



No. 125

N° 125

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 25 November 2015

Mercredi 25 novembre 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

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

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

Index inquiries

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

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

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

Renseignements sur l'index

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

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



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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 25 November 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 25 novembre 2015

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 144, An Act to implement budget measures and to enact or amend certain other statutes, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Wednesday, December 2, 2015, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Thursday, December 3, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 144:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 1 p.m. on Tuesday, December 1, 2015; and

—That witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee on a first-come, first-served basis; and

—That each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation followed by nine minutes for questions from the committee members; and

—That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Thursday, December 3, 2015; and

—That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 10 p.m. on Friday, December 4; and

—That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, December 7, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and from 6:45 p.m. to midnight, in Toronto, for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

On Monday, December 7, 2015, at 4 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be

deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Tuesday, December 8, 2015. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The votes on second and third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Bradley has moved notice of motion number 44. I now recognize the deputy House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, this important piece of legislation fulfills a commitment made by the government in the 2015 budget and further implements our economic plan to build Ontario up. If passed, the Budget Measures Act will enact five new statutes and amend a number of other statutes. This bill implements necessary changes in order to continue to implement our economic plan to build Ontario up. The plan includes investing in people's talents and skills; making the largest investment in public infrastructure in Ontario's history, over \$130 billion over the next 10 years; creating a dynamic and innovative environment where business thrives; and strengthening retirement security. These changes are necessary as we continue to implement the plan for Ontario. This legislation will help our economy grow and create jobs.

As you know, our government has committed to unlocking the value of provincial assets and placing the net proceeds from the sale of qualifying assets in the Trillium Trust. These funds will then be used for public infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges and transit—

Interjection.

Hon. James J. Bradley: —including, if necessary, work on Highway 417 in eastern Ontario.

The Budget Measures Act, 2015, seeks to make amendments to the Trillium Trust Act, 2014, which would specify the qualifying assets. This amendment would help us fulfill the government's commitment of investing more than \$130 billion in public infrastructure across the province over the next 10 years; investments to help our economy grow and enhance the quality of life for all Ontarians. The Budget Measures Act, 2015, also seeks to make amendments to the Liquor Control Act to support the sale of beer in grocery stores.

We are also proposing to make an amendment to the Electricity Act, 1998. The government has already taken action to reduce electricity cost pressures for Ontario households. As previously announced, the government is removing the debt retirement charge from residential electricity users' bills beginning January 1, 2016. Currently, business and other electricity users will continue to pay the debt retirement charge until it is determined that the residual stranded debt has been retired and a notice to that effect is published in the Ontario Gazette.

If passed, the proposed amendment would end the debt retirement charge for all electricity users in Ontario on April 1, 2018. This means that commercial, industrial and other non-residential electricity users could stop paying the debt retirement charge nine months earlier than previously estimated and give them certainty to help them make investment decisions. This would save a typical large industrial company about 7%, a large northern industrial company more than 8% and a small business about 4% on their electricity bills.

0910

In the last Parliament, this Legislature was virtually ground to a halt and was unable to move forward. Only 39% of government bills were passed in the last minority government, compared to more than three quarters of bills that were passed going back to 1990. The voters of Ontario sent a clear message last June: They wanted a government to get on with the business of governing in their best interests. So it is time that we now conclude second reading and refer the bill to committee.

In committee, stakeholders will present their views, we will be able to hear directly from the public their thoughts on this bill, and committee members will have an opportunity to move amendments to the bill. At the same time, this House can move to substantive debate on other matters. There are a number of important pieces of legislation that have already been introduced, which the government would like to debate in the House and move through the legislative process. I'll give examples: Bill 119, the Health Information Protection Act; Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act; and

Bill 135, the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act. We would like to spend time debating some other important pieces of legislation currently before the House, but we cannot until Bill 144 is dealt with. I urge all members of this House to support this motion and help pass this bill as soon as possible.

What we see is an opportunity that I must say did not always exist, when I look back on the history of this Legislature. In other words, believe it or not, there were previous governments that had no time allocated in committee for bills. We wanted to ensure that there was time in committee for two things: first of all, representations by the public—that is, the public has an opportunity to comment on specific aspects of the bill and make suggestions and recommendations to the committee of the Legislature—and second, that any member of the committee have an opportunity to introduce potential amendments to the bill if they believe it can be improved or changed in such a way as to make it a bill that would be better for the people of the province of Ontario. So we have provided that opportunity and a considerable amount of time for debate on this particular piece of legislation.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, that didn't always exist, but in consultation with members of the opposition—you can't always come to a final conclusion, but there has been some consultation with members of the opposition—

Interjection.

Hon. James J. Bradley: —including my good friend the member for Renfrew-Pembroke-Nipissing. That's a different order, but I like to change the order around a bit, because I want to emphasize that one part of a riding is not always more important than the other. So I try to make sure that I change that around from time to time.

I do appreciate the fact that already in this House we've had some considerable debate on this particular piece of legislation. I have read Hansard carefully and have taken into account, as all members of the government have, what has been said by all members of the Ontario Legislature. You will note as well that the government, in its wisdom, I think, has actually allocated more time for the opposition to be able to speak at second reading than members of the government, because we know that members of the opposition have wanted to speak on this particular piece of legislation. So we said, let's have fewer government members speaking or, if government members are speaking, reduce the amount of time they might otherwise have the opportunity to speak. Again, that's trying to accommodate the wishes of members of the opposition, as we try to at the House leaders' meeting, where the leaders of the three parties—these are the parliamentary leaders or, as we call them, the House leaders of the three parties—along with the whips get together to try to iron out a schedule that is mutually acceptable to all. We know that's very challenging to do, but we make that genuine effort.

When we cannot come to a conclusion, the government is then compelled to move forward with a specific schedule for a bill. That is what we have done here: a specific schedule. One other good thing about this is that

everybody knows exactly when the bill will be in committee, how long it will be in committee, the specific hours and then something that—when I first came to this Legislature and for a number of years after, there was virtually never third reading on a bill.

The government has said, “Well, you know something? After we’ve had the opportunity to go through committee, to hear people and to hear amendments put forward, we’re still prepared, at the conclusion of that, to allocate time for third reading”—and allocated it, I might add, equally amongst the three parties. Even though the government has more seats—and one would say, if you’re doing it proportionate to the number of seats, the government would have more time—we have said it’s important, we think, that the three parties have that opportunity.

I know there will be a very positive and fulsome debate on this particular motion. I’m confident that members of the opposition will be—

Miss Monique Taylor: A point of order.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: Do we have a quorum?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Would the table check to see if we have a quorum?

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): A quorum is present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): A quorum is present.

Continue, deputy House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I will avoid making any reference to the fact that a quorum is present at this time and that there are the required number of members. But, of course, that’s—

Interjections.

Hon. James J. Bradley: That is something, for sure, that used to happen.

I see a gathering of people around the member for Nipissing, and therefore I feel compelled to yield the floor to him for his very positive and supportive remarks about this motion.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Yes, it’ll be positive. I’m positive that this should not be happening.

Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the actual Bill 144. I know we’re going to hear from our whip and we’re going to hear from our deputy leader, and they’re going to talk about the finer points of closure and why this should not be happening. I want to talk about the meat of this bill and what this is really all about, and why, in my opinion, this closure is happening.

The member talked about unlocking the value of public assets and using them to fund this \$130 billion in infrastructure. Speaker, it’s easy to say that, but none of that—none of that at all—is what’s happening here. Absolutely none of that. So I’m going to talk for maybe 10 minutes and take us on a little trip as to what this is all about.

This is all about filling the financial hole in their budget. This has nothing to do with infrastructure. I’m going to prove that. In fact, I’m going to use the government’s own words, on page 162 of the budget bill, to prove what this is all about: that it’s all about plugging the financial hole. It’s about desperately trying to balance their budget, at which the Financial Accountability Officer showed us that they’re going to fail.

Let’s just take a little history, because this is all about selling Hydro. Let’s start at the beginning, when this happened. It started back when the Ed Clark report was first presented. The first time it was presented—because it was presented twice—it was called Retain and Gain—and he’s talking about Hydro—Making Ontario’s Assets Work Better for Taxpayers—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Stop the clock for a second.

I would ask the members on the government side especially—when your member was speaking, everybody in this House was silent, and that you would offer the same to the speaker currently.

The member for Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: As I was saying, Speaker, the original Ed Clark report was entitled Retain and Gain: Making Ontario’s Assets Work Better for Taxpayers and Consumers. The whole purpose of this one was to retain all the companies and significantly improve their performance. That’s what it was called. In fact, the Ed Clark commission concluded that Hydro One transmission should remain in public hands as a core asset.

0920

That was then, and this is now. Now you’ve got the Premier in front of this massive—and I mean massive; she is dwarfed by this beer-in-grocery stores backdrop. It is so huge, it would encompass about eight people in front of it to hide it; it’s that massive. She was standing there talking about beer in grocery stores and said, “Oh, by the way, we’re selling Hydro.” That was just a little aside. Something happened along the way—when we got Ed Clark’s final report, which came that day. It was issued five months after his first report that said Hydro One transmission should remain in public hands as a core asset.

Now he’s got a second report, and this one is called Striking the Right Balance: Improving Performance and Unlocking Value in the Electricity Sector in Ontario. Speaker, that is so full of crap that the title needed a colon in it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I’d ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I withdraw, Speaker.

They concluded the province should sell a majority interest in Hydro One through share sales to the public. This is an amazing reversal in five months: going from “They should remain in public hands as a core asset” to “The province should sell a majority.”

It appears that what has happened is the government realized what the Ministry of Finance has been saying all

along in the internal documents: There's no plan to balance the budget. They're not on track to meet their deficit targets. So they opted to burn the furniture to heat the house. They're selling off assets to artificially balance the budget. That is exactly what's happening here.

They talk about—

Interjections.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's so obvious that we are on the track of the truth here, something that this other side knows nothing about.

Let's see what happens here. They are now going to be selling Hydro One, which they say, ostensibly, is to go into infrastructure. Here's the first part that shows everything they've had to say is inaccurate. It starts off in their 2014 budget. In their 2014 budget, they were talking about putting \$130 billion into infrastructure. It is comprised of selling \$1.1 billion of the GM shares and, over the next three years, only another \$2 billion in assets. So it's \$3.1 billion in assets over four years, including the GM shares. That's in their 2014 budget. In their 2015 budget, they now need the Hydro One sale to make that happen. But that is absolutely untrue.

In the Ottawa Citizen, way back in April, they nailed it. They said:

"A reasonable person might wonder why we need to sell most of a significant ... asset ... just to keep doing what we have been doing for years.

"The real answer ... is that putting some billions of new money into the province's transit trust will enable the government to quietly shift existing money to help it reduce the deficit or pay for other spending."

What they're saying is, "Look, you're going to sell Hydro, but you can pretend to take that money and announce you're putting it in transit—but taking it out of the existing money, the transit budget, that you've already put." That's what they alluded to back in April. We've been standing here saying that for months now.

Now, in the government's own budget document, Bill 144—it's 167 pages long—buried, in one sentence on page 162, is what this is all about. Everything comes down—all this other material here is just fodder to bury this one sentence, and the one sentence is in "Authorized expenditures." What can they do with the money from the sale of Hydro One? Schedule 22, section 7(1):

"1. To fund, directly or indirectly, costs relating to ... infrastructure.

"2. To reimburse the crown for expenditures incurred by the crown ... for a purpose described" above.

They can reimburse the crown for infrastructure spending. That lays it flat out in front of everybody that this game they've been playing—every single day they have stood here and said that the money is for infrastructure, it is going to infrastructure, and then taking the infrastructure money out and putting it against their deficit, because they do not know how to control their spending and they cannot balance their budget.

One sentence lays everything they've said to waste. It is laid out now very clearly for us that all of this is, in

their own words, "To reimburse the crown for expenditures" of "construction or acquisition of infrastructure." I need not say another word. We now know the truth for the first time in this Legislature. We now know that everything they've been saying about the infrastructure has been laid flat here.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It has been exposed.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It has been exposed. They've been outed. They got caught again. They got caught red-handed again with yet another yarn that they've spun, and we know flat out, in their own words, that it's not true.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you, Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

Ms. Catherine Fife: John Yakabuski, be quiet.

Bill 144: time-allocated. The finance minister stood up and spoke to this piece of legislation for 16 minutes—16 minutes—unbelievable.

Now this Premier ran in the last election as if she was going to be a progressive Premier, as if she was going to rule—do you remember?—from the activist centre. I guess the activist centre doesn't believe in the democratic right of members of this Legislature to fully debate pieces of legislation which will negatively impact the people of this province. The entire premise—do you remember? "Oh, yes. We are going to put evidence over politics. We are going to put policy over partisanship. We are going to make sure that we consult with the people of this province."

What has happened? An omnibus bill is before this House. We have not even fully had the opportunity to consult with the people who this piece of legislation will be affecting. This includes everyone from the small grocery stores that can't get the licence to sell beer in their stores. We are just hearing from that whole sector from across the province because they're worried that the large chains that, apparently, fell into favour with this government are able to sell beer.

Yet, the entire beer conversation, just to add insult to injury, the day that this government came out with the full privatization plan of Hydro One—that same day—that was the day where this government decided to say, "Beer for everybody. Don't look at this plan over here, the privatization of Hydro One and the false choice of 'You must sell off Hydro One in order to get infrastructure.' Forget about that. No, look over here."

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Member for Eglinton–Lawrence, would you come to order?

Ms. Catherine Fife: This is the biggest charade that this province has ever seen. The sell-off of Hydro One is the largest transfer of wealth from the public sector to the private sector. It is the largest. It is so unfair to the people—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence and the member for

Hamilton Mountain, if you wish to carry on a conversation, I'd ask you to take it outside.

Carry on.

0930

Ms. Catherine Fife: We have to let the people of this province know what is actually going on in this House, Mr. Speaker, with this huge bill and schedule 22, which I spoke to at length when I had the opportunity. Most of the caucus on this side of the House have not had an opportunity to share their concerns. I could not agree more with my fellow critic on schedule 22, and it is important to get on the record what the Trillium Trust is.

As I explained in my lead, the Trillium Trust is not a bucket where, when you sell off and you carve off pieces of Hydro One, that money ends up in this bucket and then it's safeguarded for infrastructure. No, no, no, Mr. Speaker; that is exactly the opposite of that fund.

Money will go through the revenue and it will end up in the minister's hands. Essentially, that is exactly what this piece of legislation does. It gives unbelievable power to the Minister of Finance and, obviously, to the Premier. You can't blame us for having concerns about that because this government has a long-standing record of not being able to follow through on their promises, of not listening to independent officers of the Legislature like the Auditor General, like the Financial Accountability Officer.

When we look at where the money has gone in this province—as the finance critic, it's hard to follow it, quite honestly, because there are these little sidelines, this shell game of where money goes.

Schedule 22 of Bill 144 makes it very clear that this government is not going to be putting this money solely into infrastructure—not at all. In fact, this government has basically put into legislation the right and the entitlement of the Finance Minister to spend whatever he wishes on infrastructure.

I'm going to read: "When money is withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for infrastructure expenditures, including 'reimbursements' for expenditures directly or indirectly related to infrastructure construction or acquisition, the government may record as an 'authorized expenditure'" —carte blanche—"an amount up to the total balance in the trust.

"The government is given broad regulatory authority to prescribe 'anything that is permitted or required by this act to be prescribed, designated or done by regulation or in accordance with the regulations.'"

Once again, we have a government that ran from this activist centre, "where we will consult, where we will listen, where we will draw people into the democratic process"—no consultation on this, no consultation on Hydro One. People are still waking up to the fact that this government is selling out Hydro One right from under their feet. Hydro One generates revenue for this province. That revenue supports education; that revenue supports health care. This government can't afford to waste any more money.

As we move forward with this piece of legislation, clearly the government doesn't want to hear from the people of this province on this bill; clearly they don't because they have time-allocated it. They have shut down democracy. How is that for progress? That's not my definition of a progressive.

Who knew that right in the middle of the activist centre of this Premier is a banker, a banker who is pulling the levers and using the Premier's office as a pulpit to privatize the public services in this province? It is unbelievable, Mr. Speaker.

You can clap.

Applause.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It really is. It's hard to actually explain this fully to the people of this province because they don't feel connected to this place at all. In fact, they're losing confidence in the legislation that has come from this place, the lack of consultation. Just to find out that even as this government moved forward with the privatization of Hydro One, the way that they carved it off and then the province paid the bill for that financial transaction, that, in and of itself, demonstrates that this government is solely focused on that 1%. Believing in evidence over partisanship is a thing of the past, for sure.

The false choice—this is what I really do need to focus on, Mr. Speaker—is that this government has said that without selling Hydro One, we will see no infrastructure investment. The money—even if you get it, even if it flows through general revenue, even if it ends up through the Trillium Trust, even if somehow that shell game ends up on an LRT or GO train maybe, even if that happens—is 1%, Mr. Speaker.

Now, remember that this is the government that failed to spend the money that they had in their budget in 2014 and 2015; allocated funding, \$1.4 billion in total. This government was unable to spend that money. Yet the Financial Accountability Officer has said that with the sale of Hydro One, this government may accrue \$1.4 billion to \$3.1 billion. I mean, they are moving mountains to sell off Hydro One, and 80% of the people of this province, who were not consulted, have said, "We do not want you to do that. You did not run on it. It was not in your platform."

Broadening the ownership: That's what they're going to come back with. They're going to say, "Oh, it was in our platform, broadening the ownership." How do you broaden the ownership any more than having the entire province own this important public asset? The entire province, prior to the sell-off of that 15%, they were the owners.

There could be a focus on conservation. There could be a focus on efficiency. One of the first things this government does is it gives the new CEO of Hydro One \$4 million. That's what that new CEO makes. No CEO of any hydro facility across this country makes that kind of money. It's a slap in the face to the people of this province, what is happening in this place, Mr. Speaker.

So we challenge this premise that you have to sell Hydro One to deliver infrastructure. No other Premier

across this country has to do that. We challenge the premise that you are actually going to invest these dollars in infrastructure; in fact, your legislation proves that you are not. And we challenge this concept that you are actually moving forward with this Budget Measures Act in the best interests of the people of this province, because it is simply not the case.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to join this debate on this closure motion. Interestingly enough—how telling is this?—I just grabbed a copy of Bill 144 off the table, and when I opened it up, it's printed upside down. Now, that pretty well should answer the whole story about what's wrong with this motion and what's wrong with this government. Half the time, they can't tell whether they're right side up or upside down. Here is another indication of it right here. They got Bill 144 and they printed it upside down, because it's a mess right from the start. How illustrative is that? I can read upside down, so I'll get the points that I need out of it.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, no need, no need; sometimes it's better to have it upside down. Well, we'll get two copies here. That's just like—see, the government has two sides: one where they want to tell you how nice they want to be, “We want to work with the opposition. We want to collaborate. We want to hear from the opposition about their views on different things, so together we can bring in better legislation for the province of Ontario.” This one, sure enough, is right side up.

Earlier today, my colleague from Nipissing said that I was going to touch on some of the finer points of this motion. Well, I may get to that, but unfortunately I'm going to say some things this morning that are not going to make people very happy. The people on the other side are definitely going to get a little upset.

We're getting a little tired of the same old thing over and over again. You know, this motion—and I want to correct my record. Yesterday, I said it was the 17th closure motion since this government took office in July 2014; it is actually only the 16th, but trust me, Speaker, it won't be long before there is a 17th. My record of yesterday will be correct in short order. My record will be correct in short order because there will be another closure motion coming from this government. Because, you see, this is the problem with this new Kathleen Wynne arrogant majority government—

0940

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask you to refrain from using names. Use titles.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Precedent has said we can call it the Wynne government—okay, this new, arrogant Wynne government and their arrogant attitude with their majority. Now that they've got their massive majority that they keep talking about, the mandate that they got from the people, they can behave with absolute impunity when it comes to being arrogant and how they disregard the members of the opposition.

Now, once again, here we have the guillotine motion. We heard from captain closure earlier, the member from the Garden City, St. Catharines, bringing the motion this morning. Once again, he stood on behalf of the government—general guillotine, captain closure, you can give him whatever rank you want—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I hear what you're saying, but I would ask you to be a little bit respectful of your colleagues in how you describe them. I don't think it's appropriate for the chamber.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. That is not meant in any disrespect. It is quite obviously in jest. It is not in disrespect; it is in jest. He would understand it and most people who have an open mind, if they are not too small-minded, they would understand that. We're attaching something to try to point out how much pleasure they seem to take in doing these kinds of motions, and it's wrong. It's wrong.

I'm going to get down to the nitty-gritty here and talk about the arrogance of the government, and the Premier in particular. I remember the first time when we were having a debate in this House, long before she was even in cabinet. She made a comment in this House—you can go back and check Hansard, I don't have the date—but she basically referred to the men in the opposition as a bunch of misogynists. She called us a bunch of misogynists. It really struck as a bit of the attitude that we're going to experience.

Now, as Premier—this is why we have these motions to shut down debate, because they consider the opposition to be somewhat irrelevant: “We will hear the requisite amount of debate. We'll have to suffer through it, as the know-it-all government that cannot be challenged,” because they have their electoral mandate. “We'll sit through what we have to, but then we're going to do what we decided to do because they are inferior to us. That opposition is quite frankly inferior; we don't have to listen to them and we're not going to.” Even though on the front side, when they're talking outside, in the press, or here, they'll talk about trying to work collaboratively, but it hasn't happened. It hasn't happened.

But how many times, when members of the assembly, or anywhere—and the best illustration came out this week, when we were talking about the Syrian refugee crisis and the federal plan. The Liberals derided the Conservative plan and made great promises about what they were going to do about the Syrian refugee crisis by the end of 2015, by the end of the year. When anybody questioned that plan, the Premier would rise to the defence of her mentor up in Ottawa and as much as call those people racists for challenging the plan that the federal government had to bring—even the former Premier of British Columbia, a Sikh.

Now, Speaker, I have never tasted the sting of racism. That's probably fairly obvious. There are members in this Legislature, I am sure, who have tasted the sting of racism, and it is absolutely painful, I am certain. But Premier Kathleen Wynne is not one of them. Now, the former Premier of British Columbia, I'm sure, could

speak to that because he most likely probably has tasted that sting. But when he is being lectured by the Premier of Ontario because he questions the plan of the federal government—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I hope the member is going to tie this into the debate that's in front of us very soon.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It is as tied in as what else was being talked about, Speaker—infrastructure and everything else was tied into the debate on this motion. This is about the attitude of the government towards the people on this side of the House. I believe it is absolutely tied into the debate because that is why we have had 16 closure motions by this government since they took office in July 2014—16 closure motions.

You see, this has become the tactic of this particular Premier. When you don't agree with her, you are racist or a bigot, or some other word that makes people feel very uncomfortable. When you challenge them on their social policy, well, she drifts into as much as calling you a bigot. When you challenge their support—their blanket support—of the Ottawa plan, which now they have completely reversed on and gone back more to what the plan was of the previous government, is she now going to call Justin Trudeau and Ralph Goodale and John McCallum racist or impugn that they are racist because they are backing off on their plan to bring over Syrian refugees? No, of course she's not. But then she shouldn't refer to members of the opposition, or any other group that doesn't immediately fall in line with her tactics, that way either. Those words are hurtful, and they're painful. When you attach them to people, you should do it only—only—when you absolutely have come to the conclusion that they are deserving of having those words attached to them, only if you are absolutely certain they are deserving of having had those words adjoined to them.

I hope that there is a change in attitude in this government about what we do on this side of the House. It is our responsibility to challenge what the government does. We have been given that legal responsibility, that legislative responsibility, to challenge what the government does. It is not something that we take lightly, but when you are challenging the government, you should never have to feel that because you question something they're doing, for legitimate reasons—the plan has changed. Was the plan—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I say to the government whip: Has the plan changed in Ottawa? What changed in the last few days, or since, that they changed their plan completely? Nothing has changed in the last few days, but now they are backing off on it.

I just want the people on that side of the House to understand that we also have a right to question what governments are doing, and we should not be immediately characterized. We should not hear phrases that I know have been said in this House. They don't get said anymore because the offenders have been told not to use that phrase anymore, but I do see the hand gestures some-

times, and the gentleman knows who I'm talking about. We should never have to put up with that in this House when we question something the government is doing. The debate should be based on the value of the issue, not whether or not you agree with the government's one-sided argument.

It's about time that the government showed that they are interested in hearing what the other side has to say. That's what the owl impugns on that side: Be wise and listen to the other side. The eagle on this side tells us to be vigilant and keep an eye on the government. That's our job.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: But that's hard.

Mr. John Yakabuski: But it's hard to do that when the debate is stifled because the government—this was unbelievable, this is the epitome of their actions, what they have done to this bill here. This is not a bill of small importance. It's not a small bill. It is 167 pages—167 pages. It's a significant piece of legislation. Shortly after they reach the 6.5—for those out there who are listening and don't understand the rules of the Legislature, after 6.5 hours of debate the government can decide that there will be no more debate.

0950

The next bill that would be as big as this—well, with as much stuff in it—would be a budget bill. When the government brings in a budget, it requires a set amount of debate. I may not be exactly correct on this, but it's 12 sitting days of debate that have to take place for a budget before it can even be voted on and passed or rejected. Because of the significance of the legislation, there's a requirement that this Legislature debate it for an extended period of time. It can't be shut down after 6.5 hours. I would have thought that that kind of consideration would have been given to a bill of this magnitude—167 pages, Speaker. There are 23 separate statutes that are being amended in this piece of legislation. This is not a small piece of legislation.

It is not only our right, it is our responsibility to question what is in this legislation. People didn't send us here to be rubber stamping what the government does. In that case, we need not have a Parliament. We need not have any debate whatsoever. We need not sit here. We just need the kings and queens of the Liberal Party to run the province and we'll just go home and cut ribbons. Of course, there wouldn't be many cut because this province would probably be on its knees and broke even faster if there wasn't an opposition to hold these people to account.

But if they're not going to pay any attention and they're not going to pay any heed to what we have to say about a piece of legislation like this—as I say, 167 pages. How is it possible to have a full and complete debate on a piece of legislation of that size when only a few select members of the House have had a chance to speak to it? All of the critics who are affected by this have not spoken to it. People who are representing their constituencies have not had the opportunity to speak to it. Yet, because the government has its own agenda and they've become so arrogant in believing that we are an inferior group on

this side of the House, their view is that they need not concern themselves with what we have to say.

We're only getting 40 minutes to speak to this because of the standing orders. The standing orders require that. If the government could put this bill through without giving us the 40 minutes, they would have done that. That is a scary thought, when you think about it, Speaker: a scary thought when you think that this is where we're coming to in this Legislature. If this attitude continues, where are we going to end up?

This is not what our forefathers envisioned when we brought the British parliamentary system to this country. This is not how they saw it happening. They saw the opportunity for people who are elected by their people at home to come here and debate that legislation. They did not believe for a minute that they would be stifled on legislation of such magnitude in such short order. They believed they would have a chance to speak to it.

I have not been shocked with some of the closure motions that have come forward by this government. Some of them I've totally expected. I must tell you that when I saw this motion yesterday, when I saw it presented, I was shocked. I remember saying to my colleagues, "I don't believe that even this government would possibly bring forth a closure motion this quickly on this bill." They just have to see that it's wrong. They've got to know that it cannot be right to take a bill of that size, and that changes 23 separate statutes, as I said, and just ram it through without any real debate. It's wrong.

I don't blame the Liberal backbenchers. They take their orders from the corner office. That's what has happened here. This is the attitude that is coming out of the corner office, and it should change.

I don't blame the staffers who work for the Liberals. They're doing their job. I talk about him all the time: Lucas Malinowski in the under press, the man with the rope. He pulls the switch on the guillotine. He takes orders from the deputy House leader. He pulls the switch on the guillotine and down it comes on the opposition once again. I don't blame Jackie Choquette either. She does a great job working for the House leader. She gets her orders to go sharpen the knife edge on the guillotine because Lucas is getting ready to pull the switch—and down it comes once again. They shouldn't be doing that to their staffers over there.

We've got good staff here too. Jessica Lippert is here all the time, every day. She doesn't get to do those kinds of things, but she'd like to have her members have an opportunity to speak more often. Cody Welton is down there, wondering, "What's going on down here?"

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Point of order.

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

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'm listening, caught on every word that the honourable member is talking about—as always, captivating. However—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can you make your point of order succinctly, please?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon:—talking about the staff is, I think, a tad unparliamentary and not—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): That's not a point of order.

Member, carry on.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. I knew it wasn't a point of order.

Sometimes, I think it's important to recognize the good work that staff do around here, and I do that routinely because I respect the work they do. I respect the work that the members on the opposite side of the House do. What I'm having trouble respecting is the attitude that is coming out of the Premier's office more and more with regard to respect for the work that we do on this side of the House.

Speaker, if this is going to be a Parliament that works collaboratively, that works collectively, that works for the betterment of all the people of Ontario, then that attitude over there has to change.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today, on behalf of the constituents I represent in London West, to share some of the concerns that have already been raised by my colleagues in the House. Certainly, we have deep concerns about the time allocation motion that is before us today, to limit debate on Bill 144, the Budget Measures Act.

Speaker, time allocation, as others have said, is inherently undemocratic. It cuts off debate, it stifles citizen engagement in the political process, it denies MPPs the opportunity to share the views of our constituents and it allows the government to push through a legislative agenda without the full scrutiny of members of the Legislature. But it is particularly egregious when it is used to cut off debate on legislation with the heft and scope of the Budget Measures Act.

Bill 144 is an omnibus bill. It is 167 pages in length, and it amends 23 existing statutes. It was introduced just late last Wednesday. On Monday, it was debated for second reading. Only one week after its introduction, the debate is being cut off.

Usually, a bill is introduced, it sits on the order paper before it is called, and citizens and stakeholders have an opportunity to review the legislation. They have an opportunity to think about the implications of the changes that are proposed. This is not the case with Bill 144. There has been very little time to unpack the bill and to reflect on its contents. There has been very little time for MPPs to reach out to our constituents to see how they feel about the amendments that are included in the bill.

1000

Speaker, we've seen this government resort, time and time again, to time allocation, but rarely have we seen it being used to push through a bill with the magnitude of Bill 144.

I understand that the government would like us to believe that the bill simply ties up loose ends from the 2015 budget. I guess that was wise. The Minister of Finance chose not to spend time explaining or defending Bill 144

when it was introduced for second reading debate. He and the member from York South–Weston spoke to it for a total of 16 minutes instead of the full hour that is typically allocated to a leadoff speech. I understand why it is important for the government to be able to tie up loose ends, since the process to develop the 2016 budget is already under way. So I do understand what is motivating this legislation, as well as the motion that is before us today to cut off debate.

The problem is that this place is not supposed to be about the government. It's not supposed to be about what's in the government's interest. It's supposed to be about the people of Ontario. It's supposed to be about allowing time for full and meaningful debate among the 107 MPPs who have the privilege and honour of representing the people of the province. It's supposed to be about consulting with stakeholders who will be directly affected by the legislation, so that we can ensure that their views are represented and taken into consideration as the bill moves through the legislative process.

As my colleague the member for Kitchener–Waterloo said in her excellent leadoff speech—and by the way, Speaker, she did take the full hour—this kind of conduct hardly demonstrates the openness, the transparency and the accountability that the Liberal government promised to Ontarians. If anything, what the Liberals are doing with the time allocation motion is the exact opposite of what they promised. It's no wonder that Ontarians feel so disappointed. It's no wonder they feel let down, even betrayed, by the government's use of code words during the election, like “optimizing assets” and “unlocking value.”

Despite the government's claims that people knew all along that voting Liberal meant voting for the largest wholesale sell-off of public assets in this province's history, Ontarians just aren't buying it. Ontarians know that they did not give the Liberals a mandate to sell Hydro One, regardless of what the government says. On the contrary, the overwhelming majority of people in this province—83%—are opposed to the privatization scheme. Speaker, 188 municipalities have passed resolutions to keep Ontario's electricity system in public hands.

Yet in the face of such strong citizen opposition, what does the government do? Instead of voting in favour of the NDP motion to halt the sale of any more shares in Hydro One; instead of respecting the independent, objective analysis of the Financial Accountability Officer, who showed that privatization could net as little as \$1.4 billion for the province, which is less than half of the revenue projected by the Liberals; instead of listening to the people of this province, who are demanding that Hydro One remain in public hands, the Liberals are ramming through Bill 144.

This is a bill that will enable the government to go, as the Premier says, “full steam ahead” with its flawed, short-sighted and irresponsible Hydro One privatization plan.

Speaker, I want to focus my comments on two of the most concerning statutes that are amended by this Budget Measures Act: the Electricity Act and the amendments

outlined in schedule 3; and the Trillium Trust Act, which is outlined in schedule 22 of the bill before us. These two pieces of legislation provide the legislative scaffolding that the government needs to use to push through its privatization of Hydro One.

On Monday, in her lead speech, my colleague the MPP for Kitchener–Waterloo quoted from a very insightful analysis of Bill 144 from Tom Adams of Energy Probe. He said that schedule 3 of the bill “contains the first clues so far disclosed as to how the government intends to fill the hole it has created” at the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. “with the sale of Hydro One.”

Schedule 3 repeals the sections of the Electricity Act that would have redirected monies collected from Hydro One, OPG and municipal electricity utilities through payments in lieu of municipal and school taxes back to municipalities, once the residual stranded debt is paid off.

Currently, while the residual stranded debt—the debt inherited by the government following the dismantling of Ontario Hydro—remains outstanding, these monies flow to the OEFC, and they will continue to do so under Bill 144. But as Tom Adams points out, this means that the proceeds of the sale of Hydro One to build transit are to be achieved in part through the farcical finance of seizing revenue from another level of government. The amount of money may be small in the scheme of things, but it illustrates the government's reliance on astrology and unicorn sightings to guide their electricity and transit plans.

We see the same kind of shell game played elsewhere, in schedule 3 of this bill. A magic wand is waved so that any and all references to the residual stranded debt and the stranded debt are simply erased from the act. The minister is no longer required to report the value of the residual stranded debt and no longer has to inform Ontarians when the residual stranded debt has been retired. This is information that Ontarians have a right to know, since they are on the hook for paying off the debt through a debt retirement charge on their electricity bills.

Schedule 3 does make good on the government's commitment to remove the debt retirement charge by the end of 2015, and also sets a date of April 1, 2018, for the elimination of the debt retirement charge from all electricity bills, not just residential, including business and other consumers.

We know that the residual stranded debt was estimated to be about \$2.6 billion as of March 2014, and it's being paid down at a rate of about \$1.3 billion a year, which means that it should be nearly paid off. However, schedule 3 makes it clear that businesses will still be paying debt retirement charges between now and 2018, even if the residual stranded debt is retired prior to April 2018. According to the analysis done by the Financial Accountability Officer, debt retirement charges represent a financial hit to Ontario businesses of about \$600 million a year, so businesses have a huge stake in having the charges removed as soon as possible.

To be fair, however, it does seem unlikely that the residual stranded debt will be retired early, given the

impact of the privatization of Hydro One. As the FAO pointed out in his report on the sale, the loss of dedicated Hydro One revenues will have the effect of increasing the residual stranded debt, thus prolonging the need to keep the debt retirement charge.

I want to move on to schedule 22 of Bill 144, which deals with the Trillium Trust and the proceeds of privatization, which is where things get really interesting. This schedule completely restructures the Trillium Trust in its current form. Instead of operating as a bank account for the government—money in, money out—this schedule changes the purpose of the Trillium Trust to become what is essentially an accounting procedure. No longer will the trust record all receipts and disbursements of public money. Instead, its purpose will be to track:

“(1) Prescribed amounts of designated proceeds of disposition of qualifying assets.

“(2) Prescribed amounts of prescribed non-cash benefits that are recognized by the crown in connection with dispositions of qualifying assets.

“(3) All expenditures of public money under this act.”

Currently, the designated proceeds of disposition are paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund, not the Trillium Trust, and a prescribed amount of the proceeds is then credited to the trust. This will not change with Bill 144. There will still be no guarantee that money from an asset sale will be dedicated to the trust, and the government will maintain full regulatory authority to prescribe whatever amount it wishes to dedicate.

The critical change with schedule 22 is that there will now be no guarantee that amounts credited to the trust represent actual money. It will be possible to increase the balance of the Trillium Trust simply by designating a claimed gain on paper with respect to assets that the government already owns. Not only will no money ever be deposited into or withdrawn from the Trillium Trust, but there is no longer any guarantee that amounts credited to the trust represent actual money or even a liquidable non-cash asset.

As we know from the work done by my colleague the member for Toronto–Danforth, the estimated \$2.2 billion in Hydro One proceeds that the government claims will be dedicated to the Trillium Trust is actually a non-cash gain that cannot be spent.

Why does Bill 144 merit more fulsome debate, and why should it not be time-allocated? Because Ontarians do not want a legislative framework to sell off Hydro One. They want to keep Ontario’s electricity system in public hands. I’m going to read a sample of some of the emails I’ve received about the sell-off, and I suspect these will sound familiar to all MPPs, including those on the government side of the House, since we are all receiving very similar messages.

Here’s one: “Selling Ontario Hydro is a very bad ‘investment’ in the future for the people of Ontario. Will the Liberals become the party that sold Ontario? Do not sell Ontario Hydro at any price as it is owned and paid for by the people of Ontario ... not the Liberal Party.”

Here’s another: “All government assets are owned by the citizens and not by a particular political party that

happens to be in power at the moment. I don’t recall seeing this sale mentioned in any election platforms. What’s next? Selling off provincial parks or maybe even selling off Queen’s Park? Maybe they can sell off naming rights to Queen’s Park. Maybe Budweiser would be interested.”

Here’s another: “Selling it is like if I sold 60 acres off a 100-acre farm and then used the money to buy hay for the cows in the barn. It would be much more cost-effective to grow the hay. I have lost the land, lost the income, will lose the cows and then the rest of the farm.”

Finally: “As a legally blind Ontarian who is reliant on public transportation, I am in full support of investing in transit and infrastructure. That being said, I am not in favour of doing so at any cost. Selling a money-making asset for a one-time influx of cash is foolish.”

Speaker, I want to expand a little bit on this last quote that I shared because it is worth emphasizing. Londoners want investments in transit. Londoners are united behind a new rapid transit initiative in our community called Shift London. Londoners recognize that our future prosperity relies on people’s ability to move around the city, on students’ ability to get to campus, on businesses’ ability to move goods to market. We recognize that our collective well-being relies on our ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by taking vehicles off the road.

But to say that Londoners can either have transit or we can have public hydro is a false choice. There are other and better ways to fund transit infrastructure, ways that will generate more revenues and will not jeopardize the province’s bottom line, which is what the FAO said the sell-off would do, and I quote from his report, “In years following the sale of 60% of Hydro One, the province’s budget balance would be worse than it would have been without the sale.”

The sell-off of Hydro One is a bad deal for the families and businesses of this province. While the Premier says the sell-off will raise \$4 billion for transit and infrastructure, we know from the FAO that the sell-off could raise as little as \$1.4 billion. It is not only a bad deal for the people of this province, it is an irresponsible deal—\$1.4 billion is only about 1% of the revenues needed to fund the Liberals’ infrastructure plan.

Look at what the implications of the loss of public electricity will be for this province: Ontario will be in worse long-term financial shape after privatization. We will be losing almost half a billion dollars a year annually by 2025 as a direct result of this sell-off.

Speaker, for these reasons and many more that have been articulated by members on this side of the House, the time allocation motion should not proceed. We need a more fulsome debate on Bill 144 so that we can investigate and further elucidate the implications of the changes that are proposed in the bill.

Debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It looks like we have a large body of people to introduce, so if we can do that sharply this time around.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to welcome Michael Schmidt, a farmer from my riding, and a number of other people from my riding. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's not often that I get to welcome people all the way from Timmins, sir, but we have professional firefighters here, some from Timmins, some not: John Mavrinac, Peter Osterberg—we're not going to say what his nickname is—and Rob Shaughnessy is here as well.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'd like to recognize all of the violence against women stakeholders and advocates who have joined us today at Queen's Park. Among them are Charlene Catchpole, chair of the board of directors for the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, known as OAITH; Marlene Ham, provincial coordinator for OAITH; and all the members of OAITH here today.

In recognition of the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, you will see these advocates wearing purple scarves as part of the Wrapped in Courage campaign. We invite all members to join us on the grand staircase following question period for a photo in our purple scarves, and everyone is welcome to attend the reception hosted by OAITH from 11:00 a.m. until 12:45 p.m. in room 228.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'd like to welcome nine people to the Legislature today. These are nine very strong and responsible advocates for the consumption of raw milk in Ontario. They are: Nadine Ijaz; Sibernie James-Bosch; Steve Martin; Gerry Isabel; Robert Greenfield; Cathy Noble; Paul Noble; Elisa Vander Hout; and Michael Schmidt. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I hope that everyone will join me in welcoming Dean Good and Brett Gibson from the Waterloo Professional Fire Fighters Association; and Gerald Van Decker from RenewABILITY Energy Inc. from Kitchener. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Bill Mauro: The College Student Alliance is here today, and I had an opportunity this morning to have breakfast with three of the members from Confederation College in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan. I was pleased to meet and welcome Chris Cartwright, Tanner Bell and Preston Cromarty to Queen's Park.

As well, I have one other very special introduction I'd be happy to make. Welcome to Queen's Park, in the members' gallery, Mr. Don Rusnak, the newly elected federal MP for the riding of Thunder Bay–Rainy River.

I want to welcome them all to Queen's Park.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'm pleased to welcome guests from the Chatham Kent Women's Centre to the Legislature today. They are: Amanda Kelley; Cindy Howes; Luisa Teasdale; Erika Jones; and Zahra Elhussein. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Good morning, Speaker. Two amazing young people from the Windsor–Tecumseh area

have joined us this morning. They are student representatives at St. Clair College, Miranda Underwood and Jeff Rousseau. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, please help me in welcoming the president of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, Mr. Carmen Santoro, and the vice-president of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, Mr. Ernie Thorne. Please give them a warm Queen's Park welcome.

Mr. Patrick Brown: It's my pleasure to welcome firefighters from Simcoe county, from the Midland force, Orillia and Barrie.

I would also like to welcome to Queen's Park today my friends from the College Student Alliance.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I would like to welcome some guests today, women who are here to talk about women's issues and advocate for women's issues. I would like to welcome Kate Wiggins; Jane Scheel; Silvia Samsa; Lorris Herenda; Eva Kratochvil; Jehan Chaudhry; Marlene Ham; Pamela Havery; and Lyn Allen. Welcome to the Legislature today.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'd like to welcome today President Ryan Madill and Vice-President Mike Vail of Local 485 in St. Catharines of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm honoured to welcome to Queen's Park today very good friends of mine and supporters Gail and Henry Wiersema from Strathroy-Caradoc.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is my privilege to welcome to the Legislature today the president of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, Carmen Santoro, and vice-president of the OPFFA, Ernie Thorne. Also from Oshawa, President Steve Barkwell is joining us and Vice-President Rod Thwaites, and from Whitby, I'd like to welcome firefighters Bob Brandon and Dirk Franke to the Legislature.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'd like to welcome the members of the permanent Roundtable on Violence Against Women, who are meeting at Queen's Park. The Premier and I met with them this morning, and I just want to thank them very much for their work and for being here today.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to welcome two professional firefighters from St. Thomas: Warren Scott and Daryl Smith. Welcome, guys.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I would like to welcome professional firefighters from Windsor: Wayne Currie and Kris Matton.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to welcome firefighters from Clarington in my lovely riding of Durham: Scott Snowden, Dan Worrall and Peter Lomax. Welcome.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to welcome Andrew Rogerson from the Stratford fire service.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I'd like to welcome Kendall Trembath, the executive director of Saakaate House in Kenora.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: On behalf of the Ottawa caucus from all sides of this Legislature, I want to welcome Ontario's finest firefighters. From Ottawa, members of Local 162: President Peter Kennedy, Vice-President John Sobey, Treasurer Erik Leicht, and Malcolm Todd to Queen's Park.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'd like to welcome Bessie Sullivan from the Haliburton County Public Library here today with us in the gallery; and also Bob Brandon and Dirk Franke, Whitby professional firefighters who I met with earlier.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to welcome two people from my riding today: Shane Malcolm and Alison Mary Nakiwala from Niagara College.

I'd also like to welcome two firefighters from the Niagara Falls Professional Fire Fighters Association, Dave Jarrett and Brandon Fife, who are joining us today. Thank you for all the work you do.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I can't go without recognizing Captain Vail, a member of the Niagara Falls Professional Fire Fighters Association who died tragically on November 10. Although Captain Vail is not here today, I know he's here in spirit. I just wanted to recognize him as well.

Hon. Reza Moridi: I would like to welcome student leaders from the College Student Alliance who are here today with us: Ciara Byrne, Jeff Rousseau, Justin MacDonald, Colin Gaudet and Chris Cartwright.

I also want to welcome firefighters from York region: Jeff Voisin and Dan St John.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I would like to welcome friends Norah and Lyn from Family Transition Place, who are joining us today.

Also, I would like to introduce my father, Brian Jones, and Audrey Archer.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'd like to recognize two students from my riding of London-Fanshawe, Alan Bushell and Maria Nikides from the Fleming College students' union. They are here at Queen's Park today as part of the College Student Alliance advocacy workshop, and I look forward to meeting with them this afternoon.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: In the east members' gallery, I'd like to welcome two members of the Cambridge Professional Fire Fighters Association, Chris Davidson and John Holman.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to recognize all of the firefighters from the Woodstock Professional Fire Fighters Association—even though they're not here, they deserve recognition.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to introduce Karl Lehan and Steve McQueen, two Welland professional firefighters who are here today in the gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am delighted to welcome Kate Wiggins from London Women's Community House; my old, dear friend Eva Kratochvil from Windsor; and, of course, all members of the London Professional Fire Fighters Association.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank and welcome my friends with the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association.

I met with some of my constituents today about Ontario libraries, but I do want to recognize a young person who's here, Tyshan Zakss, who is here from St. Lawrence College in Brockville. Welcome to Queen's Park.

1040

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: It is with great pleasure that I introduce Lynda Muir in the members' gallery. Lynda is the executive director of the Women and Children's Shelter of Barrie.

As well, I'd like to welcome—I don't see them right now—Kevin White and Nevin Hamilton, members of the Barrie Professional Fire Fighters Association.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I know there are Toronto firefighters here as well, so I want to acknowledge that. Welcome to all the Toronto firefighters as well.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to introduce Ms. Pam Havery, the executive director of Kingston Interval House.

I would also like to welcome the delegations of the Ontario Library Association and the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries; and Anne Bryan, the president of Kingston firefighters' Local 498. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: Ça me fait un grand plaisir de présenter aujourd'hui l'Association des pompiers d'Ottawa au nom de mes collègues d'Ottawa des deux côtés de la Chambre : MM. Peter Kennedy, Erik Leicht, Malcolm Todd et John Sobey. Ils sont ici avec nous aujourd'hui. Merci d'être ici.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to extend a warm welcome to my constituent Kate Wiggins, who is also executive director of Women's Community House in London. Thank you.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Please help me in welcoming Sharon Floyd, executive director of Interim Place, to the chamber this morning. She's visiting this morning as part of the third annual Wrapped in Courage event for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and girls.

For over 32 years, Interim Place has been providing shelter and support services for women in the Peel region who face violence. Thank you for being here, and to all of you who are supporting this issue.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: On behalf of my constituents in Scarborough-Guildwood, I'm very pleased to introduce Sukanya Chakraborty, who is from Centennial College Student Association. She's here today with the Centennial College Student Alliance advocacy workshop.

I'd also like to welcome Frank Ramagnano and Janos Csepregi, who are the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' Association president and executive officer.

I would also like to give a warm welcome to the students of West Hill Collegiate. We have 100 students here today to observe question period, along with their teachers, Ms. Permell Ashby and Mr. James Sorel, and many volunteers who are here with them, including PC Randy Arsenault from 43 Division.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park Charles Lewis, who is the president of the Oakville Professional Fire Fighters Association, along with all members here from the Oakville and Burlington professional fire fighters' associations.

In addition, I'd also like to welcome Diane Beaulieu, who is here with Halton Women's Place. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'd like to welcome firefighter Chris Francescone from the Belleville Fire Department.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I want to welcome two members of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association: Eric Nordlund, District 7 vice-president of the OPFFA, and Dennis Brescacin, who is the president of the Thunder Bay Professional Fire Fighters Association. Welcome.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I want to introduce Amy Cronin, who is with Ontario Pork, and all the members of Ontario Pork, who are holding a reception here this afternoon, 5 to 7 p.m., in room 228. Come down and enjoy some of Ontario's great pork.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have other introductions. I'd like to get the introductions done.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I would like to welcome my constituent Mr. Patrick Whitten, who is here with his college today.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I would like to introduce firefighter Robb Roy. I'll be meeting with our firefighters this afternoon.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to introduce page captain Jack Farley's mother, Manjusha Pawagi; his father, Simon Farley; and his grandmother Asha Pawagi. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to welcome two gentlemen from the Conestoga College student association: Jeff Scherer and Colin Gaudet. Thanks for joining us today at Queen's Park.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'm pleased to welcome to Queen's Park today Dan VanderLelie, president of the Burlington Professional Firefighters Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Just in case there's anybody else in the building that hasn't been welcomed, welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member from Windsor-Tecumseh. That used to be my old line when I used it, as well.

I do have visitors in the Speaker's gallery. I'll just bring attention to the professional firefighters that are here from Brantford. And my other brother, Joe Peters, is here, with his friend Hayley Moffat.

I will now entertain a point of order. The Minister of Community and Social Services.

WEARING OF SCARVES

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I believe that you will find that we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear purple scarves in recognition of the United

Nations' International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to wear purple scarves. Do we agree? Agreed.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I believe you'll find we also have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear white ribbons in recognition of Women Abuse Prevention Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Children and Youth Services is seeking consent for permission to wear white ribbons. Do we agree? Agreed.

Just before we move into question period, I'll bring note to you that I try as much as I can during that time allotment to introduce all of our guests, but I'd just like to make a note that there's an awful lot of people here who have come to watch question period. I just thought I'd like to point that out.

ORAL QUESTIONS

FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: I want to start by welcoming all the firefighters here today. Many of them are my good friends, and those friends of mine, along with their paramedic and police officer colleagues, continue to tell me that the government is holding up access to care for post-traumatic stress disorder.

It has been 72 days since I asked the Premier to work with me and the NDP to fast-track the third party's bill that would enable faster access to PTSD support for first responders. Will the Premier bring back this bill for third reading and pass it today, not a watered-down version of a government bill? Do the right thing: Show all firefighters here today that the government stands behind them and supports them. Will the Premier do that?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I also want to welcome all of the firefighters and all of the guests who are here today to question period.

The question that the Leader of the Opposition has asked, I think, highlights once again a very important issue that we are already working with firefighters on. The fact is that we have worked very well with firefighters over our time in government in terms of presumptive legislation. We know that PTSD is an issue that has to be addressed.

I don't think that this is about a particular member's bill; this is about getting it right. This is about putting supports in place for these first responders who are critical to the safety and the security of all of the residents of Ontario. So we will continue to work with fire-

fighters to make sure that we have the right supports in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The NDP do have a good bill. Don't blindly oppose it simply because it's an NDP idea; it's the right thing to support. The work that firefighters do, the sacrifices they make and the fact that they risk their lives every day for the people in our communities should mean so much to us.

I vividly remember attending the funeral of Bill Wilkins in 2002. Madam Premier, you may remember that Bill Wilkins was a firefighter from Simcoe county. He served the city of Barrie and tragically lost his life responding to a call.

The danger is very real for firefighters in the line of service. Many of our communities have seen it first-hand. The families of those lost need our support. There has been no action on this front as well.

Will the Premier support a heroes' fund similar to what we have with the Canadian Forces, for survivor benefits for the families of first responders who have fallen in the service of our province?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

1050

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In terms of actions that have been taken, I have specifically asked the Minister of Labour to come forward with steps on a comprehensive strategy for dealing with PTSD as well as other mental health issues. The Minister of Labour is working on that and I know he will want to speak to it in the supplementary.

This is something that we need to get right. It is very complex. I understand why the Leader of the Opposition wants to make political hay of a particular bill. The reality is that I'm glad that the member for High Park raised the issue. I think it's very, very—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want all of the resources of government to be able to be put behind bringing forward a bill that's going to ensure that we're a leader in prevention, that we're a leader in resiliency and that we get this right. We are working on that.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: It's not political when you have a firefighter die in your community. I haven't gotten an answer on PTSD and I haven't gotten an answer on the heroes' fund, so I'm going to try a third question and maybe the Premier can actually answer it.

The most appropriate way for municipalities to ensure public fire safety is through a risk-based assessment of their communities. Currently, there are municipalities making cuts to their fire service without undertaking a risk-based assessment. That causes a serious threat to

public safety. This government needs to support a comprehensive risk-based assessment for fire prevention.

Will the Premier direct the Ontario fire marshal to develop an integrated risk-management tool? Don't pass the buck; just answer one of my questions—just one.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I say to the Leader of the Opposition that these are very important issues. These are issues that we have been working on. We have been talking with firefighters for a number of years and we've made advances.

As we've talked with firefighters, we've gotten advice on presumptive legislation. Breast cancer, multiple myeloma and testicular cancer were added to the list in 2014. Prostate cancer, lung cancer and skin cancer will be phased in by 2017. I only raise that presumptive legislation in the conversations we've had with firefighters to say to the Leader of the Opposition: We are open. We are open with firefighters. We have discussions with our first responders in order to make sure that we continue to change legislation to put the supports in place.

Will we work with the fire marshal to make sure that the right protections are in place? Absolutely. Will we make sure that we have the right resources and policies on PTSD? Absolutely.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Patrick Brown: To the Premier: As you are aware, the PCs have put forward a motion to be debated this afternoon, with specific points. Maybe the Premier can let us know if she'll be supporting them.

First, as she knows, I was very disappointed when I learned that the government handed out \$2.5 million to pay for education negotiations without asking for a single receipt. If that money had been—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Finance, come to order.

Mr. Patrick Brown:—invested into the education system, it would have gone a long way. The Premier could have funded 75 education assistants with that money. She could have put the money towards special education.

Will the Premier ensure the Ontario Liberal Party pays back the money to the Ministry of Education to reimburse Ontario students and teachers for the funds that were taken out of the classroom?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would just remind the member opposite that he is talking about a negotiation process that has been successful. Students have remained in the classroom. The negotiations were concluded in line with our net-zero bargaining framework—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's enough. I will be tempted to move to warnings if it persists.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: And we've done all of this without making cuts to the classroom. That process, which was developed in conjunction with our education partners, has been successfully concluded.

The fact is that this new process, which, as I say, was developed in conjunction with our partners, required new resources. What we have put in place—there are some examples of the way the agreement was paid for. I'll come back to those in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: If your measure of success is successfully taking money out of the classroom, you're dead wrong. The PCs still aren't quite sure if these payments are even legal. Section 70 of the Ontario Labour Relations Act says—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It goes both ways. I need to hear the question and the answer.

Carry on.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, I guess we've touched a nerve.

Section 70 of the Ontario Labour Relations Act says employers can't contribute financial support to a trade union. The secrecy and the backroom dealing gives off the wrong impression, especially since recipients of these payments were engaged in partisan activities and donations.

Mr. Speaker, will the government strengthen section 70 of the OLRA to prohibit any future payments, or are you going to continue to do this as your version of business as usual?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me once again talk about what I think the measures of success are. Students have remained in the classroom. Our agreements are in—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The agreements are in line with the net-zero framework, and we did this without making cuts to the classroom. The funds did not come out of the classroom. The cost of this process was funded—let me tell you how—through early discounted payout of retirement gratuities, through the lowering of the cost of sick leave, and through making the delivery of professional development more efficient. That's the reality. That's how the agreement was put in place, and no matter how often the Leader of the Opposition denies that, that's the reality. Those costs did not come out of the classroom, and children stayed in the classroom.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: Your story is changing every day, and we only know about this because you got caught, because it got exposed. These payments have too many unanswered questions.

I want to remind everyone that even the Toronto Star said that these payments were impossible to defend. The Star said "There is no reason they should have been kept

hidden from the public," unless, I suppose, they were used for political purposes. And the recipients of those payments did spend over \$3 million engaged in the last campaign. Ontario is the Wild West of third-party advertising. It's time to do the right thing and to fix it.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier introduce legislation to cap third-party election advertising?

Interjections.

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

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, question period is always a random access activity these days.

Let me just go back to what I think was at the core of the question, and that is that teachers' unions will be required to provide an accounting of the funds. The money has not flowed. Unions will be required to provide an accounting to show how costs were incurred and what they were, and we will make those details public. We have said over and over again that we're supportive of having the Auditor General look into these costs.

But remember, this was a successful process that meant the kids remained in the classroom. We stayed within our net-zero framework, and costs were not taken out of the classroom; cuts were not made to the classroom. Those are my measures of success.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Climate change is one of the most important issues in our generation, and it needs more than rhetoric.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Education, come to order, and the NDP caucus, come to order.

Interjections.

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

Thank you. Please put the question.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It needs more than just rhetoric, Speaker. It actually needs a plan. Does this Premier have a plan that she's actually bringing to the Paris summit?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Absolutely, and I was very pleased yesterday to put forward the strategy that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change has been working on. As the leader of the third party will know, there will be a five-year detailed plan that will come forward in the new year.

1100

The leader of the third party also knows that we closed our last coal plant in 2014. The Leader of the Opposition also knows that we passed legislation in this House to make sure there will be no coal plants to generate electricity in this province ever again.

The leader of the third party also knows that we are working on linking our cap-and-trade market with that of Quebec and of California. She knows that that work is under way. Officials are working on that.

She also knows that the investments we are making in transit across this province are very much a part of our reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontarians were hoping that the Liberals would announce a climate change plan yesterday. Instead, we got a reannouncement that there will, at some point, be an announcement.

The Premier knows, or ought to know, that we've been waiting for a plan since 2008, when Ontario signed on to cap and trade. It took the NDP government of Alberta a mere six months to develop a plan to deal with climate change. But after nearly 10 years, two general elections and two Premiers, the Liberals are promising that they are going to have a plan, maybe, next year.

Why doesn't this Liberal government already have a climate change plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, when the leader of the third party says she has been waiting, that's right: passively, silently, waiting for something to happen, and she has put not one word forward in terms of what she would do.

Now the Premier of Alberta has done a wonderful thing—she has moved forward—but she has got a huge hill to climb. She's catching up. We've shut down our coal-fired plants. They're going to shut them down in 15 years.

The fact is, Ontario has been at the lead of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in this country. The former Prime Minister touted the accomplishments of this country, riding on the closure of coal plants in Ontario.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

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

Hon. David Zimmer: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I hope that's a signal that I want the tone to change.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: At yesterday's announcement, this Premier boldly patted herself on the back for releasing yet another strategy but left people waiting again for an actual plan.

People want to take action. They want to have options. They want bold leadership. That's the job of the Premier of this province. Instead, they've got just the opposite from this government and have been getting the opposite from this government for eight long years.

Why, after nearly 10 years of study, are we still waiting to see an actual climate change plan from the Liberals?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to say to the people of Ontario, but also to all of the members of this Legislature, that they can be very proud of what has happened in Ontario. We have made the greatest greenhouse gas emissions reduction in North America. That is what we have done in this province.

I welcome the leader of the third party to proudly go outside of Ontario and say, "Look at what we've done in Ontario." She has the right to do that, because she's part of this Legislature, and I welcome her to do that.

We are moving on climate change initiatives. I think that if the leader of the third party talked to businesses around the province, they'd know we're working with them right now as we develop a cap-and-trade system. They know it's real. They know we need to work together with them, because they know it's going to make them more competitive and it's going to allow them to innovate. That's why we're implementing it.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier reannounced her plan to make an announcement to address climate change. She talked about being a leader in green energy. But in order to do that, Ontario will need an electricity grid that actually serves the public interest, not just shareholders. Unfortunately, the Liberals are selling off Hydro One. That's a big step backwards.

Will this Premier commit to how much Hydro One will be spending on conservation programs going forward?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change really wants to answer one of these questions.

I would just note that climate change was not mentioned in the Ontario NDP platform once. In fact, the leader of the third party wanted to take the HST off gasoline. She wanted to take the HST off home heating fuel. Every environmentalist who read their platform said, "That's a bad idea. That's not going to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That's not going to deal with climate change." In fact, they had an anti-plan. They had a plan to increase greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. We're moving forward with it. We're implementing it. We have already come a very long way. We have reduced greenhouse gas emissions more than any other jurisdiction in North America. We're—

Interjections.

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

Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Public hydro agencies in other provinces already invest more in conservation than we do here in Ontario, and they have lower electricity rates. Instead of learning about what works from provinces like Manitoba, BC or Quebec, this Premier is learning from Nova Scotia, where the rates are sky-high and the private power company there is actually fighting against conservation measures.

Can this Premier actually answer my question and commit to how much Hydro One will be investing in conservation?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, all my ministers want to answer this question, but I need to make a point here. The leader of the third party is doing something that I think at this moment in our history is not a good idea. Apart from having been passive on climate change, she is trying to drive wedges among the provinces.

What we've done at the Premiers' table is we've actually worked together. I've worked with Alberta. I've worked with British Columbia. I've worked with the Maritime provinces. Contrary to what the leader of the third party is trying to do, we've actually forged a Canadian Energy Strategy. That Canadian Energy Strategy has climate change and GHG reductions as part of it, because of work we have done at that table with the Premiers.

The leader of the third party might just want to talk to some of her counterparts in other parts of the country and understand that the provinces working together has been a very good thing for this country.

We now have a federal government that's going to work with the provinces. We're going to take our place—

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

Interjections.

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

Be seated, please. Thank you.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Quite to the contrary, Speaker, what I'm doing is trying to encourage this Premier to learn the lessons from what other provinces have successfully done with public electricity systems, and this Premier knows that's exactly what I was trying to say.

Yesterday, this Premier said that the cost of inaction on climate change was too high, and I agree with her on that fact. But instead of taking the kind of action that would lead to better energy conservation, this Premier is selling off Hydro One, which is likely going to mean less conservation here in the province of Ontario.

Will this Premier admit that selling Hydro One is the wrong decision for Ontario? It is wrong for our economy. It is wrong for our environment.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say three things. The first thing I want to say is this: In Norway, the Netherlands and the UK, they put climate change above partisan politics.

Let's just look at what we've done. We already had a plan. It's finished. It achieved the 6%-below-1990 levels. It was just completed. It was the most successful climate change plan in North America.

1110

We now have a strategy that is more detailed and more comprehensive if you compare it to Quebec or California. The strategic document is not the action plan, and we needed one.

We are the only province that has invited my opposition critics, the member for Toronto–Danforth and the

member for Huron–Bruce, to be part—and we now know that our federal government is including them in our official Ontario delegation. I think we're the only province doing that—and the previous federal government didn't.

We need to work together on this. This province has the deepest reductions in North America. No one holds a candle—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Just a reminder: When I stand, you sit.

New question.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My question is for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Yesterday, the minister held another photo op about the looming cap-and-trade scheme, revealing little to no details at all.

In attempting to say nothing at all, the minister unfortunately said more than we could have ever hoped. When Alberta unveiled its plan this past Sunday, the government told Albertans exactly what the cost would be: \$470 per household a year by 2018. But the minister's answer to that same question yesterday was, "We are not focusing, nor has there been a lot of discussion about cost."

Mr. Speaker, how can this minister possibly move forward with cap and trade without telling Ontario businesses and Ontario families what it is going to cost them?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I hope the member has accepted her invitation to join our official delegation in Paris, because what she will see is a place like Switzerland, which has deployed 25,000 ground-sourced geothermal and has the most comprehensive program in Europe on lowering heating and energy bills by switching people away from expensive power to in-home and non-polluting. It now has some of the lowest energy costs by creative adaptation of technology.

The cap-and-trade system has been in over a year of negotiations and discussions with industry, environmental groups and homeowners. If you look at British Columbia and California, which have had these pricing systems in, they have had the strongest GDP growth and some of the strongest job creation.

Part of the reason I asked you to join us is to meet Conservative organizations, like in the UK, that are successfully managing these projects, because we need a more sophisticated, less partisan response from the official opposition.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, it's all about the cost. Alberta's government told the people on day one, yet we're almost a year into this process and the minister—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Speaker, the minister still can't answer a simple question: What's it going to cost?

When asked yesterday if food prices would go up or if energy prices would go up, all he could muster was, "We're hoping not." Well, hope is not a strategy. Clearly the minister hasn't done his homework. He hasn't even tabled a cost-benefit analysis.

Speaker, will the minister finally tell this House and the people of Ontario what they can expect to pay per year under their cap-and-trade scheme?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, three things: Let's just deal with the other cost, the cost of inaction.

Insurance rates are going up. One hour of rain three years ago in July cost us \$600 million when, the Minister of Transportation will tell you, we lost eight metres of track—\$600 million could have built an LRT line in this province.

Food: California is now in the most severe drought. That's 34% of our food, and probably more than half of it in the winter. Those are real things affecting family budgets. The cost of inaction is unacceptable.

Let's look at the 28 jurisdictions that have some sort of carbon pricing. Their CPI, their cost-of-living indices, are not going up faster than those that don't. As a matter of fact, they're driving productivity.

I know industry has gone to the member opposite and is supporting this, because they can internalize these costs, they can make their plants more productive and they can reduce their operating costs by using this system.

We have four cap-and-trade systems already in place in Ontario, and not one of them has driven costs—

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yesterday, the Premier had the nerve to "welcome" the NDP—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Renfrew, second time.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: —to the discussion about climate change.

As an MPP, I've watched the Liberals slash programs that help families invest in conservation, like the Ontario Home Energy Savings Program—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Who is the question for, please?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: For the Premier.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: —and delay taking action on climate change over and over again. We're not going to take any lessons from this government on environmental responsibility.

There's an essential question: Are Ontarians going to see a real climate plan next year, or will it be more rhetoric and more reannouncements?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member speaks to conservation occasionally, and I would expect that if it was that important, he would be on his feet talking about conservation every day.

We're very proud of what we have done in conservation. Just last November and December, 71 utilities—LDCs—in the province of Ontario signed a six-year contract that will see us work towards a conservation target of 30 terawatt hours in 2032. It's a very aggressive target. They have announced that they're now reaching 106% of their target already.

Our conservation programs in Ontario are a tremendous success. If he wants to talk about climate change, ask him to talk, as the Premier said, about us going off carbon, off coal, which has reduced our costs by \$4 billion in terms of environmental costs and health care costs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I guess the Premier didn't want to answer the question.

I'll go back to the Premier. Ontario's non-partisan Environmental Commissioner has said Ontario is going to miss its 2020 greenhouse gas targets unless there is significant action.

Yesterday's government announcement on climate was a reannouncement that they would make an announcement about a plan at some point in the future. The government has been reannouncing its intention to take action since 2008. In the meantime, we're another year closer to 2020, and the government claims it has a plan coming next year.

Will the Premier commit that her plan will actually get us to the greenhouse gas targets we're supposed to meet in 2020?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: This is the most serious issue of our generation. Our Arctic is going to be seven or eight degrees warmer, no matter what we do.

I would ask that every member of this House go and Google what an eight-degree-warmer Arctic, which is inevitable in 2050, will mean to our children and our grandchildren.

We have to leave our children as good a legacy and as healthy a planet as we inherited from our parents. This strategy is better than or as good as any other in North America. Our action plans that we have completed, unlike almost every other one in the world, achieved their targets; very few did. We achieved 6%.

The strong measures we're taking—not being afraid to tell the truth, and being honest about this—are a cap-and-trade system that will close the 20% gap we had. We reported that 20% gap and then we took measures to do it.

We have said when we'll meet our goals. We've reported shortfalls, and we've taken strong, bold corrective actions to—

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

FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Minister of Labour. Today, we are joined by firefighters from across Ontario, from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. I know that on behalf of all members of this Legislature, on all sides of this House, I can say that each and every one of you today deserves our respect and our gratitude for keeping Ontarians safe.

I know that in my riding of Ottawa South and across Ontario, hard-working women and men put their lives on the line each and every day to ensure that our friends and families back home in our communities are safe. They show courage, valour and bravery when they leave the fire hall and head to what could be a dangerous situation.

1120

I know that yesterday the minister spoke to the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association conference. Could the minister please provide us with some of the things he spoke about yesterday?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I thank the member for that excellent question. Yes, I was down at the association speaking to their conference yesterday. Like the member says, we owe a great deal to those people who put their lives on the line in dangerous situations for complete strangers, for people they've never met.

I'd be happy to share what I spoke about. We all know that PTSD is a very serious issue. It has entered the public consciousness in a way that it hasn't before. I'm hoping that this House will work co-operatively to get to that solution that we need. We're working on how we approach that change. We've had a first responders round table, a first responders summit. Quite recently, the Premier obligated to bringing forward some PTSD legislation early in the new year.

I want to particularly thank the member from Parkdale–High Park. She has held this House's feet to the fire on this issue and I think she deserves credit for that, Speaker. In order for Ontario to be a leader in this, we can do better than Bill 2. We can take Bill 2 as a great first step and we can improve it. That's what I obligate to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: I thank the minister for sharing those points on post-traumatic stress disorder, which he spoke about yesterday, and I too congratulate the member from Parkdale–High Park.

I know the minister continues to make sure we do all that we can for firefighters. It's because of the critical work that firefighters do that our government is making it a priority to do our best to protect them, just as they continue to protect us.

Last year, the government announced it was extending workplace protection for firefighters by adding six cancers to the list of diseases presumed to be work-related. I know that we made these changes so that the firefighters who are sick and suffering can use their energy on their most important duty, which is getting better for their families.

Speaker, through you to the minister, I'd like to know what else this government is doing to ensure that our front-line workers are given increased protection.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Once again, my thanks to the member for that question. When I spoke with the association yesterday, I also mentioned some of the other things we're working towards that are going to benefit our firefighters and all first responders in this province.

Earlier this year, we introduced Bill 109, which, if this House passes it, is going to address how survivor benefits are calculated by the WSIB for a worker who dies of an occupational disease and who had no or low earnings on the date of that diagnosis simply because they were retired or they weren't able to work. If passed, what it would allow the WSIB to do is to continue the current practice, but also enshrine it in legislation. It's not something you should do; it's something that has to be done in the future.

I'm also happy to talk about how, just last week, we moved to ensure that all injured workers are finally treated the same in this province with indexation. Whether you're fully disabled or partially disabled, you deserve to be treated the same.

LABOUR DISPUTES

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Last week's hand-delivered letter to the Premier's office stated that North Bay is in a state of chaos. The disruption at three of the largest employers falls firmly at the feet of the Liberal government.

Patients and staff at the hospital are still reeling over the 350 cuts made to front-line health care. The workers at Ontario Northland are locked out. Unifor is looking to the Premier as they're willing to go to arbitration.

Nipissing University is in its fourth week of a strike. This is causing grave concern, with students and parents calling, worried that the semester will be lost. Nipissing University is the third-largest employer in our city, and this strike is also now affecting businesses.

The city is hurting. I ask the Premier again, will she act to get all sides in these disputes back to the table?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for the question. This province has an excellent record of dispute resolution. In fact, 98% of all agreements are reached without a strike, without a lockout. So obviously in cases like this, when there is a disagreement—negotiations are tough by their nature, and they should be. We want them to result in a resolution that both parties can walk away from feeling that they've been able to resolve their differences at the bargaining table.

We're confident in this case as well that, by working together, those parties can reach a settlement. What we do at the Ministry of Labour is we've got some of the best arbitrators, some of the best mediators in the country. They have been involved in this. They are remaining at the table. They remain available to assist those parties to reach the successful resolution that we want them to reach.

If the past track record is any indication, Ontario resolves these issues at the table.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: You have created strife at our hospital, Ontario Northland and Nipissing University. The problems at Nipissing were created in no small part when the Liberals made significant cuts to funding for teacher training. I wrote to the minister on this issue, first as a concerned mayor and again as MPP in 2014. These cuts had a disproportionately large effect on Nipissing, where education students accounted for 30% of total enrolment. I warned that without adequate transitional funding, the Liberal cuts would put the university in a precarious financial position.

Speaker, we're certainly pleased that a mediator is trying to get both sides together, but what is the Premier going to do to preserve the vitality of Nipissing University over the long term?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member once again for his interest in this issue. We're committed, obviously, to supporting Ontario's post-secondary education system. It ranks among the best in the world. I think we have more people entering that system than many other jurisdictions. But each one of those universities, each one of those colleges, by its nature is an autonomous institution. It's got responsibility. It has reached a mature level where it handles its own labour relations and handles its own HR issues, and that includes collective bargaining. The record of success that this province has in collective bargaining tells me, as Minister of Labour, that the right thing to do is to get arbitrators in there and let these people bring their best to the table—

Ms. Catherine Fife: What about EllisDon?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: We encourage all those parties involved to work together, because we know that working together, these people will negotiate a fair settlement for both parties.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Premier: Today, Toronto firefighters are watching, not just here but all over the province, hoping to finally hear that this government will bring in legislation to recognize post-traumatic stress disorder as a workplace injury. This is not rocket science. That's all they're asking for.

Mr. Speaker, they have been waiting for eight long years. My bill has passed second reading. It's been tabled five times.

I regularly get calls from desperate first responders with no place else to turn, because this government won't listen and, in many cases, won't even take their calls. These firefighters, paramedics and police officers are the people we call when we need help. But when they need us, all we can say is, "Just keep waiting."

How much longer will we keep first responders waiting?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Labour is going to want to reinforce some of what he has already said. But just to be clear, we take the calls of our firefighters, and we absolutely meet with them. We have taken action based on their advice; I use the example of presumptive legislation. We have taken their advice in terms of the importance of the PTSD legislation. We are working with them. The Minister of Labour is working with them to bring forward the right policy and build on the work that the member opposite did in putting together her private member's bill. But we have to get this right. We can only do that in conjunction with the front-line responders—with those workers—and that is what we do, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Back to the Premier: So far this year, there have been 31 responder suicides in Ontario because of PTSD, eight more years of more suicides—eight years already. One suicide is one suicide too many.

Labour Minister Flynn promised that the legislation would be tabled this month. Now, all of a sudden, we're hearing January. We are far behind other provinces on this. Alberta has had this legislation since 2012.

If the government fails to see the urgency in this, I don't know what else we can do. First responders are asking. Will more have to die before action is taken?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

1130

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: In a sense, the member has answered her own question. The solutions she brought forward were for people who had already contracted PTSD. It was a good start, but very, very clearly, it became evident that what you also wanted to do as part of a comprehensive strategy was ensure that people didn't contract PTSD in the first place.

What we obligated to do—in conjunction with working with the first responders, working with the police departments, with the fire departments, with the EMS detachments around this province—was to build on their best practices so that when we bring forward our PTSD legislation in the very near future, it will be the best in this country.

Simply put, Bill 2 is a good start. It got us talking about it; it put the issue on the table. It's nowhere near as robust as anywhere else in this country that has legislation. I want Ontario to lead this country, not follow this country, when it comes to PTSD.

Interjections.

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

New question.

ENERGY STORAGE

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, it was a pleasure having you visit my riding of Halton this week to announce a big step forward for our energy sector. Based on the high turnout at Monday's announcement, I think we can all agree that this is an exciting time in energy technology.

I'm proud that my riding will be home to a new energy storage project. New energy storage technologies allow for electricity to be captured and then used later on demand. This means more control over the time between when electricity is generated and when it has to be used. This can mean savings.

In the past, decisions about electricity have largely been based on real-time demand and on how or when it can be delivered, but new energy storage technology is changing that. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can he please tell the House about the benefits of energy storage?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: It was a pleasure to visit Milton with the member from Halton. It was an exciting opportunity to discuss the work Ontario is doing to incorporate energy storage into our system.

Storage remains one of the world's most innovative aspects of energy policy, particularly because of the incredible potential it represents. Storage technology adds stability to our power supply and is a technology that has the potential to revolutionize the way we operate our electricity system. Instead of needing to use or transmit electricity at the time it's produced, often when it was most expensive, storage allows for system operators to hold back your electricity for use at optimal times. Instead of building costly generation for use only a few times a year, we are now starting to store the electricity from existing generation for periods of peak demand. This could mean tremendous cost savings for the system and for consumers when fully developed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, Minister. I am excited about the benefits of energy storage and the opportunities they provide for improving Ontario's electricity system. It opens new doors.

The possibilities offered by new storage activities are definitely game-changing. I'm thrilled that my riding of Halton will be home to Baseload Power Corp., one of the cutting-edge companies that will offer a plan for energy storage. This new project will have the ability to store up to eight megawatts of energy.

I know my constituents will be happy to hear that new sources of energy storage have the potential to strengthen the economy, create jobs and lower costs for consumers—very important. It's fantastic to see so many Ontario companies leading the pack in innovation.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Could he please tell the House about the province's second phase of energy storage procurement and how we are integrating this technology into Ontario's electricity system?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Our government is committed to being a global leader in energy storage. This week in

Milton, we announced that the IESO has selected five proponents, representing nine projects, for energy storage contracts totalling 16.75 megawatts. With this announcement, Ontario has completed our long-term energy plan commitment of procuring 50 megawatts of energy storage technology.

Ontario is already an energy storage leader, with real-world experience in integrating energy storage technologies, like advanced batteries, flywheels and pumped storage.

The companies that have been awarded contracts will provide a valuable contribution to our grid, allowing us to store electricity over longer periods of time. In the process, we will improve reliability, increase flexibility and efficiency of our networks, and reduce costs for electricity consumers.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I recently attended a meeting with the board chair and CEO of my Central East LHIN, where we discussed the LHIN's Integrated Health Service Plan.

LHINs and service providers continue to roll out palliative care community teams, GAIN community teams and other investments in home and community care. Despite these investments for home care, when it is no longer safe for Ontarians to stay at home, they deserve to know that long-term-care beds will be provided for them.

My Central East LHIN is in crisis. It has the lowest number of beds available and the highest number of those in need in Ontario. In Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock alone, just one part of the LHIN, there are 770 people on the wait-list for long-term care, and that list continues to grow.

When will the minister deliver the promised beds for long-term care?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I want to thank the member opposite for her question. I also want to thank her for recognizing the investments we've been making in home care. Thank you so much for that.

I want to assure her that in addition to home care, we continue to invest in long-term care as well. It's because of these investments that the long-term-care wait times in Ontario have been reduced by approximately 45% since 2008-09—investments such as 10,000 new beds that we brought online since coming to office, investments like the redevelopment of 13,000 beds that we have already made and we continue to make.

Interjections.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: The members opposite are asking me, "Where?" Well, let me give them some examples. How about this? On October 30, 2015, I was in Waterloo with the Deputy Premier and members of the PC caucus for the opening of a brand new long-term care in—

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, the government keeps saying it is going to address 30,000 more beds.

At the recent HealthAchieve conference, the Minister of Health spoke about change that's supposed to improve our health care system and provide better access for Ontarians. The minister talked about closing the gaps between different areas and ensuring equitable access.

You've had 12 years to review and develop a long-term-care capacity study to ensure that there is equitable access across the province. We've been waiting 12 years for that capacity study, to make sure the beds are where they need to go.

In Haliburton county, one of my homes needs to know when they will be refurbished and if they can get more beds allotted in order to make it sustainable, or they're going to leave that community. They may not stay.

Will the minister tell us when the capacity study will be done, and if it will be done before the refurbishment plan so we know it's fair and equitable?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: We plan on redeveloping all existing beds. The program is open. We have reached out to all long-term-care homes across Ontario that are interested in redevelopment to come to us with a proposal. A number of them already have. I look forward to announcing them in the near future.

I thought the member opposite might be interested in this particular redevelopment: It's Fairview Lodge. On September 25, I was there for the reopening of their brand new redeveloped long-term-care home in the middle of the Central East LHIN.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Premier. The government intends to ram through its omnibus budget bill this week. We heard that this morning. At least one part of that bill would allow cabinet to release a single company, corporate construction giant EllisDon, from its 60-year obligation to respect labour agreements on its work sites. The Premier herself voted against the Conservative bill on this issue just last year.

1140

Will the Premier tell this House if there is any conflict of interest to declare between her government and EllisDon?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you again to the member for this question. What we've done here is we have taken a situation where an agreement surfaced from the 1950s that simply wasn't in place anywhere else in the province of Ontario and impacted one particular company. There was an initiative about a year or two ago that brought forward a solution that would have favoured one side. I didn't think that was fair. What I did was I invited both sides to sit down for a weekend with Kevin Burkett, one of the best—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: —arbitrators and mediators that this country has to offer, and they were

able to reach an agreement that would allow for a regulation to allow for the extinguishing of the agreement, but also to put something else in its place.

What will happen now as a result of this, should this pass, is that both parties will leave this exercise feeling like they got something out of it. I think that's a good resolution.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: That didn't really answer my question on the issue of conflict.

The Premier has got to know that this looks bad, that her Liberal government is basically gifting legislation to well-connected insiders and their friends. Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to remind the member—I gave this warning yesterday and I'll give it again today: If it gets anywhere near close to making an accusation, as I know you could, I'm going to stop it.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you, Speaker.

Was the Deputy Premier, known to have close ties to executives at EllisDon, part of any discussions at any point, and has she declared a conflict of interest in drafting any section of this bill?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: The member is better than that. The question that's being asked is simply not applicable to this situation at all.

There was a very tough situation. We sat down; we hammered out a deal. What the member speaks of formed no part of that deal.

I understand there is an employer side to this. I understand there is an employee side to this. There is a building trade union side to this. But for the member to suggest that is simply—I think you're better than that.

FAMILY DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My question is for the Attorney General. Minister, ensuring access to justice is an essential part of maintaining confidence in the justice system for the people of Ontario. While I commend you for the steps you have taken to address this, such as the recent increase in funding towards legal aid clinics, we all realize that there is always more work to be done.

This past Monday, the Family Dispute Resolution Institute of Ontario held an annual general meeting to discuss ways in which family mediation techniques and processes can increase access to justice for everyday Ontarians. The institute also named this week Family Dispute Resolution Week.

The Family Dispute Resolution Institute is not the only provider in the province for dispute mediation processes. Speaker, those individuals who work in the field should be congratulated for their excellent work.

Will the Attorney General please elaborate on how family dispute resolution techniques contribute—

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

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, let me say thank you to the member for Scarborough—Rouge River. I know that he's very, very interested in the topic.

I was very pleased to be invited to the Family Dispute Resolution Institute's first annual general meeting last Monday. It was very heartwarming to see how many individuals are committed to helping families navigate often difficult, emotionally charged situations.

Dispute resolution can be a great way to solve issues, as it's often a faster, less costly alternative. This can be especially important in the area of family law. Going through separation or divorce can be a very difficult experience for everyone involved, especially the children.

I would like to personally congratulate everyone who is involved in this area. I applaud them for the work that they do. I look forward to expanding on the topic of dispute resolution in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I thank the Attorney General for that answer.

Dispute resolution does seem like a realistic and cost-effective way for families and individuals to reach an agreement. It also seems as though it could be a less emotionally taxing experience.

I know that some constituents and friends have gone through often exhausting, taxing and expensive separations and divorces. Unfortunately, children are often caught in the middle.

While I'm happy to hear that the Attorney General attended the Family Dispute Resolution Institute of Ontario AGM, I'm curious to know what else this government is doing to ensure that families who are going through difficult periods have the proper support. Could the Attorney General highlight what her ministry is doing in this area for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: After attending the conference this week, I have to say that I was very impressed with the number of people who have committed themselves to helping families get through these difficult times.

Most importantly, we offer family mediation services to help parties resolve conflicts outside of courts. This can be a good way for parties to reach decisions quickly and in a cost-effective way. Family information centres provide free help on family law issues such as divorce or child custody. This is improving access to justice and family law, which we all know can be an emotionally charged and sensitive area. We are also building a simple, easy-to-use online service that will make it faster for parents to set up or change child support payments without going to court. I am proud to say that this will be the first of its kind in Canada, with a goal of launching this service by summer 2016.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Todd Smith: My question is for the Premier this morning. Premier, over the last two years, we've seen 200 positions and over \$20 million cut from the local hospitals in the Quinte region. We're talking about one of the largest retirement communities in the province, one of the most visited for tourists and one of the largest communities for veterans in Ontario. One hundred and

sixty-two positions, including nurses, were cut just last week at Quinte Health Care. My constituents who use Prince Edward, Trenton Memorial and Belleville General hospitals have seen bed cuts, service cuts and nursing jobs being cut.

My question, basically, is to the Premier. How much tighter can she put the screws to Quinte Health Care before she breaks these small rural hospitals?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I want to begin by saying that my expectation as the Minister of Health is that our hospitals have a responsibility to ensure that the patient care that they provide is of the highest quality and the services are there to meet the needs of their communities. That includes the four hospitals that the member opposite is referring to that come under the umbrella of the Quinte Health Care Corp.

Now, it's true that QHC has been working to manage within their budget. They have, of course, as the member opposite talked about, the eliminated positions that are being proposed at this stage. They've had conversations with the unions involved. He talks about the job losses, but, of course, he left out the fact that 38 of those positions are actually vacant today. Also, they are creating 78 new positions—he failed to mention that—which has a significant impact.

But nonetheless and notwithstanding that clarification, I'm working very closely with the member from Northumberland–Quinte West on all of the hospitals in the region, including the Trenton hospital, which is a hospital that is being affected by these changes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Todd Smith: That answer is just not going to sell in the Quinte region. Over the last five years, you've cut \$36.5 million. How do you expect to maintain the same kind of service that you say you expect when you've cut that many jobs from our local hospitals?

Don't take it from me, and don't take it from the grassroots efforts that are under way in the Quinte region, or even the Ontario Health Coalition. Take it from the emergency room doctors at those local hospitals, who have sent a letter to Quinte Health Care saying that the cuts are definitely going to impact patient care there negatively.

The Minister of Health was happy to say yesterday in the Belleville Intelligencer, "We have always maintained the expectation that service to patients will not be impacted." But when you're making those kinds of cuts, it has to have a negative impact.

I would like the Premier to stand up, because she's the one in charge over there. I would like her to guarantee no more cuts and no more shortfalls at local hospitals in the Quinte region—or do I just have to set up an appointment with Dr. Hoskins for next year to learn about the latest cuts?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll remind the member that when I stand, you stop.

Minister of Health.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Again, the member opposite neglected to mention that last year, due to budget pres-

tures, we stepped in with \$3.9 million of mitigation funding to Quinte Health Care. We're likely going to be doing the same as they face these pressures, because there is that expectation that the quality of services doesn't suffer.

A year ago, we had discussions that resulted in me providing additional funding for one of the hospitals that the member opposite was concerned about. I have to say, over the course of this calendar year, I haven't heard a word from the member opposite about Quinte Health Care Corp. or the four hospitals, but I have, almost on a daily basis, been working—

Mr. Todd Smith: You haven't been listening very closely, then.

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

Finish, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It's fine for him to stand up near the end of the game to make these allegations, but I would expect him to do what the member from Northumberland–Quinte West has been doing with me: working with the local communities to make sure we have a solution—

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

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Huron–Bruce has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change concerning the cost of Ontario's cap-and-trade plan. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

VISITORS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to welcome a student from London who has come to Queen's Park to shadow me today. Erynn Quigley is here in the members' gallery.

Hon. David Oraziatti: I was also remiss this morning. I want to introduce Mariyan Petrov, a friend of a close policy adviser in our office, who is an international relations student at the Munk School at U of T. Welcome.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I wanted to welcome Jennifer LaChapelle to Queen's Park today. She is the CEO of the Clearview Public Library system.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands adjourned until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1152 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure today to introduce to this House some very special guests both from my constituency and across the province of Ontario.

In the members' gallery here, in the opposition gallery, are Gordon and Kathleen Stringer, the parents of Rowan

Stringer, whom I will be introducing a bill on later on this afternoon. Please welcome them.

In addition, I'd like to introduce Paul Hunter, who is the manager of community coach development with Rugby Canada—thank you, Paul, for coming—as well as Dr. Frances Flint. She is the chair of the Ontario Athletic Therapist Association's research and education foundation. Thank you very much, Frances, for your support of the bill.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: He's not in the members' gallery, but my husband, Fred McGarry, will be joining us shortly. I just wanted to introduce him before he comes into the House.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MEDVIEWMD

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Recently, I had the privilege to get a glimpse of the future of health care in the province of Ontario. The opening of the MedviewMD patient studio in North Bay was a genuine advance in patient care. It is a telemedicine facility, part of a growing global trend that provides accessible, primary and specialized medical expertise through Internet technology.

Here's a snapshot of my visit. I met a registered practical nurse. She plugged me into an array of digital attachments, connected online to an attending physician—I think this physician was in Pembroke or Peta-wawa—who I could see online and I could speak with. We talked about my blood pressure and temperature, and the RPN put a device in my ear, and the doctor, seeing the image digitally, was able to offer a comment.

This is an exciting, affordable way to reduce the over-reliance on emergency services for non-critical health issues and to address the chronic shortage of family doctors.

Speaker, I congratulate MedviewMD for choosing to locate in the city of North Bay.

We must ensure that our health care administration is both agile and responsive as we embrace new and evolving technologies.

NOGDAWINDAMIN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: Aanii. Bonjour, Mr. Speaker. I would like to highlight an outstanding organization in Algoma–Manitoulin. Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services had their grand opening this past weekend in Sagamok First Nation. Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services embraces the fundamental philosophy of valuing relationships built on the foundations of good governance practices by:

—fostering and maintaining positive and collaborative relationships by engaging our families and extended families in all aspects of service delivery;

—maintaining cohesive relationships with First Nation leadership;

- providing services that reflect the principles of strong partnerships among the Anishnawbe people;
- building models of collaboration with existing community services;
- consulting the communities in a comprehensive and meaningful process, to ensure their input is respected in service design and delivery; and
- developing working relationships with external partners to achieve agency goals.

Thanks to the tireless work of the countless leaders, board of directors, staff members and program supporters within the North Shore Tribal Council communities, this has become a reality.

Over the years of serving the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin, First Nation communities have offered me many opportunities to better understand the wisdom of their culture. These opportunities have led me to respect and revere the principles and vision of indigenous people. Chi-miigwetch. Baamaapii. Nahow.

DURHAM FOODS

Mr. Granville Anderson: I get to stand up today once again to acknowledge the dedication of agri-food innovation that thrives in Durham. This year, Durham Foods in Port Perry has won the Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence, a repeat of their feat in 2012. The award celebrates producers, processors and organizations in rural communities who innovate to create jobs and boost Ontario's economy.

This year, Durham Foods was presented with the award for their innovation through an application that regulates food safety: a tablet computer system for their hydroponic spinach production that makes it easy and convenient for workers to keep track of information. Most importantly, this system helps them document issues and ensure compliance with food safety regulations. It has eliminated time-consuming paperwork, made food safety audits faster and easier, and slashes the costs of the company's food safety program.

I would like to personally congratulate Jim and Shelley and their entire team on this award and to thank them for innovating and making our community proud. I can't wait to see what they will come up with in the future.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: For some time now, I have heard opposition to the sale of Hydro One from all across the riding of Huron-Bruce. I would like to take the opportunity to share these concerns that I have been hearing.

To date, the majority of municipalities in Huron-Bruce, including Ashfield, Central Huron, Huron East, Morris-Turnberry, North Huron, Arran-Elderslie, Huron-Kinloss and Saugeen Shores have either passed motions opposing the sale of Hydro One or have supported municipalities that have put forward resolutions. I share their concerns, along with the people of Huron-Bruce, and quite frankly, there is a lot to be worried about.

Earlier this month, the Financial Accountability Officer confirmed what the PC caucus and people from across the province have been saying all along: The Hydro One sale is a bad deal. It is projected that the sale could cost the province approximately \$700 million in revenue every year. As the world's most indebted subnational borrower, we cannot afford this sale.

Among the concerned are everyday ratepayers who are worried that, despite having some of the highest hydro bills in North America now, they will see them increase yet again. In fact, my understanding is that we'll see another rate increase as of January 1. When I think about this, I'm reminded of a story of a Huron-Bruce resident who last year left his oven door open to heat his home. This is not what Ontarians deserve in 2015.

It frustrates me that this government chose to act in their own interests rather than that of Ontarians. I would like to thank the people of Huron-Bruce for sharing their concerns with me. I will continue to share their voices here with you at every opportunity.

BICYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Hardeep Singh was a 30-year-old father of two young children and a husband who was struck by a motor vehicle and killed on October 29. He was struck and killed while riding his bicycle on Steeles Avenue between Toronto and Brampton.

About two weeks ago, the Cycling Advisory Committee and Bike Brampton organized an event to pay homage to his death by placing a white ghost bicycle at the crash site. I really appreciate that gesture, and I want to share my condolences with the family and the victims—his children and wife—of this tragic, tragic loss.

What this loss teaches us is that cycling, as a practice, while very beneficial to our society in terms of providing an alternative means of transportation, a recreational activity and also something that promotes health, is something that results in far too many deaths. The tragedy is that these deaths can be prevented.

The most important way to prevent cycling deaths is to ensure that we have cycling infrastructure. That's why I want to call on this government and all levels of government to invest in the appropriate cycling infrastructure so that cyclists do not have to cycle with the fear of being struck and, in some very terrible circumstances, killed.

1510

Brampton is a city that has fallen far behind when it comes to cycling infrastructure. As an avid cyclist, I call on this government, and particularly the city of Brampton, to commit to increasing cycling infrastructure so that Hardeep's death is not in vain and we can use this terrible tragedy to ensure that this type of tragedy doesn't happen again in the future.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: One act of violence against one woman is one act too many, and yet Waterloo Regional Police Service continues to respond to hundreds

of calls per year in Waterloo region, mostly from women experiencing domestic violence. As a society, these assaults should make us angry; in fact, we should rage against violence.

On November 30, at the Dunfield Theatre Cambridge, we will have that chance as, fittingly, during Woman Abuse Awareness Month, the curtain will open on the performance of *One Act, Rage Against Violence*.

Written by Gary Kirkham and Dwight Storrington for the Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region Haven House rebuild, this play is built and based on the true stories of 14 people whose lives have been impacted by domestic abuse. The audience can experience an honest, real-life window into the world of domestic abuse, the lives of its victims and those who work to eradicate domestic violence.

Weaving together stories of women who have had experience with violence gathered through interviews, including my experience as an emergency room nurse, the playwrights will tell these real-life stories in a way that will engage the audience and leave a lasting impact.

Each vignette will be played by a carefully chosen storyteller who will take part in a powerful community call to action. These stories should help people realize that domestic violence likely affects someone they know; that it is everyone's issue; and serves as a call to do all we can do to stop it.

INSURANCE BUREAU OF CANADA

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm pleased to rise in the House today and recognize the valued and charitable support of the Insurance Bureau of Canada in my community of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. The IBC is generously supporting my constituents' health care with a donation of \$40,000 to local health care facilities.

Last week, I joined IBC's Madi Murariu in distributing \$5,000 cheques to the Tobermory Health Services Auxiliary; Grey Bruce Health Services, including the Bruce Peninsula Health Services Foundation, Lion's Head and Wiarton hospitals, Owen Sound Hospital Foundation, Meaford Hospital Foundation and Centre Grey Health Services Foundation, Markdale; the South Bruce Grey Health Centre—Chesley and District Health Services Foundation and Durham and Community Health Care Foundation; and the Hanover and District Hospital Foundation.

The \$40,000 donation will help us improve cancer care services by upgrading operating rooms and will provide better health services by assisting in the buying of new hospital equipment, as well as assisting each organization reach its capital campaign fundraising target quicker than anticipated.

As a former executive director of the Bruce Peninsula Health Services Foundation, I truly appreciate the value of donations, donors and volunteers. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the leaders and volunteers of our local foundations for all they do to help ensure that our local health care is the best it can be.

A big thank you to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, especially to Doug DeRabbie, Matt Hiraishi and Madi Murariu, for all their work and efforts to make this investment in our local health care possible.

In closing, I extend a sincere thank you to all donors for their philanthropic spirit and action in ensuring that better health care services reach residents in Bruce and Grey counties.

ST. MARY'S POLISH ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I rise today to extend my congratulations and best wishes to St. Mary's Polish Roman Catholic parish, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in my riding of Davenport on November 8. In particular, I would like to congratulate the parish community in Davenport, who held a fantastic celebration with a mass and reception. A special thank you to Rev. Kazimierz Brzozowski, Archbishop Thomas Collins and the board and volunteers for organizing this landmark celebration.

For over 100 years, Ontario has welcomed people from Poland. When they arrived in Ontario, many Polish immigrants relied on St. Mary's parish Catholic church.

St. Mary's is one of the oldest and most respected Catholic institutions in Toronto. The parish has been part of Davenport since 1915. Throughout time, St. Mary's Polish Roman Catholic Church has served the Polish-Canadian community in Toronto, preserving their culture and their faith. The parish church continues to serve as a way for new Canadians arriving from Poland to establish support networks.

Now the church and the parish school have expanded beyond the Polish community and have made a positive impact on many of the diverse communities in Davenport.

As you know, Ontario has a strong and proud Polish community. In my riding of Davenport, Polish culture is alive and well. The 100-year anniversary of St. Mary's Polish Roman Catholic Church is evidence of the long-standing presence of the cultural contributions of Polish Ontarians.

I want to thank St. Mary's Polish Roman Catholic Church for their commitment to preserving Polish culture in Davenport so that the next generation of Polish Ontarians may understand and appreciate their long-standing history in the riding of Davenport.

PEEL LUNCH AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Mr. Speaker, as the member for the great riding of Mississauga-Brampton South, I recently had the opportunity to attend the 40th anniversary of PLASP, the Peel lunch and after-school program.

Since 1975, this charitable community-based agency has grown from a lunch and after-school program to offer early learning and child care for more than 13,000 children every year. This agency is helping to improve

the lives of children by offering care that is supportive of childhood development and highly educational, and is helping parents balance their busy family and professional lives by creating a safe, affordable place for their children during the workday.

Mr. Speaker, I'm so pleased that our government has been so supportive of child care programs by providing more than \$1 billion each year to 47 municipalities.

I wish to thank the PLASP team for their work with the parents and children of Peel region, and I congratulate them on their 40th anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, real success is shown in the happiness and achievement of our children.

VISITORS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Before we get into further business, I would like us to, first of all, recognize Jean-Marc Lalonde.

Applause.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Jean-Marc was originally in the 36th Parliament, representing Prescott and Russell, and then in the 37th, 38th and 39th Parliaments he was the MPP for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, and, I might add, a former hockey coach for the Legiskaters. Welcome.

A point of order: I recognize the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Now that you're in the mood to welcome people, I thought it would be appropriate that we recognize a very special guest who is with us today up in the Speaker's gallery: former member Ron Hansen, who was here from 1990 to 1995. He's here with his nurse—and unfortunately, I lost the little piece of paper with your name on it, but welcome anyway.

Applause.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Other former parliamentarians and those here today will have a chance to go to a reception at the Whitney Block. So if you want to see some of your former colleagues, some of them might be there.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It is therefore ordered for third reading.

1520

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ROWAN'S LAW ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE COMITÉ CONSULTATIF DE LA LOI ROWAN

Ms. MacLeod moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 149, An Act to establish an advisory committee to make recommendations on the jury recommendations made in the inquest into the death of Rowan Stringer / *Projet de loi 149, Loi créant un comité consultatif chargé d'examiner les recommandations formulées par le jury à la suite de l'enquête sur le décès de Rowan Stringer.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Nepean–Carleton, Ms. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker. Today I'm joined in the gallery by Gordon and Kathleen Stringer, two of my constituents who are joining us at Queen's Park today to support Rowan's Law. Their daughter, Rowan Stringer, passed away tragically when she was 17 years old, playing rugby in our community of Barrhaven.

I am pleased to have the support of this bill from all members of this assembly. In particular, I would like to say thank you to my co-sponsors: Catherine Fife of Kitchener–Waterloo, and John Fraser, from my neighbouring community of Ottawa South. In addition, I would like to say thank you to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the government House leader for making this bill a reality.

This bill enacts the Rowan's Law Advisory Committee Act, 2015. The bill establishes the Rowan's Law Advisory Committee to review the jury recommendations made in the inquest into the death of Rowan Stringer.

Those 49 recommendations span a variety of different government departments, a variety of different jurisdictions and nongovernmental organizations. This committee would recommend how to implement those recommendations and perhaps make other recommendations with respect to head injury prevention or treatment.

The committee is required to provide its recommendations in a report to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, which must be tabled in the Legislature and published on a government website. The bill provides that the act is repealed one year and three months after the day it comes into force.

This is a very important piece of legislation that could save lives across Ontario. It would be the first of its kind in the great nation of Canada. I urge all members to expedite the passage of this bill.

ENERGY REFERENDUM ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015 SUR LES RÉFÉRENDUMS
EN MATIÈRE D'ÉNERGIE

Mr. Yakabuski moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 150, An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998 /
Projet de loi 150, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur
l'électricité.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Mr. Yakabuski.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. The bill amends the Electricity Act, 1998, to permit a local municipality to hold a referendum at any time on the question of whether the local municipality is willing to permit large-scale renewable energy projects to be located in the local municipality. A local municipality that has not held such a referendum must do so before proceeding with a large-scale renewable energy project.

If a local municipality indicates that it is willing to permit large-scale renewable energy projects, then any such project that is subsequently proposed may proceed in the usual course.

If a local municipality indicates that it is not willing to permit large-scale renewable energy projects, then any such project that is subsequently proposed may not proceed.

A local municipality may hold subsequent referendums on the same question at any time.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Is there consent? Agreed.

Back to the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(b), Mr. Tabuns and Ms. Taylor exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Tabuns assumes ballot item number 8 and Ms. Taylor assumes ballot item number 6.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

FAMILY DISPUTE RESOLUTION WEEK

SEMAINE DU RÈGLEMENT DES DIFFÉRENDS FAMILIAUX

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I rise in the House today to bring attention to the good work being done by the many lawyers, arbitrators and mediators who specialize in family dispute resolution. I'm sure that almost everyone here today has been touched in one way or another by family breakdown, whether it involved a friend, a loved one or even yourself.

Comme bon nombre d'entre vous le savent, une séparation ou un divorce, c'est très difficile pour toutes les personnes concernées : les parents, les enfants, la famille élargie et les amis. Ces moments difficiles ne devraient pas être aggravés par de longues et coûteuses batailles judiciaires.

Environ 170 000 personnes utilisent les cours de la famille de l'Ontario chaque année. Plusieurs de ces parties n'ont pas de représentation juridique. En qualité de procureure générale, l'une de mes priorités est de trouver des moyens d'aider les familles à régler ces affaires le plus rapidement et facilement possible et de mettre à leur disposition un vaste éventail de services de soutien.

On Monday, I had the pleasure of attending the first conference of the Family Dispute Resolution Institute of Ontario. The event brought together professionals from across Ontario to discuss common challenges and best practices. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated. I thank them for their ongoing commitment to improving outcomes for separated families in Ontario.

The institute has designated this entire week Family Dispute Resolution Week. All week, events will be held in communities across the province to help raise awareness of the services offered by family lawyers, mediators and arbitrators. It will also help educate Ontarians about their rights and responsibilities. I have no doubt that these events will be incredibly valuable to people who are considering separation or divorce.

J'aimerais souligner ce que mon ministère fait pour aider les familles qui subissent une rupture, afin qu'elles puissent obtenir l'aide dont elles ont besoin le plus tôt possible.

Par exemple, le programme d'information obligatoire de l'Ontario fournit des renseignements sur les répercussions de la séparation sur les enfants, nos services de médiation familiale encouragent les parties à régler leurs différends hors du tribunal, et les centres d'information en droit de la famille offrent gratuitement de l'aide pour des aspects du droit de la famille comme le divorce et la garde des enfants.

We're also building an easy-to-use online service that will make it faster for parents to set up or change child

support payments without going to court. This program will be the first of its kind in Canada. The goal is to launch the service in select areas by early 2016. We then plan to roll it out province-wide by summer.

J'encourage tous les députés à se joindre à moi pour remercier les intervenants du secteur du règlement des différends familiaux pour leur excellent travail.

1530

I'd like to thank the lawyers, arbitrators and mediators who worked so hard to be a source of light during some very dark times for so many families. I commend them all. Keep up the good work. Merci.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'm proud to rise today to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Joining us in the Legislature earlier today were Charlene Catchpole, chair of the board of directors of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, known as OAITH; Marlene Ham, the provincial coordinator at OAITH; and many members of OAITH. I want to thank the staff and volunteers of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses for truly being leaders in helping to raise awareness about the issue of violence against women. They have shown tremendous leadership in their very successful Wrapped in Courage Purple Scarf Campaign.

November is also Woman Abuse Prevention Month, so it is good to see some members of the Legislature here at Queen's Park wrapped in purple scarves to demonstrate our support for women's shelters and violence prevention organizations. I call upon all honourable members to join with Minister MacCharles and myself to support this worthwhile campaign.

I also want to recognize the enormous contributions of the front-line staff in women's shelters and agencies across the violence-against-women service sector in Ontario for providing the care and support to women and their children who have experienced violence. Every day, Canadian women are confronted by disturbing realities that test their courage. According to Statistics Canada, on average, every six days a woman is killed by her intimate partner. Aboriginal women in Canada were three times more likely than non-aboriginal women to report being a victim of a violent crime. And according to UNICEF, each year in Canada, an estimated 360,000 children witness violence in their homes.

We need to keep the horrific tragedies, including the three shootings that happened in the Wilno area this past September, top of mind and close to our hearts when we are helping support women escape violence. It takes the commitment and support of an entire community to end all violence against all women. Everyone has a responsibility to prevent and end violence against women and children.

Our government has made a strong commitment to fight domestic violence and protect women. Our Domestic Violence Action Plan strengthened programs and services and placed an important new emphasis on the prevention of violence and better community supports for abused women and their children. Since 2003, the Ministry of Community and Social Services has increased funding for violence-against-women services and supports by 61% to almost \$150 million as of this fiscal year. Our annual funding provides many resources for the sector, including funding 96 emergency shelter agencies across the province that operate more than 2,000 beds. These shelters served more than 10,000 women and 7,000 children last year alone. And earlier this year, Premier Wynne launched It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment.

We know that change will only happen if we are all committed to it. We're calling on all Ontarians, through their actions and their attitudes, to make change happen. Let's make this a transformative time for women in Ontario, and build a safer future for every girl in this province. I am confident that by working together, we can make all our communities better, safer places to live, to work, and to raise our families.

I call upon all members of this House to join me in working to end violence against women. Women deserve our support.

WOMAN ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH MOIS DE LA PRÉVENTION DE LA VIOLENCE FAITE AUX FEMMES

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I rise to recognize November as Woman Abuse Prevention Month in Ontario.

Violence against women is a very serious and persistent problem. It will not be tolerated in Ontario. November is an important month for profiling the need to end violence against women. Today, we mark the UN's International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which falls on every November 25. November 25 is also the beginning of the UN's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, ending on December 10.

Monsieur le Président, notre gouvernement est engagé à éliminer la violence faite aux femmes sous toutes ses formes.

As the minister responsible for women's issues, it's a priority for me that every woman in Ontario has a fundamental right to live safely, free from the threat of fear and violence.

C'est pourquoi, le 6 mars 2015, la première ministre Wynne et moi-même avons lancé Ce n'est jamais acceptable : Plan d'action pour mettre fin à la violence et au harcèlement sexuels.

This three-year plan includes concrete measures to help change attitudes, provide more support for survivors and make workplaces and campuses safer and more responsive to complaints about sexual violence and ha-

rassment. You may have seen our provocative TV advertisement, aimed at bystanders, using the Twitter hashtag #WhoWillYouHelp. That was part of phase 1 of our multimedia, multilingual education campaign to raise awareness. The #WhoWillYouHelp hashtag has reached more than 85 million people around the world.

At the Summit on Sexual Violence and Harassment that we held just last week, the Premier announced phase 2 of our public awareness campaign. The hashtag for this phase is #ItsNeverOkay and it started rolling out this week with an edgy new TV ad. I encourage everyone to watch it and to share it.

Another part of Ontario's action plan is that the government has introduced legislation that, if passed, would strengthen the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include a definition of sexual harassment. A new code of practice is also being created to describe for employers the steps they can take to comply with the law and make their workplaces safer for employees.

We have convened a permanent stakeholder Roundtable on Violence Against Women that has been held every month, I believe, since March. The round table advises our government on continuing and emerging gender-based violence issues.

Our government has also implemented many initiatives to combat domestic violence and to strengthen support for victims since the release of our Domestic Violence Action Plan in 2004. One of those initiatives is the Neighbours, Friends and Families public education campaign, which helps people recognize the signs of abuse and learn how to help an abused woman. This campaign includes francophone, aboriginal, immigrant and refugee communities across Ontario.

Another initiative is the Language Interpreter Services Program to help survivors of domestic and sexual violence who have limited English or French language skills or who are deaf or hard of hearing. Last year, this program, which is available in 70 languages, helped 10,000 survivors.

Plus tôt cette année, j'ai annoncé que nous investirons 9,3 millions de dollars sur trois ans pour continuer à soutenir ce programme.

The month of November has other dates and campaigns that allow us to recognize the work being done by communities across Ontario to end woman abuse. The Association of Interval and Transition Houses last year launched a public awareness campaign called Wrapped in Courage, urging people to wear a purple scarf to support ending violence against women and children.

The White Ribbon Campaign, the world's largest organization of men working to end male violence against women, encourages men and boys to wear a ribbon from November 25 until December 6, Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

Speaker, I urge all Ontarians and all MPPs in this chamber to support these campaigns because ending woman abuse is everybody's responsibility. I encourage everyone to wear a white ribbon or a purple scarf or both

to show your support for Woman Abuse Prevention Month.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Responses to ministry statements.

FAMILY DISPUTE RESOLUTION WEEK

Mr. Jeff Yurek: This week marks the first Family Dispute Resolution Week in Ontario and also celebrates the first year of operation of the Family Dispute Resolution Institute of Ontario.

The Family Dispute Resolution Institute of Ontario—the FDRIO—is a new, not-for-profit organization designed to bring together professionals in the family dispute resolution field to advance advocacy about the benefits of resolving cases out of court.

1540

Numerous organizations and agencies have been putting on workshops and information sessions to inform the public about alternative methods to resolving family disputes outside of the courtroom. Family disputes are deeply personal, emotional and incredibly difficult for families to get through on their own, without the additional burden of dealing with the often high-stress, costly and litigious nature of the court.

The FDRIO is focused on providing advice, information and guidance to families from professionals whose experiences are largely within the area of family law.

For these reasons, we applauded the efforts of the legal community and those involved with the Family Dispute Resolution Institute of Ontario, coming together to create a framework and providing guidance to help families resolve their disputes without the need to subject them to the lengthy, costly and already congested courts.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

WOMAN ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Ms. Laurie Scott: As the PC critic for women's issues, I'm pleased to rise in the House today and recognize the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and Woman Abuse Prevention Month. I proudly wear the purple blazer today and my white ribbon.

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women is part of the United Nations Secretary-General's UNiTE Campaign, inviting us to "orange the world" and step up our efforts to end violence against women and girls.

Woman Abuse Prevention Month reminds us to improve our efforts to prevent woman abuse, because all women have a fundamental right to live in safety and security in their own homes and communities, free from the threat of violence.

Canada is a nation that is known across the world as a place of opportunity. We are so privileged to live in a

country where we can embrace the strength of diversity and compassion. We can show our compassion by making our communities safer and ensuring that harassment and violence become things of the past.

I want to thank all the contributions of the women and men who are front-line workers in all our shelters and agencies across our violence-against-women networks.

How we think about a woman's place in society speaks volumes to the dignity and respect that we have for them as human beings. Too many women feel that they don't have the right supports in place to protect themselves from intimidation and assault.

In Canada, one out of every three women will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime. That is way too many. The murders in Renfrew county a couple of months ago remind us of the need for immediate action to prevent revictimization.

I've mentioned many times the changes I'd like to see, in the Legislature, that we could make now, where, for example, the government uses better risk-assessment tools to flag high-risk offenders; crown attorneys are notified when offenders don't sign probation orders; bringing in the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke's private member's bill, where there's better monitoring of high-risk offenders before they're released; and, of course, the Partner Assault Response Program, to bring it back to its original form. With those recommendations, I'd like the government, of course, to move as quickly as possible.

I do want to acknowledge the It's Never Okay action plan that the government has brought forward. We look forward to combining that with the recommendations that are soon going to be tabled from our select committee, that received support from all members of the Legislature. We worked very hard at travelling the province and building recommendations so we can make our province better and protect more women and men.

I'm also going to put another hint in to the fact that I introduced a motion about human trafficking and how we can make some changes to help alleviate that horrendous crime, and to give the resources and the province-wide networking so that we can decrease the incidences of human trafficking, predominantly involving women.

I think that we can achieve a lot when we stand united, and I hope today is a sign that we are moving forward in the province of Ontario to better protect women.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today as NDP women's issues critic to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the first of 16 days of activism to end gender-based violence, ending on Human Rights Day, December 10. This recognizes violence against women as a violation of human rights and is a stark reminder of the persistent inequality between women and men around the world. Nowhere is this more

evident in Canada than in the 1,200 missing and murdered indigenous women whose stories have waited too long to be told in a national inquiry.

My colleagues and I in the NDP caucus support the actions that have been taken by the government to address sexual violence and harassment; however, we must make sure that new progress does not jeopardize past gains.

The summer newsletter of Building a Bigger Wave, a provincial coalition of violence against woman service providers and community leaders, quoted an Attorney General ministry official who said that domestic violence is no longer the "shiny object" for this government. During hearings of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, we heard repeatedly that siloed funding for domestic violence and sexual violence creates real barriers to integration and coordination at the community level.

We know that amazing collaboration and innovation is happening locally to end violence against women, yet the government has resisted changing the names of Ontario's 48 domestic violence coordinating committees to "violence against women coordinating committees" to reflect the reality that sexual violence and intimate partner violence almost always co-occur and that women are overwhelmingly the victims of both.

We also know the inadequacies of a justice-only response to keeping women and girls safe. We need to engage men in efforts to end violence against women and hold men accountable for their violence, not only through the justice system but changing their abusive behaviours through programs like Partner Assault Response.

The government's refusal to heed the warnings of agencies and experts about the risks to women and children that they are creating through arbitrary changes to the Partner Assault Response Program is deeply troubling. If we are serious about eliminating violence against women, we must respect the experience of survivors and we must listen to the expertise of violence-against-women community leaders.

FAMILY DISPUTE RESOLUTION WEEK

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I also want to join in commending the great work of those who assist in what is one of the most troubling and difficult times in someone's life: the breakdown of a family. I want to pay particular attention to the lawyers, the arbitrators and the mediators who do this difficult work and provide, in many cases, the only outlet and the only opportunity for hope in a very desperate and difficult situation.

I also want to respect the work of the Family Dispute Resolution Institute of Ontario, which is working towards providing more awareness around alternatives to litigation.

Just on that point, litigation is the last resort; it's not often the easiest resort. Anyone who has spent any time in a court knows that courts and lawsuits can be very difficult in general. Add in the fact that there are significant delays when it comes to the completion of a

court matter and it makes a situation that's already frustrating even that much more.

I want to add my voice to the notion that looking at alternatives to litigation is often a very important option and a very important alternative, particularly to those who don't have access to representation. It's sometimes the more cost-effective and often the more expedient manner by which to find a resolution. I think it's important to draw attention to that.

On the notion of access to justice, we know that the government has made investments in legal aid, and I commend the government for doing that. At the same time, there is a very pressing issue around the low-income cut-off for legal aid.

We often think of legal aid in criminal justice matters, but it's often the case that people who are facing family law matters don't have access to justice. They often exceed the low-income threshold but don't make enough money to actually hire a lawyer. There needs to be more work done around ensuring that there is access to justice for those who want to seek legal representation, or for those who have exhausted all of the alternative methods and alternative forms of resolution and simply need that avenue.

Again, I want to acknowledge the great work of those who are involved in this alternative form of resolution. It's a great, viable option for many people and it's something that we need to encourage and provide more awareness around.

1550

PETITIONS

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Nipissing University students have missed weeks of schooling due to a labour strike; and

"Whereas Nipissing University students may have their school year pushed back to April and may lose their reading week in February; and

"Whereas Nipissing University students may have to extend leases, seek out new housing options, may lose out on placements and may lose job opportunities;

"Whereas Nipissing University students will not be reimbursed for the schooling time lost due to the strike;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure steps are taken to ensure that a resolution is reached so the impact on Nipissing University students ends as soon as possible."

It is signed by 3,095 members. I agree with this petition, will sign my name to it and give it to page Ben.

CONCUSSION

Ms. Catherine Fife: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

"Whereas 49 recommendations to increase awareness, training and education around concussions were made by a jury after the coroner's inquest into the concussion death of Rowan Stringer;

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

"That the" Wynne "government review and adopt Rowan's Law to ensure the safety and health of children and youth athletes across the province."

It is indeed my pleasure to affix my signature and give this to page Jack.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, signed by a number of dental patients from Brampton, Mississauga and Georgetown and submitted from the office of Dr. Mohanta, from Meadowvale. It's entitled "Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water," and it reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

"Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable

to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

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

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

Speaker, it is my pleasure to sign and support this petition and to send it down with page Brooke.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Ms. Laurie Scott: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we, the undersigned, oppose the Suncor-Canadian Solar Portage Solar project proposed for 452 Portage Road, Highway 48 and Centennial Park Road in Eldon township in the city of Kawartha Lakes, based on the impact on endangered and native species, wildlife habitat, the fact that this is class 1 soil as designated by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs on provincial soil maps, and local heritage impact—opposing corner to the William Lyon Mackenzie King summer house.”

Signed by many constituents in that area, and I affix my signature to it.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I sign this petition and support it and give it to page Ajay to deliver.

SPEED LIMITS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I am very proud this afternoon to present, on behalf of the member from Ottawa Centre, a petition to set the default speed limit to 40 kilometres an hour on residential streets.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we must always strive to improve road safety for Ontario’s pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists;

“Whereas current research shows that reducing the speed limit to 40 km/h dramatically reduces the number of pedestrian fatalities and lessens the extent of injuries incurred during an accident;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario amend the Highway Traffic Act to set the default speed limit to 40 km/h on residential streets and 30 km/h in school zones across the province.”

I agree with this petition, and I’m pleased to affix my name to the petition and give it to page Michelle.

EHLERS-DANLOS SYNDROME

Mr. Victor Fedeli: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Canada Health Act requires provinces to fund medically necessary treatment for Canadians; and

“Whereas a growing number of people in Ontario suffering from Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (EDS) have to seek out-of-country treatment at their own expense because doctors in Ontario don’t have the knowledge or skills to understand EDS symptoms and perform the required delicate and complicated surgeries; and

“Whereas those EDS victims who can’t afford the expensive treatment outside of Ontario are forced to suffer a deteriorating existence and risk irreversible tissue and nerve damage; and

“Whereas EDS victims suffer severe dislocations, chronic pain, blackouts, nausea, migraines, lost vision, tremors, bowel and bladder issues, heart problems, mobility issues, digestive disorders, severe fatigue and many others resulting in little or very poor quality of life; and

“Whereas despite Ontario Ministry of Health claims that there are doctors in Ontario who can perform surgeries on EDS patients, when surgery is recommended the Ontario referring physicians fail to identify any Ontario neurosurgeon willing or able to see and treat the patient;

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

“Require the Minister of Health to provide the names of Ontario neurosurgeons who can—and will—perform surgeries on EDS patients with equivalent or identical skills to the EDS neurosurgeon specialists in the United States, and meet the Canada Health Act’s requirement to afford equal access to medical treatment for patients, regardless of their ability to pay for out-of-country services.”

I agree with this, Speaker, sign my name to it and hand it to page Ben.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Sarah Campbell: “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;

1600

“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 have affixed my signature and will give this to page Brooke to deliver to the table.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Granville Anderson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the residents of the municipality of Clarington have been promised that the GO train would be extended to Courtice and Bowmanville;

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

“That the province of Ontario keep its promise to Clarington residents and commit to providing the necessary funding for Metrolinx to complete the extension of the GO train to Courtice and Bowmanville no later than 2018.”

I agree with this, Mr. Speaker, and will affix my name to it.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs. Gila Martow: “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 would say, thank God for the doctors, because they tell me to stop talking so much and rest my voice. You can see how I followed their instructions.

I will sign my name and give it to page Lauren.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Wayne Gates: 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’ll sign the petition and give it to Aislin.

PROTECTION DE L’ENVIRONNEMENT

M. Shafiq Qadri: J’ai une pétition ici adressée à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que les microbilles sont de petites particules de plastique de moins de 1 mm de diamètre, qui passent à travers nos systèmes de filtration de l’eau et sont présentes dans nos rivières et dans les Grands Lacs;

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

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

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

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

Je vous l'envoie avec la page Keana.

HYDRO RATES

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

“Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government’s mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Whereas the billion-dollar gas plant scandal, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020;

“Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, particularly in rural Ontario, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

“Whereas home heating and electricity are essential for families in rural Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government’s mismanagement;

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

“To immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario’s power consumers, including families, farmers, and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity.”

I certainly agree with this and will be passing it off to page Michelle.

OPPOSITION DAY

TEACHERS’ COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Patrick Brown: I move that: whereas, since 2008, the Liberal government has paid teachers’ unions \$3.7 million as part of collective agreement negotiations;

Whereas the Liberal government has been reluctant to publicly disclose these payments and provide an accounting for same;

Whereas these payments violate the spirit of section 70 of the Ontario Labour Relations Act, which prohibits an employer or employer organization from providing financial support to a union; and

Whereas there are no spending limits on third-party advertising during elections in Ontario;

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

(a) calls upon the Ontario Liberal Party to immediately pay the Ministry of Education \$3.7 million to reimburse Ontario’s students and teachers for these funds that were taken out of the classroom;

(b) calls for the strengthening of section 70 of the Ontario Labour Relations Act to specifically prohibit any future payments to public sector unions to compensate for collective bargaining costs; and

(c) calls upon the government of Ontario to immediately introduce legislation to cap third-party election advertising.

This is addressed to the Premier.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Brown has moved opposition day number 5.

Mr. Brown.

Mr. Patrick Brown: I’m happy to rise in support of this motion.

This motion addresses the recent revelations that since 2008, the Liberals have paid teachers’ unions more than \$3.7 million of taxpayer money to cover costs incurred through the negotiating process. Of the \$3.7 million, 2.5 million of taxpayer dollars went to three teachers’ unions in this year of negotiations alone.

These payments speak to the broader chaos that we are seeing in the education system. It caused the longest strike in 25 years in Durham. It caused the government to walk away from multiple negotiations several times and has now cost the people of Ontario millions of dollars to pay for this government’s failed bargaining process. Just like the gas plants and eHealth, this government keeps forcing taxpayers to pay for their mistakes and mismanagement.

Mr. Speaker, the Ontario PC caucus does not feel it’s appropriate that taxpayer dollars intended to fund education services in this province are being abused. Teachers are paying classroom supplies out of their own pockets. Parents are fundraising for school trips because they are being told the cupboard is bare. Yet the Ontario Liberal government has shown a complete lack of respect for taxpayer dollars. It is wrong and this government knows it.

That is why, after being shamed by the Ontario PC caucus, the media and the public, the government agreed to pass the member from Nepean–Carleton’s motion requesting the Auditor General to review the millions in payouts to teachers’ unions. We look forward to this report, which will detail where the money from the union payouts came from, what the money was intended to

fund, and compare the practice of paying union negotiating expenses.

But more can and more should be done. Mr. Speaker, in a time of thinly stretched budgets and continued cuts by the government to essential front-line services, the Ontario Liberal Party should go one step further and immediately pay the Ministry of Education \$3.7 million to reimburse Ontario students and teachers for funds that were taken out of the classroom.

The Ontario PC caucus recognizes the extraordinary work that Ontario's teachers do. Like Premier Davis, the education portfolio is very important to me. When I won the Simcoe North by-election, I took on the critic responsibility for education that Garfield Dunlop had. I can tell you that, in my own family, my mother was an educator for decades, a teacher and a principal before she retired, and my aunt is currently a principal here in the city of Toronto.

1610

We need to give teachers the resources to ensure that our education system puts students first. Moreover, this motion is an opportunity for the Liberal government to own up to its mistakes by prohibiting any future payments to public sector unions to compensate for collective bargaining costs.

The Liberal government gave away \$2.5 million without asking for a single receipt, and the best explanation the Minister of Education could muster was that the money was for hotel rooms and pizza. No one bought that. We need to avoid such carelessness from occurring in the future. Assurance needs to be offered to the people of this province that that sort of waste will never be tolerated and it will never happen again.

Moreover, the government's payments to teachers' unions for bargaining costs have continued for over a decade. At the same time, over the past three provincial election campaigns, teachers' unions have spent more than \$6.5 million to run negative ad campaigns, and have donated over \$800,000 to the Ontario Liberal Party for the past decade.

Members' offices are receiving phone calls and emails from constituents who are concerned that the government payouts and education spending by unions create the bad feeling that taxpayer money was spent to help win an election—taxpayer money that was intended for education services, and that's the only place it should be used.

Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada that regulates third parties but doesn't restrain their spending on political ads during elections. According to Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer, the practice is so out of control—and this is almost unbelievable—third-party groups are outspending political parties themselves. I urge the government to immediately introduce legislation to cap third-party advertising.

To close, I urge all members in the Legislature to support our motion today. If you read any of the emails you get from your constituents, if you read the headlines in the *Toronto Star* or any newspaper—all have been

universally condemning this action. No one—no one other than members of the government caucus—can justify these payments. No one can justify taking money out of the classroom to use for political purposes. I hope they would do the right thing and support this motion, and we can bring integrity to our political system here in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the member opposite.

Our government has been both clear and transparent about the process under which we are currently negotiating collective agreements with our partners in the education sector.

This process, first and foremost, has been successful. We have been delivering on our commitment to reach net-zero collective agreements with teachers and education workers, while ensuring that students continue to benefit from one of the world's best publicly funded education systems.

Just recently the province approved the central agreement ratified by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. That means that we now have central agreements with all four teachers' unions—with every single teacher's union in the province of Ontario. We have also reached tentative agreements with the Canadian Union of Public Employees, and, dark and early last Saturday morning, we also got a tentative agreement with the Education Workers' Alliance of Ontario.

These agreements also recognize the important work that teachers and education workers do every day in our schools across Ontario. Unlike the party opposite, we actually think of teachers and education workers as our partners, not some hostile body. We want to work with our teachers and with our education workers, because with their hard work and dedication, we have seen our students across Ontario make significant progress.

Moreover, these are the first central agreements for teachers and education workers under the new School Boards Collective Bargaining Act. The act is a transformative piece of legislation that reworked how collective bargaining takes place in the education sector.

Negotiating under the framework established through the act has been a challenging, lengthy process for everyone involved. Working closely with our partners, we have spent more than a year undergoing the formal process to establish a central/local split for the first time and then to negotiate the central agreement.

Let me explain. The first round in the bargaining was to figure out what issues would be negotiated centrally and which items would be negotiated locally. Everybody at the table knew that we were setting precedents for the future, given that this was the first time, and that was a very lengthy process. It involved a number of referrals to the Ontario Labour Relations Board. That will never happen again. We have the rulings from the Ontario Labour Relations Board. We have the framework for what's central and what's local.

Then we had to negotiate the actual central agreements. To give you a sense of this, we have taken literally hundreds of collective agreements in the education sector and are in the process of collapsing them into nine central agreements. There has never been a central agreement before, Speaker, as you well know. That means that each and every clause of those agreements has had to be negotiated. That's a long process, but we will never have the first time again. You can only do the first time once. So we had an unusually long, complex process to reach those first collective agreements.

Let me give you a little bit of history about how we got here. After the Conservatives removed taxation rights back in the late 1990s, we had the difficult situation where, while obviously the school boards continued to be the employer, the provincial government was the sole funder of the education system, and that made for very difficult bargaining in the sector.

When we came in, beginning in 2004, we began informal discussions with the unions and the school boards about how we could change that process.

In 2007, for the first time, the Ministry of Education actually invited the unions and the school board associations to come to the table, and there were voluntary provincial discussion tables at which voluntary agreements were made around not every single detail of collective agreements, but some of the financial pieces. The tables were created to find common ground on provincial policy issues of interest to all parties in a manner that would then support transferring that into the local collective agreements.

The process continued, but by 2014 all parties recognized that we really required formal legislation around what the central process looked like. That gave us the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, and it's important to note that that came as a result of negotiations with all of the unions involved and all of the school board associations. So the act that we're working under actually is an act on which everybody agreed on how we wanted the process to work.

As I said, the current round of bargaining is the first round under the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act. Because this bargaining has been so prolonged—I've explained the extensive process—we have, in fact, assisted our partners with the costs of this more-than-a-year-long-now bargaining process for this first round only. I think it's important that the public understand that we did not just assist the lead teachers' unions; we also financially assisted school board associations. So we have been providing some support for the costs of that year-long bargaining process for everybody at the table, not just the unions.

1620

The parties will continue to cover all of their own costs for local bargaining. As the member opposite is aware and as we have publicly stated now on multiple occasions, the money to the federations, to the unions, has not flowed yet because there is an accountability and verification process around how the money will flow.

The unions will be required to provide an accounting to show that only eligible costs are being charged, and there will be a formal schedule of eligible costs. In order for the unions to access this funding, the unions will have to provide an audited expenditure report about those eligible costs, and they will have to attest that these eligible costs have been spent only in relation to the central bargaining process. Money used for any other purpose than central bargaining cannot be charged to the government.

So, there is, in fact, an accountability and verification process—a very detailed one—around the costs, and there will be transparency for taxpayers. In fact, the government unanimously supported a motion to have the independent Auditor General of Ontario look into the costs associated with these agreements, and that, I understand, will be released by the Auditor General in the spring of 2016. One of the issues that the Auditor General will be looking at, of course, is those costs. We certainly look forward to working with the Auditor General because we are quite confident that the way this payment is being managed is quite rigorous in terms of the accounting standards and eligible expense standards that we will receive before we flow the money.

But what we really need to keep in mind here, I think, is that the focus of the bargaining needs to be our commitment to the success of our publicly funded education system and to Ontario's almost two million students. That is really what the bargaining is all about: How do we be fair to our workers but, at the same time, protect the education system?

I would like to say that we have, in fact, bargained within the net-zero framework that was announced in our budget. The net-zero framework was respected, and there were absolutely no cuts to the classroom. In all four of those agreements that were ratified, there have been absolutely no changes to the class size ratios. In all of those four collective agreements that were negotiated, there have been no changes to the way in which we fund special education. We have not cut the classroom to make sure we have fair agreements with our workers. We know that we have to do both to protect the experience of our kids in the classroom and at the same time negotiate fair agreements with our Speaker—I'm looking at you, Speaker, and we like to be fair to you, too, but particularly, we want to be fair to our workers.

So, was it easy? No. Was it ever going to be easy? No, because we were doing net-zero bargaining. It was inevitable, whether you had new legislation or not, that this year has been a difficult year for bargaining, because we have been in a net-zero framework. That is what has made part of this such a prolonged process. But what I am sure about is that while we're certainly willing to go back and look at the legislation and see where it needs to be fine-tuned, we have created a system of collective bargaining that has been successful. We have six collective agreements. People are sitting at the hotel this week, as we speak, working on the last three.

My personal goal is that I really, really hope this is all done by Christmas. That would be my best Christmas

present ever, and I'm sure it would be the best Christmas present for the workers who are there, too, to get this all done. But this has been a successful process, and I am very proud of what we have achieved.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm happy to speak to our leader's motion today on this very important subject. It's never a dull day—

Mr. Granville Anderson: Where is the leader?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Where is the leader?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Members know that you don't mention absenteeism. You don't ask where the leader is. I don't want to hear that again.

Go ahead.

Mr. Michael Harris: Thank you, Speaker. Well, listen, I'll get right into it, then.

The reciprocal principle behind the catchphrase “you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours” is as old as the hills. Somebody does something to benefit someone else with the expectation that the benefit will be paid back, either immediately or down the road.

Think of the line of monkeys scratching each other's backs or in a business where perhaps a service provider engages in work for a broadcaster who, in turn, provides them ad space. But while this is an age-old practice in, say, the animal kingdom or in the business world, when this practice enters the world of politics and behind-closed-door deals with taxpayer dollars, the scratching begins to cross lines of propriety. And when it comes to today's motion, the scratch we're discussing is coming straight from the taxpayers' pockets, via the friendly neighbourhood Wynne Liberals, directly to teachers' unions that have turned around and funded election ads favouring the Liberal Party. You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours, all the way to the Premier's office.

I stood here just a couple of weeks ago and asked the Acting Premier to guarantee us with a straight face that not one red cent of the millions of taxpayer dollars—\$3.7 million that we know of—was funnelled to teachers' unions and was spent on third-party election ads that benefitted the Liberal Party.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Guaranteed.

Mr. Michael Harris: Speaker, she couldn't do it, not with a straight face nor even with a crooked one. She couldn't guarantee us because she knows, as we all do now, that she and the entire governing Liberal Party are part of a chain that saw teachers' union spend millions on election ads one year and receive millions back to cover hotel and pizza costs the next, and it continues to this day.

Right there in the memorandum of understanding with the secondary teachers' union, item number 9: “The crown shall pay to OSSTF the sum of \$1 million to offset the cost of central collective bargaining....” Later on, the Minister of Education explained that those costs, borne now by the Ontario taxpayer, were the costs of hotels and pizzas. Those must have been some pretty good pizzas.

Of course it wasn't to cover hotels and pizzas. The minister just didn't want us to connect the dots, to follow

the money from multi-million-dollar government/union payouts to multi-million-dollar union/pro-Liberal election ad campaigns. She even took the media and public on a red herring hunt, going back and forth on the existence or requirements for receipts to back up the payout costs. Then the Premier joined the hunt, suggesting that receipts would be a requirement going forward. Speaker, hogwash.

If government wanted receipts, they would have written it into the agreement right where government commits to the payout, but it's not there, because receipts aren't necessary in a “you scratch my back I'll scratch yours” relationship. It's a nod and a wink here, a million-dollar payout there, and before you know it, our TV screens are filled with pro-Liberal commercial propaganda that this government can claim it had no part of.

It's a game paid for by taxpayers' money that governments feels it can't lose. The truly sad part is that, in fact, it's the taxpayers who lose in the end. That's why we called in the Auditor General. I know my colleague will speak next to this, and we thank her for putting forward that motion to investigate and examine where the money came from and where it went.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Harris: Of course, Lisa MacLeod—I was just briefly forgetting her riding name. That's why I didn't mention it, but it's Nepean-Carleton, I believe. Yes, I got it now. Thank you, Lisa.

Certainly, we all look forward to that report this coming spring, but at the same time, we know this is much the same regime that during the gas plant scandal withheld information from the Information and Privacy Commissioner. We all remember that. So while we look forward to the report, we must carry on to move forward here in this Legislature to ensure that these concerns over misdirection of taxpayers' money are not allowed to continue, because the concerns are ongoing.

1630

People were calling my office every day when the payouts were making headlines in the *Globe and Mail*, wondering what the heck this government is spending their money on. “Why is it going to unions whose members pay dues for things like negotiations?” they asked. It's just wrong on so many fronts.

In addition to the concerns over third-party election advertising, which I will get into in a moment, the fact is that these payouts are, in my mind, a clear contravention of section 70 of the Ontario Labour Relations Act, which indicates that no employer “shall contribute financial or other support to a trade union.” Now, the minister attempts to skirt these issues by claiming the section doesn't pertain to government because they are not the direct employer. While they may want to play games with words, I think we all understand that those who are on the other side of the table negotiating the work terms of a union membership are certainly acting in the role and/or are representatives of the employer. If it walks like a duck and talks like a duck, it's a duck, and this duck has contributed \$3.7 million in taxpayers' money to

a trade union that has reciprocated with millions in pro-Liberal election ads. It's as simple as that and again, in my mind, represents a clear contravention of section 70.

It is for that reason that part of our demand in today's motion is that the Ontario Liberal Party pay the money back. Pay back the \$3.7 million taken from taxpayers to further the Liberal cause. Pay back the misdirected funds that were taken out of the classroom. Whether they want to pretend it was for hotels or pizzas or taxis, they have no receipts in support; whether they come clean on the public's concerns over their money being laundered to pay for third-party election ads, it was wrong. They know it. The public knows it. So pay it back.

While they are at it, we're also asking today for support to strengthen section 70 of the Ontario Labour Relations Act to specifically prohibit any future payments to public sector unions to compensate for collective bargaining costs. If this government is intent on wiggling out of their clear contravention of the act, it's time to remove that wiggle room and tighten our grasp on taxpayer dollars so that this type of back-scratching for political gain at the taxpayers' expense never happens again—never.

Finally, the third leg of our motion here today calls on the government of Ontario to immediately introduce legislation to cap third-party election advertising. Speaker, to be clear, as you've heard and will hear more from my colleague from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, we've made this call before—multiple times, in fact—always ending with the same result: government Liberal members voting in their party's own best interests to prevent third-party election advertising caps from being put in-place despite their promises to the contrary.

As we all know in this House, the issue of third-party advertising has been a concern not only for us in the official opposition, but also for Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer. The Elections Ontario 2012-13 annual report, in fact, called for legislative changes to third-party advertising laws and saw Greg Essensa suggest consideration of caps on third-party spending, the type of caps that we are all asking the government members to consider and in fact support today. Caps on third-party advertising are not only to address the over \$3 million in teacher union election spending we've been discussing today. The fact is that between 2007 and 2011, the amounts spent by special-interest groups on advertising tripled to \$6.7 million, and by 2014 this amount jumped to \$8.6 million, money that is used to blur the lines and create uneven playing fields for what are supposed to be fair and democratic elections.

We are all familiar with the considerable election-time efforts of the Working Families Coalition, a third-party group composed of public sector and construction unions that has spent more than \$1 million in each of the last two general elections. These groups are, in essence, super PACs: America's independent political action committees that can spend an unlimited amount of money as long as they do not donate to political candidates. Again, the concern remains: When we have super-PAC-like

groups forming to promote one candidate or one party over another, it unfairly tilts the playing field, creating political advantages that, as far as I have been taught, are not the Ontario way.

Heck, the Toronto Star—even the Toronto Star, Speaker—in the wake of the teacher payout headlines, called on the Premier to deliver on that pledge and ensure that no future government will be tainted by the suspicion of unfairly funding lavish third-party campaigns. Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta, New Brunswick and the federal government have all adopted controls over third-party advertising. Yet, every time we bring forward the option to bring forth similar controls here in Ontario, we are met by a Liberal thick brick wall. Again, I think we can all speculate as to the reasons—the 3.7 million reasons—why.

The record speaks for itself: The member from Wellington-Halton Hills put forward a bill to limit third-party collusion in 2011. The Liberals said no. My colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex brought forward third-party spending controls in 2013. Guess what? The Liberals said no. Not to be deterred, just a few weeks ago the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound tried again, and guess what the Liberal members did, Speaker? They said no.

Well, Conservatives are nothing if not determined, and so we're back again. Maybe today—now that their payouts have been exposed; the jig is up, as it were—maybe now the members opposite will see through partisan walls to support the fair and equitable principles reflected in today's motion to finally limit spending on third-party advertising. That said, while I look forward to their vote and their support, given the history, I will not hold my breath.

With that, Speaker, I would like to thank you for the time today. I want to make special mention of and thank Adrian Morrow of the Globe and Mail for his thorough work on this over the course of the last weeks. I know it will not stop here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure to join debate today on the opposition motion in the name of our leader in the Progressive Conservative caucus, Patrick Brown. I think this motion is very straightforward, and I think that only pure politics would come into play in opposing this motion. Let me be very clear and outline the three initiatives Patrick Brown, the leader of the official opposition, is talking about.

The first is for the Liberal government to pay back the \$3.7 million in undocumented, unreceipted payouts to their Liberal-friendly unions that they took from kids in classrooms. I think most Ontarians would agree with that.

The second initiative is amending section 70 of the Labour Relations Act so that we would ban the practice of paying public sector unions money they already have, intended for collective bargaining. We already know, for example, that the OSSTF—Paul Kossta is here; he can talk about the \$65 million they have set aside for

collective bargaining. All I can say is that Paul will guarantee the truth of what I just said, because it was in the newspaper. If it's in print, I learned a long time ago, it must be true.

Third, this Progressive Conservative Party that I am proud to stand here and support, and be a member of for the fourth consecutive term for Nepean–Carleton, calls for something we have been calling for, effectively, since I was elected over a decade ago, which is to introduce legislation to cap third-party election spending by the Working Families Coalition, which has, in the past, colluded with the government, not only on advertising but also with scripts for phone calls, polling and other campaign material. That's why I think it's important that the Progressive Conservative Party continue to stand—

1640

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): First of all, I'll deal with the member from Etobicoke North. You will retract what you just said.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Minister? Point of order?

Hon. Jeff Leal: On a point of order: I think we're bordering on unparliamentary language, to use the word "colluding." My sense of colluding would be, you can kind of prove the facts. I don't think the facts—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sit down, Minister.

This will be my last warning to the member from Etobicoke North to stop challenging the Chair through the table. If you have a point of order, you stand up and challenge me. Otherwise, be quiet.

Go ahead.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order from the member from Etobicoke North.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Speaker, I believe the word "collusion" is unparliamentary. I would invite you to please consult whatever dictionary you care to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you very much for your input. I certainly know what the word means, but unfortunately for the member from Etobicoke North, there was so much noise I didn't hear it. If I don't hear it, I can't call them on it. Maybe you were one of the ones talking.

Minister?

Hon. Jeff Leal: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I enjoyed the comments from the member for Nepean–Carleton. We're having a good discussion this afternoon. I just asked about the word "colluding." That's all I'm asking about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): But I did not hear it, Minister. If I hear it, I certainly will deal with it.

Continue.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Tomato, tomahto. Colluding, money laundering, slush funds—that's what that Liberal government is about. They're corrupt.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nepean–Carleton will withdraw those comments.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdrawn.

Speaker, this is a government that put forward Bill 8. The Treasury Board president put forward this centre-piece legislation where the government said eHealth, Ornge, OLG, every scandal they ever had, including the \$1.2-billion gas plants scandal where they deleted emails from the public and are under an ongoing police investigation by the OPP—that would all end so long as we brought in Bill 8. Yet, for the first time—that has come to light, anyway—we have seen that this government ignores that. In fact, what did they do? They gave \$3.7 million, if not more, in undocumented, unreceipted money to a public sector union that already had money of its own to deal with the initiative that the money was for, which is collective bargaining.

I want to talk about, in the few minutes I have left, the net-zero debacle of this Liberal government. Earlier today, I brought forward a piece of legislation that would bring forward concussion legislation in Ontario. There will need to be money for that from the education system in order to train coaches and parents, as well as high school teachers and others. This Liberal government wants to take money away from kids in classrooms and initiatives that are important like that in order to pad their friends and union coffers across this province. "Net zero" is the biggest buzzword this Liberal government has come up with since they were going to be from the activist centre. Remember that?

This is a government that brought in a health tax and called it a health premium. Remember that? This is a government that likes to talk about a clean environment or clean water and clean air, and they like to bring in bills that they continually say are going to bring in increased accountability in Ontario, and it never happens. They continue to promise us one thing—and shame on us, because we keep believing they're going to do things differently.

If they really want to do things differently, they will do exactly what the leader of the official opposition, Patrick Brown, wants to do, and that is to amend section 70 so we do not have public money that's repaying unions. We will ensure there is a cap on third-party advertising and that they will pay back the \$3.7 million they misused and misappropriated. That's the reason I brought forward the public accounts motion: in order to get to the bottom of what their misspending is.

This is a government you cannot trust. This is a government that has mismanaged our economy. Now this is a government that has mismanaged my daughter's education system and every other child's in this province.

With that, I want to say thanks to the official opposition leader, Patrick Brown, for putting a solid motion on the floor of this assembly, one I support wholeheartedly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: I will use most of my debate time to focus on the last part of our PC opposition day motion

introduced by our leader, Patrick Brown, which is specifically calling upon the government of Ontario to immediately introduce legislation to cap third-party election advertising.

I rose in this House on October 8 to debate Bill 96, An Act to amend the Election Finances Act, which aimed to cap third-party election advertising spending. In plain terms, the bill aimed to achieve greater electoral fairness and equity in Ontario and to follow in the footsteps of the rest of our country and on the advice of our chief electoral watchdog, Greg Essensa.

Mr. Speaker, I chose to reintroduce this bill because I believe we need to establish an open and transparent political process and to keep free speech free in Ontario. As my colleague Michael Harris, the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, said just a few minutes ago, the Liberals voted no to this.

Right now, as you have heard me say before in this House, our provincial elections are increasingly influenced by affluence and special interest groups. Ultimately, they can be determined by those with the deepest pockets, and that is special interests. Consider the money spent by special interest groups in the last election to influence voting outcomes: \$8.6 million. Mr. Speaker, almost \$9 million was how much unions, corporations and all other groups of special interests spent on partisan advertising during the 41-day writ period in 2014.

The concern that has been shared with me, and that I certainly have, is that the millions these special interest groups spent on partisan advertising creates a sense of obligation to benefactors—the political parties—who, after forming government, may be compelled to prioritize the interests of their groups, not the general electorate or the average voter.

By our estimates, as an example, it has now cost Ontario taxpayers \$3.7 million to pay off union negotiating costs, money that did not go into the classroom and did not go to support the needs of our special education students. I'll talk about this in a bit more detail later in my debate.

To me and my party, the lack of advertising spending limits and the subsequent quid pro quo represent a significant challenge to the idea of equality expressed in the principle of fairness—one person, one vote—upon which our democratic government is based. The lack of spending caps breeds electoral inequality.

As I said earlier, this is the case in Ontario only. The rest of the country has caught on to this inappropriate mix of money and politics. Voters and—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Hmm. Your own member is speaking.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Speaker.

Voters and legislators in most other parts of the country have acknowledged that the outcome of elections can be determined by the amount of money spent on the political campaign, and special interest donors have greater power to influence elections than the average voter. Their leaders took steps to block the power of

special interest money in their provinces, because they knew this was in the best interests of the average voter.

It's nothing radical. Their leaders simply imposed election spending limits, a corrective measure, and one that is also applied to individual political candidates who choose to run for public office. Again, the principle of fairness is the priority.

So what's holding back the Ontario Liberal Party from redistributing political power away from those with money? I think it's that their idea of equity is skewed and that they currently are the beneficiaries—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You're having a problem?

Mr. Michael Harris: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You will have in a minute. That's the second time. Keep smirking and it'll be more.

Mr. Bill Walker: So what's holding back the Ontario Liberal Party from redistributing political power away from those with money? I think it's that their idea of equity is skewed and that they currently are the beneficiaries of this skewed and unfair practice.

Consider this alarming pattern that has unfolded under their watch: Since taking power, the Liberal Party has presided over a 400% increase in third-party advertising in Ontario. In the 2007 election, the dollars spent were \$1.8 million; in 2011, \$6 million; and in 2014, \$8.6 million. Clearly, elections aren't getting cheaper in Ontario. In fact, because of lax rules on third-party financing, special interest group spending is out of control.

So I ask the members opposite: At whose expense do these generous payments come? Consider how this lack of accountability is impacting the great people of my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. The Bluewater District School Board has lost 49 educational assistants. It has also recently lost another 47 support staff. The cuts translate to lost services and lost opportunities for my local students and those other workers.

I challenge the education minister to correct her statement from October 22 about no cuts and no firing in the education sector. The massive job losses or firings in education under your government's watch means that Ontario's sordid student-teacher ratio will get even worse and that special needs students will continue to be sent home for part of the day because schools can't meet their needs.

Under this Liberal watch, the student-teacher ratios in special education have jumped from 22 students per teacher to 37 in southwestern Ontario. The ratios are even more unjustified in eastern Ontario, with only one teacher for every 52 special needs students. That's simply unacceptable. How do you justify spending \$3.7 million on, as your Liberal education minister summed up, buying pizzas and hotel rooms, when you have vulnerable students going without the special assistance they need and deserve? Why aren't the vulnerable students, the educational assistants and the support staff the benefactors of your party's electoral win?

1650

Penny Huettlin, the president of the Office Professionals and Technicians bargaining unit, shares this concern. She represents support staff, the people who are responsible for a number of tasks, from fundraising to safe arrival and safe departure. She says that the stress from the increased workload, due to downloading from the education ministry, with no money to cover the cost of the administration to perform all the work that goes along with the ministry initiatives, is off the charts. She says that with less and less funding, fundraising has become a full-time job for the support staff, and parents are left to fill the gaps left by this Liberal government.

I'm not sure how many more cuts and firings we will see under this education minister and Premier Wynne, although I know my colleague here from Prince Edward county certainly suffered, I think, around 134 cuts in his health care sector—

Mr. Todd Smith: It was 162.

Mr. Bill Walker: It was 162, even worse—but I do know that unless we fix election finance rules, the Liberal Party will inevitably continue to play winners and losers. The Liberals will play this scheme at the expense of the average and, especially, the most vulnerable people in Ontario.

Again, consider the facts: Unions representing our teachers have spent more than \$6.5 million to run negative election ad campaigns. They've also donated nearly \$800,000 to the Ontario Liberal Party over the past decade. Now we know that the same unions are the recipients of at least \$3.7 million from the same Liberal government for bargaining costs. It is an inappropriate mix of money and politics. It's inequitable and not right. We want to fix it.

Take ideas from Bill 96, adopt the directive long-supported by our chief electoral watchdog, Greg Essensa, and put Ontario's election laws on common ground with the rest of the country, by making sure election advertising is capped between \$150,000 and \$180,000 per election cycle for any group, to reflect the federal rules and caps in other provinces.

Stop subjecting voters' opinions to orchestrated, multi-million dollar attack campaigns from special interest groups. It's turning voters off and adding to the apathy that we see out in our ridings. We are hearing from many constituents across the province that they're unhappy with the status quo, that it's a broken system and impacting the type of candidates that will be recruited in the future.

It's time the Wynne Liberal government showed respect for the taxpayers and for the dollars taxed from them. As such, I encourage all members to help pass this motion today:

(1) to direct the Ontario Liberal Party to reimburse the Ministry of Education for the millions they spent on teacher negotiating costs;

(2) to strengthen section 70 of the Ontario Labour Relations Act to specifically prohibit any future pay-

ments to public sector unions to compensate for collective bargaining costs; and

(3) to immediately introduce legislation to cap third-party election advertising in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I just wanted to start by saying that the member from Kitchener–Conestoga referring to education workers as monkeys during the bargaining process is insulting to those who are charged with taking care of our children and our grandchildren on a daily basis. I think he should probably apologize to those in the education system.

On November 4, 2015, the Conservative Party brought forward a motion in the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. That motion called on the Auditor General—an independent, non-partisan officer of this Legislature—to review payments made to bargaining units relating to bargaining costs. Speaker, it was only 21 days ago since the PC caucus brought forward that motion. We supported this motion, and it passed in committee. The Auditor General was instructed to report her findings to the members of this Legislature in the spring of 2016.

Speaker, months ago, eight independent, non-partisan officers of this Legislature shared their concerns about the Liberal government's sell-off—their privatization of our publicly owned gem, Hydro One. The officers who signed this letter include: the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the French Language Services Commissioner, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, the Financial Accountability Officer, the Auditor General, the Environmental Commissioner, the Ombudsman and the Integrity Commissioner. They warned of a loss of oversight and that the general public would have little to no recourse, should they have concerns. It's quite clear to those of us in this Legislature and to all Ontarians that the Liberal government, the Wynne Liberals, don't value or respect the work of our independent officers.

It is also clear now that the Conservative leader and his caucus don't respect the work of our independent officers. If they did, they would wait for the report from the Auditor General, the report that they asked for when bringing the motion forward in committee on November 4.

The motion before us today is unnecessary, politically motivated and distracts from the real issue of Liberal incompetence on the education file. There's already a process in place to look at this issue. The Standing Committee on Public Accounts already passed a motion calling on the Auditor General to review payments made to bargaining units. The office of the Auditor General is qualified to do in-depth, independent audits. We have to take the politics out of this.

New Democrats respect the work of our independent officers and we'll wait for the Auditor General to report to this House in the spring of 2016 in order to make our determination.

While we wait for the AG report, the government has much to answer for when it comes to their record on

education, from the closure of good neighbourhood schools to cuts to special education. We won't be distracted from holding the government to account on these important issues that impact Ontario families.

If the PCs were serious about education, they would be using this time and the many months before today to talk about issues like school closures and the \$250 million this government has directly cut from classrooms, not to mention the firing of education workers across the province. These are the issues New Democrats have been raising in the chamber for months now. The Conservatives have chosen to sit on the sidelines until now. The motion before the House is nothing more than political grandstanding.

The budget showed that the Liberals made a \$250-million in-year cut to education over 2014-15. Internal documents show the Liberals plan to cut \$500 million more over the next three years. The Toronto District School Board is firing 215 teachers, 100 ESL educators and eight secretaries because of \$22 million in cuts. The PCs' answer? They would fire more. They did, after all, campaign on firing 100,000 public sector workers.

Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board in Peterborough is firing 118 contract teachers. I believe that's the Minister of Agriculture's riding. Where have the PCs and the Liberals been? I went to Peterborough and spoke to those teachers. PCs: nowhere to be found. Twenty-one early childhood educators cut in Windsor-Essex: The PC Party rarely, if ever, talk about the valuable work of education support staff. New Democrats acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of all workers in our education system.

Nearly 100 schools have been closed across the province since 2011, and there are more on the chopping block today. The 2015-16 grants for student needs were released in March. Overall funding is \$22.46 billion, virtually identical to 2014-15. This is the lowest annual increase of funding for schools since the Liberals came to office.

The Liberals claim a large increase based on stagnant funding offset by declining enrolment. What did the Conservatives have to say about that before now? Nothing. New Democrats have been speaking up on this issue.

The cumulative impact of the GSN funding and the new Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines will make it more financially unsustainable for boards to keep underutilized schools open, and easier for them to close these schools. The Liberals have stripped the voice of the communities when they're looking to close these schools; they've shortened the process for input. This has an incredibly negative impact on rural communities, like in the riding of Essex, where they are facing the closure of Harrow high, or Parliament Oak that was closed in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Health care cuts, hospital closures, and school closures rip the heart out of rural communities and affect their ability to grow and thrive. The Pupil Foundation Grant, which covers the cost of salaries, textbooks and class-

room supplies, will be \$36 million lower this year. Government blames this on declining enrolment, yet the needs of students have increased.

Education workers often shoulder the cost of purchasing learning supplies for classrooms. Our new Liberal Prime Minister's answer was to promise a tax credit for teachers—not all education workers, just teachers who contribute to public education by purchasing learning materials with their own money—rather than speaking in favour of this government adequately supplying all in-classroom supports. Frankly, Speaker, that's an insult, not a solution. If the provincial Liberals properly funded and managed our education system, neither teachers or other education workers would have to purchase basic learning materials and classroom supplies.

1700

Where did the Conservatives stand on this? That's a good question, Speaker. Nobody knows the answer since the Conservatives have been missing in action on the education file until recently.

Some 38 school boards will receive less funding under the Special Education Grant next year, including a \$3.5-million cut for the Toronto District School Board and a \$2.7-million cut for the Toronto Catholic District School Board. The high-needs allocation will be frozen for the next four years at \$1.05 billion. There are significant cuts for school facilities operations and renewal impacting underutilized small and rural schools. This government has a history of underfunding the renewal costs for school boards. The condition of the facilities that our children learn in is declining.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order, Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I just had a quick chance to review the opposition day motion that we're in the process of debating this afternoon, and it sounds to me like the member who's currently speaking from the NDP caucus is slightly off topic. I'm looking here, and this is a motion dealing with a specific concern that the leader of the Conservatives has. It's not, generally speaking, about Ontario's education system. Anyway, I just thought that perhaps the member could come back to the topic at hand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I thank the minister for his input. I certainly will monitor the situation. If I feel she's straying too far, she'll hear about it.

Continue.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker. Perhaps the member on the other side didn't realize that part of the motion was talking about cuts to classrooms.

Base top-up funding for under-capacity schools—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. Point of order, Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm actually looking at the entirety of the motion. As far as I can understand it here in this document, the entire text of the motion, Speaker—I hear a lot of things about the specific complaint of the

leader. I would actually encourage that member perhaps to have a quick glance at the motion. It's not that long; it's fairly straightforward. Perhaps the debate, again, can become a little bit more relevant to the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I thank the minister for his input. With all due respect to the minister, I think the member is actually talking about the opposition's motion and trying to address that. I don't think she created the motion.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: She should stick to the topic, though.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'll decide that. Thank you.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker.

Base top-up funding for under-capacity schools will be eliminated over the next three years. It is being cut by \$38 million this year, or roughly one third. I haven't heard from the PCs on this until recently.

The declining enrolment adjustment, which provides schools with a three-year transition period to align costs with lower enrolment, is being cut by half—\$33 million—and shortened to two years.

The Geographic Circumstances Grant to support small schools, rural boards and isolated communities is being cut by \$7 million—roughly 3.5%.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I would kindly ask the member to move towards the motion a little bit. She's—

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Good call, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. The member from Etobicoke North, I don't know how I make it through a day without you. Thank you very much.

Continue.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker.

The Geographic Circumstances Grant to support small schools, rural boards and isolated communities is being cut. Many of the PC caucus are from rural communities, and not until it came to bargaining costs did they decide to stand up and suddenly start talking about schools.

The wait-lists for ABA/IBI services for kids with autism has grown to more than 16,000. Thousands of children are on a wait-list for special needs assessment and/or special education supports. That's just the tip of the iceberg of the issues—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sorry, member. We have another point of order. The member from Cambridge.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you, Speaker. I've also been listening carefully to the member opposite, and I still don't see how it relates to the opposition day motion that we have in front of us. Just my comment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I thank the member for her point of order and I certainly will take it under consideration. If I feel she's drifting too far, she'll hear from me.

Continue.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker. That's just the tip of the iceberg of issues to talk about in our publicly funded education system.

Once again, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts already passed a motion asking the Auditor General to look into payments made to bargaining units. In fact, it was the PCs who asked for this study, and New Democrats supported the motion.

We expect the Auditor General to report to this Legislature in the spring of 2016, as the PC caucus had asked. New Democrats respect this process, and in doing so, we will wait to review the results of the Auditor General's work. We will not be supporting the PC caucus grand-standing and making this a political issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise today and speak to the PC Party's motion presented by the member from Simcoe North.

I would like to start today by stating a couple of simple facts. Our Liberal government has increased funding to education to \$22.5 billion since taking over government in 2003. That is an increase of 56% since 2003. Yes, I said "56%." Even during the worst economic recession since the Great Depression, we made education a funding priority.

I'm proud that our government has been able to ensure that students and teachers remained in their classrooms throughout the bargaining process. That is a very impressive accomplishment. It speaks volumes about the dedication that the negotiating team had when it came to making sure our kids stayed in the classroom.

The agreements are in line with our frameworks of net-zero bargaining. They are also in line with what voters wanted us to do when they elected us. Agreements were signed without cuts to the classroom and with an eye to ensuring we were keeping our budgets in check, and yet delivering the services that our communities badly needed. Our government achieved exactly what we set out to do—a process that focused on our children's futures.

In order to make sure that the school year was not disrupted, we implemented a successful new process that required resources. As a result, our government provided support to both teachers' unions and school boards so we could move forward with the best possible plan for our students. It's this action that kept everyone at the negotiating table and teachers in the classroom. It's not easy to do this. I covered many union actions as a reporter, and I know that bargaining can be extremely complicated and very challenging. This support kept difficult negotiations on track and kept those conversations going.

Mr. Speaker, throughout this process, no funds—I repeat, no funds—were taken out of Ontario classrooms. That's important. The cost of this successful process with unions was offset by savings that were achieved through the collective agreements.

Let's take a look at a few of these cost-saving measures. For example, our government was able to negotiate early discounted payout of retirement gratuities. Our government was also able to lower the cost of sick leave and make the delivery of professional development more efficient.

The government's priority is Ontario's teachers, students and parents. This means we are focused on avoiding labour disruptions and making sure that deals are net zero, and we've done exactly that. Ultimately, this is about making sure our children get a strong education and were in the classrooms when they were supposed to be.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear: Teachers' unions will be taking responsibility for their own costs by providing accounting in detail. They're going to have to lay out exactly what those costs were that they incurred before receiving any money. And our government is completely supportive—completely supportive—of having the Auditor General look back over the last several years into the costs involved for supporting the negotiation process, a very important process.

Our government understands the importance of education and has gone above and beyond to strengthen Ontario schools. Why? Because education is the only gift that you can give a child that can't be taken away. And why? Because education is an investment in our future. And why? Because education builds a solid foundation for our communities and our province.

In fact, we have invested \$12.9 billion in school infrastructure investments, including 725 new schools and more than 700 additions and renovations.

1710

In my riding of Halton alone, we've seen great progress in education. As you know, Halton region is the fastest-growing area in the country, and the need for student spaces is rapidly growing as well. In fact, over the last 10 years, 40 new schools have opened, are under construction or are in the planning process in my riding alone. Just this year alone, the government allocated \$7.8 million to upgrade and expand two schools in the Halton region.

The achievements and progress in my riding are just an example of just how seriously this government is devoted to improving our education system. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud that graduation levels are up across the province. In fact, the graduation rate of high school students enrolled in Halton District School Board exceeds the provincial average. The Halton board's graduation rate for students in 2014 was an impressive 88%; the average across Ontario was 84%. Education is, without a doubt, one of our top priorities, and our actions back it up.

In addition, the motion calls for capping third-party election advertising, but I'm surprised that the party opposite isn't aware that the Liberal government has already addressed this. We already have constraints surrounding third-party expenses, and this year's budget laid out a promise to strengthen the rules even further.

Our existing rules in Ontario ensure that there is both transparency and free speech in our election campaigns, and this government has pledged to go even further. Why? Because we want to ensure that we're protecting the public's interests. A fair election process is vital to protecting the democratic process.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I was born in South Africa and, as many of you know, when it came to people like myself, there was no fair, democratic process. I cannot tell you how pleased and proud I am to be a part of a government that is ensuring that we have a transparent and free and fair democratic process.

Finally, the Liberal government has nothing but praise and admiration for our hard-working teachers. Both my parents were teachers; my aunts and uncles are teachers; many of my friends and neighbours are teachers. I am proud to be a part of a government that supports teachers, and I have nothing but praise and admiration for our hard-working teachers, staff and students.

Our teachers have one of the most important and difficult jobs out there: shaping our children's future and shaping our province's future. We give them our children every day and put our trust in them, and we have to treat them with respect and ensure that they are allowed to get their work done in the course of the classroom. I am proud of our government's record on education and I look forward as we continue to turn out and graduate the best and brightest students who will ensure Ontario's future is a strong and successful one.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to have spoken to this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Second call, further debate? Last call, further debate? The Minister of Transportation: just under the wire.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Well, Speaker, at the end of the day, it's always an honour for me to have the chance to speak with respect to this motion. I've had the pleasure, as you know, because I stood on a couple of points of order here this afternoon with respect to some of the fiction that's being spun by the members of both the Conservative and New Democratic caucuses on this particular motion. There is a lot that I'd like to cover off this afternoon, so I'm going to do my best to get through it with the time that I have remaining.

Speaking directly to the motion itself being brought forward by the member from Simcoe North, who also serves as the leader of the Conservative caucus: I find it fascinating to have witnessed first-hand, literally since the very day the leader of this party arrived in this Legislature, his repeated, day-after-day, attempts to essentially—at a philosophical level, completely and in a very dramatic way—reverse himself with respect to what has essentially been at the foundation of his entire political career. We know, Speaker, of course, that he served—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, with all due respect, Minister, speaking to the motion and personal attacks are—I think that in the future, you'll

stick more to the motion, rather than running down the leader. Thank you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Of course, Speaker. I do find it fascinating that to get you to rule on them, I had to stand and make a point of order, but you—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I believe the minister is trying to attempt, in his own way, to challenge the Chair, and I would suggest he doesn't go down that road because the result will be very painful.

Continue.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: So as I was speaking to the motion brought forward by the leader of that party, about the leader of that party: As I read the motion, it's explicitly presented by MPP Patrick Brown of Simcoe North, as I referenced in my opening comments. If you look at the philosophy that underpins this particular motion, which is rife with political discussion—and listening to members from that caucus speak this afternoon, they did their level best to try and draw a very clear connection between political activity, the history of political activity and this particular motion. To that point, which of course was cutting through every single comment that I heard from the Conservatives this afternoon, I simply wanted to point out that I find it remarkable to have witnessed, not only in this motion itself but in the entirety of everything we have heard that leader bring forward since he arrived in this Legislature, effectively a philosophical 180-degree turn—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): With all due respect, Minister, we're not talking about the entirety of his whole presence in this Legislature. We're talking about his motion. Once again, you tried to slip one by me. Please don't do that.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Okay, Speaker. I see how it is this afternoon; no problem.

So as I was saying, the leader of that party has brought forward a motion, and member after member after member in that caucus—it's explicitly mentioned in the leader's motion this afternoon that he suggests that an action or an activity undertaken by this government should somehow be dealt with via the Ontario Liberal Party, if I understand that correctly. I just want to make sure I had that correct, because I don't want to run afoul again of the Chair: that the Ontario Liberal Party "immediately pay the Ministry of Education," and it goes on from there. So I've now quoted directly from leader Patrick Brown's motion this afternoon.

I find that fascinating, because it, at a philosophical level, sets down a notion or a principle that when activity occurs, when decisions are made within government, that political parties should step into the process or into the procedure and, in some way, shape or form, deal with the matter at hand.

Of course, because in Ontario's history all three parties have had the opportunity to form government, it would be important to remind members on all three sides that decisions are made in government on a weekly basis, on a daily basis and on a monthly basis, for which sometimes there is broad consensus within society here

in Ontario and sometimes there is not broad consensus. Sometimes governments make decisions that have very little support, so I would only say on this specific point that I would encourage the members of the Conservative caucus, and I would encourage and advise the leader who has brought forward this motion to be careful about the suggestions that are being made.

He doesn't suggest in this motion, of course, that there be any kind of limitations, I guess I'll call it, on that principle, on the notion that when there might not be broad consensus or there may be broad consensus on a government decision, there might not necessarily be any limitations of time or scope or amount with respect to what a political party should do to, in their view—I'll use this in quotes, Speaker—"rectify a situation for which they disagree." Because, of course, that party would certainly know that in their own time, within the realm that I am technically responsible for as Minister of Transportation, when they had the opportunity and the privilege of serving as government, there were decisions that they might have made as government that would not necessarily have had broad consensus and that may to this very day continue to cost the treasury and the taxpayers significant monies in terms of forgone revenues.

At no point in time did any single member of that caucus, in all of the debate this afternoon—not even the man who is responsible for their financial understanding, the member for Nipissing, who is over there and who I know is doing his level best to try and interrupt me this afternoon, and who talks frequently about his Focus on Finance or, as we like to call it, the fiction on finance—it's interesting to me that nobody on that side has said, consistent with what's embedded very explicitly in this motion by the leader of that party, that for example, the Ontario Conservative Party should pony up the roughly \$11 billion to buy back the 407 ETR. Again, I have stood in this place in the past and I have suggested that that was a decision that that government of that day in 1998-99 made that I believe was a mistake, but never at any point in time that I can recall, at least in the form of debate, have I ever suggested that the Ontario PC Party, through the donations it receives from its supporters, or from its rank-and-file members via their membership fees, should somehow find a way to effectively crowdfund, I suppose, to raise \$11 billion to buy back that crucial infrastructure asset for the people of Ontario.

1720

Going on from there, there are plenty of other examples. I'll borrow another one really quickly—because, of course, I am the Minister of Transportation. Never once have I heard any member on that side of the Legislature say that back in—for 99 years, lease for 99 years, ironclad lease—

Interjection.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: The member from Thornhill is actually now heckling to defend the sale of the 407 ETR—and place that in a 99-year—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'll stop the clock for you. You're drifting a bit again. As you

complained about them doing it, you are now moving to the 407. I'm not quite sure that has anything to do with this motion.

Back to the motion. Thank you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Absolutely, Speaker.

Again, so I can make this explicitly clear for the members from Thornhill and Nipissing and the rest of my friends on that side: This motion explicitly says that when governments make decisions and there is somehow a disagreement or there is a lacking of consensus around the decisions that are made, allegedly, perhaps, political parties—not just the Ontario Liberal Party; I'm talking about the foundational principle or the philosophy that's at the heart of the motion from the leader of the Conservative Party—should step in to deal with what others might feel were decisions that they don't agree with, for which, again, there wasn't necessarily consensus.

I already mentioned the 407. I won't go back there again, Speaker, obviously. To be very clear, there are other decisions that all caucuses, when they've served in government, have made, for which people out there who watch this, the people we represent, might say, "Hey, I didn't necessarily agree"—for example, people in my community. I know that back in the mid-1990s, when that party decided to cancel the Eglinton subway project and spend millions of dollars to fill in the tunnels that had been created to build that subway—and now, a decade and a half later, we come back, and we're spending \$9.1 billion to build the Eglinton Crosstown LRT. I've heard nobody on that side say—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sit down, please. Sit down, please. You're still talking as you're sitting.

Number two, you have now gone on to a subway. That's not part of the motion. So for one who does not like other ones doing it, you're sure drifting from your example. Thank you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, am I allowed to ask for a point of order while I'm up speaking on debate?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Don't ask for it.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Oh, I see. So the unparliamentary language emanating from the member from Nipissing is not something that I can call him out on—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): With all due respect to the minister, the minister will sit down when I stand. I stand; you sit.

And do you know what? I'm glad you brought that up, because if you weren't disrupting my train of thought all the time, I might have caught that.

Continue.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I apologize. I didn't realize that providing debate in my job as the MPP for Vaughan was distracting to the Speaker.

As I was saying, Speaker, I think of the education realm, which, of course, this particular motion does touch on fairly directly. I can think of a period of time in this province when a caucus that is led by the member from Simcoe—I can think of a time when, again, education

budgets were literally slashed to the tune of millions and millions and millions of dollars.

When I worked in this building as a staffer many years ago—I think everyone here in the province can remember the hundreds and in some cases thousands of people on the front lawn of this building protesting those decisions made by the government of that day when the Conservatives were in power, and yet again, as hundreds of millions were cut from core public services, including education and including health care. No one in that caucus, in debate this afternoon, has said, "When we did things, as government, that perhaps there wasn't broad consensus for, did we ever contemplate that we would somehow cross over between the decisions that are made in government and what happens with how parties spend their money?"

I said this at the outset: The leader of the Conservative caucus, I think—I'm trying to give friendly advice—and all of his members in that caucus should think very carefully before they come forward with motions like the one that we're looking at today.

Again, to the point that was raised by the member of the NDP with respect to, broadly speaking, what we're looking at—and the member from Halton also spoke to this this afternoon and spoke very eloquently, as she always does—we are a government that has moved forward very aggressively in the area of education and in a variety of other areas to make sure that we continue to provide the investments that are required to build a modern, strong and prosperous province.

I think it's unfortunate when I look down at this motion and I hear that members of that party, the Conservative Party, who literally brought Ontario's education system to its knees prior to 2003, are suggesting that they have a proposal that would somehow strengthen or augment what we have done since 2003 to build what is recognized as the world's strongest public education system.

I think of my own community as it relates to the education system. In the last three years, I have been privileged in some cases to stand alongside our current Minister of Education, and in other cases I've had the chance to do it on my own. At this point, if I'm not mistaken, since 2012, in three years, there have been four or five new schools approved for my community of Vaughan in York region, which I'll admit is a fast-growing part of the province, as I know Halton is, and a number of other communities as well: Ottawa-Orléans and others. There have been tens of millions of dollars to construct new elementary and secondary schools, both in the public system and in the Catholic system in my community.

That's why I find it fascinating when that member from Simcoe, who represents the Conservative Party, puts forward a motion, surrounded by his caucus, a caucus or at least a party that, again, came very close—in fact, they had a former Minister of Education, Mr. Snobelen, who believed that his mandate was to wreak

havoc and create chaos in Ontario, a crisis in Ontario's public education system.

With the minute or so I have left on the clock, I would only say this, again trying to be collegial, trying to be helpful, trying to think of all that that leader is attempting to accomplish with, I think, a very misguided motion here this afternoon. I guess I would finish up by saying that the people of Ontario—and I know that in debate, that leader has actually said, “Well, jeez, you're talking about a time when I wasn't the leader of the party. I wasn't a politician; I was actually still in high school.” If he was in high school during that era, surely he would understand as profoundly as the thousands and thousands and thousands of others who were in elementary and secondary school during that reign of terror—surely he would recognize exactly how dangerous that approach and that philosophy were to public education.

In the interests of being collegial, I would recommend that all members in this House, including his own colleagues, vote against what is a fundamentally misguided motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Brown has moved opposition day number 5. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some—the noes have it. Oh, sorry. Please say “yea” if you're in favour and “nay” if you're not.

The nays have it.

Call in the members: a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1728 to 1738.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Order. Members take your seats. Are we ready to go? Good.

Mr. Brown has moved opposition day number 5. All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and the Clerk will record the names of the members.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Barrett, Toby	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Brown, Patrick	MacLeod, Lisa	Thompson, Lisa M.
Clark, Steve	Martow, Gila	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McDonnell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	McNaughton, Monte	Yakabuski, John
Harris, Michael	Miller, Norm	Yurek, Jeff

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): All those opposed to the motion will please rise. The Clerk will record the names.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Fife, Catherine	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Meilleur, Madeleine
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Baker, Yvan	Gates, Wayne	Moridi, Reza
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Ballard, Chris	Gretzky, Lisa	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoggarth, Ann	Natyshak, Taras
Bisson, Gilles	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Potts, Arthur
Campbell, Sarah	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Chiarelli, Bob	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sandals, Liz

Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor

Singh, Jagmeet
Taylor, Monique
Thibeault, Glenn
Vanhof, John
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 24; the nays are 59.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I would ask: Are we ready for the late show? The participants are ready for the late show? Yes? No? All right.

Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

ENERGY POLICIES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member for Huron–Bruce has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given today by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter and the minister's parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's unfortunate that we have to return this evening to address a question that was asked this morning. Both the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and the Premier could have easily answered the biggest question that Ontarians have regarding cap-and-trade. At their press conference—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. Could we please evacuate? We have a late show here. We have a late show and I'm getting a sideshow. A little quiet in the chamber would be appreciated for the member for Huron–Bruce.

Continue.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, as I was saying today, it's unfortunate that we had to come back this evening to try and pry an answer out of the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, and even the Premier, because they could have easily addressed the biggest question that everyone has on their mind with regard to cap-and-trade, but they avoided it yesterday at their announcement about nothing and they avoided it again today during question period.

One has to wonder whether their rush to have their photo taken was founded in a fear of being relegated to page 2 by their Albertan counterparts. After a disappointing news day from the Liberal government yesterday, a number of people and reporters took to social media to express their frustrations over the lack of an-

swers regarding the cap-and-trade scheme this Liberal government is bringing to Ontario.

I'd like to quote some of those comments, if you will, from Twitter. Essentially, one person said, "Basically, today's climate change strategy announces that government will in future make some actual announcements on climate policy." And, again, another quote: "Wynne says we are not getting 'chapter and verse' or 'final design' of cap and trade. 'Those are under way.'" And another: "@Kathleen_Wynne stresses this is just 'a framework,' so details still to come (starting in 2016)." Yet another: "What we are announcing today is not final design of cap-and-trade system."

And the last one that I wanted to touch on: "'Without dealing w climate change, we don't have an economy to grow,' Wynne says at presser that's high on rhetoric, low on details."

Well, Mr. Speaker, how on earth are Ontario families and Ontario businesses to react to the rhetoric? How are they to build business plans? How are they to plan for the future when we don't even have the details? This government has been pressed on its plan and we're told, "Just wait; we've got it coming down the pipeline in 2016. You know what? Just trust us."

Quite frankly, over and over and over again, we get a lack of details, and people just don't trust this government any longer. For goodness' sake, with Bill 144, the gist to that particular piece of legislation, which they've time-allocated and are stuffing down our throats, is the fact they want to remove more and more decision-making away from this democratic forum and behind closed doors, by way of making regulation. That scares people. It scares businesses.

I can tell you that, yesterday, when we were talking to a stakeholder, particularly about Bill 144, they literally cringed and shook their heads. They can't believe that this government is so in it for themselves. But that's where it lies, Speaker.

Unfortunately, this government doesn't think about Ontarians. This government is thinking about themselves: how to cover up their mismanagement, how to cover up their misspending and how to cover—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member for Huron—Bruce, withdraw that word.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Continue.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I will say this: The government is working hard to make sure that people completely don't get all the details in terms of how they're managing this House in Ontario in 2015. It's absolutely shameful, because the reality is, when it comes to cap-and-trade, I think it's safe to say that everybody in this House understands that we all want to protect our environment and the importance behind that, but it's the tools, it's the facilitation, it's the process that are enacted that actually confuse people, frustrate people and lead everyone to feel very strongly that this government, as I said, is only in it for themselves.

It's interesting because we've been hearing now, for almost a year, that cap-and-trade will be coming but, sadly, the very basic of elements have been missing. When we ask about what it is going to cost, they shrug their shoulders, and the minister actually earlier today said, "I don't want to talk about that. I want to talk about the costs of other things." That is shameful because, if people are to react and plan accordingly and budget accordingly, they deserve to have the details.

So this is where we worry because, time and again, we've seen ill-conceived notions come to the fore, through regulations and through mismanagement, and cap-and-trade is actually going to be another fiasco that this government is introducing to Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The parliamentary assistant for environment and climate change and the member from Sudbury.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to be able to rise and to address many of the points that the honourable member from the opposite side mentioned. Some of the things that we didn't hear about is that climate change is not a distant threat and action needs to be taken on it now. The international community is in agreement on that.

I know the member opposite stated this morning and just recently that it's about the cost. So, in reality, it's about protecting the air that we breathe, the water that we drink and the health of our children and our grandchildren.

The truth is that climate change is already costing the people of Ontario. It has devastated communities, it has damaged homes, businesses and crops, and it has increased insurance rates. So the cost to society of not acting on climate change has been shown, in many studies, to exceed the cost of taking action. That's why Ontario has already taken strong action on climate change.

Last year, Ontario closed its last coal-fired power plant. Closing coal represents the largest greenhouse gas reduction initiative in North America, equal to taking seven million vehicles—let me repeat that again—seven million vehicles off our roads.

Yesterday, Ontario took the next step in the fight against climate change by releasing the province's climate change strategy. Now, I know the honourable member talked about cap-and-trade. Cap-and-trade is one tool in the toolbox. We have a strategy that we are bringing forward to address climate change. This strategy lays out our government's vision for securing a healthy, clean and prosperous low-carbon future by transforming the way we live, move, work and adapt to our environment. It outlines a broad vision for Ontario that will achieve its GHG emissions target of 80% below 1990 levels by 2050 while building a prosperous, low-carbon economy.

Yesterday, what was announced: Ontario's climate change strategy outlines the steps the government will take. For example, I'll just name two: developing a coordinated approach to reduce emissions from new and

existing buildings, and reducing emissions from transportation by promoting the uptake of zero-emission and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

I'm pleased with the direction our government is taking in this strategy. I know it will also support Ontario's proposed cap-and-trade program. Last April, the Premier and the minister announced that Ontario would begin to work by consulting on a proposed cap-and-trade system. Those consultations are ongoing with the business community, environmental groups and First Nations.

For example, I continue to work with the mining association. As we know, Sudbury, as I like to say, is the nickel capital of the world, and it's paramount for us to ensure that we work with our mining communities to get this right. The mining companies know that as well. Last week, we posted a consultation document to the Environmental Registry for public input.

So let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. This is a consultation document and not an indication that Ontario has finalized the design of its cap-and-trade system. We know that a cap-and-trade system is the most effective way to reduce

emissions while building up the economy. This is because cap-and-trade allows the market to decide where emissions can be reduced with the least cost while still helping us reach our overall emission reduction targets.

We also understand that costs such as electricity prices are a key concern for many Ontarians, and so we are designing a cap-and-trade system that will not increase the average electricity bill. The proposed cap-and-trade system will help Ontario meet its emission target reductions, reward innovative companies and ensure that households and businesses thrive as the province transitions to a low-carbon economy.

In conclusion, I will end by saying that as the world turns its attention to the United Nations Conference of the Parties in Paris, Ontario is in a very strong standing internationally and is seen as an innovative leader in the fight against climate change.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. There being no further matters to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1753.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	York–Simcoe Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB) Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Halton Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP) Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Essex Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC) Potts, Arthur (LIB) Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB) Sattler, Peggy (NDP) Scott, Laurie (PC)	Perth–Wellington Beaches–East York Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord Northumberland–Quinte West Guelph London West / London-Ouest Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP) Smith, Todd (PC) Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB) Taylor, Monique (NDP) Thibeault, Glenn (LIB) Thompson, Lisa M. (PC) Vanthof, John (NDP) Vernile, Daiene (LIB) Walker, Bill (PC) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton Prince Edward–Hastings Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale Hamilton Mountain Sudbury Huron–Bruce Timiskaming–Cochrane Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Simcoe–Grey	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC) Yurek, Jeff (PC) Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) Vacant	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke Elgin–Middlesex–London Willowdale Whitby–Oshawa	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Jim McDonell, Eleanor McMahon
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Laurie Scott
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jack MacLaren
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Steve Clark
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French
Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat
Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Norm Miller
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
Glenn Thibeault
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment /
Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère
sexuel**

Chair / Présidente: Daiene Vernile
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Han Dong, Sylvia Jones
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Continued from back cover

Labour disputes

Mr. Victor Fedeli..... 6693
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn..... 6693

First responders

Ms. Cheri DiNovo..... 6694
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne..... 6694
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn..... 6694

Energy storage

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris..... 6695
Hon. Bob Chiarelli..... 6695

Long-term care

Ms. Laurie Scott..... 6695
Hon. Dipika Damerla..... 6695

Collective bargaining

Ms. Cindy Forster..... 6696
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn..... 6696

Family dispute resolution

Mr. Bas Balkissoon..... 6696
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur..... 6696

Hospital funding

Mr. Todd Smith..... 6697
Hon. Eric Hoskins..... 6697

Notice of dissatisfaction

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)..... 6698

Visitors

Ms. Peggy Sattler..... 6698
Hon. David Oraziotti..... 6698
Mr. Jim Wilson..... 6698

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Ms. Lisa MacLeod..... 6698
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry..... 6698

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

MedviewMD

Mr. Victor Fedeli..... 6698

Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services

Mr. Michael Mantha..... 6698

Durham Foods

Mr. Granville Anderson..... 6699

Privatization of public assets

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson..... 6699

Bicycling infrastructure

Mr. Jagmeet Singh..... 6699

Domestic violence

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry..... 6699

Insurance Bureau of Canada

Mr. Bill Walker..... 6700

St. Mary's Polish Roman Catholic Church

Mrs. Cristina Martins..... 6700

Peel lunch and after-school program

Mrs. Amrit Mangat..... 6700

Visitors

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls)..... 6701
Mr. Gilles Bisson..... 6701

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /
RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS**

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private
Bills**

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris..... 6701
Report adopted..... 6701

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

**Rowan's Law Advisory Committee Act, 2015, Bill
149, Ms. MacLeod, Ms. Fife, Mr. Fraser / Loi de
2015 sur le comité consultatif de la Loi Rowan,
projet de loi 149, Mme MacLeod, Mme Fife, M.
Fraser**

First reading agreed to..... 6701
Ms. Lisa MacLeod..... 6701

**Energy Referendum Act, 2015, Bill 150,
Mr. Yakabuski / Loi de 2015 sur les référendums
en matière d'énergie, projet de loi 150,
M. Yakabuski**

First reading agreed to..... 6702
Mr. John Yakabuski..... 6702

MOTIONS

Private members' public business

Hon. Yasir Naqvi..... 6702
Motion agreed to..... 6702

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

**Family Dispute Resolution Week / Semaine du
règlement des différends familiaux**

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur..... 6702

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women	
Hon. Helena Jaczek.....	6703
Woman Abuse Prevention Month / Mois de la prévention de la violence faite aux femmes	
Hon. Tracy MacCharles.....	6703
Family Dispute Resolution Week	
Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	6704
International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women / Woman Abuse Prevention Month	
Ms. Laurie Scott.....	6704
International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women	
Ms. Peggy Sattler.....	6705
Family Dispute Resolution Week	
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	6705

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Labour dispute	
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	6706
Concussion	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	6706
Water fluoridation	
Mr. Bob Delaney.....	6706
Renewable energy	
Ms. Laurie Scott.....	6707
Mental health and addiction services	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	6707
Speed limits	
Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde.....	6707
Ehlers-Danlos syndrome	
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	6707

Hospital funding	
Ms. Sarah Campbell.....	6708
GO Transit	
Mr. Granville Anderson.....	6708
Health care funding	
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	6708
Privatization of public assets	
Mr. Wayne Gates.....	6708
Protection de l'environnement	
M. Shafiq Qaadri.....	6708
Hydro rates	
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	6709

OPPOSITION DAY / JOUR DE L'OPPOSITION

Teachers' collective bargaining	
Mr. Patrick Brown.....	6709
Hon. Liz Sandals.....	6710
Mr. Michael Harris.....	6712
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	6713
Mr. Bill Walker.....	6714
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky.....	6716
Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris.....	6718
Hon. Steven Del Duca.....	6719
Motion negatived.....	6722

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE / DÉBAT SUR LA MOTION D'AJOURNEMENT

Energy policies	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson.....	6722
Mr. Glenn Thibeault.....	6723

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 25 November 2015 / Mercredi 25 novembre 2015

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Time allocation

Hon. James J. Bradley	6675
Mr. Victor Fedeli	6677
Ms. Catherine Fife	6678
Mr. John Yakabuski	6680
Ms. Peggy Sattler	6682
Debate deemed adjourned	6684

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Bill Walker	6685
Mr. Gilles Bisson	6685
Hon. Helena Jaczek	6685
Mr. Randy Hillier	6685
Ms. Catherine Fife	6685
Hon. Bill Mauro	6685
Mr. Rick Nicholls	6685
Mr. Percy Hatfield	6685
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	6685
Mr. Patrick Brown	6685
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	6685
Hon. James J. Bradley	6685
Mr. Monte McNaughton	6685
Ms. Jennifer K. French	6685
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	6685
Mr. Jeff Yurek	6685
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky	6685
Mr. Granville Anderson	6685
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	6685
Ms. Sarah Campbell	6685
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	6686
Ms. Laurie Scott	6686
Mr. Wayne Gates	6686
Hon. Reza Moridi	6686
Ms. Sylvia Jones	6686
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	6686
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry	6686
Mr. Ernie Hardeman	6686
Ms. Cindy Forster	6686
Hon. Deborah Matthews	6686
Mr. Steve Clark	6686
Ms. Ann Hoggarth	6686
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	6686

Ms. Sophie Kiwala	6686
Mme Marie-France Lalonde	6686
Ms. Peggy Sattler	6686
Hon. Charles Sousa	6686
Hon. Mitzie Hunter	6686
Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris	6687
Mr. Lou Rinaldi	6687
Hon. Michael Gravelle	6687
Mr. Arthur Potts	6687
Mr. Jim Wilson	6687
Mr. Victor Fedeli	6687
Mr. Mike Colle	6687
Mr. Michael Harris	6687
Ms. Eleanor McMahon	6687
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	6687

Wearing of scarves

Hon. Helena Jaczek	6687
--------------------------	------

Wearing of ribbons

Hon. Tracy MacCharles	6687
-----------------------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

First responders

Mr. Patrick Brown	6687
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	6687

Teachers' collective bargaining

Mr. Patrick Brown	6688
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	6688

Climate change

Ms. Andrea Horwath	6689
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	6689

Climate change

Ms. Andrea Horwath	6690
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	6690
Hon. Glen R. Murray	6691

Energy policies

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	6691
Hon. Glen R. Murray	6691

Climate change

Mr. Peter Tabuns	6692
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	6692
Hon. Glen R. Murray	6692

First responders

Mr. John Fraser	6693
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	6693

Continued on inside back cover