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Thursday 19 November 2015

Jeudi 19 novembre 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Thursday 19 November 2015

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Jeudi 19 novembre 2015

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**HEALTH INFORMATION
PROTECTION ACT, 2015**

**LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LA SANTÉ**

Mr. Hoskins moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, to make certain related amendments and to repeal and replace the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004 / *Projet de loi 119, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements personnels sur la santé, à apporter certaines modifications connexes et à abroger et à remplacer la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements sur la qualité des soins.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister Hoskins.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Ottawa South.

I'm pleased to rise today to speak to the second reading of the Health Information Protection Act, 2015, which includes amendments to existing legislation that protects the personal health information of Ontarians. This action, which follows up on a commitment that I made in June, aims to create stronger and more comprehensive protection of health information privacy; a renewed provincial eHealth privacy framework; greater accountability and transparency in the health care system about privacy breaches; as well as improved patient care and patient safety. It's one more way that our government is putting patients first.

Together, these legislative amendments would require and reinforce Ontario's position as a leader in the protection of health information privacy. These legislative amendments are needed to ensure that the personal health information of patients receives the highest form of privacy protection.

These amendments would also update our health information privacy rules into the 21st century, where health records are now electronic and not locked away so easily, in a filing cabinet, as they once were.

Mr. Speaker, if passed, our bill would increase accountability and transparency by making it mandatory for health care providers to report certain privacy breaches to the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and to relevant regulatory colleges under certain circumstances.

Patients across Ontario deserve to know that their personal health information is being protected. My expectation for all health providers who hold personal information about their patients is that they will go above and beyond to ensure that patients' privacy is being respected. By mandating that certain privacy breaches be reported to the Information and Privacy Commissioner and to regulatory colleges, the individual health care provider, and indeed the whole system, will be able to benefit from the IPC's review and recommendations for avoiding future breaches.

As for the prosecution of PHIPA offences, we are removing a serious barrier to such prosecutions. Currently, there is a six-month limitation period from when a breach is alleged to have occurred to when a prosecution must commence. This has often left very little time to conduct a proper investigation. We are proposing an amendment that, if passed, will remove that six-month limitation period, which will give us more time to investigate the circumstances surrounding privacy breaches that could lead to successful prosecutions.

In addition, we intend to align PHIPA with other provincial offence statutes to require the Attorney General's consent to the commencement of a PHIPA prosecution rather than requiring the Attorney General to actually start the prosecution herself. To further reduce the occurrence of privacy offences in the first place, we propose to double the maximum fines for PHIPA convictions from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for individuals and from \$250,000 to \$500,000 for organizations.

We're also proposing to reintroduce privacy protection for electronic health records, as first proposed in 2013—changes that were and are supported by the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Finally, the proposed amendments, if passed, would enable appropriate sharing of patients' drug prescriptions by the ministry with health care providers to protect patient safety and support more informed care decisions. Keeping this province at the forefront of patient privacy protection is understandably what Ontarians expect and deserve.

The second important piece to our legislation is that we're proposing to replace the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004, with a new act of the same name.

One side of this legislation is protecting the patients' right to privacy, as I've just outlined. The flip side is ensuring transparency within the health care system itself, because information should be appropriately shared with the people who matter most: the patients. It's important that health care providers are able to review information for quality improvement purposes following a critical incident, but this should be done in a manner that also respects the rights of patients and their families to know about critical incidents in hospitals and other health care settings.

The existing Quality of Care Information Protection Act, or QCIPA, was enacted to provide health care workers an opportunity to share information candidly regarding a critical incident and to promote continuous quality improvement. The act ensures that opinions, speculation and information specifically prepared for discussions about quality improvement, which may include information from investigating critical incidents—that that information and those preparations are protected from disclosure in legal proceedings and from most other disclosures.

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Unfortunately, however, there was confusion as to what must be disclosed to the patient following a critical incident review, and when and how providers should apply to QCIPA in such circumstances. There was a lack of clarity among some health care organizations about how to use QCIPA effectively, as well as a greater need to share experiences and lessons learned about quality improvement opportunities across organizations across this province.

To better understand the concerns about QCIPA, I convened a QCIPA Review Committee and committed to implement all of their recommendations. All recommendations were intended to help ensure consistent, high-quality, safe and patient-centred care.

The new QCIPA, if passed, would maintain the existing quality improvement framework but would also provide greater clarity and help encourage better communication with and engagement of patients during the investigation of a critical incident.

The default in our health care system with respect to critical incidents should be disclosure to the affected patient and their family of all the essential information about the incident, including the facts of what occurred; the causes, where known; and the specific remedial steps that will be taken. Our proposed amendments to QCIPA will help to make it clear that QCIPA can never be a barrier to such disclosures.

So, if passed, the amended legislation would clarify the purpose of QCIPA and reaffirm the right of patients to access information about their health care. It would clarify that certain information about facts and critical incidents cannot be shielded from affected patients and their authorized representatives. It would allow the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to make regulations that would require health care organizations to adopt a uniform approach when using QCIPA to review

critical incidents. It would clarify that QCIPA does not interfere with health care facilities' legal obligations to disclose information required by law or to interview patients involved in a critical incident as part of an investigation. And, finally, it would require that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care would review the act every five years.

Mr. Speaker, this very important piece of legislation, if passed, will support people and patients, providing more security and protection of their personal health information, as well as ensuring the transparency and access to information that they deserve to make the right decisions about their health care. So I call on all members to support our proposed legislative amendments.

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

M. John Fraser: Comme le ministre Hoskins vient de décrire, le passage de la loi en débat aujourd'hui modifierait la législation existante pour protéger les renseignements de santé personnels des patients, tout en augmentant la transparence et en maintenant une haute qualité de soins dans le système de santé de l'Ontario.

Lorsque le ministre parle de la priorisation des patients, c'est exactement ce qu'accomplit cette législation. Nous comprenons que les Ontariens exigent que leurs renseignements de santé personnels demeurent confidentiels. En même temps, nous comprenons que les Ontariens veulent que leur gouvernement soit transparent et s'engage à fournir des services de santé de haute qualité. Ce projet de loi améliorera nos efforts pour fournir le type de services que les Ontariens attendent.

As Minister Hoskins has just outlined, the passage of this legislation under debate today would amend the existing legislation to protect the personal health information of patients while also increasing the transparency and maintaining the quality of Ontario's health care system. When the minister talks about putting patients first, that is exactly what this legislation does. We understand that Ontarians expect their personal health information will remain confidential; at the same time, we understand that Ontarians also expect their government to be transparent and committed to providing quality health care services. This legislation will help strengthen our efforts to deliver the kind of services that Ontarians expect.

Let me begin by speaking to the matter of protecting patient privacy. The Health Information Protection Act would amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, and several other pieces of supporting legislation to strengthen the privacy rules that protect the personal health information of individuals. These amendments, if passed, would make it mandatory to report certain privacy breaches to the Information and Privacy Commissioner and to the breacher's relevant regulatory colleges.

This legislation would also strengthen the process to prosecute PHIPA offences by removing the requirement that prosecutions must be commenced within six months of when the alleged offence occurred. Speaker, Ontarians want to know that, should there be a breach of their per-

sonal and private health information, the province will take action. These proposed amendments effectively give the government the tools to better protect patient privacy.

I would note that the Information and Privacy Commissioner was instrumental in the development of these amendments and fully supports this legislative change to strengthen privacy protection and improve Ontario's ability to pursue prosecutions. In fact, the commissioner has stated that he is strongly in favour of the mandatory reporting of privacy breaches.

I know that many hospitals and other health care providers already voluntarily and proactively contact the commissioner's office when they discover that a privacy breach has taken place in their organization. I thank them for their dedication to protecting patient privacy. They recognize how serious this matter is, and that is a strong signal that we are on the right track with this legislation.

Reporting is an important first step, but we need to take a step further to ensure that anyone considering misusing someone's personal health information really thinks twice about it. That is why this legislation calls for the doubling of maximum fines for privacy convictions from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for an individual and from \$250,000 to \$500,000 for an organization. This would serve as a deterrent for anyone who is thinking of breaching, collecting, misusing or disclosing someone's private health information for their own purposes.

Another key aspect of this legislation is that it reintroduces and updates the electronic health record privacy framework that was introduced in the Electronic Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2013. Most Ontarians who receive health services have some form of electronic medical record, and there are many different types of medical records, whether it's diagnostic imaging, immunization records or a document regarding hospital care.

Cette loi va établir les fondations pour que les fournisseurs de soins de santé puissent partager des dossiers de santé d'une manière sûre et sécuritaire, et voilà ce que les patients veulent savoir : que leurs dossiers soient confidentiels.

What this legislation does is build a strong foundation for enabling records to be shared among health care providers in a safe and secure fashion, and that's what the patients want to know: that their records are safe. This legislation also includes a provision that will allow the ministry to monitor information about a patient's narcotics and monitored drug prescriptions to their health care provider.

Speaker, I have spoken at length about the steps this legislation takes to protect a patient's private health information. That is just one aspect in this legislation. The Health Information Protection Act would also make great strides in improving transparency and patient safety in Ontario's health care system. In September 2014, our government convened a committee of health care experts to advise the government on ways to improve the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004—QCIPA—and health care legislation relating to critical incidents.

The committee undertook extensive research and interviewed more than 60 health care professionals, patients

and their family members who had experienced unintended or serious errors or accidents that caused them harm, as well as other service quality issues in hospitals. Their findings were presented in the QCIPA committee recommendations, and I'm pleased to say that the government is implementing all of the committee's recommendations. One of the ways we are addressing these recommendations is through this legislation right now.

Through the Health Information Protection Act, our government would replace QCIPA with a new act of the same name that will clarify the purpose and appropriate application of this legislation. It would reaffirm the rights of patients to access information about their own health care. It would spell out for everyone what information and facts about these critical incidents must be transparent and shared with affected patients and their authorized representatives.

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Our amendments, if passed, would clarify that QCIPA does not interfere with the right of patients and their authorized representatives to access information related to critical incidents that have occurred. This legislation would make it clear that QCIPA cannot be misused to shield from patients and their authorized representatives information about what happened, what it means for the patient and what steps the hospital is taking to prevent similar incidents from happening again. This is the kind of transparency that patients expect in their health care system.

We also want to be clear to the health care sector what we expect of them. To make sure that this happens, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will be working along with the Ontario Hospital Association and Health Quality Ontario to develop training and guidance for health care facilities and professions on the issue of critical incident review and disclosure. This would help ensure that appropriate disclosure is applied more consistently in health care facilities across the province.

This legislation, if passed, will ensure we are seeing the progress that Ontarians expect with regard to transparency and disclosure by requiring that the minister review the act every five years.

We want to ensure that patients know that when a critical incident is under review, it is being done to the same high standards that they expect, regardless of where they live or which facility the incident may have occurred at.

Our government has made a commitment to the people of Ontario through our renewed action plan for health care that we would put patients first.

J'ai beaucoup parlé aujourd'hui de ce que les Ontariens attendent de leur système de soins de santé. Ils veulent savoir que leurs renseignements personnels de santé demeurent protégés et sécuritaires. Ils veulent savoir qu'ils peuvent obtenir les informations dont ils ont besoin au sujet de leur propre santé lorsqu'ils en ont besoin. Voilà pourquoi ce projet de loi est si important.

I've spoken a great deal today about what Ontarians expect of their health care system. They want to know

that their personal health information remains safe and secure, and they want to know that they can get the information they need about their own health care when they need it. That is why this proposed legislation is so important.

If passed, these amendments would help keep Ontario at the forefront of protecting privacy of health records and would ensure that patients and their families will be kept informed and have their voices heard when an investigation is required as a result of a critical incident. That's what patients want.

J'encourage tous les membres à appuyer notre législation.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all members to support our legislation.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to respond to the Minister of Health and the member for Ottawa South, who led off the debate on this health care bill.

I noted that in their presentations neither one of them mentioned the word "eHealth," which is, of course, what comes to mind on this side of the House when the government starts talking about electronic health records. I know the minister was not in the Legislature during the eHealth scandal but I'm sure he's well aware of the fact that the Auditor General found that the government had spent over \$1 billion on the creation of this health record system. The Auditor General was highly critical and indicated that Liberal-friendly consultants received many contracts that were untendered; and, in fact, there was very little—there was some value in the work that was done, but not \$1 billion worth of value, clearly, Mr. Speaker. I think the government will need to be reminded of that and be assured that the opposition won't let them forget it.

I also would express to the minister my personal appreciation for his interest in our Groves Memorial Community Hospital project, which we discussed earlier this week in a private conversation. Again, we very much appreciate the government's commitment to proceed with a new hospital in Centre Wellington, the Groves Memorial Community Hospital. It's an issue that I've been raising in the Legislature for many, many years on behalf of the community, working with community partners. I know that the government and Infrastructure Ontario recently issued a request for qualifications, an RFQ. We're pleased that that further step has been taken. We know that the government is allowing us to disclose the time frame. We hope to have occupancy in the new hospital by the fall of 2019, with the construction phase being 2017 to 2019.

I also want to point out that the Georgetown Hospital Foundation is having a donor appreciation night tonight, and I hope to make it. They have moved forward with a magnificent new addition and expansion of their hospital emergency department and CT scanner. We're very proud of the work that's done in the Georgetown hospital

as well. I look forward to supporting them in any way I can too.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I and all of my NDP caucus are very pleased that this bill has been brought forward. I will tell you that it is high time that this bill be forward. We all know that there have been some—what I would label—catastrophic breaches of patient confidentiality, where their hospital records were accessed hundreds of times by people who had nothing to do with their circle of care. The minister was right that protection in the old days was a physical chart, and that physical chart was kept under lock and key; and when the room was open, there were staff there who protected those charts so that a chart was only made available to the person who was part—

Ms. Cindy Forster: Not always.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Not always. It should have—most of the time. There were breaches in the old times too, when we had paper charts; don't get me wrong. But now we have more and more moved toward an electronic health record, which means that the physical checks of the eyes and keys are not there anymore. Although we'd like to think that the system has evolved in a way that allowed us to restrict access, it is more a wish than a reality. So it falls upon the people who have access to be held accountable, to make sure they only use that privilege when it is for the patient's well-being. This is a difficult dance to follow each and every day of your career when you work in health care. I'm not sure we have it right the way it is put there, but we certainly have a good platform to work from, Speaker. I will make more remarks about this soon.

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

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'm pleased the minister has brought this bill forward. It's a good piece of progressive evolution. There is a concern that has existed in the past, but rather than waste time looking back—nothing more useless than that—he is moving forward, and he's doing so in a way that's going to benefit patients and protect their rights.

I have always thought that the people who really get on well in this world are the people who get up, look at the circumstances that are there and, if they're not in keeping with what he or she thinks they ought to be, takes the steps to change them. That's exactly what has happened and is happening here. As the member opposite said, it is an issue of balance and consistent improvement. We need to be always looking at legislation to see how we can improve it. I have a sense, listening to the minister and those who have offered their two-minute comments, that confidence in the health care system really comes when you have the certain knowledge, Mr. Speaker, that the legislation that's being passed is protecting your rights, is protecting your privacy, is protecting your ability to appropriately seek redress if that doesn't happen.

So I'm pleased with the legislation. It makes sense to move forward in this way; and it will continue, as one of the honourable members said, to be shaped in the future as we, together, ascertain, as the good minister has currently, improvements that will better protect the health care privacy of individual patients and restore and keep their confidence.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: When I hear about a new attempt to create an electronic record, it raises in my mind a certain spectre of government inability to do it the first time. I'm assuming that we're looking at new and improved but I think with a certain amount of skepticism, because they're difficult issues to balance: on the one side, the respect of privacy; and on the other side, the need to know. When we look at this bill, we're looking for that maintenance of balance, and the importance of being able to secure the medical records.

0930

There have been some egregious examples of people looking into the medical records of other people. I know that on an individual basis, there are issues around health records and things like that, that people are very sensitive about. They're concerned about how many people have the access to that.

It can boil down to something as simple as sitting in an emergency room, and they call out your last name as well as your first. Nobody else should know that you're sitting in the emergency room but you and the hospital staff.

I think it's a much more complicated issue than it might at first appear. We'll be watching carefully as this bill carries through the process.

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

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Wellington-Halton Hills, the member for Nickel Belt, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the member from York-Simcoe.

I just want to say that I'm pleased to hear the understanding of and the need for support for this legislation. My son James works in a hospital's medical records department. There are still paper records. Whenever I drop by to see him, there are literally rooms and rooms of paper records.

But now that all that stuff can be in a box this big, or a laptop, or something I'm not supposed to pick up—no props—that means there's some risk there, so that means we have to take greater measures to make sure we protect that information. This legislation does that. I think that's what Ontarians expect. They want to have confidence that the confidence they put into their health care providers is going to be kept. There are a lot of implications. This legislation is timely.

As far as the critical incident review, I think we can all agree, all members in this Legislature—and the member from Wellington-Halton Hills said very clearly how im-

portant his hospital was to him—on how important our hospitals are to our community and the people who live in it.

The next most important thing is that the people who have the services of those hospitals have the confidence in them, have the confidence that if something goes wrong—if there's an error, if there's a mistake—that there is transparency and clarity in the measures that have to be taken in order to disclose that incident, in order to provide information to those people affected, and also to move forward in a way that those kinds of incidents will never happen again.

I look forward to the debate. I thank all the members for their very thoughtful comments. I congratulate the minister on putting this legislation forward. Again, as I said, I think it's timely, and I think it's an important debate right now.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find we have unanimous consent to stand down our lead.

I'm sorry, I'm a bit hoarse.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Thornhill has requested that her party stand down their lead. Do we have agreement? Agreed.

Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I've spoken in the House before about the fact that I'm an optometrist, and I worked in a clinic where it was one of my jobs—I'll tell you, it was actually a part-time job for me. I couldn't see as many patients for about six months because we were implementing electronic health records, and it was extremely stressful.

I know the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care understands himself, sort of, the aspect of patients' privacy in terms of the patients themselves. It used to be that you would be seeing one patient, and an assistant or staff person might come in with a chart and a question from another patient. You would discreetly try to look, so that the patient in the room wouldn't see what was in that patient's chart. Now we have big monitors in the room sometimes, and there's a patient in the chair. When I worked as an optometrist, I was always moving the monitor.

It's as my colleague just said about an emergency room calling out a patient's name: Even these things are fundamental breaches of privacy. We have to focus on the need for good-quality health care. That's what we want to ensure. It is a balancing act, as she said. We want to make sure that the people in Ontario know that they are protected by their health care system. Of course, it has to be accountable, transparent and private, but we also have to ensure that we're not focusing on the technological gadgets all the time and we're not keeping up to date with new technologies. The fact is that a lot of these new technologies require computerization. As we're developing electronic health care records, we have to keep in mind that the technology is moving so quickly that we have to almost anticipate: What's the next level of hard-

ware and software and medical treatments that we need to constantly communicate with?

In our office, it wasn't just a matter of putting in electronic health records; it was a matter of having software between diagnostic tests to talk to the actual equipment of the electronic health care record. That was complicated and expensive, to the point that we were paying for, and continue to pay in this clinic, upkeep—software support, it's called—of three different companies because they are all interacting and talking to each other. You can see, for security issues, how complicated that is. I would say that it's very similar to the banking system, where people now—who anticipated two years ago that you would be able to take a picture of a cheque with your smartphone and have it deposited in your bank account?

With all these new technologies, yes, it simplifies life. As the member whose son works in medical records in a hospital just said, it's actually saving space, and space is very valuable because hospitals pay for the space to store all those records and pay for staff to file those records and to retrieve those records and search around for those records. One of the best parts of electronic health care records is the fact that when you have a paper chart, only one person, only one health care professional, can be looking at that chart at that time. Now with electronic health care records, multiple people can be looking at the same chart at the same time in different aspects. A patient could be having an appointment in one part of a hospital for a test, but another clinician or staff person needs to access that record for another purpose.

Right now, though, we have a fairly fragmented health care system. I think that—and I've said it before so I apologize if I'm repeating myself—we've all known, in the health care profession, that Alberta—Alberta Netcare they call it—has a fantastic e-health care system. All we had to do was go to Alberta, our friends, and say, "You have a very similar health care system for the province"—the delivery system is very similar, with a very similar mandate. I can't imagine why we couldn't have at least made the effort. I've never received an answer, not that I asked formally in writing, but I've never really received an answer from this government on why we didn't just call up our colleagues in Alberta and say, "You have this real state-of-the-art system. You've worked out all the bugs." The physicians are all integrated into the system; the hospitals are integrated; the diagnostic testing centres are integrated. Everybody is saying that it took a few years to really work those bugs out and get it working, but what would it cost us to implement it? Obviously, it wouldn't have cost us as much as it cost Alberta to set up the whole e-health, and it certainly wouldn't have cost us as much as we spent on our eHealth, which never achieved its goals.

It's a double shame because we can't just say, "We tried," when there was an e-health care system in Alberta that we could have borrowed, rented, purchased. We could have even paid the Alberta specialists to come and implement it and train our specialists. So I found it very heartbreaking on a personal level because of the col-

leagues I would see at conferences from Alberta and they would talk about the complications. Many of them said they had already purchased e-health care systems for their office that they had to basically throw in the garbage and start over again, and they weren't complaining. Even though they had to spend that \$50,000 or \$100,000 to implement the electronic health care records, they were not complaining because the new system was working so well.

0940

In 2014, there were 439 cases reported to the Information and Privacy Commissioner's office. What's interesting is that, since reporting isn't currently mandatory and this bill is going to address that, which is obviously very necessary, we don't really know what that number is if it's not mandatory. We all know that people don't tend to report things unless they know they have to. That is human nature. It's also human nature, even though it's professionals in hospitals, to try to access a celebrity. Rob Ford was a politician, but he was also a celebrity, and three hospitals had breaches of his electronic health care records because people were snooping. You could see why people are snooping: sometimes just to gossip to their friends or for their own information, but they could also be selling information to the media.

Just like I said about banking, we have to ensure—it's not enough that physicians are perhaps having electronic health care records on a laptop which they take to a conference and might be stolen. Just a few years ago, we read in the newspaper of electronic health care records that disappeared—being stolen from cars or being lost—just from laptops that weren't encrypted. It begs to mind the question that physicians, who obviously have to have a very high level of intelligence to be physicians, wouldn't understand the dire consequences of carrying around all their patients' records on their laptops and not even have a password to get into it, the most basic. But we all know that if somebody really wanted to get through a password on a laptop, they could do it. There are enough talented people. If people can break into banking systems and things like that, we know that there's nothing foolproof, but we can do our best to ensure that patients' records are protected as much as possible.

I reached out to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, and they said that they are looking forward to better protection of patients' privacies, but they mentioned a few concerns, mostly about clarifying the reporting obligations and the new provisions of how to report privacy breaches. They suggest that the language be made consistent with the mandatory provisions in the Health Professions Procedural Code. That's what has to be looked at whenever we do new legislation: How does it interact with previous rules and regulations not just of the government but also of all the colleges that are affected, and hospital protocol? We understand how complicated that can be, Mr. Speaker.

In last month's Ontario Medical Review, which I'm sure the minister receives from the OMA, there was an

article about Bill 119, basically summarizing for their membership, and they mentioned something that I haven't heard mentioned yet today, which is that they expect the bill to have an opt-out system. That's kind of like negative billing, which means that patients are automatically in the system unless they ask to opt out. Again, it sometimes comes down to individual rights and freedoms versus the collective and the needs of the community.

We see that with vaccines, all the discussion of vaccines now. People feel that, ideally, their child shouldn't have to be vaccinated but everybody else's child should be, and then their child doesn't really need to be vaccinated, and we can understand that. But if we want to use the information from health care records for studies to see if there are side effects from certain medications, we all understand that the incredible ability of computerization is that you can do searches and say, "Do a search of all the health care records of everybody on this medication who has this symptom," and it's very possible that things could come up.

There is also the aspect that patients sometimes go to multiple doctors, and one doctor doesn't know that the patient is seeing another doctor. They go to multiple pharmacies and they might have medications that they don't want one doctor to know about, other medications. That creates problems for the doctors. Ultimately, the doctors are responsible for the health care of the patients, and it puts them in a tough bind sometimes, because if they don't have all the information in front of them, how can they possibly make informed decisions about their patients?

I'm just looking here, again, at the incredible system that Alberta has, and wondering why we're not doing more than just protecting the privacy of patients. Why aren't we finally addressing the fact that Ontario does not have a state-of-the-art electronic health care record system? EHealth spent over \$1 billion. Actually, for years, we heard that, yes, the eHealth part of it wasn't implemented but there was going to be a registry of diabetic patients in the province, and we were going to be able to do great research and information exchange. Even that didn't get done.

It's not enough to say, as one of the ministers stated, that what's in the past is in the past. That's not good enough, Mr. Speaker. As the government, even in opposition, it's our responsibility to ensure that the taxpayers' money is used wisely and used for the purpose for which it was intended. It was intended that patients would have not just electronic health care records in their physician's office, not just electronic health care records in a hospital, but that all of the different systems were going to be able to interact. They do not interact right now.

Interestingly enough, I've gotten a few calls in the last couple of weeks from physicians who say that they have stopped receiving the government payments to cover the portion of their investment for electronic health care records. I haven't had the opportunity, but maybe now it's an opportunity for me to ask the health care minister

what's happening with compensation for physicians, for private clinics.

One physician I spoke to just this past week said that two of the specialists, who work predominantly at Sick-Kids, who come to his pediatric clinic in Richmond Hill only work one day a week—sometimes one day every two weeks. One is an allergist, and I think one might be a rheumatologist—a pediatric allergist and a pediatric rheumatologist. They say, "Well, if we're not receiving that \$300 or \$400 a month to cover our share of your electronic health care records, we just want to go back to paper records."

What I said to this physician is—

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Oh, come on.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Exactly. I said, "Come on. They're not going to really want to have paper charts in your office. I'm sure that you could give them a piece of paper."

Luckily enough, a lot of paper does still go through medical offices, but what happens to it is that it gets scanned and uploaded as an attachment to the electronic health care record. Yes, we can't say that these offices are paperless, because referrals are coming in through the fax machines and things like that, but at least they don't have to pay to store those charts and they don't have to look for those charts all day long.

It's very frustrating. As somebody who spent many hours in my former profession looking for patients' charts—there's nothing worse. As somebody who worked with her husband—probably the most stressful part of working with my husband in a medical clinic was that he would accuse me of having the chart, and I would accuse him of having the chart, and invariably it was me who was at fault. I have to say that those charts pile up, and somewhere in there is the chart that I should have put for re-filing.

I think there is a question among patients about accessing their records if they move out of the province. That's always a very big question, and a problem for many patients. When they move out of the province, how do their records get accessed? Are they going to be able to get a printed copy or an electronic copy?

Right now, a lot of diagnostic tests, even MRIs and ultrasounds, are put digitally on a DVD, and the patients have to go pick it up from the hospital after a radiologist has viewed it and actually transport it to another hospital where they have an appointment with another specialist. That is an incredible waste of people's time. It's an incredible waste of money, because they have to put it on a DVD and bring it to another hospital. When you have a great system like Alberta—and even Newfoundland, supposedly, has a better e-health system than we have in Ontario, which is quite shocking. That's not what the digital age is all about.

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It's a little bit like us here in the Legislature. We are not using electronic devices. It's a historic place here. It's about protocol. It's a bit old-fashioned, I guess, for most people, but it's not the most efficient place. I'm sure that

the people at the Hansard desk would love it if, instead of sending around pieces of paper to them, we could just press “send” from our device, and we would send them our notes, and they could just upload it.

That’s exactly how health care systems are supposed to work. It shouldn’t be patients picking up DVDs from one hospital to bring to another, as is happening in downtown Toronto right now. I know that even very recently, patients had to go from Mount Sinai to a nearby hospital and pick up a DVD. I’m just shocked when I hear that kind of thing. There’s duplication of services, because if patients are seen in an emergency room up at their cottage and have a test done, when they come to Toronto and they say to their doctor, “Well, I had a test done,” the doctor says, “It’s easier for me just to reorder the test and send you to redo the test than it is for me to access that information.” That’s a waste of health care dollars.

I think that’s sort of what it’s all about. Yes, it’s very important to spend the money updating the privacy of electronic health records. At the same time, it’s more important to make sure we have a state-of-the-art electronic health care system. I don’t know why we are just focusing on one aspect of eHealth instead of revamping the whole thing.

This is part of the problem: Health care dollars—too much is being spent on bureaucracy. Invariably, patients understand that rent has to be paid and staff have to be paid, but with a real state-of-the-art electronic health care record system, patients’ privacy could be protected and the efficiencies could be there. Yes, it’s an initial investment; we see how expensive it is. Maybe it is not too late to ask Alberta for some support or help.

Most hospitals now have electronic health care systems in place. The problem is that different hospitals have different systems and, yes, the doctors’ offices that are part of the government-approved system to get support funding have to be on specific electronic health care record companies. I think there were five companies they were allowed to use. But there are still many physicians who are outside of that loop; they’re not getting any government support or funding, but they’re using electronic health care records systems that are not able to be integrated into any kind of health care system that we implement here. I think that one of our concerns is that, yes, we can oversee the privacy concerns of any health care record system that is integrated in the loop for the government, but what about all these private clinics where people basically just make a Word document, and they call that an electronic health care record, and they type it into the computer? Maybe it’s a bit old-school, but they feel that they’re retiring in a few years and don’t feel like investing \$100,000 in electronic health care records.

I think that I’ve pretty much covered what I wanted to say today. Thank you very much, and I look forward to the comments.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: It’s been an interesting conversation so far. I heard the minister actually speak about

how these changes are going to provide some balance, as well, in the system.

I worked for many years representing nurses in the health care system. Yes, as the member from Thornhill said, sometimes workers were a bit nose-y, looking at patient records. But there have been situations in this province where nurses and other health care workers—but nurses in particular, because that’s who I represented—were terminated from their jobs, and we were unable to get their jobs back. Some of them were actually viewing patient records as a learning tool.

I’ll give you one example: a nurse in one of the hospitals that I represented who worked in the emergency department part-time and worked in the step-down ICU part-time. On Sunday, he might be working in the emergency department and he might have seen 20 patients during his shift. On Monday, he’d come in and he was looking after a different group of patients; maybe some of them were admitted to that unit; maybe they weren’t. This nurse would go back and actually look at some of the patients that he saw in the emergency department and was treating on the Sunday. That was considered a violation of the legislation because those patients were no longer in his circle of care. He was going back to see, “Did that patient really have a myocardial infarction, or was it just indigestion and was he sent home? Was I correct?” He was terminated from his job. We were unable to get the job back.

I think that there needs to be something in the legislation that takes into consideration that nursing is a caring profession, and sometimes they want to continue to make that connection with their patients.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I’m assuming the member from Thornhill has a sense of humor about this because I’m a little perplexed. You and I and 14 million Ontarians paid \$30,000 to put eHealth in place in every single doctor’s office. They all got a \$30,000 cheque. At that time, I ran a business. I had to have electronic health records; I had to pay for my own.

Then they’d been paid, up until this year, thousands of dollars a year to operate that system. Tell me anybody else—a rheumatologist who makes over \$500,000 a year easily in many cases is now simply being asked to do that. To suggest, as the member from Thornhill did, that these people should go back to using paper is insulting to the people of Ontario who paid for that.

My doctor and most doctors are fine folks. My partner is an operating room nurse. My mother has battled cancer. The electronic records here, or at least the medical records almost everyone has—80% of docs have electronic records. I ran a health care centre in Manitoba. I saw my mother battle breast cancer in Quebec. Our electronic health records, I would argue, are the best in Canada. I’m amazed, having to support my mom, at how easy it is, how connected her pharmacologist is to the other specialists she sees. It is an extraordinarily good—when she went into one of the other care—when she frac-

tured her hip, it was there instantaneously. There are not that many places in the world that have that.

The irony, coming from a member of the Conservative Party: We inherited an electronic system that was so badly, badly conceived and so redundant, we had to dump it because no one, including the best specialists, could figure out how to do it. That's where most of the money was lost in the so-called eHealth scandal. It was actually your scandal, because over 50%—

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: One of your colleagues is laughing. Fact on the record: Most of the costs were to dump a system the Tories brought in that didn't work. Have a little humility.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to comment on Bill 119, An Act to amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, and to comment on the speech from the member from Thornhill. I think she did make some very useful comments, and of course, she does have a background in the health field.

In particular, I think one of the best comments she made was that we should look at other jurisdictions. Instead of always trying to come up with a unique Ontario solution, if someone else has already got a good system, why not use their system? We do have a bad track record in Ontario, as borne out by the Auditor General's reports, where we spent a lot of money and have not necessarily gotten that great a value for our money.

If Alberta has a system that's working really well, why not look at Alberta and use some of their expertise instead of trying to come up with our own system? I just got a Presto card that allows you to use the TTC, GO Transit and other transit systems. I wondered why Ontario took so long to get that when, back in 1988, I was in Hong Kong and they had a card then in Hong Kong—and in London, England, they have the Oyster card. Yet with that card, from what I understand, we did the same thing. We had to create our own system instead of looking around the world, where so many other systems have worked for years and years and years and years.

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I expect we could save a lot of money and have it in place a lot faster if we took that approach. As the member from Thornhill recommended, I think we need to look at other jurisdictions that have already found solutions to some of our problems and learn from them and use their expertise.

Ontario has been pretty slow on the electronic health records file, and it's something that's vital to improving both the quality and the efficiency of our health care system. I'm glad we're getting around to it now, but I think we should learn from other jurisdictions.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm certainly pleased to rise on Bill 119. It's not every day in the House that you get to

talk directly to the health minister. I'm going to take that opportunity to do that in line with this bill.

Some of the concerns that we're reading about are about our seniors and what's going on in our communities right across the province of Ontario. The issue is very clear that we have a system that's supposed to be publicly funded and publicly delivered. So people, and in particular seniors, are thinking that that means that they're going to have health care when they're over 65. And what we're finding in the province of Ontario, unfortunately, is that that's not the case.

We had a terrible example, as you're aware, Minister, with what happened with US Steel in the courts just a couple of weeks ago. I watched it on CHCH, and it brought tears to my eyes. We had a group of seniors, 70 or 75 years old, who had diabetes or high blood pressure, or they had cancer that they needed some treatment for. They were cut off on the Thursday, that day. The very next day, the pharmacy was calling them to tell them they had no coverage. Can you imagine being 70 years old in the province of Ontario and being told that you no longer have medication? You've got some very tough choices: Do you sell your house? Do you ask your kids to help you out? When you're sick and you're 70 years old or 75 years old or 80 years old, you can't go back to work.

We have a real crisis here. When you take a look at drug costs, they think their drugs are covered. I think it's an education process for our seniors. We're going to have to tell them that in our system today they're going to have to pay for drugs. That's the way it is. If you take a look at it in the study, I have it right here—you can shake your head, Doctor; I'll bring it over to you because I read it this morning—they are saying that it's going to cost seniors over \$5,000 a year just to pay for drugs. Thank you very much; I'd like to talk longer with you.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change for his comments, and my colleague from Parry Sound—Muskoka as well as the member from Niagara Falls.

What I would say is—obviously I have to have a sense of humor if I'm going to survive working here. Maybe the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change misheard, but I very clearly stated that these two specialists work between two to four days a month in a clinic. That's not their full-time job. When they state that they don't want to pay \$400 in fees to be on an electronic health care records system for working two days a month, that's their choice; that's their statement. That was not my suggestion to them, as he stated. I want to correct that on the record.

In terms of his statement that the specialists make \$500,000, I would like to see a review of what pediatric allergists make. Perhaps they bill \$500,000 and then they have their expenses to pay. I have no idea what they bill and I have no idea what they make, but I would say that's

very presumptuous of him to come out with a number like that.

One area that we actually haven't touched on that I would like to just mention is e-prescriptions. Right now, doctors are still filling out prescriptions, and that's a huge place for human error. Maybe their computer prints it out so it's a little bit neater, but I think that we all would really love to see the communication directly from the actual computer device go to the pharmacist.

Interjection.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Yes. Some clinics do have it.

When I see my doctor, I'm still given a prescription by hand, so obviously it's not happening in every clinic. I am aware that it happens in many places, but I think that patients want to have that—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you for your comments.

Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I guess I will have nine minutes this morning to start my one-hour lead. Maybe I will use my nine minutes to go through the entire bill, and when I have a chance to finish my 51-minute lead, I will go into more details as to parts of the bill that need improvement.

To start out with, Bill 119, An Act to amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, to make certain related amendments and to repeal and replace the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004, is a tough piece of legislation to wrap your head around. It has 37 pages of changing bits and pieces of legislation in a number of different pieces of legislation.

I have been here for over eight years. I have read many, many health bills in those eight years. Whenever a bill starts with a four-page explanatory note, you know that you're in for—

Ms. Cindy Forster: A ride.

M^{me} France Gélinas: You're in for a ride, and it's really hard.

The problem is that each and every one of us will be impacted by this bill. We have to get it right. If we get it wrong, we will do immense damage to our health care system.

Why do I say this? I say this because trust is at the heart of our health care system. For quality care to take place, there needs to be a relationship of trust between human beings, between somebody who is in need of care and somebody who is able to help them, with their knowledge of health care. If that relationship of trust is broken, no quality care will ever take place.

This piece of legislation, in a sense, is playing catch-up, because right now, the way that our Personal Health Information Protection Act is written—it was written in 2004. In 2004, electronic health records were in their infancy. We could get your name, OHIP number and address electronically, but everything else was in a paper chart.

This piece of legislation absolutely needs to change. It needs to realize that we are in 2015 and that most health care providers are now using an electronic health record. How well it works is a question for another day. Some of

it doesn't work worth beans; some of it works better. But at the end of the day, the electronic health record is there.

The opportunity for this relationship of trust to be broken is also there. That's why this piece of legislation is important. It needs to move forward, and we need to get it right.

What can we do to better protect the health information that is shared between—we'll call them patients and caregivers, or clients and health providers, but you get the idea. How do we do that better? This act takes a number of steps to bring us there. It will talk about who is responsible for keeping this safe. How can we, as clients, as patients, decide who has access and who does not have access?

It goes on to penalties. Who will be held responsible if something goes wrong? What are the penalties to the actual employee, worker, physician, the person who was the custodian of that information?

It also goes on to say that there will be people who will have access to that information in order to manage our health care system, because the better you know the health of the people of Ontario, the better you can plan. I can see the importance of that. Now that information is being collected electronically, it allows us to do things that we were never able to do before: to collect data, to see trends, to see differences regionally or based on race or sex or whatever else, so that we can adjust our health care system.

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All of this is great if you can do it in a way that protects patient information, because once that information goes out into the public sphere, once it is on the Web, we will never be able to regain that trust. This is like one of those bank accounts where you can make many, many deposits into a trust account but you only make one withdrawal. Once you make one withdrawal, once you have lost this trust, the account is empty and will stay empty forever. I want us to get this right, but life shows us that we are a long way from that.

Others have mentioned what happened to Mr. Rob Ford, whose personal health records were accessed over 100 times by people who had nothing to do with providing care to this man. This is wrong; this is wrong on every level that you look at. We had other cases where people were actually collecting data when a new child was born in this province and selling that information to a baby photographer so he knew who to contact so that he could sell baby photography to them. This is wrong. This is wrong on every level that you look at.

This bill puts steps in place to make sure this never happens again. But there is a big "if" and there is a big "but" in there. It assumes that the electronic health system will be able to block things, will be able to shelter information from some people, some part of your chart. Unfortunately, the systems we have in place right now—whether you look at the system the health units are using, Panorama, or that the different hospitals are using, or community health centres or family health teams, they're all using different systems but none of them has the elec-

tronic ability to do this in a way that is electronically secure.

What does that mean? That means that responsibility then lies on the shoulders of the people who use that information. So the education of the people within the system will be huge in order for them to comply with a bill that is so tough to understand. Although I have been here for a long time, and I follow the health file very closely, I have a hard time understanding it. Can you see the disconnect there, Speaker?

We are putting forward a bill that depends on electronic means that do not exist at the present time. I sure hope those will become available—the sooner the better—but right now, as we speak, they are not available; so then the responsibility shifts to health care providers and anybody else who works within the health care system, whether it be the custodian, the medical secretary, the receptionist or anybody else who happens to be around at the time.

Then there's the other big elephant in the room: that more and more of our programs and services that used to be delivered within the hospital system—a hospital has means. They have a reputation and they have many reasons to want to get it right. They will have their lawyers look at this; they will have a way to teach their staff and physicians to make sure they understand. But more and more the programs and services that used to be within our hospitals are now being transferred into private clinics, into the community. Our hospitals are being told that if it is not acute hospital care, then it is okay to send it off. Most of them are under really tight budgets. They look at where they can decrease their expenses, cut costs, and they say, "If we stop offering outpatient physio, then we don't have to pay for those services anymore, and those services will be provided by for-profit physio clinics in the community. If we stop providing colonoscopies and let a private clinic in the community do them, those are savings that we can achieve." And they're doing this; they're doing this full tilt. Did you know, Speaker, that—my time?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I 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.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: You see the member for introductions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Okay. Let me do my normal rotation, please.

Introductions? The member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to welcome members of the Persian francophone association of Ontario. They're pretty well known in North York, Thornhill and Richmond Hill, and they come from many diverse cultures and backgrounds. We have Bijan Mahjari, Narges Mozassari and Noushin Hashemi. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: We have a number of trans activists and their allies here in the gallery: Steven Little, Luke Fox, Melissa Hudson, Lauren Hetherington, Christine Newman, Nicki Ward, Maya Cole, Davina Hader, Susan Gapka, Christopher Karas, Claire McConnell, Tim McConnell, Monique Chin, Christin Milloy, Mathieu Chantelois, Marg Foy, Maurice Tomlinson, and Stella and Jessica Skinner. We welcome you all to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I have a number of visitors visiting here today, and I want to start off by welcoming a class of grade 12 students visiting from the Toronto Ouest French school in my riding of Davenport, accompanied by their teacher, Monsieur Edmond. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I'm very pleased to introduce Joan Blair, the mother of my LA, Tiff Blair, who is visiting from Montreal today. Welcome.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to welcome two visitors in the members' gallery who are joining us for question period this morning from Oakville. The page from Oakville in this session is Brooke Westwater; her brother, Noah, and her grandmother, Carol, are here to watch Brooke, and she is the page captain today. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome one of my constituency assistants from Belleville, Ontario, Canada. Ashley Harnden is here with us today.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I wish to introduce a committee of delegates visiting us from Portugal this week on the occasion of the Transmontano Folklore Group of Toronto's 34th anniversary celebration this Saturday. They just walked in: Dr. Artur Nunes, mayor of Miranda Do Douro region; Celmira Macedo, president of the LEQUE Association; Helder Ferreira, curator of the Iberian Masks; members of the folk group Lenga Lenga; and Ana Costa, president of the Transmontano Folklore Group of Toronto. I extend a warm welcome to them and wish them a fabulous time here in Ontario. Bem-vindos.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I just want to take this opportunity to acknowledge some guests who are with us: Saira Kirefu and Husein Kirefu. They are the mother and father of page captain Aminah Kirefu, from my riding of Etobicoke Centre.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I just saw them walk in: I would like to introduce a class of grade 5 students visiting the Legislature from St. Nicholas of Bari Catholic School in my riding of Davenport, accompanied by their teacher, Ms. Rose Di Pede. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to recognize a few birthdays that are occurring either today or in the next day. One of our colleagues, MPP Martins, is celebrating her birthday today. Happy birthday. Also,

Minister Dipika Damerla's will be upcoming, and Minister Meilleur will be celebrating her birthday this weekend.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It gives me great pleasure to welcome my uncle Don Archer and Audrey, but I would like to talk to you afterwards about explaining why you didn't tell me you were attending question period today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): First time I've ever heard a reprimand in an introduction. I thought that was pretty good.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It is with great pleasure this morning that I would like to introduce members of our great city of Ottawa. On behalf of the Ottawa caucus, I would like to welcome David Gourlay; his wife, Danielle McGee; and their very newborn Sophia McGee-Gourlay in the House this morning, in our Legislature. Thank you for being here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Let's try not to make the baby cry.

The member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: With your indulgence, this is really more of a point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have with today me a plaque that I received as the Canadian delegation lead in Mexico, that was presented to me. I was there replacing the honourable Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The plaque is in fact made out in his name, and I would like to give it to him today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Go right ahead. That's actually not a point of order.

However, that said, I do have a point of order—wait a minute; I have the member from Nickel Belt. On an introduction?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Introduction, yes. Were you done with introductions, Speaker?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm trying to be lenient but I don't think it's going to work.

Carry on.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ça me fait extrêmement plaisir de présenter des étudiants de l'école Toronto Ouest, des étudiants de 12^e année. On a ici avec nous, dans la galerie, Darya Arzani, Denis Beslimov, Éloïse Slater, Jeremy Young et John-Alex Duff-Wilson. On a Marcos Santos, Nicolas Karwowski, Patrisha DeMille, Simone Helston, Tiana Crosbie, ainsi que leur enseignant, M. Simon Edmond. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Parkdale High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I rise on a point of order. I believe we have unanimous consent—and by the way, this is an historic first for a jurisdiction of this size, so I thank

all members—that we rise and observe a moment of silence for the Trans Day of Remembrance, to recognize and honour those hundreds who have been killed or have died due to anti-trans hatred and anti-trans prejudice.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Parkdale–High Park is seeking a unanimous consent to provide a moment of silence in respect of transgender deaths. Do we agree? Agreed. I would ask all members of the House to please rise for a moment of silence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Just before we begin, I would just indicate that it was the first time I had anything like the member from Beaches–East York doing this. I'm going to recommend that it not become a habit. It was actually not a point of order and I'd appreciate not doing those kinds of things in the House during business time.

1040

ORAL QUESTIONS

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Patrick Brown: To the Acting Premier: We all know there's money coming in from the Hydro One fire sale, but what we really know is that money is not going for infrastructure. The plan the Premier touts was announced in a budget a full year prior, without the sale of Hydro One. It cost \$130 billion in 2014. That was the planning for infrastructure over 10 years. In 2015, it was still \$130 billion, with not a single cent added for infrastructure. There is no new money. This is a shell game. Is the government willing to explain why the infrastructure budget hasn't changed by one cent?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am delighted to answer this question, and I have to say I'm a bit surprised by it, because we are making a historic investment in infrastructure, and we do have to pay for that infrastructure.

We've always been very clear that the revenue that will pay for the new infrastructure will come from a variety of sources, including maximizing the value of our assets.

I'm very pleased that we've generated almost \$3 billion so far on the Hydro One IPO. We will be making other decisions that will pay for the infrastructure that this province so desperately needs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: Even if the government does spend \$1.4 billion from the fire sale on infrastructure, it would only account for 1% of the infrastructure budget. This isn't about infrastructure. The FAO actually said it would be cheaper to borrow money, yet the Liberal government plowed ahead with this plan anyway.

The Hydro One fire sale, I will repeat, is not about infrastructure. There is no new infrastructure money. It is a ruse—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm hearing it on both sides, and I'm going to have to kind of tighten it up. If you don't do it, I will.

Please finish.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Given that there are no changes in the infrastructure budget, will the government tell the House—no more shell games, no more distractions: Is the money going to pay for your next scandal, or was it the last one?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: This is a bizarre line of questioning. We've always been very, very clear: We're committed to making those investments in infrastructure. We're not going to do it by raising taxes and we're not going to do it by slashing services. The way forward that we have chosen is to get maximum value from the infrastructure, the assets that we already have.

We will be investing in infrastructure, including infrastructure that I think should be very important to the member from Barrie. One of the projects that we will be expanding significantly is the Barrie line, from 70 trips a week to over 200 trips a week. If the member from Barrie doesn't think we should be making this investment for the people of Barrie, then I think he's got some explaining to do.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: I get a sense that your own caucus doesn't buy this spin, doesn't buy this ridiculous assertion that it's for infrastructure.

Let me share with you a few examples. The member for York West once said, "There is nothing the public of Ontario ... will benefit from with the sale of Hydro One."

The member from Peterborough said, "We've been pretty clear" that the Liberals will "keep ... Hydro One in the public's hands," as it should be.

The member from St. Catharines is on the record as saying, "I think anyone who looks objectively at" the Hydro One fire sale "would recognize that it ... is best kept in ... public hands."

How does the Premier justify having those members—in her cabinet—publicly disagree with her? Why does she ignore them at the cabinet table? Listen to your own caucus members.

Interjections.

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

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, Speaker, when it comes to listening to one's caucus, I'm not inclined to take lessons from that member opposite.

I think our caucus is absolutely committed to building the infrastructure of the future of this province. Every single one of our caucus members hears from the municipal leaders about the need for investments in infrastructure.

When we talk to our municipal councils, when we talk to our business people, they are unanimous in saying we need to invest in infrastructure.

The party opposite had the chance to invest in infrastructure. Instead of building infrastructure, they filled in the hole that was already being dug for the Eglinton subway. That's their attitude on infrastructure; it sure is not ours.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING

ÉDUCATION POSTSECONDAIRE ET FORMATION PROFESSIONNELLE

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: Since this government doesn't want to talk about why there's no new money for infrastructure, let's talk about the skills mismatch. I know this government is well aware of the surplus of young Ontarians graduating from teachers' college—two graduates for every one job—but their solution of extending teachers' college by a year simply won't make a dent in a larger problem.

The amount of new teachers is just one example of the growing skills gap in our province. Two things I hear regularly are that employers can't find qualified candidates and that young Ontarians don't have the skills for the jobs available today.

Young people are forced to leave Ontario because they can't find work, because of the skills gap. The gap is even costing Ontario's economy \$24.3 billion a year and \$3.7 billion in forgone tax revenue.

Mr. Speaker, will the government tell us what they're doing to deal with the significant skills mismatch that exists in Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, we're making unprecedented investments in skills and training, and I have to say that our record on education is an extraordinary record. I think even the members of the opposite party have to acknowledge that when our graduation rate has gone from 68% to 84% since they were in charge of our education system, kids are getting an opportunity that they never would have had had they dropped out of high school.

Our investments in education are having a profound impact on the success of our young people. We're continuing to make investments. We've built a very strong foundation, cleaning up the mess that was left behind by the Conservatives when they had the chance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: I appreciate the Acting Premier answering a different question, so I'll try again and be a bit more specific.

While Ontario graduates 4,000 new teachers each year without a job for them after they graduate—I visit places like Cambrian College, where there are more jobs available than there are graduates in their power line program.

The skills gap exists in this province; it is real. As many as 52% of engineering and infrastructure firms have difficulty hiring someone with the qualifications they need. Employers shouldn't have to go beyond Ontario to find workers, and, frankly, young people shouldn't have to leave Ontario to find jobs.

Mr. Speaker, can the government outline to us what plans they have to deal with the skills gap?

Don't say it doesn't exist. It exists. What are you going to do to solve the problem?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to report to the House that our universities and colleges have been doing the best job in the world. We have the best universities and the best colleges in the world. This year, Queen's University produced a Nobel Prize winner in physics.

We are very proud of our graduates. Around the world, the graduates of our universities and colleges are very well thought of. This is something we have to be very proud of.

In relation to the teachers' profession, we are aware of that, and in the future, the demand and the supply of teachers will be balanced. Of course, during the years when the NDP and the Conservatives were in office, there was an enormous shortage of teachers. We have met that demand. Now there's a supply and demand discrepancy somehow, but that will be rectified in the coming years.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Acting Premier: Another gap exists in education in Ontario, and that relates to francophone education.

Depuis les trois dernières années, la communauté franco-ontarienne me dit que nous avons besoin de créer une nouvelle université de langue française en Ontario.

Partout en Ontario, les francophones souhaitent gérer eux-mêmes leurs programmes universitaires au sein d'une université par et pour les francophones, comme c'est déjà le cas pour leurs écoles, leurs conseils scolaires et leurs collèges.

C'est pourquoi notre parti appuie le projet d'université franco-ontarienne et demande au gouvernement d'agir rapidement pour appuyer cet important projet.

Quand est-ce que le gouvernement va répondre à la demande de la communauté franco-ontarienne et s'engager à mettre sur pied cette institution?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to providing post-secondary education in the French language. That's why we have two bilingual universities in Ontario and we have two fully French-language colleges in our province of Ontario. We are committed to providing post-secondary education.

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Today, there are 22,000 students in our province of Ontario that receive post-secondary education in French language in our universities and colleges. In 2014-15, we invested \$90 million to support French language training in our universities and colleges.

I am aware of the aspirations and desires of our francophone community. I have been talking with the student groups and the community groups. We have also

established an administrative advisory committee on the French language, whose report will be issued to you next March, Mr. Speaker.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Acting Premier. More than 185 municipalities have called on this Premier of our province to keep Hydro One public. But yesterday, every Liberal in the House voted to ignore municipalities.

Why is this Liberal government refusing to listen to people everywhere, from Atikokan to Zorra, who want the hydro sell-off stopped?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I must say that everyone from Atikokan to Zorra also wants investments in infrastructure, and that is exactly what this is about. We have assets; we need different kinds of assets for the future. The assets in infrastructure must be built. They must be built now. We have a plan to build those and to pay for them.

Municipalities have spoken to every single member of our caucus. I expect that every single member in this House have heard from municipalities, loud and clear, that these investments in infrastructure must be made and they must be made now. That is what we are delivering on.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Over 80% of Ontarians want the Premier to keep Hydro One public. But yesterday, every Liberal in the House voted to ignore Ontarians, and, trust me, Speaker, Ontarians are going to be hearing about that.

Why is this Liberal government refusing to listen to such an overwhelming majority of Ontarians who want the sell-off of Hydro One stopped?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: You know, it's interesting: I had the privilege to speak yesterday afternoon to the motion that the leader of the NDP is talking about. In the discussion yesterday afternoon, I asked a question of her and her party which, of course, didn't get an answer. I guess I will put that question back to her.

It's also delightful that she asks about caucus members on this side of the House, given how many of her caucus colleagues have significant requests for infrastructure investments in their communities. Whether it's Hamilton or it's London or it's the north or it's Windsor or it's Durham or it's Kitchener—any of those regions across the province—they want more investments, and I wonder if the leader of the NDP will come clean and tell her caucus colleagues which of their projects she would cancel if she had the choice.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Businesses know that the Hydro One sell-off is bad for them. But yesterday, every Liberal in this House voted to ignore small business, big business, manufacturing, the agricultural industry, the

mining industry—you name it, Speaker. Every one of those sectors does not want to see any more sell-off of Hydro One.

Why is this Liberal government refusing to listen to the job creators in this province? Why are they refusing to listen? Why will they not stop the sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I think it's unfortunate that the leader of the NDP has a different perspective on this. What every single member in this government caucus voted for yesterday was continuing to build this province up and moving it forward.

Specifically, we voted for a re-established Connecting Link fund. We voted for extended GO service to Hamilton, specifically to Stoney Creek. We voted for two-way all-day GO service across all of our seven corridors. We even voted yesterday for the potential to extend GO trains for Niagara region.

To support the north, to support the southwest, to support all regions of this province: That's what we voted for. The question is, why won't you?

Interjections.

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

New question—

Interjections.

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

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Back to the Acting Premier—but I must say I think it's funny that the Minister of Transportation has no idea that in that big list of projects he just mentioned, each one of them will likely cost more than the \$1.4 billion they're getting for the sell-off of Hydro One. How sad is that?

This is a question, now, to the Acting Premier that's about integrity and honesty. Just over a year ago, the Premier stood right here in this House in her place and she said to me, "There is not a sell-off of these companies." But here we are.

Can the Acting Premier explain why anyone in this province should trust the current Premier and the current Liberal government?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It was to the Acting Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I apologize. It's a new question.

Same question, new question, the answer remains the same: We will be raising \$9 billion through the sale of a portion of Hydro One. That number was confirmed by the Financial Accountability Officer. The Leader of the Opposition wants to pretend that that is not the right number, but that is the number that was confirmed by the Financial Accountability Officer.

In fact, we have already collected almost \$3 billion, cash in hand, received through the IPO. We are going to

use that money to pay down debt and to build badly needed infrastructure.

We know the NDP doesn't think that's a good idea. We also know that the NDP has no idea how they would pay—

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

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the question is actually going to the integrity of this government. In October 2014, the Minister of Finance who is sitting right there now looked me in the eye and said, "We have made it clear that we are not going to sell off our assets." That's what he said in this chamber, in this House. But last week, they issued a press release bragging about the province's sale of Hydro One.

It is time for this government to take a step towards regaining the trust of the people of this province. Will the Liberals stand by their previous commitments and stop any further sell-off of Hydro One or any other revenue-generating asset in this province?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Well, that's interesting. We have put the notion and the reason as to why we're looking at our assets—all of it, for that matter: to do a full review of how to maximize the value for the public and the people of Ontario. We put it in the 2014 budget, which that member didn't even have the decency to respond to or talk to the press about. In fact, they turned their backs on Ontarians when they voted it down the second time around, where we had the option and the opportunity to again reinforce the review of our assets, including real estate, including passive shares, including Hydro One.

In the 2015 budget, we reaffirmed the increases on the optimization of those assets, the dedication of increases to the Moving Ontario Forward plan equivalent to the amount of asset valuation increases, again to be re-invested, dollar for dollar, for the people of Ontario and for our future generations.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In October 2014, the Premier of this province said here in this House, "We're not selling off the assets." Put simply, the Premier has broken trust with the people of Ontario. She didn't run on selling assets, she promised them thereafter that she wasn't going to sell the assets and then, Speaker, she proceeded to start selling off the assets of the people of this province.

Will the Acting Premier show that integrity, keep the promises that the Premier and this Liberal government have made and stop any further sell-off of Hydro One or any other revenue-generating asset that the people of this province own?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we promised that we would increase the valuation of our assets for the benefit of the people of Ontario, and we did that in the IPO for only 15% of that transaction, which equated to a net of \$3 billion to reinvest in Trillium Trust, to reinvest in infrastructure—and an additional billion dollars to pay down debt.

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We said that, and this is what the leader of the opposition said in July 2014. She read the same budget, apparently, that the rest of us did, and she says this: “The budget says in black and white that the government is looking at the sale of assets, ‘including ... crown corporations, such as Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario.’” She said it, Mr. Speaker.

We are going forward with maximizing value for the people of Ontario and reinvesting those funds dollar for dollar, as stipulated in our budget.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Deputy Premier. All we’ve seen from this Liberal government is one scandal after another. The recurring theme is they can never get their stories straight.

During the gas plant scandal, they couldn’t get their story straight on who paid Peter Faist to delete the files off the government computers. It turns out that the taxpayers paid the \$10,000.

Now the government can’t get their story straight on the Sudbury bribery scandal. First, they didn’t know who paid Gerry’s Loughheed’s legal bills; then it wasn’t the government; and now we know the Liberals paid the bills until he was charged. But the Premier stated that Gerry Loughheed doesn’t speak for the Liberal Party. So my question is, why did the Liberals pay his legal fees in the first place?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Premier made it very clear yesterday that the government has not paid anything towards the legal bills here. The party is not paying anything.

This is an issue that’s in the courts, and we’ll have no further comment on that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, back to the Deputy Premier: The recurring theme with this scandal-plagued government is they can never get their stories straight.

In the teachers’ union scandal, it was \$ 1 million; it was for pizzas—no, wait; it’s \$3 million; it’s for negotiating—no, wait; it’s for labour peace. Every single day, the story changed.

Now in the Sudbury bribery scandal, it’s obvious that many Liberals are going to be subpoenaed by the crown or by Mr. Loughheed’s lawyers. They’d better get their story straight before they swear an oath. But I’m curious: Will they be in court standing up for Ontario’s taxpayers or for the Liberal Party? And my question is, will the

Premier and her deputy chief of staff be testifying for the crown or for the defence?

Interjections.

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

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, we’re not going to speculate on an issue that’s before the courts.

REFUGEES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Acting Premier. Canada has promised to welcome 25,000 Syrians, and New Democrats are proud to support this commitment. We are proud to stand with Ontarians to welcome Syrian refugees to our community. It’s a part of our strong tradition of respecting the importance of bringing in immigrants, and standing up for the global community, and respecting the refugees in our society.

But a promise is not enough alone. We also need a plan. This government needs to come forward with a plan to ensure that these people receive the adequate services they so desperately need.

What is this government’s plan when it comes to housing, support services and language services for these refugees who so desperately need assistance in addition to just promises?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you for that question. I think we are united in the understanding that Ontario is a welcoming place, that we are a place where people from around the world can find a safe haven. I am delighted that Ontario is stepping up to create the conditions for successful integration into our communities of these refugees coming from Syria.

We have established an ad hoc group of ministers, co-chaired by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. I am honoured to be a member of that committee.

I will give the supplementary to the Minister of Health, who can talk about the issues that we are dealing with.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I’m encouraged by the fact that our province has made a strong commitment, and I’m encouraged by the fact that our country has made a strong commitment. We also need a strong plan to back up this commitment. We need an actual plan with respect to affordable housing to ensure that refugees are housed. We need an actual plan to ensure that there are the health services so that people are adequately taken care of. And we need to ensure that there are language support services.

In addition, we’ve heard today from a press conference that there is a growing backlash against Islamophobia and there’s a growing backlash against community members who will be coming in against the refugees. We need a provincial strategy to ensure that this is responded to with

strong language, that we support refugees and that we have a security plan in place.

Will the Acting Premier provide a clear plan on how our province will address all of these important areas so that we can have an actual committed way to bring in these refugees and not just an empty promise?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I think the member opposite realizes that we have yet to get the specific details in terms of the numbers of refugees who will be coming to Ontario, as well as where and when—the timetable.

Given that we expect in the coming days to receive more detailed information, we are working hard in a co-ordinated way, not just across government, but with civil society and our many, many partners. Whether it's in the education system, housing, settlement agencies that have tremendous expertise in this area, or the health care system, I'm quite frankly amazed at the enthusiasm and confidence that all of these sectors have. We have the capacity and we'll get the job done.

We have a big responsibility, but a tremendous opportunity, particularly at this time of the year, to welcome, as we always do, these refugees that come from the most horrible circumstances, and to bring them into the safety and security of this province. We have a committee across government that's working with our partners in civil society and in our public institutions to make sure that we get the job done right.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This Sunday, November 22, is National Housing Day. National Housing Day recognizes the importance of people having a home to call their own. Our government knows that stable, affordable housing can improve a person's health and their prospects for a good job and education. National Housing Day is an important time to reflect on how much more work we have in front of us, because the challenges are real and they are growing.

Access to affordable housing is a real issue in my riding in Davenport, and one that I often hear about in my constituency office. As housing costs rise, available affordable housing units decline and wait-lists for social housing continue to grow. I know that when I speak to many of the fantastic social housing organizations in Davenport, like the Perth Avenue co-op and the Tamil co-op, they are really feeling the pressure.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, how is our government responding to the demands of affordable housing in our province?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I appreciate the question. It's my interest as minister to ensure that affordable housing is understood as a crucial component of social infrastructure. To do that, we're having a number of conversations with the municipalities through AMO and other vehicles,

the private sector, and a number of agencies that are advocates for housing.

I'm proud that our government is committed to the goal of ending homelessness, which we arrived at by working with our expert panel. I'm also proud that Ontario is supporting the creation of 20,000 affordable rental housing units, more than 275,000 repairs and improvements, and providing rental and down payment assistance to over 90,000 households in need. We're also going to work with the federal government.

I look forward to presenting more about our long-term housing strategy very soon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I know the minister agrees that this year National Housing Day feels different from past years. Unfortunately, National Housing Day has historically served as a reminder that Canada is the only G8 country that lacks a national housing strategy.

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While I understand that you and your ministry staff work closely with our municipal partners and local service managers to flow funds from the Investment in Affordable Housing program, a comprehensive affordable housing strategy in Ontario really requires all levels of government to work collaboratively.

Now, with the new federal government, there is hope for a renewed and strengthened partnership that goes beyond this commitment to address the growing needs of our province. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, what does the minister look forward to building with our new federal partners?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Mr. Speaker, I look forward first and foremost to actually working with a federal government that gets it and is prepared to make a commitment to working not only with Ontario, but with all the provinces with respect to important issues to them.

We have started conversations, and we're proceeding with those. The new federal government has made some incredible commitments in the area of social infrastructure and urban infrastructure, something that's new to federal governments. We'll be working with them. Our shared sense of purpose is to achieve a sustainable supply of affordable housing and a fair system of housing assistance for those who need it most.

HIGHWAY TOLLS

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Yesterday, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation's freedom-of-information request revealed that not only did this government's Pan Am HOV lanes make motorists stew in hour-long traffic tie-ups that directly led to a 73% increase in accidents, but they made motorists pay \$3.2 million for that privilege. Minister, how do you justify the spending of \$3.2 million on accident-inviting, slap-dash, peel-and-stick HOV lane stickers?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for that question. As I said to media yesterday, the transportation

plan for the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games had a budget that was estimated to be \$61 million. After completing the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games, in fact, we came in \$23 million below that \$61-million figure.

I think it's also important to stress, Speaker, that within that budget of \$61 million, we included resources to make sure that we appropriately signed and delineated where the temporary HOV lanes would be in place for the games. We were very happy to listen to law enforcement, one of our most important partners in the transportation plan, and we opened up the temporary HOV lanes for Pan Am/Parapan Am well in advance of the games, to give motorists and people visiting our region an opportunity to become accustomed to the change that would be coming.

I look forward to following up on this in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Speaker, back to the minister: These were temporary lane markings that were quite literally flying away in the wind days after they were applied, due to the shoddy stick-on plan, and he bills taxpayers \$3.2 million. Will the minister at least acknowledge his \$3.2-million HOV rollout for the costly, traffic-tying debacle it was, before he doubles down and transforms HOVs into even more costly HOTs?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member opposite, of course, for his follow-up. I just want to stress one more time—I'm not sure if members on that side of the House in the Conservative caucus heard exactly what I said in the first round, Speaker. Of course, I would only assume that they would want to have an opportunity to stand up and clap for the fact that the transportation budget came in \$23 million below the original estimate.

Speaker, even more important than that—as that member would know, because I believe he actually took the opportunity to attend a number of the venues and see the sporting events that were taking place—these were the most successful Pan Am/Parapan Am Games in history. More than one million tickets were sold. We had more than 1.4 million people attend Parapan Am and Pan Am celebrations at seven sites, including Panamania Live at Nathan Phillips Square, an Ontario celebration zone. Over the course of both games, more than 31 million Canadians tuned into radio and TV coverage of competitions, Speaker.

With our transportation plan, Speaker, we kept the region moving—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. We're moving along nicely without some of the little interjections that are taking place.

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, my question to the Acting Premier: Every Ontarian pays a debt retirement charge on their electricity bill to pay down the residual stranded debt left over from the old Ontario Hydro. The government keeps the amount of that debt a secret, but

we know it was being paid down at a rate of \$1.3 billion a year, and stood at \$2.6 billion in March 2014.

Simple math says that that debt should be almost paid off by now, but the Financial Accountability Officer showed that because the government is privatizing Hydro One, the residual stranded debt will increase and businesses will have to keep paying \$600 million a year in debt retirement charges.

Why must Ontario businesses pay \$600 million a year to subsidize the government's sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member will know that we're actually accelerating the removal of the debt retirement charge from businesses by nine months. He also knows that it's already been accelerated starting at the end of this year for residential homeowners. He also knows that we've been very, very sensitive to creating mitigation measures for ratepayers across the province. He knows as well, particularly for businesses, that we have expanded the Industrial Electricity Incentive Program, which gives up to 50% off their bill if they're creating jobs new in the province or expanding their businesses, including businesses right across the province. We've also made available the ICI program for large industrial producers to many more businesses across the province, which takes 20% off their electricity bill.

We're very sensitive and we're very responsive to the business community with respect to rates.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes, and you're still sticking them with an extra 600 million bucks a year for this.

At the rate the residual stranded debt was being paid down, it should nearly be paid off by now, but according to the Financial Accountability Officer, by selling Hydro One the government has made the debt bigger. If the government hadn't privatized Hydro One, it could have eliminated the debt retirement charge for everyone in 2016. Instead, business will keep paying \$600 million a year until 2018.

Why should Ontario businesses keep paying that \$600 million for the government's sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let's understand what this is. We have a stranded debt, a legacy of the Harris government, which left \$21 billion on our books. We have since paid that down, even though the Harris government actually increased the amount of residual stranded debt throughout that period. It is going down; it has been going down continuously; we have outlined how it is.

More recently, a stranded debt of \$9.8 billion remains, and currently we are continuing to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll add you to the list. The member from Simcoe–Grey, the member from Lanark and the member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: In fact, the Financial Accountability Officer indicated that as a result of the transaction

that we're putting forward, we will be able to provide an additional amount towards the residual stranded debt. We are now going to be able to provide certainty to businesses that we're going to do away with the residual stranded debt nine months earlier, notwithstanding the fact that stranded debt will continue, which will have to continue to be paid down by other sources.

The Financial Accountability Officer made it clear that as a result of the way it operates, it's never certain as to how much it will be, but we're making it certain.

MÉTIS NATION

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. On Monday, I had the pleasure of joining the minister and many other members of this House, including you, Mr. Speaker, to raise a flag for the Métis here at the Ontario Legislature in celebration of Louis Riel Day. Speaker, you spoke quite passionately about your Métis heritage and you spoke and said you were very proud to call yourself Métis. My good friend Stewart Kiff, who is known to so many of us in the House and is undergoing some personal challenges, is also very proud to call himself Métis.

In my own family, my father regularly spoke of Jerry Potts, the great Métis guide who helped lead the CN surveyors across the foothills of the mountains of the Rockies to build the CN railroad.

The minister, in his remarks on Monday, spoke at length about the significance of our government's strong relationship with Métis peoples.

Will the minister then tell us more about the significance and what we're doing to support Métis in Ontario?

Hon. David Zimmer: I'd like to thank the member from Beaches–East York for that question. The Métis are an important part of the richness of Ontario. When we observe Louis Riel Day on November 16 each year, we honour the distinct heritage of Métis communities in Ontario. They are recognized as one of our country's founding peoples and as one of the aboriginal peoples of Canada by the Constitution Act of 1982.

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They built a new culture, taking the traditions of First Nations and European fur traders to create something unique. Louis Riel Day is a time to recognize and respect the history, culture and identity of Métis people. We are grateful for their historic and their ongoing contributions to Ontario and Canada.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I know all members of this House would congratulate the minister on the great work he's doing forging strong relationships with First Nation peoples in Ontario. It's great to hear that our government recognizes how significant the culture of the Métis people is to our shared history. I applaud the minister for doing such great work building those ties between the government and the Métis peoples. This was certainly reflected in the very warm reception that we all received on the south lawn on Monday.

The minister is often heard to say that when the aboriginal peoples of Canada prosper, Ontario prospers. I'm sure that is especially true and equally true for the Métis people. Speaker, will the minister tell us more about what his ministry is doing to create new opportunities for the Métis people in Ontario and our work to promote their distinct heritage?

Hon. David Zimmer: Last year, I had the privilege of renewing our government's commitment to the Métis Nation of Ontario by signing a new five-year framework agreement. The agreement sets out how we will work together over the next five years to improve the well-being of Métis children, families and their communities. We will do this by facilitating the recognition and advancement of Métis people in Ontario. We will provide a forum for discussion on matters of mutual concern. We will establish a coordinating committee which will identify priority activities on an annual basis to support the goals and objectives of the new agreement.

Together, we will continue working to build a successful, compassionate and united province, where everyone has the opportunity to connect, contribute and enjoy the highest quality of life.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

FINANCEMENT DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

Mrs. Gila Martow: In honour of today's francophone guests, I'm going to ask my question first in French and then in English.

Pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée : avec notre population croissante et vieillissante, le système de soins de santé public de l'Ontario est sous une énorme pression. Est-ce que le ministre peut expliquer comment il peut fournir les excellents soins de santé dont les résidents de l'Ontario ont besoin et qu'ils méritent en même temps qu'il coupe des postes de résidence en médecine et réduit les honoraires des médecins?

With our growing and aging population, Ontario's publicly funded health care system is under immense strain. Will the minister please explain how cutting residency spots and slashing physician fees will provide the top-notch health care that Ontario residents need and deserve?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate this question. It gives me the opportunity to speak about this important aspect of ensuring that we have the right mix and supply of physicians in this province to attend to Ontarians' health care needs.

It's important to state clearly that, since 2003, we've actually almost doubled the number of residency positions for physicians in this province from just over 600 to roughly 1,200 today. As a result of those investments, in fact, we're seeing tremendous progress where, this year alone, 700 net new doctors will be practising in this province. Our projections are that that growth rate of new doctors will be at three times the rate of population growth.

We felt that it was prudent, after doubling the number of residency spots in this province, that we actually use science and evidence and health resource modelling to determine what we should do going forward, and I'll speak to that in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} Gila Martow: Est-ce que le ministre peut expliquer comment le gouvernement prévoit de fournir des soins de santé pour plus de résidents, pour le nombre croissant de personnes âgées et pour d'autres traitements avec ces augmentations inadéquates au budget global de la santé?

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain how his government expects to provide health care for more residents, more seniors and more treatments with an inadequate budgetary increase to the global health care budget? Yes, we're seeing an aging population and newer treatments. It's not just about population growth; it's about those increased costs as well.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Just to finish off on the residency spots, we felt it was prudent, through health resource modelling going forward, to make sure that we have an adequate number of physicians and specialists; that we look at this. So we've made a modest reduction of less than 5% in the number of spots because of what we've been told by our epidemiologists and actuaries—everything to take into account precisely what the member opposite is referring to.

But the point, Mr. Speaker, is that we are continuing to invest in our health care system. Our health care budget went up this year, as it did last year, as it will next year, including the physician services component. We're also investing more in home care: \$250 million more that will benefit, generally speaking, our senior population. We're continuing to broaden the scope of our practice of our health care professionals so that they can do the hard work they do day in and day out, to make sure we're providing that highest quality of care to our seniors and to all Ontarians.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. The people of Hamilton are worried about a proposal to build a garbage gasification plant using unproven technology on Hamilton's waterfront. Instead of a full environmental assessment, the risky project only had an environmental screening, a much weaker process intended only for "projects that have predictable environmental effects that can be readily mitigated." That's ministry language, Speaker.

A year ago, I asked the minister to ensure that Hamiltonians have a full environmental assessment, to assure them that that environmental assessment would take place. A year has passed and the minister is still waffling over whether to elevate the environmental screening to a full EA. When will this minister finally decide that an experimental project of this nature and scale requires a full environmental assessment?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I appreciate the member from Hamilton Centre's question. The law of Ontario—and I want to be very clear about this—does not allow, in the case of these types of bump-up requests, any involvement by the minister at all. These are director-level decisions, which I am prohibited from interfering in.

There was a huge volume of activity on this. The ministry received an overwhelming number of concerns articulated on that. I can't prejudice the process by expressing my views on this particular issue, because the director ultimately reports to the deputy minister and I can't interfere in that process.

I have been monitoring it very carefully, and I am assured by the ministry that they are near to making a decision on the bump-up request. I will do my job on behalf of this House to ensure that's not politically interfered with and that proper adjudicated due process takes place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It is this government that watered down the requirements for an EA process on energy facilities. This company is gaming the system. They won't apply for a licence as a waste facility because a waste facility actually requires a full EA but an energy facility does not require a full EA. So this minister does have a responsibility to the people of Hamilton to make sure that a full environmental assessment is taking place on this waste facility, Speaker, as it should be.

I want to say very clearly that Hamilton city council has asked for a bump up to a full EA. The neighbourhood people want a full EA. Environment Hamilton has asked for a full EA. I personally have asked the minister to bump this up to a full EA. The bottom line is that an independent study showed that the screening process is not adequate for this kind of facility. Will this minister step up to the plate as the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and ensure that a full EA of this waste facility takes place in Hamilton?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I've been here for about five, six years, which probably puts me in the lower 25% of members with experience around here. I would expect that a member who's been longer than I would know the basic law of this Legislature, which she and I have to uphold. What she's asking me to do is legally impossible and illegal. If I went to try to bump up this request and interfere politically in the process—there is no legal basis for that. I'm accountable to the House to ensure that, as a minister of the crown, I support the law of the land. As a member of this assembly, I am responsible for being familiar with the law. Does the NDP want ministers to break the law and politically interfere in independent adjudicated processes of the public service?

1130

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. Last night, I had the

pleasure of attending the opening reception for It's Never Okay: 2015 Summit on Sexual Violence and Harassment. Mr. Speaker, this was a remarkable event. I had an opportunity to meet with women and men who are working in the field of sexual violence, not only in Ontario but in fact from around the world. It was very encouraging to see colleagues there, including some members of the opposition who were there.

This summit was a commitment that was made in the sexual violence and harassment action plan, announced by the minister and the Premier in March of this year. Can the minister please inform this House of the goals of this summit?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the member for the great question and for her hard work on the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. I was pleased to be with her last night at the opening reception. I'm glad that she has connected with some familiar folks and some new contacts, as well, in this sector.

Speaker, there are well over 600 people at this summit, as we stand here today. They're registered to attend the summit, including members of our Roundtable on Violence Against Women and our Joint Working Group on Violence against Aboriginal Women. It also includes, I'm pleased to say, our new federal Minister of Status of Women, the Honourable Patty Hajdu from Thunder Bay.

There are so many more presenters and panellists who are in Toronto for this summit. We have people from across the country and across our nation, including from Ireland and New Zealand. So everyone's gathered together because they share a commitment to end—

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

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'd like to thank the minister for her answer and for her hard work and that of her staff in putting this summit together. This summit is an opportunity for people who are working in the sexual violence sector to collaborate and share best practices with their colleagues. It's an important opportunity to hear about the innovative work that's going on with these different organizations. I know that many of these groups and these individuals have appeared before the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment and shared compelling testimony with us. Can the minister please explain the outcomes that she hopes to hear from the summit?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Again, I want to thank the member for the question.

She's right; having people together from across the sector to hear the latest research and best practices is an incredible opportunity. We've organized speakers and sessions on best practices to end sexual violence and harassment, and to support survivors in the best and most appropriate ways. When the summit is over tomorrow, Speaker, we'll be positioned to continue the important work we've begun with the action plan, working even more closely with our partners in this sector.

I want to thank everybody who is attending the summit today and tomorrow. For those who were unable,

there are webcasts going on simultaneously so people can access the summit. Mainly, I want to thank people for their commitment to ending sexual violence and harassment, whether it's in homes, schools, our communities or our workplaces. Everyone will go back from the summit, I think, with strengthened capabilities and continued support for our survivors and victims.

PROBATION AND PAROLE SERVICES

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I've asked about the horrendous murders in Renfrew county far too many times. The Attorney General couldn't say how many offenders are let go when they refuse to sign their probation orders or why crown attorneys aren't notified when this happens. The families of three innocent women have suffered because of the inadequate support for our over 800 probation and parole officers. The government is far too silent about the gaping holes in our criminal justice system.

This week, the minister said in the Legislature said that he cherishes the work of probation and parole officers, despite the fact that this government won't provide the resources to monitor the 51,000 released offenders. So, Mr. Speaker, how can the minister defend his empty words when this government's spending on monitoring offenders is the second lowest in the country?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Let me first start by expressing, I think, all of our condolences to the family and friends in the communities of the victims. I've said this before: the events that took place in Renfrew county were shocking, brutal and disturbing.

As criminal charges have been laid and the police investigation is continuing, I cannot comment on any details of this case, and can only speak more generally. That is a point that I think everybody should be quite sensitive about, because we want justice to be served and police to be able to complete their work and the investigation that they're doing.

Everybody has the right to feel safe in their home and their communities. Ontario's probation and parole officers are committed to supervising offenders and holding offenders accountable. There is comprehensive pre-release planning that is undertaken before an offender is released from a correctional facility. I will provide more details in my supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Well, Mr. Speaker, the question is about saving lives. What happened in Renfrew county was not just a tragedy; it was the depraved violence of a dangerous man.

It just doesn't make any sense why this government couldn't be more vigilant. We know that probation orders are enforceable whether or not they're signed, but it scares me to think what will happen when other offenders are let go and the resources for better monitoring just aren't there.

Bill 130, introduced by my colleague the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, is addressing part of that

issue, but the fact remains that the likelihood for very high-risk offenders to re-offend is more than 60%. When will the minister face Ontarians to say that's just not good enough, finally start supporting the needs of our probation officers and assessing high-risk offenders before they are released? Please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Our probation and parole officers—

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Our probation and parole officers work extremely hard. They develop community supervision plans for offenders that outline the types of programs and services that are required for their safer return to the community. In the community, ongoing monitoring and assessment tools are used to ensure that the offender can be safely managed in the community.

I fully recognize—we who are in public service all recognize—that there's always more work that can be done in reducing probation and parole officer caseloads and ensuring that our community is safe. That is why we are committed to supporting our probation and parole officers by working collaboratively through a joint working committee between the ministry and the union that represents our probation and parole officers and their workload.

I'm personally committed to continuing to work to make sure that women and all members of our community are safe at all times.

POVERTY

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the minister for poverty reduction. Today a report by an Ontario-wide coalition of over 90 labour and community groups confirms what New Democrats have been warning about for years: that Ontario falls last in the pack of provinces when it comes to jobs, social programs and income equality. Ontario families are facing longer wait times for social housing and the highest daycare costs in Canada. Seniors still face some of the lengthiest wait times for long-term-care beds. Students have the highest debt and the least funding for post-secondary education.

What's worse is that this government has been in power for 12 years. When will this government accept responsibility for its policies and priorities that have left Ontario's most vulnerable behind?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am enormously proud of the work that we have done so far to address issues of poverty in this province. There is absolutely more to do, and that's why we, by legislation, have an ongoing commitment to poverty reduction.

I do want to remind the House and Ontarians that since the recession, we've created 590,600 jobs. The vast majority of those are full-time, and 77% are in industries that have above-average wages.

We've indexed the minimum wage; we've raised it from \$6.85 to \$11.25. It's the highest of any province in the country.

We are looking at and taking the precarious employment issue very seriously, and that's why our Minister of Labour is leading the Changing Workplaces Review.

Since 2003, social service spending has increased from \$8.3 billion to—

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: This government's priorities are loud and clear: We have the lowest social program spending per capita in the country; long-term unemployment is one of the worst in the country; precarious, low-wage work has ballooned to 8% more than in other provinces; and income disparity between the richest and the poorest Canadians has nearly doubled. Instead of focusing on these matters, the government is privatizing our public assets, driving up hydro costs and continuing to make life unaffordable for Ontario families.

Why won't this government admit that after 12 years, it has failed Ontarians who need help the most?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We introduced the Ontario Child Benefit. It has gone from zero to \$1,336 per child per year. Our child care funding has almost doubled. We've introduced full-day kindergarten so that four- and five-year-olds get that education, saving families \$6,500 a year on child care costs. We've increased per student funding. We're investing more in financial aid.

This government has done more on poverty reduction work than any government has ever done before. We are committed and remain committed. We will do more, but we must take pride in the work that we have done. For the member opposite to suggest that nothing has happened simply discourages those who are working very, very hard for a better Ontario.

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

The House recessed from 1142 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CHILD PROTECTION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Tomorrow is the United Nations' day of the child. I've often advocated in this assembly for greater children's safety and protective rights. In fact, it was the focus of my first private member's bill almost nine years ago. It would have, among other things, strengthened child protection legislation and enshrined into law a children's day in Ontario that would have been acknowledged today in this assembly.

Over the years, I have marvelled at those who have devoted their life to the protection and defence of children, like the late Les Horne and Agnes Samler of Defence for Children International, or Irwin Elman, our independent child advocate.

I'm even more in awe of parents who have lost their children, yet have given Ontarians the gift of child advocacy after their son or daughter has passed on. Allan Hubley and his wife Wendy, Sheri and Pat Leighton, Kathleen and Gord Stringer are all parents from my constituency who have joined me at Queen's Park to make a difference for our children after tragedies have taken the life of their child.

Recently, I've come to know Gabe and Stephanie Batstone, father and stepmother to a beautiful girl named Teagan. Blonde, blue-eyed and eight years old—Teagan's mother ended her life. There were many warning signs that could have prevented this heinous and unspeakable crime, and Gabe told me that the most significant included: a lack of coordinated services, a lack of in-depth expert analysis, opinion evidence in the form of untested affidavits and a focus on one parent's rights instead of the rights of the child. So he and Stephanie started Teagan's Voice to advocate for legislative changes to protect other children from the same tragic fate as Teagan. It is in that sentiment that I dedicate tomorrow's UN day of the child to sweet little Teagan Batstone and the child protection organization that bears her name.

I encourage members of this assembly and parents across Ontario to check out teagansvoice.com to learn how they can make child protection and safety in this province a priority.

THERESA FARAO

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It is my honour to once again rise in this Legislature and to recognize something special in my riding of Essex. The Windsor-Essex United Way, in partnership with the labour movement, has worked tirelessly on community programming and fighting poverty. They provide funding and tremendous leadership in our region. I thank them for all that they do.

Each year, the United Way awards a local activist at the labour appreciation awards dinner with the Charles E. Brooks Labour Community Service Award. This will be the 38th year of this award and 2015 marks what would have been Charlie Brooks's 100th birthday.

This year's recipient is Theresa Farao. Theresa is an activist, a mentor and a feminist. Through her dedication, leadership and compassion, Theresa has made a positive impact on her community and the members of her union.

Theresa is the president of Unifor Local 240, and her volunteer history includes multiple fundraising activities on behalf of the Polar Bear Dip for Childcan, Heart and Stroke, Coats for Kids, Easter Seals, House of Sophrosyne, Hiatus House, Wellcome Centre and the walk for breast cancer.

Theresa has a passion for fairness. She has been a champion for pay equity in her workplace and her union for years. Theresa was successful in getting a recommendation passed at CAW council and again at Unifor Ontario council making pay equity a priority. Theresa's passion for fairness has caused her to fight against ha-

arrassment, bullying and discrimination in our workplaces. At the same time, she understands the importance of building working relationships.

Congratulations, Theresa, on your nomination and your award of the Charles E. Brooks award. Your contribution has, indeed, made our community a fairer, more just place to live.

HATE CRIME

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Like many others, I was deeply troubled to learn of the horrific terrorist attacks in the days leading up to and including the events in Paris on November 13.

This past Saturday evening, the region's only mosque, in my neighbouring riding of Peterborough, suffered a fire. It is believed this fire was deliberately set in what I can only imagine was a hateful response by a select few who do not stand for the inclusion, peace and diversity of our country.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Peterborough has spoken against this by saying, "The fire set at the Kawartha Muslim Religious Association Masjid Al-Salaam mosque is a despicable act of hate that cannot be condoned in our community."

He goes on to say, "This behaviour in no way represents our community as a whole. Peterborough has always been and will continue to be a very diverse and inclusive region."

In spite of the incident, the Kawartha Muslim Religious Association has said, "We are deeply touched and highly encouraged by the overwhelming support we have received from the Peterborough community at large. We will continue to work with all faith groups and concerned citizens in raising awareness of peace and tolerance."

Mr. Speaker, as an immigrant myself, I hope I will never really understand the fear and turmoil that refugees are fleeing from. I have a profound appreciation for the opportunities to prosper, grow and raise my family here.

I echo the Premier's words that we must continue to strive for and pray for peace in our communities and throughout the world. We must guard against and resist the blame and generalizations that can lead to racism and hatred.

TARA CENOTAPH

Mr. Bill Walker: On November 11, as people across our communities, the province and country gathered at cenotaphs and Royal Canadian Legion halls to pay tribute to the men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice for peace, freedom and democracy, we were reminded of just how proud we are to live in Canada and to call Canada our home. We truly enjoy an Armed Forces and veterans who are the envy of the rest of the world.

On October 4, I attended a very special event in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. It was the rededica-

tion of the community cenotaph, originally built in 1924, in the village of Tara. I was proud to be in good company: Nancy DeVries; Tom and Mabel Ruff of Tara, whose son Alex Ruff is a distinguished officer in our Armed Forces, having served a number of missions overseas; honorary lieutenant colonel to the regiment, Ivan Fenton; CFB Meaford Major Chris Beatty; Tara Legion members; Chesley high school teachers Ric Swigger and Don Matheson, and their students; along with a large turnout of residents, donors and businesses from the surrounding community.

The students—who had been to Vimy Ridge, Dieppe, Juno Beach, Ortona and Holland—made this ceremony a memorable one for the entire community.

In recognition of Canada's involvement in the liberation of Holland, a supply of 770 tulips has been provided by the Dutch government and will be planted by students to commemorate the 70th anniversary of our role in ending the Second World War. It will be a magnificent display in the spring, and one that again will fill our hearts with pride and honour in respect of the valour shown by our brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice, and their esteemed colleagues, the veterans in whose debt we shall forever be.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a very fitting way to recognize and honour our brave sons and daughters who have in the past, and continue to serve and protect.

A big thank you to the great Canadian community of Tara, and to our troops, whom we continue to support, value and thank for their service and commitment, not just on Remembrance Day, but every day.

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: First of all, I just want to thank every member of this House who was part of the historic moment that happened. I know it was quickly eclipsed by the drama of question period, but today the largest jurisdiction in North America, for the first time ever, recognized the trans day of remembrance. Thank you to everyone for that.

I'm going to use my member's statement to tell us why we did that:

- one in five transgender individuals have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives;

- transphobia is experienced by 98% of the trans population—by the way, these are all from Trans Pulse—this wonderful study;

- 77% of trans respondents in an Ontario-based survey had seriously considered suicide, and 43% had attempted suicide;

- almost 50% of trans folk live in poverty, below the poverty line in Ontario;

- one in five trans Ontarians have been the target of physical or sexual assaults;

- one in five are unemployed.

Toby's Act—which, again, was an all-party movement to add gender identity and gender expression to the

Ontario Human Rights Code—was inspired by the death of the music director of our church, Toby Dancer.

On behalf of all of the legislators here, on behalf of all trans folk, and anyone really, Mr. Speaker, who cares about civil rights and human justice—I just want to say, on behalf of trans folk and their allies, thank you.

1310

POLISH INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Each year, on November 11, Polish people and Polish Canadians celebrate the national independence day of their homeland. Many of my constituents in Mississauga–Brampton South were part of those celebrations. I was fortunate to join some of them at St. Maximilian Kolbe parish on November 9 in my riding. While on November 11 the world celebrates Remembrance Day, I learned more about the struggle of the Polish people as they emerged from partition by foreign powers, and later communism, to become a free and democratic society.

Freedom from tyranny and war is something that people in our own society may appreciate, but perhaps we do not know enough about the sacrifices made by others to make that freedom possible. While November 11 may be solemn, for Polish people it is also a celebration of their culture and independence.

I wish to offer my congratulations to constituents of Polish descent in my riding of Mississauga–Brampton South and to the Polish people all around the world on this important date.

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Last week I was pleased to be joined by my colleague the member from York–Simcoe, and together we went across the riding of Huron–Bruce to host discussions on small business. These round tables focused on the growing concerns of local businesses and the steps the province should take to help them out. In our discussions, the rising cost of electricity, to no one's surprise, was a recurring theme.

For one local economic development officer, it was a concern that she heard from small businesses time and again. She shared, specifically, a story of a local business owner who was forced to close their storefront because the heating was just too expensive. Without a doubt, business suffers from electricity rates that are among the highest in North America.

Another major concern that was expressed and brought forward was excessive red tape. Small businesses, such as a family-run store and operation, have neither the time nor the resources to jump through endless hoops. We heard first-hand examples of this. Speaker, I was very disappointed to hear of one particular business owner who waited 14 months for his application to be processed by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. For these businesses, every minute

spent filling out paperwork is one diverted from doing what is needed to live, work and raise a family.

There were also concerns expressed and subsequent discussions regarding the increase in minimum wage, lack of skilled trades, ORPP, and the need to foster innovation.

In Huron–Bruce, the small business is truly big business. It is the heart of our communities, our culture and our local economy, and we should be cultivating a culture of opportunity.

CONSTITUENCY OFFICE STAFF

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to take a moment today to thank my community office staff for their hard work and dedication to their jobs. Rahmat, Hillary and Aliya work tirelessly to help people in our community and do their best to ensure that every person who contacts our office receives the support they need.

I'd like to read a thank-you message written by a woman who recently came to our office for assistance: "Last week I arrived at your office asking for help. Your team responded in a most courageous way. My friend is dying and I was in distress. Everyone was kind and sensitive to my needs. I kept saying, 'I want you to fix this problem.' They gave me what I needed—someone who would listen. We are so grateful for all" of their support.

This is only one example of the caring work that Rahmat, Hillary and Aliya perform on a daily basis, and I thank them for it.

Mr. Speaker, I know that, in our members' community offices throughout the province, the care I have just described happens every day. Our staff welcome people in our offices when we can't. They hold a genuine interest in helping the people that they serve. They are the backbone back home in our ridings. Their words and actions help make our communities better places to live, and I want to thank not just my staff but the staff in offices across the province.

ALBANIAN CANADIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am pleased to rise in the House to speak about the Albanian Canadian Community Association in my riding of York South–Weston. Immigration to Canada began in the early 20th century, and today there are over 28,000 Albanian Canadians in Ontario. This community has made and continues to make important contributions to the growth and prosperity of the province of Ontario.

November is a significant month for the Albanian community. Each year, people of Albanian origin celebrate the Albanian declaration of independence, which declared Albania an independent sovereign nation on November 28, 1912. That is why I will be introducing a bill later to declare November as Albanian Heritage Month in Ontario.

Albania also commemorates liberation day, which is the day that Albania was liberated from Nazi Germany's forces after the Albanian resistance on November 29, 1944.

The Albanian Canadian Community Association has supported the community for 25 years, since November 4, 1990. The association commemorates the history and celebrates the rich traditions of Albanian heritage and should be proud of the work that they do. I would like to thank Dr. Ruki Kondaj in particular for her tireless work and dedication to the Albanian Canadian community through her work as honorary president of the association.

I believe it's important to remember our heritage. I feel an affinity to this community, not only because of my last name but also because of similarities with my own heritage.

Congratulations to all Canadians of Albanian heritage.

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

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Ms. Soo Wong: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 106, An Act to amend the Condominium Act, 1998, to enact the Condominium Management Services Act, 2015 and to amend other Acts with respect to condominiums / *Projet de loi 106, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur les condominiums, édictant la Loi de 2015 sur les services de gestion de condominiums et modifiant d'autres lois en ce qui concerne les condominiums.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Carried.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ALBANIAN HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE ALBANAIS

Mrs. Albanese moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 145, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month / *Projet de loi 145, Loi*

proclamant le mois de novembre Mois du patrimoine albanais.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mrs. Laura Albanese: November is a significant month for the Albanian community. By proclaiming the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month, our province would recognize the meaningful contributions Albanian Canadians have made in building Ontario's communities and the social, economic, political and cultural achievements of Albanian Canadians throughout the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Motions? The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice with respect to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

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

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I agree with this petition and I'll affix my signature to it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have a petition here that reads "Save Our Northern Health Care."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

"Whereas Ontario hospital funding is the lowest in Canada;

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

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

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

"To immediately stop cuts and freezes to hospital budgets;

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

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

I support this petition, will affix my signature and give it to page Aislin to deliver to the table.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition here addressed 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 date "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 the petition, affix my name and give it to Jack to bring to the table.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

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

"Whereas the Ontario government's proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) is a mandatory pension

plan which would target small businesses and their employees; and

“Whereas there has been little to no discussion on what the costs would be, or who would pay them; and

“Whereas affected businesses would be hit with up to \$1,643 per employee, per year in new payroll taxes starting in 2017; and

“Whereas affected employees would have up to \$1,643 per year extra deducted from their paycheques, and it would take 40 years for them to see the full pension benefits; and

“Whereas the Canadian Federation of Independent Business predicts the unemployment rate in Ontario would rise by 0.5%, and there would be a reduction in wages over the longer term; and

“Whereas all of these costs would be shouldered exclusively by small businesses and their employees; and

“Whereas public sector and big business employees who already have a pension plan will not be asked to pay into the plan;

“We, the undersigned, do not support implementation of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan and petition the government of Ontario to axe the pension tax.”

I fully support this, will affix my name and send it down with page Alex.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Michael Mantha: 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 agree with this petition, affix my signature and present it to page Brooke to bring it down to the Clerks’ table.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Chris Ballard: I have a petition entitled “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 agree with this petition, Mr. Speaker.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs. Julia Munro: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

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

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

As I am in agreement, I will affix my signature and give it to page Lauren.

ÉDUCATION POSTSECONDAIRE EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: J’ai des centaines de pétitions qui m’ont été données pour demander une Université de l’Ontario français. Ça dit :

« Entendu que ... le 10 février » de 2015 « le RÉFO, l’AFO et la FESFO ont présenté le rapport du Sommet

provincial des États généraux sur le postsecondaire en Ontario français;

« Entendu que le rapport a indiqué un besoin et un désir pour une université de langue française;

« Entendu que le 26 mai, 2015 la députée France Gélinas a présenté un projet de loi pour créer cette université;

« Nous, soussignés, pétitionnons l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario comme suit : de commencer la création de l'Université de l'Ontario français dès que possible. »

J'appuie cette pétition. Je vais y ajouter mon nom, et je demande à la page Hannah de l'amener à la table des greffiers.

LUNG HEALTH

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

“Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

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

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

“To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry’s private member’s bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

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

I agree with this important petition. I will sign my name to it and hand it to page Taylor.

1330

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition with regard to health care, coming from constituents from Parry Sound–Muskoka, and it reads:

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

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

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

I have signed this petition in support.

LYME DISEASE

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition, and I wholeheartedly put my name to it and present it to page Megan to bring down to the Clerks’ table.

MAIL DELIVERY

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: On behalf of my colleague the member from Ottawa Centre, it gives me great pleasure to bring a petition to restore Canada Post door-to-door mail delivery.

“Whereas replacing door-to-door mail delivery with community mailboxes would have a big impact on our

senior citizens, less able-bodied citizens and parents with young children;

“Whereas it would be difficult for residents with strollers, wheelchairs or walkers to obtain their mail from community mailboxes in adverse weather conditions (especially through snow);

“Whereas residents in dense, urban communities are concerned about the safety and accommodation of larger mailboxes on busy streets;

“Whereas residents feel that receiving packages through the mail would become much more difficult because there would be limited package compartments in community mailboxes.

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario encourage the government of Canada to require Canada Post to continue door-to-door mail delivery, specifically in urban, downtown communities.”

It gives me great pleasure to affix my signature—and bring this wonderful petition to the Legislature.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs. Julia Munro: “Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

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

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

UNIVERSITÉ DE L'ONTARIO FRANÇAIS ACT, 2015 LOI DE 2015 SUR L'UNIVERSITÉ DE L'ONTARIO FRANÇAIS

M^{me} Gélinas moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 104, An Act to establish the Université de l’Ontario français / Projet de loi 104, Loi constituant l’Université de l’Ontario français.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Merci, monsieur le Président. J’aimerais commencer par remercier bien des gens. Je vais aller assez rapido : du côté du RÉFO, on a Alain Dupuis, Christopher Karas, Dominique Montpetit, Emily Rost, Éric Desrochers, Falonne Shimba, Fernando Luna Cesar, Isabelle Lepage, Josée Joliat, Léonie Tchatat, Lucas Egan, ainsi que Myriam Tardif et Odette Nindagiye.

Du côté de la FESFO, nous avons Alexandre Black, Geneviève Latour, Hannah Beaulieu et Jérémie Spadafora.

J’aimerais remercier mes conférenciers qui étaient avec moi pour la conférence de presse : Éric Desrochers, Lucas Egan et, bien entendu, Milena Oliva—et bien d’autres : Christian Robert, Dara Tai, Darya Arzani, Denis Beslimov, Divine Ntumba Kalama et Éloïse Slater. Nous avons Jeremy Young, John-Alex Duff-Wilson, Julie Lutete, Lucie Atangana, Luis Pereira, Marcel Kalala Lukuta, ainsi que Patrisha DeMille, Paul Dupré, Sébastien Duff-Maillou, Simon Edmond et Simone Helston. Aussi, je crois que j’ai vu Stewart Kiff, qui est ici également—oui; merci, Stewart, d’être venu—et Tiana Crosbie.

Je voulais prendre un moment pour présenter tous ces gens parce que c’est eux, vraiment, qui ont aidé à mettre ce projet de loi de l’avant.

Aujourd’hui, l’Ontario a l’opportunité de faire un pas sur le chemin qui nous amènera vers une nouvelle université pour et par les francophones. Aujourd’hui, nous allons non seulement débattre de ce projet de loi, mais nous allons également voter pour ce projet de loi qui créera une nouvelle institution d’enseignement universitaire.

Le projet de loi s’inspire de tout le travail qui a été fait par le RÉFO, par la FESFO et par l’AFO durant les dernières années et qui s’est conclu avec le sommet sur l’éducation postsecondaire.

Nous avons dû travailler fort pour avoir des écoles primaires, puis des écoles secondaires, pour les francophones. Après plusieurs années, nous avons réussi à avoir nos conseils scolaires pour les écoles primaires et secondaires, et plusieurs de celles-ci offrent également des garderies pour nos tout-petits.

Il y a un peu plus de 20 ans, nous avons eu les collèges francophones, comme le Collège boréal et La Cité collégiale, qui sont encore ici.

Nous sommes présentement sur le chemin pour compléter le système d’éducation et mettre en place notre Université de l’Ontario français.

Je dois dire un gros merci également au commissaire aux services en français. Lorsqu’en juin 2012 il a publié son rapport spécial d’enquête intitulé L’état de l’éducation postsecondaire en langue française dans le Centre-Sud-Ouest de l’Ontario : Pas d’avenir sans accès, il est devenu clair et il avait conclu que les possibilités limitées d’études postsecondaires en français, les longues

distances et l'autonomie fragile de certains établissements affaissent les efforts de recrutement et de rétention, entraînant dès lors une perte pour la communauté franco-ontarienne. Je lui dis merci.

Aujourd'hui, les néo-démocrates veulent une Université de l'Ontario français. C'est clair; c'est net; c'est précis.

Comment on fait pour se rendre là? Ça, c'est un peu moins clair. Aujourd'hui, nous allons encourager l'Assemblée législative à prendre le prochain pas. Je vous ai parlé des consultations qui ont eu lieu dans les quatre coins de la province—des états généraux—et qui a suivi un document synthèse qui a été déposé avec le gouvernement.

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La réponse du gouvernement, disons que c'est un silence. J'ajouterais que c'est un silence gênant. Pour être complètement transparent, le ministère des Collèges et Universités ainsi que la ministre déléguée aux services en français ont émis un communiqué de presse conjoint suite au dépôt du rapport, mais le communiqué ne dit pas grand-chose. Donc, aujourd'hui, j'espère que pendant la période de débats on pourra en apprendre plus sur la position des différents partis politiques en Ontario face à l'Université de l'Ontario français.

Si on n'en a pas entendu beaucoup du côté des libéraux à date, eux, les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes, en ont beaucoup à dire. Entre autres, plus de 2 200 personnes ont soumis une demande d'admission. Ça, c'est 2 200 personnes qui ont quelque chose à dire. L'université n'existe pas encore, mais on a 2 200 inscriptions déjà. Ce qu'ils sont en train de nous dire au travers de ce processus-là, c'est qu'ils veulent qu'on fasse le premier pas.

Le premier pas, c'est clair. C'est de mettre en place un conseil de gouverneurs transitoire. Donc, ce sera déjà le conseil de transition qui sera là pour établir des liens avec l'université francophone existante, parce qu'il faut se souvenir qu'on a une université francophone à Hearst; mon collègue de Timmins—James Bay me le rappelle régulièrement. Ils auront également des liens avec les universités bilingues ou celles qui offrent des services en français. Il faut reconnaître que l'Université Laurentienne, l'Université d'Ottawa et le Collège Glendon à York, toutes ces universités, offrent des services en français. On a également nos collèges, le Collège Boréal et La Cité collégiale. Ces gens pourront établir des liens. Ils pourront faire des recommandations—et ça, c'est une recommandation que bien des gens attendent—sur les sites. On en entend beaucoup parler.

Pour ceux qui ont participé aux états généraux, c'est clair que les gens qui ont participé à cet exercice voudraient voir un campus principal à Toronto avec des campus satellites dans le Nord, dans le Sud-Ouest et dans l'Est. Pour les gens qui viennent de se joindre à ce projet, qui sont excités par la possibilité d'avoir une Université de l'Ontario français, ces gens-là, disons qu'ils sont moins précis par rapport. Mais ce serait quand même au conseil de gouverneurs transitoire à décider. Il y a des étudiants potentiels dans toutes les régions de l'Ontario,

donc on aimerait que tout le monde y ait accès comme le commissaire aux services en français nous l'avait dit.

Obtenir une gouvernance universitaire pour et par les Franco-Ontariens, c'est d'avoir un établissement pour lequel on gère tous les leviers. Donc, la gestion inclurait les programmes, c'est certain, mais inclurait également l'administration, les finances, la vie étudiante, les activités académiques, la recherche, tout ça pour et par les francophones. Bien entendu, on parle du corps professoral, des étudiants, des services de l'admission, etc.

Les étudiants et étudiantes parlent haut et fort. Ils veulent un milieu universitaire francophone, un milieu où on est garanti qu'il n'y aura pas d'assimilation. Plusieurs d'entre eux ont fait toute leur école primaire et secondaire en français et maintenant se retrouvent avec le choix déchirant de soit faire face à l'assimilation dans une université anglophone ou même bilingue, ou de devoir s'exiler pour venir à bout de faire des études universitaires en français. Les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes devraient pouvoir étudier en français dans leur province sans avoir à déménager.

Donc, ça c'est ce qu'on veut. On veut voir la mise sur pied d'une université de langue française avec un mandat provincial, avec des campus régionaux coordonnés qui peuvent offrir une formation généraliste, mais également la formation spécialisée dans les régions appropriées selon la demande. Ils veulent une université faite sur mesure pour l'Ontario français, centrée sur la transmission et la création du savoir, qui forme des travailleurs, des penseurs, des créateurs et des citoyens pouvant contribuer au rayonnement de l'Ontario français et de la province dans son entier. Ils veulent un établissement qui offrira une formation de qualité, qui constituera un milieu de vie social en français, et ils expriment également qu'ils veulent être ouverts aux gens pour qui le français n'est pas la langue principale.

La langue française joue en Ontario un rôle historique honorable depuis plus de quatre siècles. On vient de fêter nos 400 ans. La Constitution lui reconnaît le statut de langue officielle au Canada, et le français est reconnu en Ontario comme langue officielle en éducation. De plus, la Constitution reconnaît à la communauté franco-ontarienne le droit à la gestion scolaire. Nous gérons présentement un réseau de 450 écoles primaires et secondaires, 12 conseils scolaires et deux collèges communautaires en français. Les Ontariens et Ontariennes d'expression française n'ont cependant qu'un accès limité à des programmes postsecondaires en français.

Je crois que mes collègues dans les trois partis reconnaissent l'apport du patrimoine culturel des francophones à l'Ontario et désirent le sauvegarder pour les générations à venir. Il est en effet dans l'intérêt social et économique de la province d'améliorer l'accès aux programmes postsecondaires en français dans toutes les régions de notre province. La création d'une université de langue française en Ontario est donc une étape logique et souhaitable qui permettrait à la communauté franco-ontarienne de disposer de tous les établissements

scolaires nécessaires à son épanouissement, à sa pérennité et à son rayonnement.

Les buts de l'université : offrir des programmes de premier cycle et de cycles supérieurs qui sont innovateurs; de favoriser un apprentissage, un enseignement, une recherche et un exercice professionnel de langue française qui soient de la plus haute qualité; de contribuer à l'avancement de la communauté franco-ontarienne; d'être une université qui est gérée et administrée en français et que tous les services soient disponibles dans cette langue; de promouvoir l'Ontario à l'échelle nationale et internationale en mettant l'accent en particulier sur les contributions économiques et culturelles de la communauté franco-ontarienne; de faciliter les échanges avec les éducateurs anglophones et allophones de l'Ontario afin de leur donner l'occasion de s'immerger dans un milieu scolaire universitaire de langue française; et de permettre aux étudiants francophones venant de régions éloignées ou de familles à faible revenu de faire des études universitaires en français.

Nous avons cette opportunité, cet après-midi, de faire un pas. Est-ce que c'est le pas qui nous amène au fil d'arrivée? Bien sûr que non. Le chemin sera encore long, mais avec tous les jeunes que l'on a ici avec nous aujourd'hui et avec tous les gens qui sont prêts à nous aider sur ce chemin, je me sens confiante que l'Ontario est prêt à faire ce pas aujourd'hui : non seulement d'en discuter de façon positive, mais également de voter pour que ce projet de loi passe sa deuxième lecture.

Je vous remercie, monsieur le Président, et je remercie tous ceux qui se sont déplacés aujourd'hui pour être avec nous pour ce débat important, un débat historique. Merci.

Le Président Suppléant (M. Ted Arnott): Merci beaucoup. The member for Ottawa–Orléans.

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: I'm actually very happy to rise this afternoon to speak on behalf of my community of Ottawa–Orléans and mostly on behalf of my constituents on the bill brought forward by my colleague across the floor.

En tant que Franco-Ontarienne, ce projet de loi que M^{me} Gélinas a proposé me tient vraiment à cœur. Comme vous le savez, ma circonscription d'Ottawa–Orléans comprend la plus grande population de francophones à l'intérieur de la grande région d'Ottawa. Je comprends les enjeux des jeunes francophones en Ontario, spécialement en ce qui a trait à l'enseignement postsecondaire en français. C'est pourquoi je suis tout à fait en appui du projet de loi 104.

Our students deserve programs that help them to succeed. For francophone students across the province, that means having access to undergraduate and post-graduate studies in the official language of their choice.

Le français est une langue avec un statut spécial en Ontario, tout comme le droit à l'instruction en français. C'est donc dans notre intérêt, comme Ontariens et Ontariennes, de promouvoir et d'assurer la vitalité de la langue française.

French is already recognized as an official language in the courts and in primary and secondary education. We

have well-established French schools, school boards and two French community colleges, including La Cité, which has their trades and skills school located in my riding. Mais pour notre jeunesse francophone qui se retrouve dans des régions plus éloignées, soit à Sudbury ou dans l'est de l'Ontario, par exemple, leur choix est plus limité.

I have to say that living in Ottawa, we know how privileged our youth are in regard to accessibility to French services as well as French education.

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Nous devons aussi reconnaître l'apport de l'Université d'Ottawa comme institution bilingue offrant d'excellents programmes en français.

Notre gouvernement s'est engagé à fournir à nos étudiants et étudiantes une diversité de programmes et de services en français à travers la province.

We continue to promote the success of our Franco-Ontarian youth through targeted investments. In 2014-15, our government invested nearly \$90 million to support French-language post-secondary education, an increase of 75% since we came into office.

En travaillant sur ce projet, le ministre Moridi a eu l'opportunité de parler plusieurs fois—et la ministre Meilleur—avec le Regroupement étudiant franco-ontarien, la Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne et l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, pour discuter de la possibilité d'une université gouvernée par et pour les francophones.

Je dois dire que j'ai eu l'honneur—l'immense plaisir, aussi—de rencontrer ces groupes à plusieurs reprises depuis la dernière année. J'ai également eu le plaisir de les rencontrer dans mon bureau en août dernier et, tout récemment, dans les dernières deux semaines. Je dois dire qu'on est fiers, forts et dynamiques au niveau de la jeunesse francophone en Ontario.

Je suis fière de notre héritage linguistique et j'ai eu le plaisir d'entendre leurs idées au sujet de l'éducation universitaire en français. Je dois dire que c'était, bien, un plaisir pour moi d'avoir leur apport et leurs contributions. Je veux remercier et féliciter ces groupes d'étudiants qui sont ici pour leur engagement face à ce projet et surtout pour leurs contributions à notre communauté francophone en Ontario.

Je me réjouis de l'initiative du gouvernement actuel d'avoir mis en place le Plan d'action pour l'éducation postsecondaire en langue française dans le Centre et le Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario. Ce plan a permis la création d'un comité consultatif composé de 13 membres, qui permet à certains représentants des groupes étudiants, comme le RÉFO et la FESFO, d'être représentés et d'avoir une voix forte afin de protéger et de renforcer l'éducation postsecondaire en français.

The 13 members of this advisory committee include student group representatives as well as experts from the post-secondary sector, business, immigration, continuing education and health.

Cette initiative est une des plusieurs étapes comprises dans le plan d'action de l'Ontario pour améliorer et

élargir l'accessibilité des programmes scolaires en français pour la région centrale et celle du sud-ouest ontarien.

This is one of several steps taken as part of Ontario's action plan to make French-language programming more accessible in central and southwestern Ontario.

Notons que plus d'un tiers de la population francophone de la province habite dans ces deux régions spécifiques.

Under this plan, \$14 million has been specifically allocated to create 16 new French-language programs in central and southwestern Ontario, an area that is especially lacking in such programs at present.

The final report from the advisory committee on French-language post-secondary education is expected in the spring. Their work, which has been ongoing since January 2014, will bring additional insight and recommendations for facing the challenges associated with expanding French-language educational offerings.

Ce sont non seulement les étudiants et étudiantes qui bénéficieront d'une université francophone, mais aussi l'essor de la francophonie ontarienne dans son ensemble.

Comme gouvernement, il faut toujours trouver des façons de permettre le développement maximal de nos jeunes et ainsi tenter de leur donner les meilleures conditions pour contribuer à notre économie. Nos employeurs ont besoin de travailleurs qualifiés et nos diplômés veulent trouver un emploi où ils pourront performer et vivre leur francophonie. C'est clair qu'une université de langue française contribuera non seulement culturellement mais aussi économiquement à la province.

I look forward to seeing the impact a dedicated French-language university can have in Ontario. I truly believe the creation of this establishment will hugely enhance the francophone community, from students and their families, to researchers and professors to employers.

Nous, ici, collectivement, en Chambre, partageons des objectifs communs, et notre fierté franco-ontarienne nous amène à défendre des causes ensemble afin d'assurer, de promouvoir et surtout de faire rayonner la francophonie en Ontario et, ce qui peut importer le plus, dans nos activités.

En conclusion, l'essentiel dans ce projet de loi est de continuer à préserver et à développer nos institutions en Ontario afin de donner à nos jeunes les outils nécessaires pour qu'ils deviennent une force économique pour notre province.

Ceci signifie que nous devons travailler ensemble afin de garantir le meilleur accès possible à l'éducation postsecondaire en français pour notre jeunesse francophone. Merci, monsieur le Président.

Le Président suppléant (M. Ted Arnott): Merci beaucoup. The member for Thornhill.

M^{me} Gila Martow: Merci beaucoup. Je m'excuse, mais je perds ma voix un petit peu aujourd'hui, alors j'espère que vous pouvez m'entendre un peu.

Une voix.

M^{me} Gila Martow: Merci beaucoup. Premièrement, je souhaite la bienvenue à tous les délégués qui sont ici de

la communauté francophone. Ils sont ici cet après-midi pour appuyer la deuxième lecture du projet de loi 104 de ma collègue de Nickel Belt pour la création de l'Université de l'Ontario français.

Nous avons des délégués qui représentent des organismes francophones très différents à travers toute la province—j'espère qu'ils sont tous de bons amis—pour parler pas seulement avec nous autres, mais avec toutes les communautés pour voir l'intérêt pour une université francophone ici en Ontario.

Des communautés visiteuses et organismes qui sont ici, on a le RÉFO, le Regroupement étudiant franco-ontarien. C'est l'organisme porte-parole des 22 000 étudiants et étudiantes qui poursuivent des études postsecondaires en français ici en Ontario. On a aussi l'AFO, l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario; et la FESFO, ce qui veut dire la Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne. C'est l'organisme porte-parole des 25 000 jeunes francophones ici en Ontario. Ils ont une voix très, très forte, comme avait dit ma collègue de la circonscription d'Ottawa-Orléans. Alors, bienvenue ici à la législature de l'Ontario.

Je vais parler un petit peu aussi en anglais.

I have a study from the Conference Board of Canada that states that the province is losing enormously by not investing in a university system managed by and for francophones. According to the Conference Board of Canada, investment in Quebec and New Brunswick governments in the bilingual population increases access for these provinces to foreign markets and leads to additional economic benefits of up to several billion dollars. More specifically, and I'm quoting from the study, "In 2011, exports from Quebec and New Brunswick to French-speaking countries were two times more than would be expected considering their share of overall Canadian exports. The difference is even more marked with imports: Quebec and New Brunswick import from French-speaking countries two and a half times what they should given their share of Canadian imports overall. This indicates that the eight other provinces are doing much less trade with francophone countries in proportion to their share of Canadian global trade."

Obviously we need to have strong, educated francophone community members across Canada, not just here in Ontario, who can advocate and travel the world and develop those trade agreements and work for companies that do trade with other companies, and to develop and open up those markets. Certainly we see that happening in the provinces with the numbers of students who have more than just high-school and elementary-school French. In order to do that sort of international trade work, you have to have language skills from post-secondary and university-level programs.

I'm going to just say that en français : l'étude du Conference Board du Canada souligne que la province perd énormément en n'investissant pas dans un système universitaire géré par et pour les francophones. Selon le Conference Board du Canada, l'investissement des gouvernements québécois et néo-brunswickois dans le

bilinguisme de leur population augmente l'accès de ces provinces aux marchés étrangers et mène à des retombées économiques supplémentaires pouvant atteindre plusieurs milliards de dollars.

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Je veux parler un petit peu au sujet des francophones ici en Ontario.

I want to say a few things about francophones here in Ontario; these are just a few facts for everybody to absorb. Among the 13.5 million people living in Ontario, 1.4 million speak French, which is over 10%; 611,500 of them identify as francophones; 42.2% of francophones live in eastern Ontario, 35.7% in southern Ontario and 22.1% in northern Ontario; by 2025, half of all francophones in Ontario will live in southern Ontario; 60% of francophones are born in Ontario; 14% are born outside of Canada, mainly Europe and Africa.

Part of the support from this side of the House for a francophone university is that there's a lot of talk about increasing francophone immigration. But one of the keys for immigrants—we see it between the United States and Canada—is that if somebody goes to university in another country, there's a pretty darned good chance they are going to stay there. They meet somebody, they make friends, they get comfortable, they do some part-time work and they make connections in the community.

It's a fantastic way for us to boost francophone immigration in Ontario, which we all keep talking about and supporting, but it doesn't quite seem to be happening. The target is to increase francophone immigration to 5% of new immigrants who would be from francophone countries and able to at least work to a reasonable degree and converse to a reasonable degree in French and contribute to all the francophone communities we have in Ontario.

Up in York region, in the riding of Thornhill, we have l'AFRY, l'Association des francophones de la région de York. Mona Babin was the « directrice », and now her friend Valérie is taking over. Alain Beaudoin is the president. They have fantastic events and a fantastic summer program for students. We cannot keep that level growing without francophone university students. In fact, some people have even said to me, "There's a lot of francophone universities in Quebec, and if our francophone students want to go to a francophone university, they could just go to Quebec."

That brings us right back to what I said about immigration. If our francophone students go to Quebec, they might decide to stay in Quebec. That's not what the francophone communities here want to see. They don't want to see their young people moving outside the province for university, not to return. I think we actually want to do the opposite, Mr. Speaker. We want to have francophone students from Quebec come to Ontario and maybe settle here, and this is definitely one way to do it. So it's not just about a francophone university.

Ce n'est pas seulement une discussion au sujet d'une université. On devrait parler un peu de la qualité des programmes dans cette université. Est-ce que c'est

quelque chose pour étudier pour devenir médecin ou dentiste, ou est-ce que c'est seulement un programme des sciences sociales? J'espère qu'on peut en parler un peu. Peut-être qu'on peut avoir des programmes pour travailler au gouvernement, parce qu'on voit qu'on a besoin de personnes ici, des Ontariens et Ontariennes, qui peuvent non seulement parler en français mais écrire des choses dont on a besoin—des « press releases ».

I'm going to repeat that, Mr. Speaker. There's the question of what kind of programs and what kind of quality a francophone university would have. Obviously it would have to start small, but my suggestion would be to consider having programs that would help those of us here who are working in government—you know, as somebody who is not francophone—je suis francophile. But we're always looking, in all levels of government in this province, for people who have the necessary skills, who can write articles, who can do press releases in French and not merely have a bit of French-language skills. Maybe it's something we can work on to have an internship, un programme de stage. Somehow there could be some kind of co-operation between those of us who are elected officials and have students from a francophone university spend time interning in our offices. We could be part of that program and a part of that solution, because we see that in the medical professions. You don't just go to university and get the degree. Some of the greatest programs have the best internships. Obviously, doctors have to practise in hospitals and clinics. As an optometrist, I had to work in a clinic for two years. We also see the co-op programs that are so successful.

So my personal opinion is that I would really like to see some type of work/school program that would help us for purely selfish reasons. We all are often looking for staff not just in our offices but in the ministries and in so many areas in the government—if we want to continue to be a true shining light of francophone communities in Canada, not just, "Oh, yes, Ontario also has francophone communities."

I'm going to end by saying that on that level, my nephew, Eden, est étudiant à l'école secondaire le Collège français, ici à Toronto, au niveau 11. Il venait souvent pour m'aider à traduire, « translate », mes notes en français. He was born to a mother who grew up, like I did, in an English suburb in Montreal. She went to a French university in Quebec City and then she did, at the Sorbonne in Paris, a master of education, and she made a big effort to speak to her little baby son in French. He went on to go to a French-only school—not French immersion but French-only school. I have to say, now, when he speaks English, he sometimes has a French accent. Merci beaucoup à Eden Gladstone pour m'avoir aidé. Thank you very much. Merci beaucoup à tous les étudiants qui sont venus.

Le Président suppléant (M. Ted Arnott): Merci beaucoup. Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Bonjour et merci, monsieur le Président. As an anglophone, I actually represent a riding that is designated bilingual under the French Language

Services Act. I can tell you that Welland and Port Colborne, which are part of my riding, embrace the French culture.

While I was la mairesse of the city, we developed French signage in an area known as “French Town” in our community. We also developed a bilingual flag which flies proudly in our city, and we’re proud members of AFMO, the association of French municipalities of Ontario. I can tell you that it is very important to our community, and I’m sure my community would support the development of an independent French university.

Some 1.7 million francophones live in Ontario, but only under 600,000 actually speak French in their homes today. Part of that is the incomplete transmission of the French language by parents to their children in the home, but the other part of it is the fact that once you get past high school, the opportunities to actually go on to university or college are limited, if you want to study strictly in French.

I just want to spend a couple of minutes talking about the erosion of French-language services under the act in my own riding. As a nurse in the Welland County General Hospital, before it became part of the Niagara Health System, where they brought eight hospitals together and closed three of those sites, we used to offer French services in our hospital. We offered French lessons to our nurses and to our health care workers. We translated documents—patient teaching documents and surveys—into the French language, but that has all gone by the wayside under the Niagara Health System.

When I contacted the Niagara Health System, after I spoke to the French Language Services Commissioner about this issue, basically what they said was—I asked for the documents that actually supported their programs—that they were non-existent, and when we talked to them about it, they said they would do their best, and that purchased services are available in the public domain to provide French services. Well, that isn’t enough.

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It’s not acceptable to expect families to actually pay for French services when the government is mandated to do it. Closing the Welland site of the Niagara Health System, which is proposed by this government, is going to further erode those French-language services for a community that has a 15% French population.

I have to actually sit down now because my time is up, but merci beaucoup.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Michael Coteau: It’s a pleasure and an honour to be able to speak on this bill here today. I want to first start by talking about my experience in my local community in regard to the French and the francophone culture.

When I campaign, I knock on doors and I talk to people. It’s quite often I meet someone who’s from a francophone diaspora, who has come to Canada, or someone who’s been here for quite some time. I think it’s my last name that kind of activates the conversation, and

they say, “Oh, Michel Coteau, how are you?” We have a bit of a conversation. It always surprises me how many francophones would live in a place like Don Valley East. Our francophone culture is very large across the province of Ontario.

I know that, as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in my previous portfolio, I had the opportunity to talk to a lot of people throughout the community when we were bringing through the immigration act that set a 5% target for francophone immigration here in the province of Ontario. I remember the conversations we had around small towns in Ontario that were established by francophones and some anglophones many years ago.

All throughout Ontario, the francophone history in Ontario is a long history. If you go back to the early settlement of Europeans in this region, you’ll find that there’s always been a strong francophone presence in Ontario. People are often surprised when you say that Ontario has the second-largest francophone population in Canada. Sometimes people think it’s New Brunswick, but it is Ontario, again, with several hundred thousand francophones.

I know that there’s a strong demand for French-based education in this province. If you look at Toronto, for example, while I was a school board trustee, we had a massive expansion of French immersion. I believe at the Toronto District School Board currently there’s roughly 20,000—I could be wrong with the number, but the last time I checked, it’s roughly 20,000 students who are in French immersion. In fact, my two daughters go to a French immersion school. It’s one of the three at the public board that is fully French immersion. They’re not introduced to English, I think, until grade 4. The demand at that school continues to grow and grow. It’s a real issue for that school because they’ve run out of space. There’s so much demand.

I think that this type of a response to a demand is—looking at other academic institutions that would be able to support the growing demand here in Ontario would be quite good. I think that looking for ways to support any type of education attached to francophone and French learning in the province of Ontario is great. That’s why I’m so glad that Madeleine Meilleur has been looking at ways to bring people together to look at this initiative for expansion.

I think I’ve gone over my time so I’m going to sit down now, but I have so much more to say on this topic. If I’m given another opportunity, I’ll speak a bit more on this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It’s my honour to rise today to speak in support of Bill 104, An Act to establish the Université de l’Ontario français, brought forward by the member from Nickel Belt and the NDP critic for francophone affairs.

I want to first of all thank the member for Nickel Belt for all of the excellent work that she has done in support of the over 600,000 francophones in Ontario. Bill 104 is

the result of a province-wide consultation, as she has mentioned in her remarks, that was held in many communities across Ontario.

One of the main recommendations stemming from the États généraux sur le postsecondaire en Ontario français was the creation of a Franco-Ontarian university. This bill that she has introduced and we're debating today aims to do just that.

Le but de ce projet de loi est précisément de répondre à cette recommandation.

It urges the Premier and the government to listen to the Franco-Ontarian community and commit to the creation of a French-language university in Ontario for everyone. The French language is a constitutionally recognized official language of our province and our country, and Franco-Ontarians deserve the right to access their post-secondary studies in French. This request is supported by the Regroupement étudiant franco-ontarien, the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario and the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne.

Along with the Ontario NDP caucus, I fully support the creation of a francophone university for all in Ontario as I recognize the importance and the contribution of francophone communities across Ontario.

French-speaking Ontarians from across the province have waited long enough for the opportunity to complete their university studies in French. We've heard from students and families about how hard it is to gain access to French-language classes in our post-secondary system.

Les étudiants et étudiantes, ainsi que leurs familles, nous ont clairement indiqué à quel point il est difficile d'avoir accès à des cours en français dans notre système d'éducation postsecondaire.

In the 1960s we saw the creation of French-language elementary and secondary schools. It only makes sense to have a French-language university that is available to everyone in Ontario.

C'est juste normal d'avoir une université francophone pour tous les gens de l'Ontario.

There is no reason why anyone in the House should not be supportive of this bill. I look forward to seeing this bill move through the legislative process and becoming law so that every Ontarian will have the opportunity to complete their university studies in French.

The time is now—c'est le moment d'agir—particularly as we celebrate the 400th anniversary of the French presence in Ontario.

I want to thank everyone who has pushed for the creation of the Franco-Ontarian university, including many members of the francophone community, for their hard work on this very important issue.

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

Mr. Han Dong: Bonjour, monsieur le Président. I'm very pleased to speak to this very important bill brought forward by the member from Nickel Belt, who has been a long-time advocate for the francophone community in Ontario.

Similar to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, both my kids are in French immersion and I've seen a very good result and, in fact, a very good experience. My daughter often tells me about it coming back from school, and I'm picking up a bit of French here and there as I tutor her, helping her with her homework.

I think in spirit this is a very good bill to make sure that the French language remains strong in our post-secondary education. I know there are members of student groups here with us in the Legislature this afternoon. I want to assure them that our government supports bilingualism and the francophone community being strong.

I look forward to further debates on this, and I'm happy to support this bill as presented.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to congratulate my colleague the member for Nickel Belt on bringing forward this bill for us to consider today.

I am the MPP for London West, which is not in a designated French-language area. However, we do have a growing francophone population, not just in London but across the southwestern region. In fact, there are estimates that in my region, southwestern Ontario and central Ontario, within the next 10 years nearly half of Ontario's francophone population is going to be living in that area.

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This is an urgent issue, given the population growth of the francophone community, but it's also an urgent issue from the perspective of post-secondary education policy. I am the post-secondary critic for the NDP caucus, and certainly this bill moves forward on the commitment that was made in the 2013 report of the Expert Panel on French-Language Postsecondary Education, which was itself called Moving Forward, and which recommended the establishment of a French-language university.

We know that across this province, only 22% of post-secondary programs are available to students in French, and the French Language Services Commissioner found that in central Ontario and southwestern Ontario, it can be as little as 3% or even less program options that are available to French-speaking post-secondary students.

What this means is that students are leaving the "French first" school system or the immersion school system—like many MPPs, my daughter attended immersion—but they're leaving the system before they get to high school because they know there are no post-secondary options for them in the area after they graduate from high school. So we are losing that linguistic capacity in our region and across the province when we don't see students moving on to high school, and then of course we don't see students moving on to post-secondary.

Our region needs a highly skilled pool of bilingual workers, given the influx of newcomers and immigrants who are settling in southwestern Ontario. I should also say that there are internationally educated professionals

coming to our region who come from French-speaking countries. They want to be able to access bridging programs so that they can get into their profession here in Ontario, and they don't have the option to do that. That would be another benefit of offering this or for creating a French-language university.

Speaker, I strongly support this bill and look forward to seeing its implementation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Timmins—James Bay.

M. Gilles Bisson: Premièrement, comme francophone, comme père et comme collègue NPD—avec ma collègue M^{me} Gélinas—je suis très fier d'être ici aujourd'hui pour supporter ce projet de loi.

Écoute, c'est un chemin qui est pas mal long. On le sait, dans la communauté francophone : tout ce qu'on est allé chercher, on est allé chercher nous-mêmes quand ça vient à l'éducation en français au postsecondaire et au primaire, et tout entre les deux poteaux, comme ils disent.

Je veux, premièrement, comme père, dire que, moi, je suis très fier que notre fille Natalie a eu l'occasion d'aller à l'université en français parce que, nous autres, à Timmins, nous avons l'Université de Hearst qui est en français—comme on a à Kapuskasing, comme on a à Hearst—une institution qui est formidable; une institution qui est colocalisée avec le Collège Boréal dans ces trois instances, ces trois sites-là.

Pour nous, comme famille, c'est important parce que ça dit que Natalie a eu la chance non seulement d'aller à l'université chez elle, mais ça veut dire qu'elle a établi sa vie là. Comme pèpère, je peux vous dire, c'est important. Quand on a des petits-enfants, on ne veut pas qu'ils s'en aillent trop loin de la maison. Donc, l'autre partie du « mix » de cette affaire-là, c'est qu'il faut donner à nos jeunes l'opportunité de rester dans la région où ils veulent possiblement rester. S'il y a de l'éducation postsecondaire et il y a de l'emploi, il y a plus de chances que ces jeunes-là vont rester.

On apprend de nos expériences. Quand on a créé le Collège Boréal et La Cité—je dis toujours « la cité des jeunes », bien, votre collègue, Madame—on a trouvé qu'il y avait certaines personnes qui disaient : « Non, non, non. C'est une perte d'argent. » C'était rien qu'un gros succès. Les jeunes ont choisi d'aller à l'école en français. Les jeunes ont été au Collège Boréal et au collège d'Ottawa. Ils vont faire le même choix qu'ils ont fait à l'Université de Hearst. Donnez-leur le choix et les élèves vont choisir d'aller à l'école en français.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to start by thanking my leader, Andrea Horwath, for taking part in this debate and putting on the record clearly that New Democrats stand 100% with the francophone community and with every Ontarian—that we are ready to take this next step, that we need this new Université de l'Ontario here in Ontario.

I'd like to thank some of the anglophones from all three parties who took part in the debate because this

really shows that this is a step forward for all of us. This is a step forward for our province. By standing up and speaking to this bill today, you put it out clearly. I certainly thank my colleagues, but I also thank the members from the other parties who stood up. They may not be from a francophone background, but they understood the important step that needs to be taken.

Aujourd'hui, je crois que dans cette assemblée, on vient de faire un petit pas historique. C'est la première fois qu'un débat a lieu, face à une université pour l'Ontario français, et tous ceux qui y ont participé, ils ont participé de façon positive. Donc, j'en déduis qu'on a l'appui unanime de la Chambre pour aller de l'avant.

Le prochain pas est clair. Le prochain pas est la mise sur pied d'un conseil des gouverneurs transitoire pour nous amener à tous les prochains pas qui nous amèneront à la route qu'on veut atteindre qui nous amènera à notre Université de l'Ontario français.

Le message est clair. Il a été appuyé par tous les partis dans la Chambre. Il est certainement appuyé par ceux qui ont participé, qui sont venus à Queen's Park aujourd'hui, les 2 200 étudiants qui se sont déjà inscrits. On veut un comité transitoire. Le plus tôt sera le mieux. Je leur donne trois mois, monsieur le Président. Merci.

CHILDREN'S LAW REFORM
AMENDMENT ACT (RELATIONSHIP
WITH GRANDPARENTS), 2015
LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT
LA LOI PORTANT RÉFORME
DU DROIT DE L'ENFANCE (RELATION
AVEC LES GRANDS-PARENTS)

Mr. Mantha moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 142, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act with respect to the relationship between a child and the child's grandparents / Projet de loi 142, Loi modifiant la Loi portant réforme du droit de l'enfance en ce qui concerne la relation entre un enfant et ses grands-parents.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Unfortunately, I don't have the privilege of referring to myself as a grandfather yet, and, unfortunately, my wife would also probably not be impressed with me if I would, because she is a very young, beautiful woman who has just finished raising her two boys, and we're just starting our honeymoon once again. But I do have some godchildren, some nieces and nephews, and I do have some people in my life that I refer to as grandparents.

Unfortunately, when I was a very young lad, both on my mother's side and on my father's side, I lost my grandparents at a very young age. However, it's one of the things that really attracted me to my wife, seeing that her grandparents, pèpère Bidoux and mémère Juliette, were wonderful individuals who really cared for the

entire family structure. They cared for each and every one of their children's children. It was that structure that attracted me quite a bit to my wife.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to introduce my bill here today, the Children's Law Reform Amendment Act (Relationship with Grandparents). I'm reintroducing this bill. It shouldn't be of a surprise to many of the members here because this bill was introduced by a previous member, Mr. Kim Craitor. I've always been one to stand in my place in this House, Mr. Speaker, and give credit where credit is due, and today I'm doing that. I took the opportunity, a couple of days ago, to extend a call to Kim, wondering how he was doing and just telling him that I was taking the initiative of his bill and bringing it forward in this House. A good idea is a good idea regardless of where it comes from, and we need to foster those ideas and move them forward.

1430

The last time it was presented in this House was in 2012 as Bill 48, which was co-sponsored by the then member Christine Elliott along with Cheri DiNovo. It was introduced in previous years: in 2008 as Bill 33 and in 2012 as Bill 67. So this bill has seen this House many, many times. Actually, it's been through this House about five times.

It's far too many times, Mr. Speaker, where it has been proposed in the past and was very well endorsed, was very well spoken about and, unfortunately, sat on the order paper and never moved forward. This is a bill that has been slipping through the cracks for many years. We have to seal that crack, and we have to get this bill through to committee and see this through into law.

I want to give credit to Kim Craitor. He was very passionate about this bill, and for him, it was quite personal. He took the time to express his entire relationship; his experience with his grandparents. For him, this was personal. I hope for him, and for all those grandparents and grandchildren who have lost their relationship, that this bill can finally be passed.

The intent of the bill is to legislate consideration by the Family Court to grant grandparents access to their grandchildren as part of a custody hearing if it is in the best interests of the child. You will see that I will be repeating that several times here today: in the best interests of the child. This is what this bill is about. This bill is not just about grandparents; it's about the children, and grandparents wanting what is best for them.

Many MPPs in this House are frustrated that this bill has never gone through. I recall being in the House when Kim was saying, "It sure seems simple to me. I don't want to be critical of my own government, but come on, guys, wake up. Come on. This bill has to go through."

Not only do I recognize the work Mr. Craitor has put in, but I also want to recognize a former colleague who is here from Parkdale-High Park—

Interjection: Former?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm still here.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Did I say "former?" I am sorry, my dear. She's still the member from Parkdale, and a great member too.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I just checked her pulse.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Yes, she's still here.

I also want to recognize Christine Elliott. They are huge advocates and worked very closely with Kim on this bill.

It is important to recognize the many grandparents who have been on the journey to get this legislation passed, and I'm proud to stand in my place and continue the fight to see this through. Grandparents deserve it, but the children need it.

What this bill does is amend the Children's Law Reform Act to allow the development and continuation of a relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren. Many of these children have already gone through much stress in their lives, and they don't need any more. People often take for granted the relationship between grandparents and their grandchild or grandchildren.

No one expects that something like this could happen, but it does, way too many times. Young children dealing with broken homes, fights between grandparents and parents, and changes to routines; the one thing children can count on is their grandparents. They can always go home to grandma and grandpa, to *mémère* and *pépère*, and expect that hug and expect that warmth.

Often for children, grandparents are a constant in their lives. A place where they can go for that warmth and that love during tumultuous times; a place where they can just be kids, just be with grandma and grandpa and, again, find that hug.

Unfortunately, for many grandparents, due to breakdowns of family they are prohibited from seeing their grandchildren. I can't imagine how sad this must be for so many to lose contact with their loved ones. This makes no sense, Mr. Speaker. Children need love, especially in these difficult times, and often that comes from grandma or grandpa.

Many of these grandparents are more than just grandparents. They're mentors; they provide guidance. Many of these children lack stability in their lives. Often, these grandparents provide it to them, and so much more.

I know that my oldest son, when he heads down to Gogama and visits *pépère* Jean-Guy and *mémère* Sue—it doesn't take very much for Grandma Sue to tell him, "Hey, moon pie, how are you doing?", and he goes from a six-foot-two, 280-pound boy to a little moon pie. He crumbles very quickly in the glare of grandma. That's quite an impressive influence that one person has on a child's life.

It's extremely sad that more than 75,000 grandparents in Ontario are denied access to visiting or seeing their grandchildren. That's a fact: 75,000. In addition to that, it's estimated that over 112 grandchildren are suffering from the loss of their grandparents.

Interjection: Thousand.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Let me correct that: 112,000. I thank my seatmate for correcting me and my colleagues who constantly correct me, which I enjoy because I always look at improving my task here at Queen's Park.

These bonds are extremely important and will inevitably affect children for years and generations to come. This bill currently exists in other provinces. It exists in the Yukon. It exists in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec and Nova Scotia. It's long overdue here in Ontario.

This bill, again, is simple. It states that when a grandparent makes an application to the courts to have the right to access their grandchildren, have the right to custody—or, in some rare cases, they could take full custody of their grandchildren. The problem is, when grandparents get to courts now, they make that case; they make that relationship. However, the court's response to them is, "I'm sorry. You've made your case. I hear what you're telling me, but unfortunately there's nothing in the law for giving me that directive." This bill would give direction to the courts—just direction—because it would add the word "grandparent" to the Children's Law Reform Act where it does not currently exist.

There is still a responsibility, when the grandparent makes an application, to prove that it is always in the best interests of the child. The child will always come first. That's important: that this will always be done in the best interests of the child. The child always, always comes first.

I'm sure that many people here in the House—many of my colleagues are grandparents. I can imagine the pain and anguish you would feel if you were all of a sudden no longer able to see or be in the lives of your cherished grandchildren. I feel, and many others feel, that we need to look at grandparents and their roles in grandchildren's lives.

If that relationship is deemed by the courts to be in the best interests of the child, then we need to look at these options or at least have the ability to look at these options. That's what this bill does.

The relationship between my children and their grandparents is strong. My one son spends weeks at a time—it actually gives me and my wife a break when he's away from the house—but you know that he is there, getting the values which my wife and I have instilled into our kids. We know that he is there in a safe surrounding. We know that he is there, that he is being loved and we know that he's there being fed, which takes away from my expenses. So thank you, *pépère* Jean-Guy and *mémère* Sue.

It's sad to think that that relationship is not available to all grandchildren, and that's the sad part. This is what this bill does—to make sure that that relationship not only flourishes but is there now, tomorrow and for years to come because that relationship that grandparents have with their grandchildren is one heck of a special relationship. It is true; it is genuine; it is different.

I see my friend here, Gilles Bisson, the member from Timmins–James Bay—and I will address this in my two minutes, but seeing him sitting down, playing trucks in the halls of Queen's Park—that is a moment that will stay in that child's memory for a very, very long time.

I look forward to the debate, Mr. Speaker.

1440

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

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's always a privilege to be able to stand in my place in this House and add commentary to the debate. I want to start by thanking the member from Algoma–Manitoulin for bringing this bill forward today and having the courage to bring it forward again.

Just shortly after I was elected in 2014, I had one couple visit my office and talk about the former attempts to bring this bill through the House. At that point, they asked me to sponsor this private member's bill. I was unable to at that point, because I had already committed to and started work on my private member's bill last year, which was the Lung Health Act. But I certainly appreciate the comments from the member opposite.

Our government is firmly committed to supporting Ontario's families and ensuring that a child's best interests are looked after, and this is an important part of that commitment. I know that the member opposite was saying he hasn't had the privilege of being a grandparent yet, and I want to let him know that I'm looking forward to that in May. I went to Copenhagen for a couple of days to see my stepson and his fiancée get married. They're expecting our first grandchild in May, and I couldn't be happier. I'm looking forward to that very happy event. Hopefully they'll be living closer to North America than Europe at that particular time.

Again, it brings this home for me, as I'm looking forward to the birth of our first grandchild and really reflecting and pausing to look at my experiences with my own grandparents and my children's grandparents. As we know, the role that grandparents play in the lives of children can be enriching to the children, the grandparents and indeed the extended family.

I just wanted to add a couple of comments about the private member's bill. Under the current law, our courts must consider the "love, affection and emotional ties" between a child and any person who is applying for custody or access. In fact, currently, in an application for custody or access under section 24 of the Children's Law Reform Act, "The merits of an application ... shall be determined on the basis of the best interests of the child," considering a broad range of factors that include among others, "the love, affection and emotional ties between the child" and the persons involved in the child's care and upbringing.

This would likely include grandparents in any instance where the child's grandparents are an active part of the child's life. I want to stress that point, Mr. Speaker: At present, under Ontario law, a grandparent already has the ability to obtain an order for access to their grandchild if such access is found to be in the child's best interests. So when the member from Algoma–Manitoulin's bill states a requirement that a child's relationship with his or her grandparents be considered among the factors in determining the child's best interest, I don't think we should see that as an entirely new concept. It does already exist.

Rather, what the member's bill does is make the grandparents an explicit factor in the determination of access and custody. I know that determining access and custody in today's scenario is really a difficult, complex and highly nuanced decision that a judge needs to make. It says that a change to make grandparents an explicit factor to consider, regarding the best interests of the child, could have symbolic value and may satisfy the concerns of grandparents who believe they should be treated differently from non-grandparents under the language of the Children's Law Reform Act. The proposed amendments are technically unnecessary, however, and would not change how custody or access determinations are made.

In regard to the other reform contained in the member for Algoma-Manitoulin's bill, I think we all need to look very closely at how "unreasonable barriers" are defined in the relationship between children and their grandparents. As well, I would ask the member opposite whether that requires parents to facilitate a positive relationship between the child and the grandparents. I think it's fair to say that some grandparents may have unreasonable expectations about how much access they should have with their grandchildren and where and when that access should take place.

Also, we seem to be working on the presumption that having access with a grandparent is always in a child's best interests, but in reality, that may not always be the case, and I know the member from Algoma-Manitoulin has talked about that. There can be so many determining factors of that: It may be a very strained relationship between a parent or both parents and either set of grandparents. It may be that it's not in the child's best interests because the strain of that access point, of where and when and how long, can be difficult for the child. It's very difficult, sometimes, for the custodial parent or guardian of that child to really know what's being said or done or talked about in the presence of the child, in a strained family relationship. So I just want to be cautious about that particular situation.

As I said before, family dynamics, particularly during family strains and breakups, are very, very complex. I'm cautious about the bill being overly prescriptive. The decisions that judges have to make in light of strained family dynamics and all the complexities that can fall upon families—make the decisions very difficult for judges. I think there are a lot of complexities that are different. All families and sizes of families have differences. There are differences in family relationships and dynamics there. I know that judges strive to keep the interests of the child at the centre of these decisions.

As we know, just as there are unfit parents who represent a risk to their child's well-being, the same can be true for grandparents, and I think we in this House would recognize that. There have been several court cases, even in the last few years, that have looked at the abuse that some children have had to suffer at the hands of their grandparents. There have been several convictions of grandparents who have mistreated their

grandchildren. I know that those are few and far between, but we do need to recognize that.

I've said before in this House that I was a pediatric nurse at the Hospital for Sick Children for the first 10 years of my nursing career. I was working with children under age four and a lot of children who were coming in with a diagnosis of neglect or potential child abuse or something like that—failure to thrive was another. Those children I remember in my nursing career weren't always parented by parents. They were sometimes coming in with guardians who were aunts, uncles, grandparents. Some of these children that I saw—babies and toddlers, in particular—had horrific signs of abuse.

I remember, actually, the first child I ever admitted to the Hospital for Sick Children was a 13-month-old little girl. She had a rope burn around her neck. The story that I had from the parent and the grandparent at the time of admitting that child was very different from the story that they came in with the next day. The bottom line was that it was the grandparent who was later convicted of abusing this person.

Those are the kinds of things that come to my mind, Mr. Speaker, when I'm looking at the protection of children.

In closing, I think that it's a very difficult decision to prevent someone's access to children in their family, but our concern continues to be paramount—for the well-being of Ontario's children. We want to make sure that we're not overly prescriptive and that judges continue to be allowed to make the nuanced and difficult decisions that they need to, to protect the children who are there in front of them.

I wanted to reiterate again that, under today's law, grandparents are able to ask for access from Ontario's courts, to be able to continue to see their grandchildren.

1450

In saying that, Mr. Speaker, I just want to recognize again the member from Algoma-Manitoulin's bill today. Those are just really a few of my thoughts. Indeed I do support getting this bill into committee and having that dialogue and a greater debate, to be able to hear from all points of view. Again, I want to thank him for his caring attitude by putting a bill out today that really tries to address some of the issues that we've heard about in our constituencies about parents and families, and grandparents in particular.

Thank you very much. I look forward to hearing further debate.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: Again, I have to apologize for my hoarse voice, which I hope sounds more sultry to you than it sounds to me.

There's an expression—and I've certainly heard it in Thornhill; maybe it's just a Thornhill thing—that the reason we have kids is so that we can have grandchildren. I think that being a grandparent—apparently; I'm not there yet—is a heck of a lot more fun than being a parent. You can certainly see why, because when you're a grand-

parent, you're there for all the good times. You can say bye-bye when it's not so great.

I grew up with my grandparents living across the street from me. The neighbours used to laugh: There'd be containers of food coming in one direction, full, and going back in the other direction, empty. We could always sneak over to the grandparents' house when our parents weren't letting us watch TV or do other things.

My grandparents really were parents, and if my parents had split up, as some of my friends' parents had—it's very possible that they could have made a court date and gotten divorced without the grandparents' knowledge. How would the grandparents know unless they're being told? People can sneak off and get divorced and the grandparents wouldn't have any input.

I think this bill isn't insisting that grandparents remain in their grandchildren's lives. What this bill is saying is that they must be aware. That's how I'm taking it, that the grandparents must be told there is a divorce going on. The kid has to be—if they're old enough to discuss and to assess what the emotional ties are with the grandparents and to see if the court wants to mandate that the grandparents should have access if they want to have access—that they are able to somehow communicate that to the court system, to the judge.

We see too often in custody disputes that there are a lot of sour grapes and chips on people's shoulders and they'll do anything to punish the opposite party, even so much as hurt their own child by denying their child access to their in-laws or maybe even their own parents, who maybe they feel slighted them.

I think that the member from Algoma-Manitoulin is addressing something that does affect a lot of people. I don't think that this is a small number of grandparents. Certainly there are the vocal grandparents. We've heard of them in the newspapers, who have protested not having access to the grandchildren, but I think that there are probably tens of thousands of grandparents who are denied access to their grandchildren. Perhaps the grandchildren moved away. If they offer to have the grandchildren fly out to visit them, they're not even able to communicate that because they might not even know where their grandchildren are if the court doesn't mandate that they are allowed to have some kind of access.

He's not here today, but the member from Etobicoke Centre told a beautiful story about how his grandfather insisted he learn Ukrainian and learn about the Ukrainian culture, that it was one of the closest relationships in his life and that he really credits his grandfather for a lot of his success.

I bet that if we speak to a lot of people in here and we talk about our families and who was influential in our lives, a lot of us here had a support system that went beyond just our parents and our siblings; it went to aunts and uncles and grandparents. It definitely does take a village to raise a child, and I would hate, for the child's sake, to see that they're denied a relationship with their grandparents if they want to have that relationship and if the grandparents want to have that relationship.

I am also looking forward to hearing from members of the community. I think that it's going to be interesting in committee to see which community groups come to speak on this and what they have to say. I think that the fact that we're living in a multicultural country really says a lot about different cultures and different attitudes to raising children. I think that a lot of the new Canadians—we certainly see it when we go knocking on doors, Mr. Speaker. The door is opened and you start talking to somebody, and it turns out that they're the grandparent, not the parent. The grandparents are there, sometimes living with two or three generations, sometimes four generations, in one house. It's a very vibrant, lively household, and those children are extremely lucky to have that type of atmosphere and that type of upbringing.

I think the main thing we all have to remember is that the child should come first. If a child is only a toddler and the parents get divorced, that child might have different needs as a toddler than they have growing up and being older, perhaps in their teens. I think it would be very sad if we couldn't ensure that grandparents could somehow have a connection to their grandchildren, if the grandchildren want that connection and the grandparents want that connection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for Timmins-James Bay

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You should call me *pépère* for this debate, because that's how I'm referred to by my grandchildren, or I should say our grandchildren. Murielle and I are quite fortunate. Our two daughters, Julie and Natalie, both have two children. Nathaniel and Victoria, being Natalie's—Julie's children, are the two oldest. Isn't it like a parent, getting your own kids' names mixed up sometimes? Somehow, we never mix up our grandchildren, which is interesting. And Natalie has Ellisa and Eva. I can tell you that they're such a part of our lives; I can't imagine what it would be like not to have them around.

Imagine if we were in a situation, as is unfortunately the case in a lot of situations, where the husband and wife don't get along and they happen to separate. It's a little bit easier for us, because the mothers are our two children. It makes it difficult in regard to how you maintain that relationship if the relationship sours to the point that it affects custody of the children.

I've had people come to my constituency office—I'm sure you have—and people I have run across in my constituency who live exactly that situation: The grandparents were a part of the grandchild's life, the grandchild doesn't know why *mémère* and *pépère*, or *nonno* and *nonna*, are not coming by anymore and find themselves in this awful situation thinking that somehow or other the grandparents just gave up on them. It's not a question of the grandparents gave up on them; they're just not able to get access because of the bitterness of the separation.

All the member is trying to do is give the judge the opportunity to say, "Let's look at what's practical here."

And if it's doable, let's give grandparents access." I understand there are going to be times when we're not going to be able to do that because it won't be practical. But the bill is written in such a way as to allow that to happen.

I urge us not just to vote for this bill today, but for once to actually allow this bill to go to committee and hopefully come back for third reading, for a vote, and actually make it law. There are a lot of families out there, when it comes to people living in this province, who are affected by this.

I want to end on one last point—I want to leave a little extra time on the clock for my colleagues. We, as grandparents, talk about how when we send the kids home—the great thing about being a grandparent is that we're sending the kids home because we get to have the fun of playing with them and we give them back to the parents because they can take care of them. No, that's not what warms my heart. I know that when my grandkids go home, those kids are in good hands. I don't have to worry about the things I had to worry about or Murielle had to worry about when we were raising our children, because our daughters are great parents. Nos gendres—I don't know how you say it in English.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Son-in-law.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Son-in-law. That's the thing about being French: There's some stuff that doesn't translate.

We know that those kids are in great hands, and when they're with mom and dad, they're well taken care of. So we get to do the spoiling, we get to do the stuff that we maybe didn't have a chance to do when we were grandchildren.

On behalf of all the families out there who would like to see *mémère* and *pépère* continue to be part of the lives of these grandchildren, I urge to you vote for this bill.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 142, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act with respect to the relationship between a child and the child's grandparents. I should start by saying that I do have a conflict on this, because I am a grandparent now and I certainly appreciate how important the relationship of a grandparent can be to their grandchildren. I've seen it firsthand in terms of my own kids and my parents, and all the knowledge and fun and love that was passed on by my parents to my own kids.

1500

In my case, unfortunately, my two granddaughters are not anywhere near Ontario. In fact, they're both in Shanghai. Beatrice, who is now two, and Noelle, who's now eight months, are living with my daughter Abigail and her husband, Mike Paduada, in Shanghai. Luckily, for Skype—that's the way we're able to maintain contact.

I think this bill recognizes the important role that grandparents can play. As was mentioned, it has been debated and passed in this Legislature before. The member from Niagara Falls, Kim Craitor, brought it up a

few years back, and I think it has been debated more than one time. There are questions as to how it would actually work that need to be addressed, and that's why I think it's certainly a good idea that it be passed in this Legislature, that it go to committee and that it spend some time in committee so that those details can be worked out.

I know the member from Algoma–Manitoulin talked about the important criteria that any contact with grandparents has to be in the best interests of the child, and I think that's a really important part of this bill:

"Subsection 24(2) of the act is amended. That subsection sets out the needs and circumstances of a child that the court must consider in determining the best interests of the child. The bill adds to that list the emotional ties between the child and the child's grandparents and the willingness of each person applying for custody of the child to facilitate contact with the child's grandparents, if such contact would be appropriate in the circumstances."

I certainly think this private member's bill should pass, and I hope it goes to committee. I hope there's an opportunity for those people who are interested to get a chance, so that the details of how it would work can be addressed.

I'm just pleased to have had an opportunity to speak briefly. I think we have another speaker who's going to come to speak, so I will finish talking at this point.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to rise again on this bill. As was mentioned by the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, this has been before the House several times. It begs the question: Why are we still debating it? Why has this not happened? I would certainly send that concern over to the government side.

I also wanted to say to the member from Cambridge, because she was very articulate in her concerns that the reason that Kim Craitor brought this forward was because of the actual experiences in court cases, that I will read what one judge said when grandparents actually did go before that judge and asked for the ability to see their grandchildren. Again, the best interests of the child were that these grandparents would have access to their grandchildren, and the judge said, in response, "There's nothing in the current legislation that directs that I should do that, so I'm not going to give you that opportunity." That's why we're here. In the courts, when grandparents go forward to try to get access to their grandchildren and it is in the best interests of the child, judges are still saying things like that. That's why we're here. That's why we need this legislation.

My children didn't have any grandparents, and I only had one, so I can tell you that we miss that opportunity.

I want to share a story—it's very quick—with the member. Obviously not going to be named—a grandmother who raised her grandchildren. The reason she raised her grandchildren in my riding was because her daughter had addiction and mental health issues, was in and out of institutions, was clearly incapable of looking

after them herself. It's a sad story. She raised these children from birth until they were in their teens, and all of a sudden the mother came and asked for custody. That mother—this is her own child, so this is not even a custody dispute in a divorce case—came and asked for custody back, and she had to, by law, give it. Then the daughter refused the grandparent any access to those grandchildren. Remember that this grandparent was, de facto, their parent—the only parent they'd ever known. The daughter went on to relapse. The grandmother lost contact with her grandchildren. Imagine the horror of that. Imagine the sadness, the tragedy of that.

That is exactly the tragedy that the member from Algoma-Manitoulin's bill hopes to prevent, because, really, it is about the best interests of the child. We understand the concerns. Some of the concerns are that the grandparents, for an abusive parent, will intercede and will simply be stand-ins to be able to give that abusive parent access to these children again. That's why we go back to this: the best interests of the child.

That's why it's so important, though, to give everyone who's involved in that child's life an opportunity to make their case equally before an adjudicator. That's why it's so important. This is not taken lightly. There were busloads of grandparents who came into this Legislature when this bill was first and second and third introduced. Grandparents across Ontario want this bill to be passed. Parents want this bill to be passed. More importantly, the advocates of our children's best welfare want this bill to be passed. So in the interests of our children, in the interest of the best interests of our children, please let's get this done, finally.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill 142, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act. I've been contacted by a number of people in my riding over the years about the inability of grandparents to visit their grandchildren. It is an issue: Very caring people who just want the opportunity to visit and be part of their grandchildren's lives. Sometimes it's blocked just because of issues in the family that really are not fair to these people. Many friends of mine are grandparents, and they are such a big part of the children's lives. I think if you look at that—what a loss it would be, for the sake of a sometimes petty battle between parents, that they be blocked or something, because they can add so much—the outings, the guidance, the help.

Children's lives can be so complicated today. The opportunity to get out with grandparents in a situation sometimes that's not quite—it's away from some of the issues that they see in school and their homes. It's so much of a benefit that they can provide.

I know that this bill has been previously put forward five times, and supported, I believe, by all, each time moving onto the next step, but never getting through. We're really hoping that this gives an opportunity for the bill to go through. I know that early in the new year, I'll become a grandparent, and I'd like the opportunity to be part of that. Who knows what the future brings?

The system will be there to protect the children. There are cases when the court is—it's the right decision. But in most cases, I believe, when grandparents are having trouble getting to see their grandchildren, there really is nothing there other than some external issues that really are penalizing the children.

We see this also in the case of foster care. Grandparents are looked upon by the experts as being the first choice. I think that speaks a lot about the credibility and maturity that grandparents can provide. Sometimes it's very worthwhile to the relationships and to the well-being of the child and the grandchildren.

I'm hoping that we can see this bill pass, but not only just pass second reading. I think it's time—it's been through enough—that we see the Legislature here actually take it through and put it into law. There seems to be a general agreement that it's important and that it's the right thing to do. Hopefully we'll see, in the not-too-distant future, that this actually becomes law so it doesn't have come back a seventh time.

1510

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

Miss Monique Taylor: Speaker: 8, 33, 22, 67, 48. We've all seen these puzzles where we have to work out the relationship between a series of numbers. Most people would be really challenged to work out these numbers, but many activist grandparents across this province will be able to work it out; and I bet my bottom dollar that if the former member for Niagara Falls, Kim Craitor, is watching, he will know exactly what those numbers mean. Because they are the numbers of the bills brought forward to address this very issue over many years. It was also co-sponsored, as we heard previously, in the last two attempts at the bill by the former member for Whitby-Oshawa and by my caucus member and colleague the member for Parkdale-High Park. Today, we can add 142 to that list. I want to thank the member for Algoma-Manitoulin for bringing this very important bill forward again.

Like other members, I often hear from distraught constituents, grandparents who love and cherish their grandchildren, but who never get to see them; who aren't able to be a part of their lives. They are heartbroken, but as the law stands just now, there is little that they can do about it. For some, it's a matter of no more than an expression of their love for their offspring's offspring. For others, they recognize that their grandchildren desperately need a shoulder to cry on, need support and encouragement, or sometimes they need a place to call home.

Grandparents have so much to offer, as they have done for so many people since time began. Memories are laced with fond recollections of time spent with our grandparents. Scolding was done by parents, but grandparents not so often. In their later years, grandparents often have more time to relax and a bit more time to enjoy what is around them. They can share the volume of wisdom that they've accumulated over the years and, often, life's

experiences that have taught them to appreciate the good things in life.

I'm not a grandparent myself—thank goodness—but yes, Speaker, I'm hoping that one day I will be a grandparent. But I do recognize the joy I see in grandparents when they have their grandchildren around. I remember quite fondly my own grandparents, my nana and my gramps; and the times we spent with them are some of my fondest memories of mine as a child. They were treasured moments that I will never forget.

Unfortunately, that is not the case for thousands. There are somewhere in the region of 75,000 grandparents being denied access to their grandchildren, sometimes for no valid reason. Make no mistake: There are valid reasons to deny access to some grandparents, and we consider this in the bill. It's vitally important that we remember that the best interests of a child should always come first. That is a principle that we must never lose sight of. And I'm glad to see that this bill addresses the issues in a couple of ways, and I'll quote them.

“A person entitled to custody of a child shall not create or maintain unreasonable barriers to the formation and continuation of a personal relationship between the child and the child's grandparents.” “Unreasonable barriers” should address one of the concerns of the member opposite. It also says that the contact should be facilitated “if such contact would be appropriate in the circumstances.” These are very important points to be made as we consider this bill.

Speaker, it's five times that this bill has been read in this Legislature and five times that it has passed second reading. This time I'm hoping that it does the same, but I'd like to see something different this time: I'd like to see this brought to committee. Let's get the work done, let's make sure we get it right and let's get these grandparents the grandchildren that they so well deserve.

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

The member for Algoma–Manitoulin has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank the members from Cambridge, Thornhill, Parry Sound–Muskoka, Parkdale–High Park, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and Hamilton Mountain.

Let's do something. If there's something that we can accomplish, let's wrap this up, put it in a box and put it under the Christmas tree for grandparents. We have an opportunity to do something that has been so needed for such a long time.

I listened to all the comments that were put around the House, and it is absolutely necessary to put the reference to grandparents inside this piece of legislation, because the answer, when a grandparent goes to the courts and makes their case—the response that they always get is, “Thank you for making your case. You're justified in your cause. You've established the relationship and the need that you have with your grandchildren. However, I do not have the tool to provide you with that opportunity.” This is the tool. If we do this—and I'm

going to reiterate it again—it will be done, and it must be done in the best interests of the child.

I'll just read this: “the willingness of each person applying”—it's not automatic. You still have to apply. You have to make a case for your want, your willingness, that relationship with your grandchild. You have to make an application for custody of the child, to facilitate contact between the child and the child's grandparents, if such contact would be appropriate in the circumstances.

Again, it's providing the tool to our courts to act in the best interests of the child, respecting the wants of grandparents. This is what this bill does. Let's wrap it up. Let's bring Santa Claus a present for grandparents. Let's do this.

PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS AWARENESS, RESEARCH AND CARE ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AU DEUIL PÉRINATAL, LA RECHERCHE SUR CE GENRE DE DEUIL ET L'AIDE AUX PERSONNES VIVANT UN TEL DEUIL

Mr. Colle moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 141, An Act to require research to be undertaken and programs to be developed for pregnancy loss and infant death and to proclaim October 15 as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day / Projet de loi 141, Loi exigeant des recherches et des programmes sur les pertes de grossesse et les décès néonataux et proclamant le 15 octobre Journée de sensibilisation au deuil périnatal.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to mention that my granddaughter Poppy is here, and my daughter Bianca. My son-in-law Scott Gosse, all the way from Belleville, is here, and my wife, Sharon, is here. Welcome.

This is a bill that, really, I didn't want to do. Usually you want to do things, but sometimes you have to do things that need to be done.

I just want to read from an article written by Ashley Csanady, from the National Post, a couple of days ago. I think she sums up what this bill is all about:

“About 37,000 soon-to-be parents lose their baby along the way each year in Ontario—and as many as one in three women will lose a pregnancy in her lifetime. Many of them struggle with a system that often lacks support and training, as well as families, friends and even health care providers who don't know what to say. Then their grief is compounded by a lack of answers and insufficient research to provide them.”

This is something that most of us—most people in this province—probably do not want to talk about. It is something that happens to thousands of Ontario families and mothers every year. They lose children through miscarriages, stillbirths or immediately after birth. When that

happens, what they run across is almost like a two-tier health care system, in this province and across Canada.

1520

If you're fortunate enough to have the birth of a wonderful baby, you get the full and the best health care and support there is. If you happen to be unfortunate, with the loss of a baby, all of a sudden you are treated totally differently. There isn't the help, the support or the medical experience to give you the counselling you need for yourself and the family. It isn't there. It's very haphazard.

If you happen to be lucky and to be in some of our excellent hospitals—Mount Sinai, or Sunnybrook—there are great teams of expert doctors there, and nurses and nurse practitioners who will help you through this traumatic time. But in most cases—we had a young mother, a very brave young mother, who came to speak at the press conference the other day, Jamie McCleary, and she said it was one of the worst experiences of her life to see her unborn child treated like medical waste. Nobody knew what to do with this dead child of hers. You can imagine the trauma of this mother who carried this baby for all these months and this baby is basically treated, as I said, like medical waste.

The problem is that it's sort of a cultural taboo. We don't like to talk about it. We can't talk about it. It's so difficult for mothers and families and fathers. So, therefore, it's never brought to the public realm. The public knows very little about this trauma that mothers and families go through. Mothers told me that they go to the hospital and the doctors or a nurse or friends will say, "Well, you lost that one, but go ahead, try again. Have another one." There's no counselling, no sympathy, and it's something you can't talk about because it's something, supposedly, that you're not supposed to talk about. Subsequently, the counselling support afterward is not there.

The way babies are treated if they're not successful in their birth is really a hit-and-miss thing that is really disgraceful. I know I've talked about some of these things and the various experts, and they all agree: We need to start breaking the silence. There's a Berlin Wall of silence around infant loss and pregnancy. Whether you're in the medical community or whether you're in the general population or in the Ministry of Health, it's a subject rarely dealt with. Subsequently, it doesn't get the attention and the resources that it desperately needs.

Thankfully, most of the doctors that I have talked to in recent days are world experts; we're very fortunate. They all say we need this attention. We need to talk about it. We need to invest. We need to expand existing programs and we need to acknowledge that this is a health issue that can no longer be ignored.

I talked with Dr. John Kingdom here, the head of obstetrics and maternal health at Mount Sinai. He totally agrees. We have to pay attention to this so that we can get mothers and families the medical support that they need when they go through childbirth and pregnancy. These are things that can be done. We have the ability

but because of this, as I said, wall of silence, it's not given the attention, the resources it requires.

There is a network called PAIL, Pregnancy and Infant Loss Network, where a lot of volunteers go forward and talk to grieving mothers and families, and give them some support. But this is a very small, fledgling organization of volunteers that's standing alone in trying to give help to these mothers and families. We need to invest in these types of organizations and have programs right across the province of Ontario. Right now, as I said, it's very hit-and-miss.

These organizations, by the way, quietly helping mothers and families, are all over Ontario—they're in Brampton, Hamilton, London, Peterborough, Toronto, Markham, Durham, Barrie, Woodstock, Sarnia, Renfrew county, and Ottawa—but they're working with limited resources, and they need to be resourced, along with the co-ordination of expert medical support, which is possible, because we do have the experts here in Toronto, and we have experts in other parts of the province, but we need to co-ordinate them.

There is an urgent need to do this, because the experts even say, like Dr. Kingdom says, despite all the advances of medical science, the rate of infant loss and death has not decreased in this province. It's still on the rise every year—thousands of mothers—and the research can't really tell us why this happens. Does this occur more in Ontario than it does in New York state or in Europe? We don't know. This comprehensive type of research of the causes and the incidence is not really done. We need to fund this kind of research and co-ordinate this research across the province. We can do it with the expert doctors and nurses that we have here.

We have a wonderful nurse practitioner who came to the press conference the other day. She came to the press conference. She is the coordinator of this outreach program out of Sunnybrook—Wendy Mouldsdale. She does this every day, and she says, "I believe this bill is an important step to begin collaborating with the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Together we can share our knowledge...." We have to do better.

Dr. Mathew Sermer from Mount Sinai says, again, we need this kind of legislation. Dr. Seaward from Mount Sinai—I got a letter from a doctor from Sunnybrook from this morning, saying we need this kind of co-ordination.

We have capable nurses; we have capable midwives; we've got an excellent health care system. But there's a big gap in our health care system when it comes to mothers who lose their children through miscarriage and stillbirth, or early infant death. They just suffer in silence. They can't talk to their relatives, because it's something you don't talk about. Sometimes their family doctors don't know anything about the grief they're going through. Some of them suffer serious mental challenges because of this tragedy they go through. It can affect your mental health and your physical health—not to mention the agony of losing a child that they've carried for months.

What this bill would do is basically help bring—what we're here for today, I think, with your support—we can

bring attention to this subject that nobody wants to talk about. We need to start getting people to ask questions, to discuss solutions and to share best practices. The essence of this bill is to try and bring this out of the darkness into the front of our health care system.

At the same time, I'm also asking, with this bill, in order to help with this awareness—as you know, we've done this with many bills in this House; we've had awareness days—for October 15, which is this day in many other jurisdictions, to be called Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day. That would help too.

It's not going to solve all of these problems overnight, because some of these, as many of you have known, have been talked about quietly for years, but very little has been done about it except, again, in isolated circumstances where you've got wonderful doctors and midwives who do something about it. There are programs, as I said, at Mount Sinai and Sunnybrook, but we need to have this available to all mothers and families across Ontario, to see what practices, what protocols exist in Cornwall or Kenora, North Bay and in Burlington. We've got to know what's there for mothers there.

1530

Right now it is not a comprehensive health care system. As I said before, it's a two-tier health care approach that exists in this province. It's not to blame anybody, the doctors or the people in the Ministry of Health; it's something that needs to change culturally. We need a change in our culture here towards pregnancy and infant loss, and this bill hopefully will move this along to where it should be.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I want to commend the member for Eglinton–Lawrence on this very worthy and compassionate initiative before the Legislature today. He makes a lot of outstanding points and tells some heart-wrenching stories.

I've got to think that the worst thing ever in life is if you have to bury a child. I can't imagine that. You'd never wish that on your worst enemy. Sadly, this Saturday I'm going to a funeral for a friend of the family. He has been a good supporter, a businessman and a leader. His mom will be burying him. He lived to his fifties: Tom Fleming. Poor Val lost both Tom and her husband, Art, within a year.

It's a celebration of life too, a celebration of what Tom accomplished. Whether you lose a child as an adult, teen, or youngster, we have ways of coping with that. It never makes up for the loss, but we have ways of families coming together to give support. But as the member for Eglinton–Lawrence points out, it doesn't exist for children who are stillborn or for miscarriages. I don't quite understand why. He says it has been taboo, which is true. I always found it interesting. When Deb and I went through her pregnancies, and friends—you just don't tell anybody. What's the unwritten rule? Three months or something like that: You don't tell anybody. It's just the way it is. It's kind of puzzling, because you probably should. It would help us cope with that kind of loss.

As a result of that, without these coping mechanisms, a way of people giving the support of family, friends, health care professionals, you feel abandoned and awfully empty. I guess for stillborn, too, my God, you go through the same gut-wrenching, extraordinary physical stress. As a mom, the child is born and you've got that as the end product: a healthy baby. But for a stillborn, there's that crushing emptiness that would result from that. As the member said, people will often say, "Well, you can go back at it; you're young." It's really no way to deal with this. This member has a number of initiatives to deal with this in terms of looking at best practices, comparing scientific data, investing in counselling. I think those are all very worthy and timely initiatives.

I think the other aspect, too—I know I'm sharing my time with my colleague from Thornhill—you beat yourself up, too, right? Without some answers and some help and support, you start beating yourself up when this tragedy hits a family.

We're lucky, Speaker; we have two beautiful little girls, Miller and Maitland, six years apart. Miller just turned eight at the beginning of October; Maitland will be almost two for Christmastime—she'll be two in March. We had some good luck at the back ends and some tough luck in the middle, but we've got two.

In these situations I know the mind will whirl: What could I have done better? Should I have made some different approach on my own health? Did I exert myself too much? Dads will think this, but for the moms it's going to be deeply wired in. And if you don't have some better answers, some better practices, some counselling, that's going to haunt you forever. You start blaming yourself. I suspect that's some of the psychology behind all of this.

But if when a stillborn birth occurs, or a miscarriage, there's a better understanding of the science, there's some emotional support from family, from friends, from others who have gone through it, if there's an understanding of the psychological counselling that can help make—I can't say adjustment, but help to cope—I think we're going to be all a lot better off for it.

I commend the member. It's forward-looking. I just had never questioned before why there's that three-month taboo. There really isn't a reason for it. And for all of those who go through that gut-wrenching loss and emptiness, it's going to help.

So good for the member for the initiative. I fully support it.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to speak to this bill, an act to require research to be undertaken and programs to be developed for pregnancy loss and infant death and to proclaim October 15 as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day. I thank the member for Eglinton–Lawrence for bringing it forward.

Losing a child is an unimaginable pain. Whether that loss is in infancy, at birth or before term, it leaves a parent missing a piece of something so precious that should have been—a loss of a dream and the joy that was

felt when they learned that they were bringing a new life into our world and the thoughts of the possibilities that the future held.

A family close to me was touched by such a loss at full term. It was a horrendous time. The nursery was ready. The shower had happened. Everyone was excited and waiting for this wonderful gift that would be joining their family. But that excitement came crashing down as things went horribly wrong very quickly, leaving extreme emotional destruction in its path. This is just one experience that I'm very familiar with.

The Pregnancy and Infant Loss Network reports that one in five pregnancies in Canada end in miscarriage, and that in Canada, six of every 1,000 births are stillborn. Thirty-seven thousand families across Ontario experience pregnancy and infant loss each year. Those parents deserve and require support and understanding during their time of grief. That is what this bill aims to do. By amending the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act, this bill would add new duties and functions to the minister.

In addition to those duties and functions already in place, passage of this bill would require the minister to establish research initiatives and programs, undertake analysis to look at and understand what contributes to pregnancy loss and infant death, develop programs to reduce the risk, provide counselling and support to families affected by these tragedies, and undertake research into the best practices of other jurisdictions. It's hard to argue against the Minister of Health being required to put all of these items in place, and I wouldn't want to do that. They are all needed.

There are many things that the minister should be required to do when it comes to the delivery of health care in Ontario. The lack of services for people with mental health problems has been spoken about often in this chamber.

Earlier this year, I was taken on a tour of a few homes operated by the Good Shepherd in Hamilton: a transitional house where youth between 16 and 20, some of them dealing with mental health issues, learn life experience and skills and learn how to cope; a residential home for youth and supporting families who need support and tools to deal with their mental health problems, trauma and conflict resolution; a shelter for homeless and street-involved youth which provides 20 beds as well as on-site access to mental health professionals, a physician, a nurse practitioner, as well as youth support workers.

Thanks to the dedicated staff—those workers—and their own fundraising efforts, they manage all of this with government funding of \$44 per day. They're terribly underfunded and, in fact, they have just 1.6 mental health clinicians to service all of Hamilton. Children's Mental Health Ontario reports that 6,000 kids are waiting a year for mental health treatment.

We hear often of cuts to our mental health services as well as other health care. I hear it regularly from constituents. The member from Nickel Belt has spoken about the loss of 87,000 hours of nursing care in Health Sciences North.

1540

I appreciate what the member from Eglinton–Lawrence is trying to do with this bill, and I support him in this cause. Pregnancy loss and infant death is an exceptionally traumatic experience that does not get the attention it deserves. D. Ferguson is quoted on the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Network's website as saying, "How very softly you tiptoed into my world, almost silently, only a moment you stayed, but what an imprint your footprints have left on my heart." It's very easy to underestimate the impact these events can have on mothers, fathers and the entire family, but I think this quote really brings it home.

This bill also serves as a reminder of where the government is failing to provide services right across the entire mental health sector.

The bill will also establish October 15 each year as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day in Ontario. This date is already recognized in the US, parts of Canada, Australia and the UK, and it was previously brought forward to this chamber by my colleague the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. I think it's fitting we make this declaration now in Ontario.

Again, I thank the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for bringing this bill forward, and I hope that we can pass it through committee and make sure we get this work done.

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

Mr. Han Dong: I'm very pleased to rise and debate this very important bill brought forward by the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, named the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness, Research and Care Act, 2015.

I noticed that there has been quite a bit of attention given to this bill since being introduced recently. Other than the coverage in media, I actually received e-mails from my constituency. Constituents felt passionately about this bill, and they urged me to support this bill. I would like to quote one of the e-mails: "Losing a baby is very traumatic for a family. It goes against the natural order of things. It can leave families feeling isolated and alone. These families are grieving, and need access to support and resources—support and resources which are sorely lacking today."

Which brings me to my fond memory of first having my two kids. Seven years ago, when my daughter was first born at Mount Sinai, which is a wonderful facility situated in my riding, there were entire wraparound services around my wife, the mother, and the newborn. I remember it was specifically on postpartum depression. The mother was cared for in that. I felt like, "Wow, I've never experienced this before." It was a similar experience when my son, Matthew, was born two years after.

So I'm a little surprised by the lack of services or supports in place for those who lose infant babies or who had a miscarriage. To me, I think they probably go through an even greater chance of emotional distress.

So I fully support this bill. I think it speaks to some of the gaps in service. If passed, it would establish and

expand comprehensive research initiatives and programs to assist mothers and families who experience pregnancy loss and infant death, undertaking a comprehensive, comparative analysis to understand the factors that contribute to an increased risk of pregnancy loss or infant death. This is very important. In this day and age, we all have BlackBerrys and cellphones. Everyone is working on their laptops. You would think that collection of data is so easy, yet we are still dealing with an area where limited data is available for any analysis, for the ministry to even look at it and make some policy around it. I think this bill does just that: It actually shines a light and calls out the need for more data collection, more attention paid in this area.

The member from Eglinton–Lawrence gave us some good numbers, good stats, on infant loss in the past. I think it is time for the province and for this government to take a look at what we can do to provide that much-needed support.

It also speaks to developing and expanding programs to help reduce the risk of pregnancy loss and infant death: Develop and expand existing programs across Ontario to provide counselling and support to mothers and families who have experienced a pregnancy loss or infant death. I said I can only imagine a parent going through losing a child. Any time you lose a family member, you need time to grieve. You remember the good times you had with this family member. In this case, it would be very difficult. I can only imagine the parent going back home and seeing the room prepared for the newborn and starting to wonder what it would be like. They can only imagine what it could be like, as opposed to remembering those fond moments.

I think the support has to be there for these mothers, and fathers as well, to go through a very, very tough period of time.

It also suggests to undertake a comprehensive analysis and survey of the best practices in other jurisdictions in regard to prevention of pregnancy loss or infant death. We have to look around the world and see how other places are dealing with this issue. I think that if we put our minds and resources to this, we could be a leader in this area.

I just recently had a visit to China. They're envious of our biomedical science and the way that we manage our medical system here. I think that if we start paying attention to this area, we could be the leader in this area and provide further assistance, not just to Ontarians but outside of Ontario and even to the world.

I'm fully supporting this bill, I want to thank the member for bringing it forward, and I look forward to further discussion on this bill.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: Once again, I'm apologizing for my raspy voice today.

Of course, this is something that we should be discussing here, because we're the ones who set an example for all of Ontario.

I'm reminded of the difference in culture if a woman has been raped. It wasn't that long ago that nobody would want to admit they were raped. Certainly, parents didn't want people to know their daughter had been raped. They felt that nobody would want to associate with her or possibly marry her. There was also a huge taboo. We went from that to much more openness—not enough, but much more openness; certainly in the medical field, where doctors will even sometimes ask women now, when they're doing a case history or seeing a woman for the first time, "Have you ever experienced any traumas of a sexual nature?" They'll ask it in leading terms. But I don't think doctors will necessarily ask a woman if she has ever miscarried a child or things like that, unless she's trying to get pregnant. Then they want to know the case history and want to know if it's an at-risk pregnancy.

1550

There are special rooms in emergency rooms set aside in all of our hospitals for women who have been raped, with special information. You would hope that the hospitals would be much more understanding, but I have a feeling they're not, because they're under incredible budgetary strain to separate a woman who has given birth to a stillborn child from other women who have given birth to healthy children. You can just imagine: The mother still needs the same health care as a woman has delivered a healthy child. She has still delivered a baby, there could still be complications and she still needs to be taken care of. We would hope, Mr. Speaker, that the resources can be put in place and that we could do something to ensure that the resources are in place, if they're not in place everywhere.

I'm going to just say a little bit about my culture. In the Jewish culture—not everybody follows it, of course—basically you're not pregnant until you're past your first term, because it was the understanding that so many women miscarried in the first trimester that you wouldn't tell people you were even pregnant, and if people asked you, you would say, "Well, it's not three months yet, so we're not even going to talk about it."

Certainly, observant families and even many secular Jewish families won't hold baby showers and won't decorate the nursery. They'll order it, like a registry when you're getting married and you order dishes and things like that. They'll order everything and have everything ready to be delivered, and they'll have a relative or friend at the house to have everything delivered when the woman is in the hospital and they get the phone call that everything is okay, because it's a tragedy, obviously, if a baby does not survive the birth or has some kind of medical complication and doesn't live long. But that tragedy is exacerbated by a mother and father having to come home to see all the clothes and the nursery and everything set up.

Of course, it's not always practical. My father always talks about how my mother wouldn't want to have anything in the house. She had four children, and he would be left scrambling, because he'd have to go and get everything, especially for the first child. She didn't

have anything. He said, "I'm bringing a woman home with a baby." Of course, in those days, they kept you in the hospital for a week, so that left all your relatives time to prepare things for you at home.

My mother had a little brother, when she was about four years old, who had a hole in his heart. Today, that would be easily repairable. But my grandparents were told, "There's nothing we can do. He's going to die in two weeks, and you shouldn't bring him home. Just tell people that he died and we'll take care of it from here on." Well, my grandmother wouldn't hear of that. She took the baby home, and he lived for two weeks. Because he hadn't been circumcised yet, he couldn't have a proper burial. So, my grandfather had to take a shovel and bury him. It's really heartbreaking. I never talk about it. Sorry, between my hoarse voice and being choked up—it's not a good combination.

We all know of somebody who has lost a baby from SIDS, sudden infant death syndrome. The celebrity Marla Shapiro in Toronto became a spokesperson because she was interviewed; she lost one of her children to sudden infant death syndrome. She went on to have a career, basically, in the public forum, speaking out, not just about that but about women's health advocacy, and became a TV spokesperson on City TV. She's a regular. She ended up with her own talk show on health issues. I think that was a very brave thing for her to do, because when she did it, very few people were able to go on TV and in the public forum—I'm not even able to talk about somebody I never even met—and she helped so many people by doing that. So, kudos to her and for all the great work she has done.

I think that our health care professionals are programmed and trained to deal with healthy babies, and they're uncomfortable and just want to see it end, because it's painful for them, as well. You can certainly imagine the health care staff spending hours getting to know the parents, only to have the child not survive the delivery. Of course, we all want to do what we can to raise awareness. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I also want to thank the member for Eglinton—Lawrence for bringing forward this bill, the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness, Research and Care Act. This is certainly an initiative that the NDP fully supports. In fact, my colleague the MPP for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek had introduced a similar bill in 2010.

As women's issues critic for the NDP caucus, I want to frame my comments from the perspective of reproductive justice. Reproductive justice acknowledges that not all women have the same ability to make reproductive choices. Their reproductive autonomy may be limited by lack of access to abortion services or by lack of social and financial resources that are necessary to have children and raise them in safe and supportive environments. So this bill recognizes that pregnancy loss must equally be included in the full spectrum of pregnancy and parenting options that reproductive justice

includes. That covers abortion, IVF, childbirth, adoption and, now, pregnancy loss.

I want to speak for a moment about language. Certainly language evolves; and I congratulate the member for the language of this bill, because what we see here is a long, overdue step forward from the term "miscarriage," which is how we often refer to natural pregnancy loss. But what the term "miscarriage" conveys is that there is some fault or blame involved in the loss of the pregnancy, when actually physicians will tell us that pregnancy loss is most often the physiology of a healthy body recognizing that a pregnancy is incompatible with life.

Unfortunately, Speaker, too many people do not understand the causes of miscarriage. There was a study by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine that found three quarters of both men and women believed that stress can cause miscarriage, two thirds believed that lifting a heavy object could trigger the loss of a pregnancy, and one quarter believed that miscarriage could be caused solely by the woman not wanting the pregnancy. The reality is that most miscarriages are not associated with any action or inaction on the part of the woman. Most are caused by spontaneous chromosomal anomalies that make human development impossible. They also occur, as the member said, much more frequently than many people realize. Women who know they are pregnant experience a rate of miscarriage of about one in five, or 20%, but the rate is much, much higher if it includes the loss of fertilized eggs before the woman knows she is pregnant.

But because of misinformation about the causes of pregnancy loss, many women feel shame and stigma if they admit experiencing a loss of pregnancy. We have a society that values the worth of women according to their ability, their desire and their willingness to carry a pregnancy to term and to raise children. So it's no wonder that women often blame themselves. So by talking openly and honestly about pregnancy loss, which is what this bill does by talking about the incidence of pregnancy loss and what can happen afterwards, we can reduce the stigma and the guilt that often accompanies pregnancy loss.

Speaker, we need to ensure that there are appropriate supports in place to help those who experience pregnancy loss—not only the woman but also the woman's partner and others who cared about the pregnancy. There may be feelings of profound grief at the loss of hopes and plans for a relationship with a child; and the loss of future identity as a mother, as a father or as a grandparent.

At the same time, reproductive justice requires that we recognize and respect that there may be differences in responses to pregnancy loss. We have to avoid assuming that all individuals will experience the loss in the same way and will need the same kinds of support. We have to remember that the social norms of masculinity and femininity that condition women's response to pregnancy loss have an equal impact on men, who are expected to be stoic and strong in their handling of grief and may actually face disapproval if they display emotion

For pregnant women who have been abused by their intimate partner—and we know that the risks of violence to women increase significantly during pregnancy. We know that the World Health Organization found that spousal abuse increases the risk of miscarriage by 50%. Women who experience pregnancy loss as a result of sexual violence require very specialized counselling and supports to deal with the complex emotions that are associated with the loss of the pregnancy.

1600

Before I close, Speaker, I just wanted to go back to what I had said in the beginning about the full spectrum of pregnancy and birth options for women. There is a link between pregnancy loss and abortion. When the fetus dies, a D&C is often required to fully end the pregnancy, and this means that comprehensive access to abortion services is vital across this province, not only to protect women's reproductive autonomy but also to support women through the loss of the pregnancy.

So, Speaker, again I want to congratulate the member for bringing forward this bill. On behalf of my colleagues in the NDP caucus, we believe that this is an initiative that is important and that should go forward as part of our health care system and the kinds of supports that we provide to women and men and families in this province.

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

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It's always a pleasure to stand in the House and speak to important issues. I have to say, joining my colleagues from London West, Niagara West–Glanbrook, Trinity–Spadina and Hamilton Mountain—some very powerful personal reflections today. I always love private members' hour. It gives us a chance to talk about issues of mutual interest and concern, but today is particularly important.

I want to thank, in that regard, my colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence for tabling this conversation today by bringing forward this bill, Bill 141, the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness, Research and Care Act. I want to thank him because this is an important conversation for us to have, not in a finger-pointing kind of way but in a “Let's embrace the survivors of loss and let's do that in a compassionate and empathetic way.”

This bill, this conversation, addresses an issue that is often underreported and one which we, in Ontario and across the country, often have a hard time talking about, and yet it is an issue which touches so many lives—one that has touched, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, virtually all of the members in this House. Sadly, it has touched me and my family personally.

The expected birth of a child is supposed to be one of the happiest moments in one's life, a time full of excitement and wonder and, ultimately, hope for the future. Far too often, these magical moments are cut short by unexpected events. There is no reason for this subject to remain a taboo, and that is exactly why today's debate is so important.

Especially here in Ontario, we are proud of our ability to speak openly about the issues that impact our lives. That is why I'm pleased to say that, if passed, this bill

will proclaim October 15 as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day in Ontario. Sometimes, one of the most powerful and important things you can do to effect change is to simply raise awareness about an issue, and this bill will certainly do just that.

Of course, awareness itself is not enough. We need to deal with the complexities that lie at the heart of issues relating to pregnancy loss and infant death. Individuals who go through these extremely trying experiences need a range of supports to help them cope and to assist them in their recovery. Because each individual and family's experience is unique, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to providing support when it's needed most.

That's why, importantly, this bill calls for the development and expansion of existing programs across Ontario to provide counselling and support to mothers and their families who have experienced pregnancy loss or infant death. In addition to calling for more research into the prevention and understanding of these issues, an evidence-based approach is needed to help us to help mothers, fathers and their families and all of their loved ones, indeed, when they need it most, to heal their wounds, both seen and unseen.

According to a study conducted by the University of Rochester and published in the British Journal of Psychiatry, the depression and anxiety experienced by many women after a miscarriage can continue for years, even after the birth of another child. Sadly, we hear stories of survivors whose lived experience of loss simply isn't being validated or supported. For example, mothers are told that they will be fine once they have a healthy baby, when the research demonstrates that this is simply not true. Of the women who've had one miscarriage or stillbirth before giving birth to a healthy child, almost 13% still had symptoms of depression 33 months after their new baby was born. Of those with two previous losses, almost 19% had symptoms of depression—again, almost three years after the birth of a healthy child. That's close to three years, as I mentioned, of struggling to bear a burden that is, to all of us, inconceivable. As the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook said in his remarks—indeed, Speaker, in his extraordinarily personal remarks—no one should have to bury a child. This is completely outside the natural order.

Prenatal loss is not routinely considered a risk factor for antenatal or postpartum depression in the same way as, for example, personal or family history of depression or exposure to other of life's stresses. We need to change the way that we think about this type of loss, and that is what this bill hopes to accomplish. It would recommend necessary targeted support, because, as we know, maternal depression does not just affect mothers, but entire families. It is our duty as public servants to support Ontarians who suffer such tremendous losses.

Mr. Speaker, it is often said that it takes a village to raise a child, but when a child is lost, that village suffers profoundly. I commend my colleague the member for Eglinton–Lawrence for introducing a bill which would have long-standing positive impacts not just for the

women who have lost a child, but for their families and their circles of care too.

I urge all members of this House to support this bill, because no one should feel like they are going through these incredibly difficult times alone, without the necessary support. So let's make sure, Speaker, that they don't have to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: I truly want to thank the members that spoke. This certainly brought out the best. The member from Niagara West–Glanbrook said very eloquently that we don't want these thousands of Ontario women to feel abandoned, and they are right now. They're abandoned. There is no help, basically. If you lose a child, there's no medical help; there's no counselling support; there's no family help. They are abandoned. That's why there's an imperative for us as legislators to move our government, our province, our society to stop this.

We can't continue to see mothers left to suffer, as the member from London West said, because of biological, chromosomal activity. This is what's happening. They're discriminating. As I said, there's a two-tier health care system that punishes hundreds of thousands of people. They get punished because they had this misfortune. They get punished twice: They lose that child, then they have no one to help them when they go home.

I thank the member from Thornhill for talking about her grandmother. These are the things we never talk about. The courage you had in speaking about it—I thank you for doing that.

I want to thank all the courageous women who have been helping with this fight: Michelle LaFontaine, who is the chair of the PAIL Network; Wendy Mouldsdale, who is a pediatric nurse practitioner, who is here from Sunnybrook; Jamie McCleary, a very brave mother from the PAIL Network; Dr. Kingdom—all these brave people who are speaking out, because up until now, you weren't allowed to speak about this.

It's time to take some action. I'm committed to doing what I can, through this bill. As the member from Burlington said, more than awareness, we need to change things in this province to get rid of this discrimination and this punishment of women that happens every day. It's not by the hundreds; it's by the thousands. Women are being punished and families are being denied the support they need. This has got to end.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I thank everybody for their comments. The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

UNIVERSITÉ DE L'ONTARIO
FRANÇAIS ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015 SUR L'UNIVERSITÉ
DE L'ONTARIO FRANÇAIS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 3, standing in the name of Madame Gélinas.

Madame Gélinas has moved second reading of Bill 104, An Act to establish the Université de l'Ontario français.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I declared the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

1610

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—Madame Gélinas?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The Standing Committee on Social Policy, please.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that it be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Agreed? So moved.

CHILDREN'S LAW REFORM
AMENDMENT ACT (RELATIONSHIP
WITH GRANDPARENTS), 2015
LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT
LA LOI PORTANT RÉFORME
DU DROIT DE L'ENFANCE (RELATION
AVEC LES GRANDS-PARENTS)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Mantha has moved second reading of Bill 142, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act with respect to the relationship between a child and the child's grandparents.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—

Mr. Michael Mantha: General government, please.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that it be referred to general government. Agreed? Agreed.

PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS
AWARENESS, RESEARCH
AND CARE ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION
AU DEUIL PÉRINATAL, LA RECHERCHE
SUR CE GENRE DE DEUIL ET L'AIDE
AUX PERSONNES VIVANT UN TEL DEUIL

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Colle has moved second reading of Bill 141, An Act to require research to be undertaken and programs to be developed for pregnancy loss and infant death and to proclaim October 15 as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—Mr. Colle?

Mr. Mike Colle: To the committee dealing with private bills.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that it be referred to the committee on private bills. Agreed? Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENDING COAL FOR CLEANER AIR ACT, 2015 LOI DE 2015 SUR L'ABANDON DU CHARBON POUR UN AIR PLUS PROPRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 17, 2015, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

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

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I recognize the member for Huron—Bruce.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to continue the debate on Bill 9 because there are a couple of things I'd like to wrap up in saying.

As we all know in this House, Bill 9 is very light legislation. It reflects the trend we have from this government in terms of feel-good environmentalism photo ops, as well as legislation feel-good moments.

We all know that closing coal plants is a finite issue here in Ontario.

It's interesting. I want to quote a member from this House in a recent debate that we had on Bill 9. After quoting it, you'll perhaps understand why I'm disappointed that they didn't support our one amendment that we had for Bill 9. That quote is from the Minister without Portfolio. In a previous debate on this particular bill, he said, "My good friend, and the former member for Kitchener—Waterloo, Elizabeth Witmer, was a person who believed in it, and indeed she started the conversion of Lakeview out of the use of coal. I commend her for that, and I have been a long-time champion of her doing that on that occasion."

That's why I can't help but take this time this afternoon to share my disappointment in the government that they did not do right by supporting our amendment and renaming the bill with regard to recognizing Elizabeth Witmer's initiative to start the conversion of that first coal plant.

Carrying on from that, it's safe to say that we've had a number of disappointments with this government. That doesn't take away from the fact that closing coal-fired generation stations is indeed the right thing to do. It's the right thing to do if it's done with a smart plan, and that's where the rub is.

You look great in the chair, Madam Speaker, I must say.

Coming back to doing something with the right plan, a smart plan—makes us hesitant, because with this government's history of eHealth, gas plants, the Green Energy Act, we can't help but be a little anxious with regard to exactly where we'll end up.

That takes me to the fact that, specifically, the Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009, was intended to support new investment and economic growth in Ontario through the creation of a strong and viable renewable energy sector. Madam Speaker, I am sad and frustrated to say that the government has absolutely failed Ontario in this regard. It worries me and the rest of my caucus and, I'm sure, the third party in terms of what else is coming down the pipeline.

We have to talk about cap and trade for a moment or two because that's another worry. I hope that the government's decision to push forward with cap and trade—that it's not modelled on the European system. We don't have all the details yet, so it still leads one to worry about where we might eventually land with regard to this particular program.

Obviously, if anything can be taken away from where the Europeans went with their cap and trade, it's that it was a complete failure as well, much like the Green Energy Act. But we can learn from their failure because we have to be positioned well. We saw the cost of poor planning and pandering to the needs of special interest groups in Europe. What has that resulted in? Unfortunately, that failed vision has seen the re-creation of a dependency that Europe was moving away from. Unfortunately, that dependency is coming back onto coal because of the ill-conceived and total failure of the industrial wind turbine scenario that was fostered in Europe.

We just heard yesterday or the day before that the UK, probably maybe as early as the weekend, is actually looking at coal plants now. We know that as carbon prices have plummeted in Europe, cheap coal production is continuing to come back onto the plate in conversation. In Germany alone, 12 coal-fired stations are due to open by 2020. That is seriously concerning because we're pushing to alleviate our province of coal-fired generation and bring down greenhouse gas emissions, but all the while technology is leading and the dire need to bring energy prices back into a realm of affordability—those two main things are driving other jurisdictions to revisit coal.

For goodness' sake, I ask this government to make sure that we don't waste any more time on feel-good legislation because we know that we've already committed to closing all the coal plants. But let's make sure,

for goodness' sake, that we learn from Europe, we learn from other jurisdictions and we take sure steps going forward so that energy in Ontario is affordable and reliable and that when we consider poverty in this province, we eliminate energy poverty, because I'm afraid we are going to be facing a lot of issues associated with that very concern through this winter alone.

Again, I look to the government to stand up, to lead by example, admit their mistakes, like Europe has and the UK has, possibly stand up and take a leading position and put an end to the unaffordable, unreliable green energy that we have generating through our industrial wind turbines. Do right by Ontario. This is feel-good legislation for this government of Ontario: Bill 9, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use.

But for goodness' sake, let's do the right thing and bring down the cost of energy in Ontario as well. We can get it right by following the lead of Europe and of the UK. Terminate the use of industrial wind turbines, which has done nothing but increase energy costs. We're very blessed in Ontario. We have nuclear generation. We've got hydro generation. We've got a natural gas sector that's busting to fill in some gaps. So let's remember, as we go forward and we talk about energy in Ontario, that it's affordable and reliable, and we don't force people here in this amazing province between eating and heating.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Kathryn McGarry): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to talk on this final third reading of Bill 9. As you're well aware, Speaker, this bill is pretty simple. When I first saw it—I was talking to the Sergeant-at-Arms about it. There's no doubt about it: You could hold it up to the light and you could see right through the bill. We're not talking about a telephone book here; we're talking about a very simple, straightforward piece of legislation.

1620

It effectively bans the use of coal at four facilities in Ontario and exempts the use of coal where it's not used to make electricity for the grid or primarily for the grid. If you're burning coal today in your auto plant, if you're burning coal in your steel plant, and you're not making electricity, this bill does not apply to you. You can carry on tomorrow as you did the day before.

I support this bill, Speaker. I have to say I'm sympathetic to some of the comments of the critic from the official opposition, because I think we need to go much further than this bill. I wouldn't say I'm sympathetic with everything she has said, but I think we do need to go much further than simply the shutdown of coal.

There's no question that shutting down coal, something supported by all the parties in this Legislature, is an important part—or was an important part—of addressing climate change. But frankly, Speaker, we haven't seen action afterward that is on the same scale, and if we are actually going to come to grips with climate change, we

have to proceed on the scale of shutting down coal on an ongoing basis over the next few decades.

As has been noted, the plants in question are already closed, and this bill will make it more difficult for a future government to burn coal. No government will be able to start burning coal in those power plants at the simple whim of cabinet. They won't be able to make a decision late at night in a boardroom somewhere here at Queen's Park or simply at the end of an excellently catered meal around the cabinet table. They'll have to come into this chamber and they'll have to fight for it if they want to resume burning coal to make electricity. They'll have to fight for the authority to start choking people again, to start sending children with asthma to the emergency rooms again and to make our whole landscape hazy again. Those memories of smog—we need to put them behind us.

This bill is a firebreak against the return of coal. It is not a steel wall. It doesn't change our electricity system. Frankly, Speaker, I think that's where we're going to have to go. If you want to make sure we don't have future governments going back to coal, you have to do a lot more than shut down the coal plants that existed before 2003.

We need to think about the larger picture. All three parties in this Legislature supported the shutdown of coal, in large part because, as our nuclear power plants were taken out of service for refurbishment in the late 1990s, the government of the day ramped up the burning of coal to deal with the shortfall of power. That had substantial, visible, real impacts on the health of the people of this province; had substantial, real impacts on health care costs in this province; and generated a political backlash against the burning of coal.

That pollution on its own was enough to drive the impetus to shut down coal, and I'm glad that it did. But a larger issue, a longer-term issue and in many ways an issue that will be more profound for the health of the people in this province is the question of climate change.

A few months ago, we were debating the climate change resolution brought forward by the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, and I read a quote from Lord Stern, a former head economist at the World Bank, who was directed by the British government to write a report on the financial impacts of climate change. In 2006, Lord Stern reported back and talked about the necessity for action. He said this: “The investment that takes place in the next 10-20 years will have a profound” impact “on the climate in the second half of this century and in the next. Our actions now and over the coming decades could create risks of major disruption to economic and social activity, on a scale similar to those associated with the great wars and the economic depression of the first half of the 20th century.”

Now, Speaker, climate science has moved on sharply since 2006. Many in the scientific community are far more worried about what is coming than Lord Stern was in 2006. The scale of the challenge before us, the scale of the risk to our society, the scale of the risk to the lives of

people alive today and the next generations coming after us is quite substantial. We're talking about disruption of human society on an extraordinary scale. Those among us who may have lived through those events, or talked to their parents or grandparents about those events, know that, in human terms, we are engaged in a very high-stakes adventure, a very risky adventure.

A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to go to London for a workshop that was put on by the United Nations Environment Programme and by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. There were parliamentarians from Bangladesh, Ghana, Botswana, Samoa, Australia, the Cook Islands, the Maldives, the Seychelles. There were people literally from around the world who were talking about their problems—their daily problems—with climate change, and they were casting about for action on a global scale to deal with it.

I have to say, when I talked to my colleagues from Bangladesh, they said that even with the two-degree centigrade maximum that the international community is trying to keep temperatures below, one third of Bangladesh will be under water and 60 million people will be displaced. They said to me that there are no climate change deniers in Bangladesh. What people are trying to figure out is how they deal with this dramatic, profound change to the life of that nation.

The representative from the Cook Islands said that three quarters of their population had already moved out, that some of the lower-lying islands were being abandoned, that the rise of the seas was causing salt contamination of freshwater wells, that people were seeing the future and it was not a good one for them.

The parliamentarian from Samoa talked about the fact that, for three years running, they had droughts that devastated their crops and, at the end of each growing season, cyclones came in and wiped out the crops that had survived. They are not talking about a distant problem. They're talking about a problem they're facing on a day-to-day basis now with a drop in their standard of living.

I had an opportunity to talk to a representative from the Philippines. She talked about the massive loss of life with the typhoon—I believe it was Haiyan—that went through a few years ago, and how the Philippines, first of all, has changed their whole approach to these massive tropical storms, recognizing the potential for large loss of life and putting in place preventative measures and emergency measures that in the last cyclone dramatically reduced loss of life.

But she said, "What we have to do, what we are doing now, is trying to move people off the shores, off the coastal areas, to further inland." And they're extraordinarily resistant because, for many of these people, their life is the sea. They go out and they fish; their whole economy is dependent on that. They want to be able to get up in the morning, walk down to the shore, take their boat out and fish. Moving inland may make it safer for them in a storm, but in terms of their day-to-day life, it is made much more difficult.

From a parliamentarian from the Seychelles, the same issue: They have some very high ground on their islands and they're starting to move people inland. The Maldives are in a much tougher spot because it's much flatter.

I had an opportunity to talk to the parliamentarian from Ghana. The major part of Ghana's electricity production is one large hydroelectric dam in the country. Two thirds of that dam is idle because the water levels have dropped so low. For them, it's a day-to-day struggle to deal with the challenges to their society and their infrastructure from the impacts of climate change.

Speaker, we here in Toronto, we here in Ontario, have been touched by climate change, and I'll address that as I go further in my speech. But so far, we've had the wealth, the insurance industry, the high ground to ensure that our loss of life has been minimal. That's not the case with many other parts of the world that are far more exposed than we are.

This problem, which many in this community see as distant, in other places is today, now, this moment. In many ways, I felt when talking to them that I could see what the future would be like for us, with people constantly trying to deal with the difficulties imposed by more extreme weather events, changing coastline, and parliamentarians who are trying to come to grips with the social conflicts and the physical constraints imposed on them by the changing climate.

1630

It's one thing to talk about people far away, on the other side of the world, but I want to talk a bit about how we've seen this manifested right here in Ontario. This March, I was going door to door in my riding, talking to people on Gerrard Street. As you're well aware, because the climate has changed, the course of the jet stream has changed and we've been subjected to large volumes of arctic air coming into Ontario, coming into the northeastern United States. I talked to a pensioner on Gerrard Street whose hydro bill in March for the previous two months was \$1,500—more than her pension. For her, it was really an extraordinarily difficult burden placed on her back.

While we were going through temperatures of minus 20, in Anchorage, Alaska, way up there by the Arctic Circle, they were seeing plus five degrees, plus 10 degrees. That same distortion of the jet stream that brought arctic air streaming into Ontario diverted it away from Alaska for an extraordinarily mild winter. It isn't just that the world gets hotter, but that the climate and weather patterns change substantially. The weather becomes more erratic. It is more difficult to grow crops because it is very difficult to know what the weather will be from year to year.

In fact, there was an article in the *New Yorker*, I guess it was eight or 10 years ago—a very good science writer talking about her conversations with climatologists who looked at the change in climate at the end of the last ice age. One of things that they noticed as they went through the ice core record, as they went through the record of sediments at the bottom of lakes and of oceans, was that

the climate would change quite suddenly. You would see multi-degree rises within a decade, not slow changes over many decades; and you would see something that they called “flicker,” where the climate would go back and forth from very cold to very hot from year to year. When we see this very strong variation from year to year here in Ontario, it makes me think that we may be seeing many of the same processes that were seen at the end of the last ice age. As the world got hotter then, the world climate regime became more erratic, more unpredictable and fast-changing.

It isn't just Toronto, obviously. You get very disruptive, very chaotic events that people notice when hurricanes go through places like Goderich. A friend of mine was in Goderich the day after the hurricane a few years ago—extreme devastation, a total shock to the people of that town. A gorgeous town, if anyone's been there—a beautiful central square; a really nice place—just mowed down. Goderich, Superstorm Sandy going through New York City or Hurricane Katrina going through New Orleans—more and more disruptive events that have a huge impact in human terms and a huge impact financially.

Superstorm Sandy, as it's been called, caused about \$5 billion worth of damage on the American eastern seaboard. Since that time, insurance companies on a global basis have been getting themselves ready for a \$10-billion event on the American eastern seaboard. The scale of impact is expected to continue to grow.

In the summer of 2013, Toronto was hit with some of the worst flooding ever. I want to read a bit of what the Toronto Star reported: “The storm and flash flooding that hit the GTA on July 8 has set a record for the province's most expensive natural disaster, according to the Insurance Bureau of Canada.” We're all going to be stuck with those bills, either through higher insurance premiums or by incidental costs that aren't covered by insurance.

I've already had constituents in my riding say that insurance companies have declined to renew insurance for people's homes because they felt the homes were vulnerable to flooding; that the sewer lines in their neighbourhood weren't adequate to protect them. So parts of their coverage would be cancelled. Now, East York is far above sea level. They don't have to worry about the sea coming in. But they do have to worry about heavy rainstorms and hurricanes dumping volumes of water that our sewer systems, built for the weather of a century ago, are not able to handle.

In that same Star article, the Insurance Bureau of Canada's Ontario vice-president, Ralph Palumbo, made a statement about the storm, saying, “While these preliminary estimates are staggering, we do expect them to go even higher.” He's right; we do see very high costs.

I have to tell you, there's more to global warming than just the cost. There's also a smell. That smell is sewage in your basement. In Ontario, our sewer systems, our waste water systems, are built for a climate that no longer exists. Rainfall patterns are not the ones we had last

century. They're not the ones that engineers based the sewer and water systems on. They're becoming more and more different. Storms that used to happen once a century now happen twice a decade. That speaks to significant property damage and significant insurance costs. People are going to spend more time shovelling sewage out of their basements and they're going to be spending more money. Global warming is hard on the nose and it's hard on the pocketbook.

Speaker, as much as I believe it was a good idea to phase out coal, and as much as I think that this bill is useful in making sure that it's very difficult to bring it back, I need to remind everyone in this chamber and I need to remind the government that stopping the coal shutdown is not adequate. I am very worried about our ability to meet our 2020 targets. I haven't seen the action that would say to me that, in the next five years, we've got everything in place to actually meet that target. I'm very worried that the targets that are set for 2030 are ones where governments can say, “Yep, that's 15 years from now. My career will be over. Someone else will have that headache.”

If we actually want to meet the 2020 targets, if we want to meet the 2030 targets, for reductions of greenhouse gas emissions, everything that is going to be done has to have its starting positions put in place now. If we're concerned about climate change, global warming and the impact on our society, on our lives and the lives of our families and the lives of other people's families, we can't simply rest with this bill and say, “Everything is taken care of.”

We can understand those particular risks of extreme weather causing physical difficulty and extreme weather causing expense—expense for energy and expense for repairs—but there's another level of concern that we need to start thinking about in this chamber and in this province, and that relates to financial stability.

I want to go back and talk to you about another event of financial instability that we have to recognize and incorporate into our thinking. I'll just explain a bit of background, Speaker, and then I'll bring it back to the question of greenhouse gas emissions—oil, gas and coal. That's the 2008 financial collapse related to subprime mortgages. If you ever have the chance, Speaker, there's a fabulous book you should read, *The Big Short*, by a writer called Michael Lewis—a great storyteller, very colourful prose, very solid on the facts. He followed the growth in understanding amongst people dealing with the international financial system who came to understand that at the heart of the financial system, there was this huge chunk of rotten, dangerous assets that people had invested hundreds of billions, possibly trillions, in: subprime mortgages.

A number of analysts, in those years leading up to 2008, actually went and looked at those assets. They looked at those subprime mortgages in Phoenix, Orange county, San Diego and all over the United States: mortgages that had been given by mortgage companies that took a cut and passed them on to investors. They

didn't care about the quality. It was really irrelevant to them. All they cared about was getting their cut and passing on this toxic brew of subprime assets. Pensions, banks, people who felt they were investing in grade A, creditworthy assets, were totally—what I can say?—oblivious to the risk they were taking. In 2008, all of that came apart. There were staggering losses globally. As you're well aware, Speaker, governments around the world had to prop up the financial system—around the world. We were lucky; we didn't get a Great Depression. We did suffer and are still suffering the aftermath of what's called the great recession, but I'm not sure that we learned our lesson from the 2008 subprime mortgage debacle.

1640

I want to give you some background, because we're facing similar investment risks with oil, gas and coal. For those who have not followed the literature on this, I'll note a report that was provided by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario a number of months ago. He talked about the need for a planetary carbon diet—call it a carbon budget, if you will. In 2009, the global community, through the United Nations, adopted a ceiling that we would not go past in terms of global warming: two degrees centigrade. I referred to that earlier in my remarks. When you go past that, you start getting very dangerous, very unpredictable climatic events, most likely irreparable.

There's an awful lot of concern globally in government circles and in scientific circles that action needs to be taken to stay within that two-degree boundary. Now, as the Environmental Commissioner wrote, we're already about halfway to that threshold. We're already seeing the impact of an almost one-degree increase. We're seeing extreme storms and we're seeing substantially more erratic weather patterns.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released calculations regarding a global carbon budget. How much can we afford to burn and still stay within that two-degree cap on global warming? How much can we burn before we go over the red line? Their calculation was that to have a reasonable chance of staying within that two-degree-centigrade increase, the global economy could only generate what they called 1,000 gigatonnes. A gigatonne is a billion tonnes of CO₂ for future use.

At the current worldwide rate of CO₂ release, this global budget will be exhausted in about 28 years. We'd have to stop entirely in order to stay within that budget. That is a very short time frame in the life of a society, very short. I'll give you an example: The Wright brothers flew their first heavier-than-air aircraft in about 1903. Maybe I'm a year off one way or the other, but around then. Thirty years later, 1933, you had airline companies that were providing service across oceans. Twenty-eight years, 30 years is not a long time. There's a huge disparity between that budget that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change worked out and the amount of greenhouse gas-emitting fossil fuels that are on the books of global oil, coal and gas companies.

In 2012, the World Energy Outlook, published by the International Energy Agency, a fairly well-respected and well-regarded international institution, estimated that the remaining global reserves of all fossil fuels in the ground—that's coal, oil and natural gas—would emit 2,900 gigatonnes of CO₂ if they were all burned. If the threshold is 1,000 and what people have on their books—what companies have on their books—is 2,900, then about two thirds of the fossil fuel reserves that global companies are depending on to show that they're financially stable are going to have to stay in the ground. That raises huge questions because as you may well imagine, if an oil company says, "The value of all my reserves has to be cut by two thirds," then their stock value plummets.

A few years ago, I think BP revalued their oil reserves and showed they were 10% to 15% lower than they'd previously estimated, and the value of the stock plummeted. That's because the value of these companies is dependent on the reserves that they have on hand. The reality now is that they may not be able to burn all the reserves that they have, effectively devaluing those companies.

Within Canada, the Toronto Stock Exchange composite index is one of the most carbon-intensive stock indices in the world. In 2013, the TSX had over 400 companies listed in the oil and gas sector, representing a market capitalization of their total value or worth—here I'm quoting the Environmental Commissioner—of around \$400 billion to \$500 billion. The Environmental Commissioner stressed in his report that investors, pension plans—and many of us have great interest in pension plans—and insurance companies had to start looking at these areas of investment through a climate lens because they were putting their funds at risk by investing in these companies. Pension plans were putting their funds at risk—future pensions—by putting money in these companies.

Several authoritative international organizations, including the International Energy Agency, Carbon Tracker, the United Nations, and the HSBC—Hongkong and Shanghai Banking company, a bank you may be familiar with, one that operates in this country and in this town—are warning investors to focus this lens quickly and act accordingly, to avoid another kind of catastrophe: an economic one.

We saw, in 2008, that investors had sunk hundreds of billions into assets that weren't worth what the vendors said they were. We're in a situation now where oil, gas and coal companies are making a bet that the world will never act on climate change. That's their bet. The companies are based on that bet, financed on that bet, sell bonds on that bet. Their whole value is based on a bet that nothing will be done.

If they're right on that bet, it's disastrous for us. If they're wrong on that bet, it's disastrous for their bottom lines, for their financial statements, and for everyone whose investment portfolio, including big pension funds headquartered here in this province—it's a threat to those companies that have built their foundation on those industries.

So this is not a minor or tangential issue. This is a huge risk area for us. The Bank of England is now seriously turning to the question of what they call stranded assets—this coal, oil and gas that can't be burned—and unburnable carbon, given the major role that the London financial markets have in financing fossil fuel investment around the world.

In October 2014, the British paper the Guardian reported: "The governor of the Bank of England has reiterated his warning that fossil fuel companies cannot burn all of their reserves if the world is to avoid catastrophic climate ... impacts of their decisions.

"According to reports," Mark Carney, head of the Bank of England, "told a World Bank seminar on integrated reporting on Friday"—Friday of that October—"that the 'vast majority of reserves are unburnable' if global temperature rises are to be limited" to two degrees centigrade.

The governor of the Bank of England understands the kinds of risks that oil, gas and coal companies pose to the international financial system, just as subprime mortgages posed that risk, that threat, less than a decade ago. A decade ago, a number of people very smartly understood the risk, and they got out of that market. They saved themselves. Some of them made a lot of money by betting against the companies that didn't understand what was going on. There were a whole bunch of banks and investors—people remember the names Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers—that got hit profoundly, and many countries took a profound hit from those unstable and risky assets.

We have to understand and protect ourselves against the risk in terms of our physical experience of the world. We have to act to protect ourselves from the climate change that will destabilize our society. But we also have to understand it in terms of controlling our cost of living and cost of energy, and we have to understand it in terms of financial risk.

At this point, I don't believe that this government understands those risks, and I'm confident that they're not preparing for those risks. I look forward to being shown something different.

This bill, the one before us, as I said at the beginning, is a small firewall against a bad practice. But if we're actually going to take on the challenges before us, we need continuous, substantial steps towards changing our energy system. We have to move beyond oil, gas and coal.

The good thing is that the cost of conservation is already far less than the cost of electricity, for example. You can effectively reduce your need for electricity services at a cost of three to six cents a kilowatt hour.

I did a quick calculation on my electricity bill before the most recent rate increases came into effect. When I factored in the distribution and the regulatory charges and all that, I was paying about 21 cents a kilowatt hour. That's a lot of money, Speaker—a lot of money.

At the same time, the market for energy is changing in a profound way. In the United States, renewable energy

prices are dropping dramatically. In the United States, the cost of solar power is competitive with or lower than electrical power from the grid in Hawaii, and on track to be competitive in Arizona and California within the next few years.

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In fact, within five years, solar power is projected to be cheaper than grid power in about 20 American states, and banks are noticing. Banks are noticing the potential for disruption—technological disruption, economic disruption—of the existing energy systems.

Speaker, my bet is that at one point in your life you rented a video from Blockbuster Video. I think it's probably a pretty good bet that at one point you put down your five bucks. Maybe I'm wrong, but I think there's a very good chance that many people in this room, in the past, rented a film from Blockbuster Video. My bet is that you can't find one of them anywhere now because they're gone. They met Netflix and the game was over.

Disruptive technologies eliminate whole areas of the economy. We've seen them before. In the 1970s and early 1980s, when there was talk about bringing mobile phones to Ontario, I remember reading stories in the Globe and Mail about investors speculating whether or not this mobile phone thing would actually take off—"Is it worth putting the money in or not?" Some eventually got into mobile phones. Some still have very old-style phones in their hands. I remember meeting in the early 1980s with a fellow who was doing construction in a co-op that I was working at. He brought in his mobile phone, and he was sort of tilted over because the battery was about the size of a car battery. It looked kind of like one of those older rotary phones. There was a lot of skepticism at the time that this would catch on, but things moved on. Things moved on, and big telephone and communications companies that didn't actually adapt to, prepare for or deal with mobile technology took huge losses.

We have to understand that that is happening in the energy area with regard to renewable energy, with new technologies and micro-grids that are going to change the way people use energy and make energy in North America.

Earlier in 2014, Barclays bank downgraded the whole electricity sector in the United States. They looked at that sector and said, "Hmm, Blockbuster Video, we've seen this movie before. We're not going to put as much money into this sector as we have before."

John Spears, the fabulous energy reporter for the Toronto Star, who I believe is not writing there anymore, wrote a very good article in the Star's business section. He quoted Barclays, saying, "In the 100-plus-year history of the electric utility industry, there has never before been a truly cost-competitive substitute available for grid power.

"We believe that solar plus storage could reconfigure the organization and regulation of the electric power business over the coming decade."

“A combination of solar and storage is already competitive with grid power in Hawaii, Barclays said, and the trend will only grow.

“California could follow in 2017, New York and Arizona in 2018, and many other states soon after.”

“Barclays sees near-term credit risk for utilities where solar power is gaining traction. And it sees long-term risks ‘from a comprehensive reimagining of the role utilities play in providing electric power.’”

Barclays bank, last year, understood the potential scale of disruption of the electricity industry, understands the potential for solar power and other renewable technologies to make nuclear, coal, oil and gas electricity production uncompetitive.

Already in Germany, a country where there’s not an awful lot of sunshine, solar power is producing power for houses at a cost of between nine euro cents and 12 euro cents per kilowatt hour. Speaker, that’s a lot cheaper than peak power in Ontario.

In Abu Dhabi, which is looking at vast investment in solar power to provide electricity and to provide power for desalinization, they’re signing contracts for electricity provided by solar panels at less than six cents a kilowatt hour.

When Al Gore was speaking here at the Climate Summit of the Americas in July, he talked about a mining company in Arizona that had signed a contract for solar power for electricity at under five cents a kilowatt hour.

Speaker, the reality of electricity production, the reality of demand for fossil fuels is changing dramatically and has the potential to change even more dramatically. We in Ontario need to take advantage of those shifts.

It’s a good thing to stop burning coal; it’s a good thing to have a law prohibiting that. I’m happy to vote for this bill. My caucus colleagues are happy to vote for this bill. But I have to say that, just as Franklin Delano Roosevelt had to take far more substantial steps than simply passing one or two small laws to bring the United States back to some sort of economic viability, after four years of the Great Depression, this government or a future government is going to have to be far more active and change things far more profoundly if we’re actually going to keep climate change within—what can I say—survivable bounds, if we’re actually going to protect the air that people breathe in this province in the years to come.

I appreciate the measures that have been taken. I’m looking for measures far more substantial to continue getting rid of emissions on the same scale as they were reduced with the elimination of coal.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: I’m pleased to have an opportunity for just a couple of minutes to speak to Bill 9, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use. I must admit that I wonder why the government really needs this bill. It’s a one-page bill to make sure, I guess, that they don’t generate electricity

with coal. But we’ve seen so many promises to do with coal over the years.

I’m sure the member from St. Catharines would probably remember the original promise to shut down coal-fired generation. I had to go back and check, because I thought, “I’ve heard this so many times before.” But it was actually 2003—the 2003 election. The promise that was made did seem a little silly at the time, because they promised in the 2003 election that they would shut down coal by 2007 and replace it using clean sources. Now, they would have had to have been pretty darned efficient to actually accomplish that promise. As it turned out, that promise was made many, many more times over time, and some eight years later, after the 2007 election, it was actually achieved.

I’m not sure this bill is something that’s really required. Governments get elected, and particularly a majority government can basically do what they wish. For example, when the current government got elected, there was the Taxpayer Protection Act that the Mike Harris government had brought in to make sure that future governments balanced budgets. Well, when the current government was elected and didn’t feel like balancing the budget, they just repealed the Taxpayer Protection Act and, as we know, have run up some pretty significant deficits, doubling the debt of the province in the past number of years. So I do question, really, whether this bill is actually necessary.

When I was looking back in 2003, there were a few other promises too: We’ll not sell off the electricity grid; we’ll not sell any publicly owned generating stations. Things seem to have changed in the recent years.

Of course, we have the cap-and-trade system that’s being proposed right now. I must admit that I met with an interested citizens group wanting to educate me on different measures to try to reduce carbon use, and they were basically proposing some sort of carbon fee that was fully refundable to the citizens, more or less along the lines of what BC has done in the last number of years. BC has a carbon tax of, I believe, \$30 a tonne, but it’s revenue-neutral. It’s given back to people and corporations in the form of tax reductions so it doesn’t harm the economy. I think that’s really critical, and it’s really simple and straightforward. That seems to make a lot more sense to me than the complicated cap-and-trade system that is open to gaming and didn’t work in Europe, which is being proposed by the government.

I was asking this group that was educating me, “Why do you think they want cap and trade?” I think the suspicion is that the extra revenue that’s going to be generated is just going into the general fund somewhere, and who knows what’s going to happen? Or maybe it’s going to be used to balance the budget. When that happens, it will hurt the economy, because it will be a new tax, it won’t be revenue-neutral and maybe it won’t accomplish anything. So I’m a little concerned about the government implementing that. Especially, they’re again setting a very ambitious target of a timeline. I’ve heard

that people are really concerned and industries are really concerned. I'm the mining critic; mining is really concerned that they're not going to get it right if they try to rush it and don't take the time to do it properly. So I do have a lot of concerns with that.

But we are talking about Bill 9 today, the one-page bill. Frankly, I'm not sure that it's really necessary, so I think I'll end debate there.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House dated Tuesday, June 2, 2015, I'm now required to put the question.

Mr. Murray has moved third reading of Bill 9, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use to generate electricity at generation facilities. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): No? You guys have to shout. I'll do this again. Shout, please, because it's hard to hear you over here.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I've been told by the table that there was a no and I missed it.

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.

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

I've been handed a deferral slip. Pursuant to standing order 28(h), the vote will be deferred to Monday, November 23 after question period.

Third reading vote deferred.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just for the record, because I want to make sure that it's understood, this has happened a number of times in this particular spot. We have never been given a chance, even though we said no on other bills, to get a division. In this case, the government forgets, and all of a sudden they get different treatment. I don't think that's right. We should all be treated the same. If the government forgot to divide their own bill, that's their fault, not mine.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I thank you for that particular comment and your point of order. In the past, when I have not heard, I've always tried to confirm with the table that I did hear something or missed something. I make my decisions based on what I've heard or the advice of the table, and that's what I did again. I've been consistent.

Orders of the day?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The deputy House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Shall the motion carry?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On division.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): On division.

This House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1703.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

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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
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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
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MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
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Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
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