach to the

sharing economy gives people the opportunity to put more money in their wallets by better utilizing assets they own, like their vehicle, their home or their parking location.

The people of Ontario should have the right to earn revenue from assets they own, and it's the role of government to eliminate the red tape to make that possible.

Speaker, on the front page of the Premier's website, she states that she will continue to fight for every person across this province to make sure they have access to the opportunity they so richly deserve. I submit that ride-sharing is an obvious opportunity for people in this province, and I hope the Premier and her caucus colleagues will be true to her word and allow the access to those opportunities that, again, as the Premier puts it, they so richly deserve. It's time for us to get on board or risk getting left behind. By passing this bill at Queen's Park, Ontario will be the first province in our country to regulate ride-sharing, and I look forward to that opportunity.

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

I now return to the member for Niagara West—Glanbrook: two minutes to respond.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to wrap up. I appreciate the comments.

Look, this is the first legislation of its kind in Canada. I'm proud of that. We did our homework, as it is said, including sending draft bills to the cities. I know that one of my colleagues said we didn't consult. In fact, we consulted broadly. But the first time out it's not going to be perfect, and as I am certainly reminded by my wife, Debbie, and my daughters Miller and Maitland from time to time, Speaker, perfection is far from my current grasp. So let's get it to committee. I'm glad to hear input as to whether we got it right.

I appreciate the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change's comment. He's right: There are opportunities; there are concerns. So let's get to addressing them, because the technology is upon us and being taken up by so many consumers on a daily basis—there are a million Uber rides a month happening in the province of Ontario today.

The minister may well know too, because he follows these issues, that in Boston, they found a regulation similar to my process for Uber. In return, the city had access to data on traffic patterns that then helped them to adjust public transit and reduce emissions from automobiles to improve the environment as a result. So there are some compelling public policy benefits from this as well.

We also consulted with a number of industry associations, and many have come forward to endorse the bill. I appreciate the Insurance Bureau of Canada's comments. It says, "By acknowledging the importance of an effective regulatory environment, government can better ensure the protection of consumers while allowing a vibrant and emerging sector to thrive." The Ontario Home Builders' Association particularly likes the home-

sharing aspect. As I mentioned, in the States, over \$8,000 a year—that's a big mortgage payment. They appreciate the opportunity for "homeowners to leverage their properties for additional income" to pay down that mortgage and support housing affordability and greater choice.

The Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario similarly has given an endorsement letter talking about the importance of an effective regulatory environment: "Government can ... ensure the protection of consumers while allowing" the sector to emerge. And the Trillium Automobile Dealers Association—the auto dealers across the province—wrote a very thoughtful letter that talked about the importance of helping people afford a new automobile or upgrade one they own.

I thank members for their support and look forward to the vote.

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

WORKPLACE SAFETY
AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT
(PERMANENT PARTIAL DISABILITY
SUPPLEMENTS), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE
ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE
LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL
(SUPPLÉMENT POUR INVALIDITÉ
PARTIELLE À CARACTÈRE PERMANENT)

Mrs. Albanese moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 133, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 respecting permanent partial disability supplements / Projet de loi 133, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail en ce qui concerne le supplément pour invalidité partielle à caractère permanent.

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

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am very pleased to rise in the House today and begin debate on my private member's bill. Today marks the fourth time that this piece of legislation has been presented in this Legislature. I hope that, with the support of my colleagues from all sides of the House, this time we will be able to make a difference and be successful in rectifying what is considered by many to be an historical injustice.

1530

This bill proposes an amendment to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act of 1997 so that any pension a worker is eligible for under the Old Age Security Act does not reduce the worker's permanent partial disability benefits for pre-1985 and pre-1989 injuries under the 1997 act.

In simpler words, it aims at correcting the fact that some permanent disability pensioners who were injured before 1989 have their workers' compensation benefits reduced every year by the same amount that their Old Age Security benefit increases for inflation.

It is a short, technical bill that has a lot of history behind it. Today, this change would benefit a more modest group of people compared to the past, but passing this amendment would symbolize fairness in the eyes of many.

Mr. Speaker, I first introduced this bill in 2011, but was not able to debate it before the provincial election that took place that same year. In 2012, it was reintroduced by MPP Mario Sergio, from the riding of York West. He also didn't get a chance to bring it to second reading, as he was appointed minister responsible for seniors shortly after, and as we all know, ministers do not present private members' bills. The bill was reintroduced again in 2013, I believe, by my fellow MPP Lorenzo Berardinetti, from Scarborough Southwest. It went to second reading, but then it died on the order paper.

It is not a coincidence, in my opinion, that this piece of legislation has been championed by three MPPs of Italian-Canadian background. This community has traditionally made significant contributions to areas such as workplace safety and labour issues in Ontario. When Italian immigrants flocked to Canada after the Second World War in search of a better life, many found work in the construction industry. In the 1960s, more than 15,000 Italian men worked in Toronto alone, representing one third of all construction workers in our city.

At that time, for these men, simply going to work every morning comported risks to life and limb. A well-known example of the dangers of working in construction in those days is the Hogg's Hollow disaster. As you may remember, Mr. Speaker, on March 17, 1960, five young Italian immigrant construction workers were killed after becoming trapped in a tunnel while building a water main. This tragedy highlighted the need for safety regulations, and ultimately led to significant changes to workplace safety laws in Ontario. It also motivated the Italian Canadian community to take on a greater advocacy role in respect to safer working conditions and the protection of injured workers.

Robert Storey, a professor at McMaster University, in his seminal book, *Their Only Power Was Moral: The Injured Workers' Movement in Toronto, 1970-1985*, quotes Vincenzo Pietropaolo, formerly a city planner and now a respected historical photographer who has chronicled the workers' experience in the Italian community in Toronto. In an interview included in the book, Pietropaolo states that in those days, everyone in the Italian community knew someone who had suffered a work-related injury. That is why that advocacy has continued through time and to this day.

I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to the people who first brought to my attention the issue we are debating today. They are Orlando Buonastella, commun-

ity legal worker with Injured Workers' Consultants; Gino Cucchi, who has been president of Comites, an organization that works to identify and support the needs of the Italian community; and Antonio, or Tony, Mauro, an injured worker who has been personally affected by the lack of fairness of the current laws. We'll speak about Antonio in a moment.

Orlando, Gino and Antonio are here today, together with other representatives of the injured workers. We have Karl Crevar, from the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups and the Canadian Injured Workers Alliance, who's here from Hamilton; Margery Wardle, from the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups, who's here from Ottawa; and we also have Mario Marra and Fulvio Florio, who are long-time community advocates. Thank you for being here.

So Orlando, Gino and Antonio were the first to bring this issue to my attention back in 2009, when I also facilitated a meeting between advocates from the Italian Canadian community and then-Minister of Labour Peter Fonseca to talk about WSIB issues, cost-of-living issues and a special case of unfairness. They explained that the root of the issue can be traced back to 1994, when the government of the day introduced a workers' compensation reform bill, Bill 165, which went into effect in 1995.

From that point on, injuries that occurred after the new system came into force are dealt with under the new system, but claims existing under prior systems continue to be governed by the old legislation. Under the old legislation, a worker who in the opinion of the Workers' Compensation Board was not likely to achieve his or her pre-injury earnings was eligible for a \$200 monthly supplement. The supplement was intended for older injured workers who often lacked the necessary language skills or education to benefit from job retraining, and who were not expected to return to the workforce.

The problem arises when these older workers reach the age of 65 and Old Age Security starts being factored in with their WSIB benefits. For those injured before 1985, the sum of their pension, the supplement, any other wages and the Old Age Security cannot exceed a ceiling of 75% of their pre-injury earnings. For those injured before 1989, the sum cannot exceed a ceiling of 90% of their pre-injury earnings. The result is that these injured workers never get any increase. Any time Old Age Security is adjusted for inflation, their WSIB payments are clawed back.

In Antonio Mauro's case, the payment he receives cannot exceed the amount of money he made 43 years ago. Antonio's story is well-known within his community and beyond. He has relentlessly written to ministers and MPPs, and reached out to the media. He has never given up the hope that his plight will be heard.

Antonio Mauro is now 82 years old. He came to Canada in 1956 from a small Calabrian town, Malito, with many dreams for his future and a strong will to contribute to our society. He found work as a carpenter. In 1972, at the age of 38, he suffered a severe injury to his back that didn't allow him to ever return to work.

Patty Winsa, a news reporter with the Toronto Star, wrote an article featuring Antonio Mauro's story about a year ago. Here's how she describes his current situation:

"Mauro is in an unusual category: an older worker who has lived long enough to be subject to a WSIB law that caps his benefits—including Old Age Security—at about 90% of his 1970s salary.

"The cap means that quarterly cost-of-living increases in OAS are clawed back from Mauro's monthly WSIB cheques, even though OAS is a universal benefit that most seniors who earn less than \$114,815 are entitled to"—there are not too many, I believe.

She goes on to explain, "Older workers can only rely on Old Age Security if they've been in the country for 10 years or more. And for people like Mauro, injured at a young age, Canada Pension Plan payouts are low because he has missed years of contributions."

I would also like to share with my colleagues here in the House what John McKinnon, lawyer and director of the Injured Workers Consultants community legal clinic and highly regarded as an expert in the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, has written in this regard: "It makes absolutely no sense that workers' compensation benefits should be reduced by Old Age Security benefits. The Old Age Security benefit is not connected to disability or earnings; it is based on how many years you have lived in Canada."

When this bill was previously debated in this Legislature, some MPPs raised concerns that by supporting this piece of legislation, a new entitlement would be created without a new revenue stream. So I want to be clear: The bill I am proposing applies only to workers who were injured before 1990, who received a supplement for not being able to return to work, and that is now reduced by the calculation or integration of Old Age Security. Mr. Speaker, it simply isn't fair to punish these workers just because they were injured in the workplace before 1990. It is a question of fairness.

1540

Injured workers, such as Antonio Mauro, who is here with us today, and who, in 1972, was earning \$2.10 an hour, should not be penalized and should not be subject to this unfair clawback.

I therefore encourage my fellow MPPs to support this bill and to help me correct this injustice.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to have this opportunity this afternoon to respond to Bill 133, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 respecting permanent partial disability supplements, standing in the name of the member for York South–Weston. This bill was first introduced in this Legislature just two days ago, so we've been feverishly scrambling to get ready for this debate this afternoon.

I do want to say to the member, I want to compliment her at the outset. The member for York South–Weston, in my view, is a thoughtful and dedicated MPP who actively participates in this House and in legislative

committees. I know that she served in the Legislature for about eight years now, going back to 2007. She was re-elected in 2011 and again in 2014. I think she currently serves as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, which is an important responsibility within this House, and I know that she had a very distinguished career in broadcast journalism before she was first elected.

I know her as a member who is loyal to her caucus but it not blindly partisan to everything that goes on in this place. As one of the presiding officers in this House, I appreciate that. I can't recall a single instance when she was ever called to order or was ever warned by any Speaker. She obviously respects the institutions that she's privileged to serve. I would say that at the outset.

The member said in her introductory remarks that this bill has been introduced now for the fourth time. She mentioned that the current minister responsible for seniors, as well as the member for Scarborough Southwest, have each introduced a bill like this. It's the second time she, herself, has introduced it. The next comment I'm going to make is not a reflection on the member but maybe more so on the government. If the bill has been introduced four times by government members, one would wonder why hasn't the government either introduced a bill or taken the opportunity, in other labour legislation that opens up workers' compensation legislation, to include these provisions in government legislation such that it will actually pass? I say that recognizing that private members' public business is an important part of the process, too.

If indeed this bill passes the Legislature and goes to committee, I know that the member would want to actually have it dealt with at committee, with public hearings to take place at committee, such that it can be referred back to the House. I wouldn't question her sincerity in that. I would say to her, in my experience in this House, persistence does pay off eventually over time if you keep raising an issue.

We do have some concerns. I know that, first of all, I want to articulate on behalf of our caucus that we support fairness in compensation to injured workers. We always have. We recognize that employers pay premiums to WSIB as part of their payroll costs. We recognize that high payroll costs in Ontario today are already inhibiting new job creation, and we know that the pending Ontario Retirement Pension Plan represents an even higher payroll cost for employers and lower take-home pay for workers if, indeed, it is acted upon as the government says it wants to.

I would also add that, as a general principle, before our caucus would want to agree on increasing any WSIB benefits, we would insist on seeing an honest accounting of what these initiatives are going to cost the employers of Ontario or what it's going to cost in terms of a growing unfunded liability at the WSIB.

I have some comments that were given to me by a friend of mine, Mr. Les Liversidge, who is here today. Les, I want to welcome you to the Legislature. We

appreciate your advice on matters concerning workers' compensation. He's given me some suggestions that I think need to be put on the record here. He talks about the reason for the OAS clawback as it exists today. He says, "The reason is simple—an injured worker's de facto post-retirement income should not increase by virtue of the effect of the OAS benefit.

"This rationale is consistent with the wage-replacement nexus of workers' compensation. The general \$200 per month pension"—that the member referred to—"was introduced to recognize perceived systemic under-compensation for workers who were/are unable to increase earnings to pre-injury levels. The benefit, which was a nominal gesture, was never designed to represent actual loss but nonetheless is structurally linked to the wage-loss concepts by virtue of its default connection to section 147(4). It is important to note that supplements to lifelong pensions were increased by \$200, not the life-long pension itself. Workers who did in combination of post-injury earnings and pension benefits approximate pre-injury income, did not receive a section 147(14) supplement."

"If a worker is not eligible for OAS, there is no clawback, and the 'net' pension would still be comparable to the clawed-back pension (inclusive of OAS).

"The OAS clawback," he says, "is a reasonable proposition. The principled policy reasons behind its inception remain valid in 2015," this year.

"However, the effect is likely very different as the pool for section 147(14) recipients has likely decreased over time.

"It should be noted that labour and injured-worker advocacy groups have always opposed the clawback."

We recognize that, but at the same time we need to put that concern on the record. I believe that it's important advice that, if indeed the bill passes, the committee needs to consider.

I also want to acknowledge my colleague for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, who will be coming up shortly on behalf of our party. He was the former labour critic for our party when this bill was last introduced and he made some very valid and pertinent points. Since I am running out of time, perhaps I should just let him make those valid and pertinent points when he gets a chance in a few seconds' time.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I express my appreciation to the member. We do have some concerns that I feel obligated to put on the record, but we thank the member for bringing this bill forward today.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm always proud to speak in this House on behalf of my constituents of London–Fanshawe. I stand today to speak to Bill 133, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 respecting permanent partial disability supplements.

Speaker, a version of this bill was introduced several times, as the member mentioned. I'm happy that the member from York South–Weston has brought this bill forward again in this Legislature.

Currently, a worker's permanent partial disability WSIB benefits for pre-1985 and pre-1989 injuries under the pre-1997 act cannot be more than the amount of a full monthly benefit, under section 3 of the Old Age Security Act. What this bill does is to ensure that any pension a worker is eligible for under the Old Age Security Act does not reduce the worker's permanent partial disability benefits for pre-1985 and pre-1989 injuries under the pre-1997 act. While this may not affect many older injured workers, it is a positive step in removing barriers to workers in order for them to receive the full WSIB benefits they deserve.

As our critic for seniors, I have heard of these incidents happening in the past, and I am happy that this government has a bill to address these issues. Moreover, when I speak to seniors or listen to injured workers on pensions, they describe how when their OAS amounts increase, their WSIB decreases, keeping their overall income the same. For many older people struggling to pay bills and put food on the table, this bill will help those injured to receive their full benefits.

Seniors, especially injured workers, face a specific set of issues that other demographic groups in our province may not experience. The rising cost of drugs, our under-funded public health care system, and having family and friends to support them are just some examples of issues that these individuals may face. We as legislators should be doing everything we can to ensure the well-being of our injured workers, as well as of our aging population.

Speaker, workers deserve their fair share and should not be subject to clawbacks of their WSIB benefits. Yet it was this government that appointed WSIB head David Marshall, who was credited with ushering in an age of austerity at WSIB for injured workers, where he received gold-plated bonuses for driving down rates. It was recently very quietly announced that David Marshall would come on board as the new consultant on the province's ORPP, thus shortening his time at WSIB. His exit has been celebrated by injured workers, advocates and workers themselves, who don't deserve for their benefits to be attacked because of this government's austerity agenda with WSIB with that gentleman at the helm.

1550

This bill also highlights this government's inaction on the WSIB file and failure to take action on the major Arthurs recommendations, including experience rating, which Harry Arthurs has seriously called into question. This is how experience rating works, and this is why Arthurs had real concerns about the program in his landmark WSIB study. Employers who are able to hide their serious injuries as something called "no-lost-time medical aid accidents" and reduce their compensation costs then become eligible to receive a rebate from WSIB. The other side of this perverse program provides penalties for employers who have a higher level of lost-time injury statistics and costs.

Between the two kinds of incentives, the money at stake for many employers can add up to millions: roughly

\$200 million per year throughout Ontario. In fact, it has been estimated that over \$2 billion in rebates have gone to companies over the past 10 years without any sign that the program has actually reduced injuries. The important point is that the two sides of the experience rating program skew the lost-time injury statistics for Ontario by providing a powerful incentive for employers to under-report. In other words, no matter how badly injured a worker is on the job, as long as he or she comes to work, employers are rewarded under the experience rating.

Speaker, hopefully this small change to WSIB will be followed by a more substantive and detailed look at the WSIB file. I hope this government finally gives workers the rights that they deserve.

Thank you for the time to speak on this very important bill, and I am very glad to see that there is a small step being made forward on WSIB.

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

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: As always, it's my pleasure to rise in the House this afternoon on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Burlington and speak to this important bill, Bill 133, brought forward by my colleague the member from York South–Weston, and in doing so, join the member from Wellington–Halton Hills and the member from London–Fanshawe.

Ontarians enjoy a great quality of life but, regrettably, accidents can happen, and sometimes they change lives in an instant. In the context of today's conversation in particular, we all know that accidents can happen and, sadly, they can and do happen in the workplace. Much can be done to reduce the likelihood of such occurrences. In fact, Ontario has made important strides to reduce risk in workplaces across our province. But despite our best efforts, unfortunately, accidents still do happen. Ontarians who find themselves in such situations can sometimes end up being unable to work ever again, and so they turn to WSIB to help support them.

Sadly, as we are all aware, it can be very difficult to live on a fixed income. Every dollar counts when you have bills to pay and no ability to increase your earnings each month. This can be especially difficult for our seniors, who often incur extra expenses for things like mobility devices, medication or accessing transit. I have first-hand experience with this as, in my riding of Burlington, almost one in five residents is a senior.

It is our responsibility as legislators to protect the most vulnerable members in our communities, and this piece of legislation will go a long way in ensuring that those who have suffered a work-related injury are able to enjoy the same quality of life as everyone else.

Under the current rules, workers injured prior to 1985 and who have reached the age of 65 cannot have the sum of their compensation, including pensions for Old Age Security, equal more than 75% of their pre-injury earnings. Similarly, individuals injured after 1985 but prior to 1990 cannot have their compensation exceed 90% of their pre-injury earnings. In essence, this means

that, as one form of compensation increases, another will decrease proportionately, resulting in a net-zero change in overall benefits.

This important bill will allow injured workers to earn over the 75%-or-90% threshold when their Old Age Security amounts increase. We can help to avoid the heartbreaking stories of seniors who have been injured while at work and are still earning the same amount each month as they did in the 1970s and 1980s. The cost of living increases each year, and it is unfair to expect that anyone can survive with no increase in their monthly income, year after year. Allowing overall compensation amounts to increase will help many seniors who have experienced a serious workplace injury to enjoy a higher quality of life and the dignity of a higher income.

Mr. Speaker, we need to protect injured workers, especially when they reach the age of 65. I'd like to commend my colleague from York South–Weston once again for bringing forward this important piece of legislation and engaging us in this debate. I know my constituents in Burlington will be comforted, knowing that their government is looking out for them as they get older.

Every day in this place, we have the privilege of discussing issues that really impact the lives of all the people we serve. I urge all members of this House to support this important piece of legislation.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm pleased to rise just for a few minutes to add to this debate and speak to this bill. Of course, it's always a pleasure to speak to private members' bills because we each only get one opportunity every year, so I know it's going to be a bill that the member feels strongly about and has put a lot of work into.

Today, we're obviously talking about Bill 133, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Amendment Act. This act proposes to amend section 110 of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act so that any pension a worker is eligible for under the Old Age Security Act does not reduce the worker's permanent partial disability benefits for pre-1985 and pre-1989 injuries.

Of course, as we've heard from the member who introduced this bill, and other members, this isn't the first time that the House has seen this bill. I believe, since I was first elected in 2011, we've seen it a couple of times, back in 2012 and again in 2013. In 2013, I think, it went to committee but never made it back to the House for third reading. I'm not sure if it was because the government of the day realized that it wasn't prudent or what the actual reason was.

Interjection.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Elections do get in the way, sometimes, of private members' bills as well.

But it does make me wonder what the government's true position is on this bill. As I said, we keep seeing it brought forward from the government side of the House,

but it doesn't appear to have the political will from the government and the Premier's office to make it law.

That being said, I applaud the determination of the member from York South–Weston, who supported this bill when it was brought forward by the former member, as she said earlier, from Scarborough Southwest, and has reintroduced it a couple of times herself. I know it's a very well-intentioned bill.

I guess my main problem with this bill—and I spoke to this bill once or twice in the past—is the fact that there could be a whole series of unintended consequences and outcomes.

As I understand it, there is a real potential that the new benefits being added with this bill will be subject to costly litigation as other recipients seek to have the benefits applied more broadly. Not only is this bill a complete change in direction for Ontario's WSIB program, it would require, to my knowledge, that the WSIB would have to revisit their entire funding strategy.

If this isn't exactly what you think, you've got a couple of minutes to respond to some of these questions.

Bill 133 creates benefits without accounting for additional funding that will be necessary. There's a huge potential that these changes could be applied retroactively, which would, in my opinion, dramatically increase the costs for the WSIB. Of course, we know the situation with the unfunded liability of the WSIB alone, not to mention the fiscal situation of the province.

I'm going to leave it at that. I wanted to get a number of issues from the past from this bill, to allow the opportunity for the member to respond.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is always my privilege to speak in this House, and especially today, on Bill 133.

This is a good and necessary piece of legislation that tweaks the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. It is good and it is necessary, albeit somewhat limited.

This change would simply eliminate the deduction made to WSIB payouts to those receiving old age pensions on claims pre-1985, pre-1987, and under the pre-1997 act.

This piece of legislation seeks to correct the unfair reality that some WSIB claimants who were injured before 1990 are faced with. As it stands currently, these disability pensioners have their worker's compensation benefits reduced every year by the same amount that Old Age Security, or OAS, benefits increase due to inflation.

1600

I'd like it take a moment before I launch right into it to acknowledge and welcome Antonio Mauro here today to the Legislature and those who have joined him. Welcome and thank you for coming. As we see from Mr. Mauro's story, we have a tangled and unfair part of the system that needs to be fixed.

I would like to share part of a paper written by lawyer John McKinnon whom we've already heard about today. He's with the Injured Workers' Consultants Community Legal Clinic in Toronto. The paper that I'd like to draw

from is called Age-Based Discrimination in Ontario's Workers' Compensation Laws. I'd like to share his explanation of this specific issue. "Since many of these injured workers' pensions are based on low wages from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s and were not fully adjusted for inflation, they have reached the stage where their pension plus the" supplement "plus their OAS benefit has reached the ceiling based on their old wages. Every year they receive a letter from the federal government proudly announcing the adjustment of the OAS for inflation and then they receive a letter from the WSIB announcing that their workers' compensation benefits are being reduced by the amount that the OAS went up."

This means that these injured workers can never get any increase. There is no increase or adjustment for inflation for cost of living for these older, injured individuals. Their WSIB payments are clawed back anytime OAS is adjusted for inflation. Quite frankly, this is awful, and it is unfair. As we've heard today, this is the fourth time that this bill has been introduced in the Legislature. Our injured and targeted seniors and injured workers need this bill to pass—they needed this bill to pass years ago.

We support this bill. We commend the member from York South–Weston, and we applaud the commitment to fix this injustice. We hope that this will move quickly and take effect immediately to help people as soon as possible.

A bit of history, if I may: This specific issue stems from a change that happened in 1990. In 1990, the Ontario workers' compensation system changed from a permanent disability system to a wage loss system. Since that time and that change, there have been a number of discriminatory issues that have reared their ugly heads, and they do, in fact, all revolve around age.

A little sidestep here: My Bill 98, the Protecting Victims of Occupational Disease Act, seeks to address two separate but connected issues. Retirement and age should not preclude anyone from receiving fair compensation for occupational disease or injury. Part of my Bill 98 calls for a fair approach to determining benefits paid, specifically for an occupational disease. Someone diagnosed the day before retirement and someone diagnosed the day after should both be treated fairly. Many diseases and conditions take time to present and be diagnosed. The date of diagnosis shouldn't disqualify someone from receiving fair compensation.

Another issue when it comes to older workers diagnosed with occupational disease is that after their passing, unfortunately, surviving spouses are not entitled to receive a pension if someone dies of an occupational disease if they had been diagnosed post-retirement. These surviving spouses are only entitled to the Death Benefit, which is intended to cover funeral costs. They're condemned to living in poverty without their partner. Again, we come back to the point that age and retirement penalties are not fair and are contrary to the spirit of the WSIA.

Back to this bill specifically: I'm putting on my critic for pensions hat. I'd also like to take a look again at the

unfortunate case of Mr. Mauro, who, again, I'm pleased has joined us here today. I hope you're appreciating the debate today. I wonder if part of his story is also that he was never compensated for the loss of his CPP benefits, as well as suffering the unfairness of the benefits clawback tied to OAS increases, as, unfortunately, many older and injured workers are faced with.

So, again, back to Mr. McKinnon: As he explains, "The Canada Pension Plan is an earnings-based social program that provides benefits when a contributor to the plan retires or becomes disabled.

"Workers contribute a part of their gross wages to the Canada Pension Plan. In the future, they have entitlements to disability and retirement benefits based on their contributions and lifetime income. When you are unable to work due to a workplace injury or illness, all of this disappears without compensation."

As he further comments, "The solution will require amendments to both workers' compensation legislation and the Canada Pension Plan."

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that has been talking—not just today—a lot about retirement security and dignity in retirement. Here is another chance for us to connect with this government's new federal partners and push to amend the CPP to fix the broken bits that we are identifying as unfair and harmful.

Seniors in vulnerable and challenging injured circumstances shouldn't be sitting ducks or seen by employer lawyers and the government to be easy targets. They should be fairly compensated for their loss and sacrifice and injury, and they should be protected and fairly treated. For crying out loud, this isn't news, so let's fix this. Not just one piece at a time—let's make it right; let's fix it all together.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, we support this bill. We applaud the member from York South–Weston. This bill needs to pass, but it must only be a part of the conversation about what is right, what is fair and what we can do and choose to fix, if we decide to.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I only have a few minutes to speak. As the member from York South–Weston mentioned, this is now the fourth time this bill has been introduced in the Legislature.

We have a gentleman here whose name is Antonio Mauro. He was injured back in the 1980s, I believe it was. He got a permanent partial disability benefit from the Workers' Compensation Board. Then, a piece of legislation was passed in the 1990s—twice it was reduced. Basically, what it does is, he gets his partial disability benefit reduced every time the federal old age pension comes into place. So it's basically a clawback. It's unfair.

As we heard earlier, it's a matter of unfairness. It's a matter of what's socially just. In this case, he shouldn't be re-penalized every time the federal pension comes into being or increases. It's just not right. It's an emotional issue. Believe it or not, we're trying to speak about it

here in a non-emotional way. You get injured—people want to work—when you're young and you get your permanent partial disability benefit and then afterwards you find out it's being clawed back every time Old Age Security goes up. It's wrong. It needs to be fixed.

I hope that today after the debate finishes—I want to save time for other speakers. Every time this comes up, it's never solved. It's time to solve the problem, make the changes and make this into law and make Antonio Mauro's life, and the lives of the other people who are affected by this, more comfortable as they age and live the rest of their lives here in Canada.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: I want to first commend the member from York South–Weston on her very passionate way for bringing this forward. I'm not going to talk about the technicalities. I think everybody brought them forward.

Mr. Mauro represents a whole generation of Italian Canadians and a lot of immigrants who came from Europe after the war who literally broke their backs building this country. They weren't working building houses; they were working building sewers, bridges and roads, and they literally broke their backs. You can hardly find a senior who lives in the Italian communities of Woodbridge, St. Clair or Eglinton who hasn't had a serious back injury because they literally worked like indentured labour when they came to Canada. It's not the great Canada we see today, where everybody loves multiculturalism and respects workers. No, they were treated like indentured labourers. They worked 10 or 12 hours a day, and then they were told, "If you don't come to work on Saturday, you don't come to work on Monday." That's what the situation was. Then, when they went to get paid, in many instances there was no paycheque, over and over again. These are the people who built the country and are just looking for a little bit of fairness here. That's what this bill represents.

1610

I remember this story I've been told that in the summertime, when they were working on road construction, there was no such thing as water for the workers. It wasn't allowed. You weren't allowed to have water on the construction site. Do you know where they used to get their water? They used to get their water from the cement truck that came by. That's the only water they could get.

This is what this bill represents. It represents those incredibly dedicated family men, mostly, and women who did the work at home and had jobs also that they got paid peanuts for. They basically severely injured themselves, and the compensation system is not fair to them.

I know people say, "The Conservatives say we can't do anything about this because of the unfunded liability." Well, the unfunded liability has now gone from \$24 billion down to \$8 billion, so it is improved. That's not an excuse anymore.

Also, the impact is very small financially because, unfortunately, there are very few Mr. Mauros left, because

most of them died. They died, many of them, because of the construction injuries they got no compensation from, and they suffered their whole life.

This is not about technical, lawyers, and names of bills. This is about doing something that's right for all these people who built this city and built this country.

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: I am particularly pleased to be able to stand here to talk about this bill, because I'm so delighted that the member from York South–Weston has brought this forward.

This is a testament to the kind of member that she is, that she goes out and looks after workers in her own riding. The great work that she did on Crown Cork and Seal and the very troubled strike situation they had in that organization—she went to bat for those people, not because Crown Cork is in her riding, but because workers in her community worked in that facility, and she went to bat for them.

What makes me very pleased to be here is that today she is fighting for a representative of my riding, Beaches–East York—Antonio Mauro. I'm absolutely delighted to see you here. You've come down to Queen's Park. You've been an advocate. You've been a great media spokesperson, Mr. Mauro, for this issue. As a representative and as a constituent of Beaches–East York, I commend you for your courage to come down here, notwithstanding the fact that your mobility is limited. You've come down with your fellows who have been working with you over the years to try to solve this problem.

Let's be very, very clear: Mr. Mauro earned his disability pension. He was injured in the workplace. Why we pay premium insurance into the WSIB is that if there is a tragic situation, whether it is an injury which stops an individual from being able to work, there is a compensation program in place. That compensation program was in place to put earnings back into his family, based on the earnings of the day. Then let's also be clear that as a senior over 65, he deserves the Old Age Security benefit. It is unconscionable that these two different funding schemes are operating in a way that is disinheriting him, disenfranchising him of what is justly due to him and his family.

The article we've spoken about, in the Toronto Star, talks at length about his wonderful wife who, because of his disability situation, worked tirelessly to assist the family, to put you on as firm a financial footing as you could be for your family growing up in Beaches–East York. She, too, should be totally commended for her hard work in ensuring that the family was well looked after.

Mr. Mauro is joined here by a number of other individuals, including Orlando Buonastella. I've just met Orlando for the first time today. He works on the Danforth, not far from where my constituency office is, working with the injured workers' compensation group. His office is in Toronto–Danforth, and I'm just a little bit further east. We'll get together and we'll talk about some

of the issues, because this is an issue, being new to this riding, I hadn't come across. The fact that this has been in front of us four times—it's somewhat like the tipping bill. The fourth time, we might get lucky, in order to bring a very important piece of legislation forward and get it approved.

It's just fantastic that the member for York South–Weston has once again shown leadership to represent the little guy, the little guy who needs government to stand up and support him and support his family and all injured workers who fall into this very narrow problem, this technicality whereby, between the provincial and the federal government schemes, they are being disenfranchised of what is justly due.

Congratulations, sir, for being here. We hope to get this accomplished as quickly as possible.

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

I now return to the member for York South–Weston. You have two minutes.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to thank all of the members who have taken the time to speak on this bill: the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, the member from London–Fanshawe, the member from Burlington, the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, the member from Oshawa, the member from Scarborough Southwest and the member from Beaches–East York. I want to thank them for contributing to the debate going on today. Again, we've heard it over and over from many members.

To the concerns that were expressed by the Conservative side, I just want to say again that this supplement was intended for injured workers who would not benefit from job retraining and were not expected to go back to work. So the bill applies only to workers who were injured before 1990, who received a supplement for not being able to return to work and that is now being reduced, after age 65, by the calculation of integration of Old Age Security. I hope that they will take time to understand that.

I also want to thank the guests who are here. They are the real advocates of this bill. We have spoken about this to Antonio Mauro. He is an injured worker, and this current legislation affects him personally. He is 82 and has been waiting a long time for us to make this change.

I know that Orlando Buonastella has also been mentioned. He's from Injured Workers' Consultants. He has worked with Mr. Mauro tirelessly, bringing his story forward.

I want to thank Gino Cucchi, who was president of Comites. It's an organization that identifies and supports the needs of the Italian community. He has worked tirelessly as well.

I hope that everyone will support my bill. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to everyone else.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

BUSINESS CORPORATIONS
AMENDMENT ACT (MEETINGS
OF SHAREHOLDERS AND EXECUTIVE
COMPENSATION), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES SOCIÉTÉS PAR ACTIONS
(ASSEMBLÉES DES ACTIONNAIRES
ET RÉTRIBUTION DES MEMBRES
DE LA DIRECTION)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 76, standing in the name of Mr. Takhar.

Mr. Takhar has moved second reading of Bill 128, An Act to amend the Business Corporations Act with respect to meetings of shareholders and the adoption of an executive compensation policy.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Interjection: On division.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Carried on division.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to the committee—Mr. Takhar?

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move it to the general government committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested it be referred to general government. Agreed? Agreed.

OPPORTUNITY IN THE SHARING
ECONOMY ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES POSSIBILITÉS
OFFERTES PAR L'ÉCONOMIE
DE PARTAGE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Hudak has moved second reading of Bill 131, An Act to enact two new Acts and to amend other Acts to regulate transportation network vehicles, to provide freedom for individual residential property owners to share their property for consideration with others and to deal with the expenses of public sector employees and contractors in that connection.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We'll deal with this vote at the end of private members' business.

WORKPLACE SAFETY
AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT
(PERMANENT PARTIAL DISABILITY
SUPPLEMENTS), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE
ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE
LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL
(SUPPLÉMENT POUR INVALIDITÉ
PARTIELLE À CARACTÈRE PERMANENT)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mrs. Albanese has moved second reading of Bill 133, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 respecting permanent partial disability supplements.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Carried on division.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—

Mrs. Laura Albanese: General government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that it be referred to general government. Agreed? Agreed.

OPPORTUNITY IN THE SHARING
ECONOMY ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES POSSIBILITÉS
OFFERTES PAR L'ÉCONOMIE
DE PARTAGE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1621 to 1626.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can members please take their seats? Once you're in the hall, you've got to sit in your seat.

Mr. Hudak has moved second reading of Bill 131, An Act to enact two new Acts and to amend other Acts to regulate transportation network vehicles, to provide freedom for individual residential property owners to share their property for consideration with others and to deal with the expenses of public sector employees and contractors in that connection.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anderson, Granville
Arnott, Ted
Ballard, Chris

Hunter, Mitzie
Kiwala, Sophie
Kwinter, Monte

Moridi, Reza
Munro, Julia
Murray, Glen R.

Barrett, Toby	MacLaren, Jack	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Martow, Gila	Oraziotti, David
Chan, Michael	McDonell, Jim	Potts, Arthur
Damerla, Dipika	McGarry, Kathryn	Qaadri, Shafiq
Dickson, Joe	McMahon, Eleanor	Scott, Laurie
Harris, Michael	McNaughton, Monte	Sousa, Charles
Hoskins, Eric	Milczyn, Peter Z.	Vernile, Daiene
Hudak, Tim	Miller, Norm	

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Dhillon, Vic	Singh, Jagmeet
Bradley, James J.	French, Jennifer K.	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Natyshak, Taras	Vanthof, John

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 32; the nays are 9.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): 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. Hudak?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Committee on finance, please.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that it be referred to the finance committee. Agreed? Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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 28, 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): Questions and comments? Seeing there are none, further debate? Further debate?

Madame Meilleur has moved second reading of Bill 85, An Act to strengthen and improve government by amending or repealing various Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This will be a 30-minute bell.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I have received a deferral notice. This vote will take place next Monday, after question period.

Second reading vote deferred.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We have no further business.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Don't worry; I have no complaints. I'm just very happy to introduce my father, Alex Gladstone, up in the members' gallery, before we all run out.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The minister has moved adjournment. All those in favour? All those opposed?

This House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1632.

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 Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
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
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle 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
Wong, Soo (LIB) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC) Yurek, Jeff (PC) Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) Vacant	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke Elgin–Middlesex–London Willowdale Whitby–Oshawa	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier / Greffière: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Jim McDonnell, Eleanor McMahon
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Laurie Scott
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jack MacLaren
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Steve Clark
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
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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

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
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Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
Glenn Thibeault
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**Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment /
Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère sexuel**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Han Dong, Sylvia Jones
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
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