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**Wednesday 23 March 2016**

**Mercredi 23 mars 2016**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 23 March 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 23 mars 2016

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 22, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 178, An Act to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Projet de loi 178, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.

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

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I am proud to stand today and have the leadoff for Bill 178, An Act to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, as we begin second reading of this bill. I'm sure we'll hear quite a bit of good discussion going forward and take this bill to committee, and have quite a few deputations so that we can come out with a bill that's suitable for the people of Ontario.

**Interjection:** Good morning.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Good morning to you.

In preparing for this bill, I've really noticed how much we've changed over the last 20 years with regard to smoking. I remember back in the late 1970s, I was eight or nine years old, and on Sundays I would go to my father's pharmacy and do odd jobs just to hang out with my dad, listen to the baseball game and learn about the business. One of the tasks he gave me was taking the great big ashtray, near where people dropped off the prescriptions, and cleaning it. It was chock full of butts from people. It was amazing at the time: You're in a pharmacy, a health facility, giving medication to people to make them healthy, and you're allowed to smoke while you're waiting for your prescription.

That's something that's burned in my memory, because I really can't stand smoking. It doesn't sit right with me. It really irritates my sinuses. The fact that it was 30-some-odd years ago—and the pages never lived through this; you missed that, I guess, if that's excitement for you. But 30-some years ago you were allowed to smoke inside buildings, and waiting for your doctor, you'd have a cigarette.

It's really interesting: My family doctor smokes. I do remember going to his building, and he and his staff would be smoking in the side room before they came to see you. He would just stink of smoke when he would come and check my blood pressure and stuff.

Another aspect I remember is, in the 1990s I went to Poland; we had a family trip to Poland. I flew LOT Airlines, which was the Polish airline. You had to request a smoking or non-smoking seat in an airplane. So at the back of the plane you were allowed to smoke; in the front of the plane, you were fine. I just find it really interesting that we didn't think the second-hand smoke would just drift to the front of the plane anyway. When you have a lot of nervous flyers, they smoke an awful lot to help maintain their nerve. It was a terrible flight: nine hours there, with people smoking in the plane, and nine hours coming home.

The other thing that the pages won't ever get to experience, thankfully, I remember in my twenties going to the bars at night.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** What?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Yes, I did that in my twenties. I kind of cut back after I got married, but in my twenties I'd go to the bars.

In the morning, you'd wake up and you would just stink of smoke. It was unbelievable. People smoked all the time in the bars. You didn't realize, at the time, the amount of second-hand smoke you were probably inhaling continually. You'd feel bad for the people who had to work there and put up with it every day; I only had to put up with it on Saturday nights.

We've seen a lot of changes through the years with regard to cutting down on smoking in the system, and ensuring that the people who are smoking are in certain areas that aren't affecting non-smokers and that they're not causing any ill effects. Thank goodness they're not smoking in pharmacies anymore. It was a terrible job cleaning out ashtrays, and it's terrible for the profession.

I know a pharmacist in London, Jim Semchism. He owns a family pharmacy. His dad owned a pharmacy, and he's got brothers and sisters who are pharmacists throughout the London area. Much like my family's in St. Thomas, his is the same in London. He led the charge to remove tobacco from pharmacies in Ontario. He took a lot of flak for it, but, at the end of the day, I think it was a good message to send to people that pharmacies are a place of health and not a place to be purchasing tobacco products. So I'm grateful.

The other thing you'll probably see if you go to the States now—I mentioned the pages—is that in restaurants

you'll get asked, "Smoking or non-smoking?" If you stay in Canada long enough, you forget that, and you're kind of shocked when you walk in and go, "Jeez, we've got to figure out if it's smoking or non-smoking."

I'm also happy that other changes were made here. I brought forth a bill, Ryan's Law—it will be a year this May that it passed—which allowed students to carry their inhalers in schools. It has nothing to do with smoking, but it has something to do with lung health. I'm proud that it has been implemented through the school system, and I know that schools were quick to act on it and allow their students to carry their puffers.

I'm glad we're here to speak about Bill 178. I think this bill is here because something was missed in Bill 45—it should have been included. I know there was a little bit of a rush when Bill 45 came out and this was missed; it's something that could have been added. I guess my one offer of advice for the government is that when they do have to add something they missed in another bill, maybe they could take a look at other bills that are sitting, waiting to be debated, and incorporate them into the bill so we have a meatier bill, something where we can utilize our time. There are a number of bills that they could incorporate into the healthy smoking bill to kind of take care of the backlog of private members' business and also ensure that we get passage of the bill and utilize our time here.

I will make mention of Bill 41, the Lung Health Act. It's by the MPP from Cambridge. She has brought forth this bill, and we've had petitions in the House on numerous days asking the government to bring it forward and debate it. This is a bill that probably could have been included in this smoke-free act. It would create a lung health advisory council, and the purpose of the council would be to make recommendations to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care about lung health issues. When you're discussing the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, why not discuss lung health as a whole?

The council that would be created would include an employee from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, a member of the Ontario Lung Association—which I admit has been very supportive of lung health measures in this chamber, and was quite supportive of Ryan's Law and continues to be—and there would also be members of this council who are interested concerning lung health. The Ontario Health Quality Council would be responsible for providing an annual report card, tabled in the Legislature, with respect to the minister's performance in undertaking the recommendations of this council. Finally, the minister, with the consideration of this council and a report from the Ontario Health Quality Council, would develop and implement an Ontario lung health action plan to target research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease.

That bill is currently in the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills, which is a committee I sit on. We have yet to hear any deputations in taking that bill forward, and we would like to see this bill go forward.

#### 0910

We understand how important lung health is, and this was an opportunity to include this bill. The government has done it before. The member from Sarnia-Lambton, Bob Bailey—his bill on the tax credit for farmers to give to food banks was incorporated in a government bill that they brought forward, and it took Bob's bill out of the private members' backlog. It was passed. Bob was showing me a great email he received that food donations are way up from farmers because this tax credit is available, and it's providing people who need to use food banks access to fresh produce and meat. That was a plus-plus, and it was something that was worked on.

So that was my one aspect to the government that was making up for rushing through a bill and having to bring this out. Maybe the next time they can incorporate some of the private members' bills that are in the backlog. Another one that they have from the member from Etobicoke North is his bill on radon, the radon awareness bill. That's been repeated over and over and over. It would have been an opportunity to bring that bill inclusive into it.

I think it's very, very interesting that we are having this discussion to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. We're having to deal with this bill because it was missed in Bill 45, this aspect of it. Unfortunately—which we've totally done numerous times, especially at committees—when you rush a bill, you run into problems and you have unintended consequences due to the nature of having to expedite a bill.

Basically, this bill came forth and had to be put forward because back in November, the government was announcing one day that medical marijuana could be smoked wherever they pleased, and then 24 hours later, with the backlash of the public, they decided they needed to take a second look at this. If the proper consultations were done previously into drafting Bill 45, we probably could have avoided that whole situation, avoided this bill being here, and we could have been either not discussing this bill and discussing something else that the people of the province want, or they could have brought this bill forward and, again, as I mentioned earlier, included some of the private member bills that have been waiting and waiting to be incorporated and put through this Legislature.

Basically, this bill will prohibit the use of prescribed products and substances anywhere where tobacco is currently prohibited. It targets combustible materials. That's not including e-cigarettes or vape products. That part was done in Bill 45, and the government is currently doing consultation on the regulations in Bill 45 with regard to vaping. I seriously hope they're listening to the owners of vape businesses and trying to work with them to ensure that they don't legislate this group out of business. I'd hate to see people having to purchase their vape products online from a vendor—who knows where the product is coming from?—or if they try to mechanically fix their vape product on their own, the chances of the device possibly exploding or other things. I think these people that

run the vape products are trained to make sure that the product is operating properly, and I hope the government continues to work with this group as they develop the regulations.

This bill amends other things as well. Section 10 of the original bill will be repealed. Section 10 states that a person who owns or occupies a place where the smoking of tobacco is prohibited must ensure that signs referring to the prohibition are posted in accordance with the regulations. They've reworded section 10 to expand this obligation to include signs referring to enforce the prohibition and specify how an element of the offence can be proved in a prosecution.

Subsection 14(2) of the bill is amended to specify that inspectors can enter places where the smoking of a prescribed product or substance is prohibited for the purpose of assessing compliance with the prohibition. Clauses 14(8)(f) and (g) of the original Smoke-Free Ontario Act are amended to specify that inspectors can issue compliance directives to employers and proprietors who fail to comply with their obligations under section 12.1.

Section 15 of the original bill is amended to provide that each person who violates the no-smoking restrictions or the employer-proprietor obligations in section 12.1 is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a maximum fine ranging from \$250 to \$5,000 for individuals and between \$100,000 and \$300,000 for corporations.

Subsection 19(1) of the old bill is amended to authorize the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make certain regulations respecting prescribed products or substances, including regulations which specify how an offence for smoking a prescribed product or substance in a prohibited place can be proved in a prosecution.

It's a lot of words spoken, but basically it's taking anything that is combustible and inhaled and ensuring that they follow the rules of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act much like they do with cigarettes. So whatever is coming down the line that enters into the marketplace can be dealt with at that time as opposed to having bill upon bill continually coming back, dealing with the same issue.

This bill is also dealing with the medical marijuana usage that this government originally allowed in November and then turned around and changed their minds on because of the backlash and actually had a second to think about the issue. They stated that the exemption would include everything from movie theatres to restaurants, offices, stadiums, playgrounds and even here in the Ontario Legislature. They noted that employers, restaurant owners and other business owners could overrule these exemptions and cease medical marijuana use within these organizations. Business owners could also voice and demand some sort of verification if they're allowing the smoking of medical marijuana on their properties. They tried to sneak that exemption through, since it only affected a limited amount of Ontarians. But reading the literature, there are about 23,000 Canadians who have prescriptions for medical marijuana, and even though the ministry claimed to have consulted prior to allowing this regulation, they had to consult again. Four months later,

we have this new legislation, and it's going to prohibit it in certain places where tobacco is prohibited.

I think it's a great idea. As I mentioned earlier about second-hand smoke from tobacco, I'm glad it's moved far away. People have the right to smoke, and I agree with "You can do what you wish." It's not always good behaviour, but sometimes people use tobacco not only for enjoyment but also as medicinal to settle their nerves. I know of quite a few of my customers at my pharmacy who need to smoke. It helps relax them. Smoking also is important when you are quitting and you are on different types of medications, so always check with your pharmacy as you're cutting back. Tobacco smoking can affect the metabolism of certain medications—not a lot of them, but certain ones—and if you decrease the amount you're smoking, your metabolism is going to change and you might actually get an increase of the medication in your system. So if you are quitting smoking, which is a great idea, it would always link in with your pharmacist; there's one at every corner of every street in this province, I believe. Work out a plan with them to ensure that your medications are adjusted and to also give you support as you decide to quit smoking.

So back to the medical marijuana part of the issue, Mr. Speaker. Due to the second-hand smoke, I think it's not in the public's interest to have medical marijuana smoked wherever you please. I think there's a time and a place to take your medication, and that's what medical marijuana is: It's a medication. It's not something for pleasure; it's something you're needing to take to deal with a condition, the disease you may have. As such, as with any medication, there are side effects, and second-hand smoke from medical marijuana may not be beneficial for those others around you in the public.

#### 0920

I think allowing them certain areas, which this bill will allow for them, to partake in their medication is better. I would imagine the majority of medical marijuana users would stay at home anyhow due to their condition. They could schedule their lives around taking their medication, much like other medication forms where people are scheduled taking their medication, ensuring that they're not smoking in movie theatres or restaurants or wherever. It's imperative that the public has an understanding and that those needing medical marijuana are smoking in the places that are prescribed for them.

I mentioned Bill 45 earlier. Last year, when we had a discussion on Bill 45, the government targeted a number of things. One of them, which I mentioned earlier, was the Electronic Cigarettes Act. There were a number of amendments, which included: the prohibition of the sale of promotional items together with tobacco products; the sale of flavoured tobacco products; the list of places that an inspector is specifically empowered to enter was broadened; adjustments were made to the penalty and prohibition provisions; and the power to prescribe places for the purposes of the act was also amended to provide for exemptions.

There were also a number of amendments to the Electronic Cigarettes Act, which included: the prohibition of the sale and supply of electronic cigarettes to persons under the age of 19; restrictions were placed on the display and promotion of electronic cigarettes; the sale of electronic cigarettes in certain places was prohibited; a provision was made for regulating packaging of electronic cigarettes and for regulating the sale of flavoured electronic cigarettes; the use of electronic cigarettes becomes prohibited in enclosed work spaces and enclosed public spaces; and the amendments that are outlined in Bill 178 should have been included at the same time they did this.

I've spoken to a couple of owners of shops in my riding, and they're for limiting the sale of electronic cigarettes and ensuring that youth don't get access to these products. Their concern is—and I know the government is consulting with them; I hope they're listening to them—the vape device that they utilize: (1) They have to teach people how to use it properly, so they have to turn it on, and (2) when they have to fix it, they have to have the ability to turn it on. Right now, where they're leaning with the regulations, that might be banned for them to do so inside their shop.

I'm hoping there's a workaround somewhere along the line that's not going to be too expensive to the owners of the shops which allows them the ability to turn on the device in order to teach someone how to use it and/or fix the product. The simple solution of sending them outside isn't going to do. It's ridiculous, especially when we have our cold winter days or it's raining; it's just not feasible. You can't really ask a business to do that.

They sat down and they showed me their business and what they go through to help people quit smoking. That's the main use of these electronic cigarettes: It gets people off the nicotine and tobacco product to a straight nicotine product, and then they can wean themselves off. It's much like the patch that you have in pharmacies or the inhaler device. You're transferring from the actual cigarette to a product that doesn't have all the cancer-causing agents in it that you're inhaling. You're cut down to the nicotine in some sort of solution, probably a water base, that you inhale, and you can slowly cut down your dosage. It's much like the patch. Quite often in the pharmacy, I've seen people have to try quitting numerous times before they're successful. It's a tough go. Tobacco is quite addictive; it's quite hard to get off.

The pages here—hopefully you haven't started smoking yet. I would suggest not even trying it, staying away from it. When you talk to anybody who has smoked for a long time, they always regret starting. So to avoid that regret, do something else with your time. Stay away from tobacco products.

The fact that these devices help people quit smoking is a reason why the government needs to work with these places to ensure that they're able to continue their business and ensure that the devices are safe and the people utilizing them understand their use. It's not a complex tool, but the different advantages of using it need to be shown.

That was in Bill 45, and as I said, this Bill 178 is making up for the fact that what's in Bill 178 was missed in Bill 45 due to the rush.

I think the other thing that could have been placed in Bill 178 is the whole issue of contraband tobacco. It's something that, for some reason, the government doesn't seem to want to deal with. If you look at the charts, the smoking rates are decreasing, but I think if you went and looked at contraband tobacco sales, they're increasing. Unfortunately, I think they've just switched. The sad part is that we get a lot of tax dollars from tobacco sales that this government needs. They overspend, so they need to make up for that money they've overspent. That money is just going to the illegal tobacco trade.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** What's that?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** On all the things you ask for in question period every day to spend on.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** We're just showing you how to spend the money that you have.

Anyway, so this illegal tobacco trade is flourishing. Anybody in the riding probably sees it day to day. People talk about it openly and the fact that they all access their cheap cigarettes. It's unfortunate. This was another opportunity time. They had a bill which was basically saying, "We're going to treat anything that comes out like cigarettes, like cigarettes, and make sure we don't have to deal with it in this bill." So it's not a complex bill that we're debating here, but it was an opportunity to include other things.

I've mentioned Kathryn McGarry's law, the Lung Health Act, the radon law that we could have added in, but contraband cigarettes are something we could have totally tackled in order to crack down on not only the illegal situation that has grown in the province but also decreasing the harmful risk of smoking within our province.

Tobacco claims too many lives: 13,000 Ontarians die every year due to tobacco. That's about 36 people a day. I think everyone probably has a story of someone who got lung cancer somewhere along the line in their family and passed away too early. My uncle Lou died when he was 69. My grandparents lived into their nineties. You just think, if he had the same lifespan, he died 30 years before he should have. He quit smoking. He quit smoking the day after he found out he had lung cancer. That's too bad.

So I think there's something we can do, not only in the normal marketplace but with the illegal trade going on with the contrabands. We need to do better. We have the power here at the Legislature to create rules and regulations to clamp down on the illegal activity which is leading to people's ill health instead of sitting back and ignoring it. The member from Prince Edward–Hastings—usually behind me, but to my back left; now he's behind me. He has a great bill out there to help start dealing with contraband cigarettes, and I do have some notes on that; I'll have to get to that. I will get to the member from Prince Edward–Hastings in a minute, his bill. Anyway,

it's a great bill that he has brought forward, a private member's bill. It's another bill we could have incorporated in this bill at the same time.

But back to contraband, in some areas they estimate that up to 50% of sales are due to contraband; the average is about 33%, which is quite a few. That's pretty close to one in three cigarette purchases being purchased illegally in Ontario. By comparison, British Columbia is 17%, Manitoba is 15%, Saskatchewan is 11%. That Brad Wall does things well for his province. Quebec has seen great improvements since their police force was given the authority to investigate, seize and restrict cigarette manufacturing equipment in vehicles.

Many argue that the illegal industry that occurs within the province of Ontario is the worst in the western world. We bring forth legislation continually to raise taxes on the legal products, and that's the deterrence. Unfortunately, the illegal trade, which does not pay any taxes, is increasing. So I think we can do better in the province. We can do better to deal with the illegal manufacturers, the illegal smugglers and the illegal dealers of contraband cigarettes.

#### 0930

As I mentioned earlier, the MPP for Prince Edward–Hastings and my colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk, Toby Barrett, our ag critic, also brought forth legislation hoping to deal with contraband tobacco and accessing this illegal product.

If the government really wanted to get to the root of the problem, they could have done things for the last 13 years that they've been in power. You can't hold on to the old argument of previous governments when you've been in power for 13 years. You had 13 years to fix everything that you argue and complain about. So if you haven't fixed it, you obviously agree with what the previous governments have done.

In November of this past year, the member for Prince Edward–Hastings, Todd Smith, brought in Bill 139, An Act to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act and the Tobacco Tax Act. It was a great bill. I sat in on one of his meetings he had with some public health representatives, and it was a great meeting. The bill targets contraband tobacco and the sale focused on children. It amends the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to require the government to establish a public education program about the public health risks associated with the use of tobacco. It includes amendments to include the prohibition of the sale of tobacco in public and private schools. And the fines to those presenting illegal age identification and those convicted of selling tobacco in designated spaces are increased.

I know the health inspectors throughout the province are usually designated to ensure that businesses selling cigarettes are selling them to people who are of age. They do a good job, because we get calls at the office saying, "They tricked us. They didn't look that age to ask if they're 25 or under." It's not going to be 100% across the board, and some health inspectors will be overzealous, but the majority of them do their job.

When you have contraband cigarettes, you don't have those inspectors out there ensuring that those people aren't selling to minors. The way I figure it, if you're selling tobacco illegally, you don't really care who you're selling it to. You just want the money. That's why you're doing it. Unfortunately, too many of our kids are having access to these illegal products, and this is the time to step forward. Any time is the time to step forward for this government, but every time we're not always having discussions on the tobacco act. That doesn't happen too often, unless, of course, they devise a bill and forget to implement some of the ideas and have to come back with another one. I think when they come back with the other one they should be implementing ideas to decrease the illegal trade that's occurring in our province.

Under Todd Smith's bill, the Tobacco Tax Act is amended to permit the minister to share the proceeds of forfeited property with police forces that assist in investigations that lead to the forfeiture. I think municipalities would be happy with that; I think they're stretched on their own budgets. I believe that anything to help out their budgets with regard to their emergency services and the police is a benefit.

The bill also says that the costs incurred by a police force or the crown to remove, store or dispose of a vehicle under section 24 of the act are a debt due to the police force or the crown and may be recovered in court. Again, the cost of dealing with illegal contraband trade can be dealt with by the police force.

In his bill, enforcement powers are also expanded to include police officers, in addition to the existing persons authorized under the ministry, relating to unmarked tobacco products. Increases are made in the penalties that apply to offences relating to interjurisdictional importers, the manufacturing of tobacco products, the possession of unmarked cigarettes, and the purchase or receipt of marked or unmarked cigarettes for resale.

Finally, a person's driver's licence may be suspended if he or she uses a motor vehicle in the commission of certain offences. Suspension periods are also increased. I think that's a good deterrent. Nobody wants to lose their independence with driving. We see it time and again with our seniors who hit 80 years old and have to do that test. They get fearful because driving is their mode of transportation, especially in rural Ontario. We don't have the buses; we don't have the taxi services that are in large urban areas. In rural Ontario, we have the car. We have bicycles, but usually when you hit 80—there are fewer and fewer riding bicycles at 80, and when winter hits, you need your car.

I've been trying to push. I haven't been mean about it, but I'm gently pushing my local Ministry of Transportation in London. Right now, our seniors in Elgin county have to drive to London to do the written test and the eye test. I was able to locate a spot, free of charge to the ministry, in St. Thomas—which my seniors have been asking for around the whole area—where maybe once a month we could get the ministry to schedule some test dates; not the driving—that's another ball of wax—but

the actual written test and the eye test. I'm getting, "No," but I find that if you keep asking, perhaps down the road we'll see some changes and some benefits back into the St. Thomas area. A lot of government services have been moved out for one reason or another, but we in St. Thomas and Elgin county do need access to government services. We have the need. We have a high seniors' population.

Sorry I went off on that commercial break. Anyway, suspending driver licences is a good tactic.

It's quite clear that contraband tobacco is causing an uproar in our schools. Too many children are getting access to illegal cigarettes. I hope the government will support the member from Prince Edward-Hastings's bill. There was a time when they could incorporate it into this bill. Maybe at committee we could offer to incorporate this bill into Bill 178.

I mentioned earlier that Toby Barrett, Haldimand-Norfolk, has Bill 162 on the table as well, which is going to tackle the illegal trade. It's important that all these bills that have been put forward are dealing with lung health and how chronic lung disease is debilitating. It's something we could work on together to ensure that people, especially youth, have limited access to illegal products—have no access to illegal products. That would be the goal. That's never going to happen; I get that. But for our government to ignore the situation isn't going to make it better. It's going to ensure that people have access to illegal product. It's going to hook people on smoking—our younger kids—and it's going to deny access to tax revenue that this government needs and it's going to increase lung disease.

They talk a great game at reducing smog. Elizabeth Witmer shut down the first coal plant. They followed up and shut down the rest, and smog alerts are gone. It's great, but they're doing nothing about contraband cigarettes, which are on the rise, which are causing more damage to the lungs of our youth and our adults, which are causing an increase in the health care system at the end of the day when people end up with lung cancer, which is on the rise, or other lung effects, like asthma. The use of medication is going to grow and the access to doctors is going to grow.

We spend \$52 billion on the health care system each year—it grows. They've rationed the health care system, and we've had—this government has stepped forward and is starting rationing health care in the system. They cut doctors by \$800 million. People's access to health care is decreased. They froze funding at hospitals for four years. There are fewer beds and long waits. They can't fix it within a year. They throw in the 1% but they pull out \$100 million from the lottery fund going to hospitals. We've seen a lot of services cut and we've seen a lot of health care professionals lose their jobs.

You look at contraband cigarettes and you could do something about that to decrease the amount of people who, down the road, are going to need the health care system, which is 140,000 new people each year into the system. We have a growing demographic who are going

to utilize the health care system. Why not do stuff or take steps outside of the health care system to cut down on future costs in the health care system by tackling illegal contraband cigarettes?

**0940**

I think that's a great step the government could use. The money they could save—fewer people getting diagnosed with lung diseases, but also the increased revenue in the taxes could be filtered into the health care system and ensure that proper funding is occurring throughout Ontario instead of the rationing we see day in and day out, leading to emergency room crisis. I'm sure, Speaker, in your office, you have people calling up.

I had a lady call up the office. Her daughter has dual diagnosis and was in crisis. They ended up putting her into a regular hospital bed, so she's not getting the services she needs. There's a bed waiting for her in London, but she's got to wait two years to get to it—two years. Someday, we'll start treating mental health like physical health and ensure quicker response times, that the beds are there when you need them. But at the same time, physical health is on the decline in the province. I mentioned earlier that in January, February and March, if you wanted knee or hip replacement surgery, you couldn't access that in Woodstock, Strathroy, London or St. Thomas. They ran out of money. Unfortunately, the seniors who paid taxes their whole lives for a health care system they wanted access to when they needed it—they need to access it now and they can't. They're sitting at home and suffering. Sitting in one place too long is not healthy. They decline in health and they withdraw from social activities because it's just too painful to leave their house.

I think it's prudent of this government, when you can capitalize on opportunities to save the health care system money by doing things outside of the health care system, such as tackling contraband cigarette sales and reducing the chances of lung disease—or, if you don't want to go that far, because I know this government doesn't want to deal with contraband cigarette sales, maybe incorporating other bills like the member from Cambridge's, Etobicoke North, the member from Prince Edward-Hastings or Haldimand-Norfolk into a makeup bill, which this really is.

This bill is purely here because Bill 45 was rushed, there was no consultation and they missed this. We mentioned that at committee, that when you rush a bill, you miss things. I'm glad they're fixing their mistake; however, I always look at how we can fix a mistake and utilize what's in front of us to push legislation through that's sitting in the committee room or waiting for second reading at the Legislature, because there are good ideas on both sides of the House. There's a lot on this side of the House that the government can utilize. I mentioned Sarnia-Lambton's Bob Bailey's tax credit bill for agriculture. They did utilize that bill.

Anyway, those are my main comments on Bill 178. I think the medical marijuana issue is going to be probably key to discussion going forward. There's a certain organ-

ization that thinks that they should be allowed to be wherever they want with it. I think that, with the consequences of the second-hand smoke from medical marijuana, we have to ensure that it's removed a distance from the public. I guess this bill, when it's in place, will ensure that new items that come down the line somewhere in the future of I guess research and development, that people who would like to partake in smoking will be covered under this bill. I hope there's a way to work the regulations out that kind of is one-size-fits-all in these bills. I would hate if, 15 years down the road, if other things have gone to market, businesses have to put up five different signs for the different items that are on there, because then you get the sign traffic and you ignore it all. Your mind just blocks it out. It's much like the billboards on the highways. I don't see them anymore. I do see the speed limits. I do monitor the speed limits, in case anyone's watching or listening.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Those guys in black and white cars remind me.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Yeah. Every so often you see them on the side of the road. I usually take the 403 home, so I cut through the Hamilton area, it's very nice, and head up at Woodstock at the 401. The Woodstock area is chock full of the black-and-whites. Actually, the Brantford area, too, is quite full. They're tough, which is good. That's what we want: safety on the roads. They do a good job. I bet you there's not an MPP in this building that hasn't had a conversation with one of those guys at one time in their role as we go from place to place in our ridings.

Joe Preston was the MP in my area, and his plates said "Joe MP." He couldn't even hide. They loved pulling him over, especially between Dorchester into Aylmer. He'd try to get to those events as quick as possible and he got caught quite often. The fines that he paid, he probably bought a few police cars with regard to the fines that he paid. Anyway, Joe's retired now and he's doing well.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Are you going to get the "Jeff MPP"?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** No, I don't need a marked car. My car licence plate says "Elgin St. Thomas" on it so if you're out there, you know that's my vehicle. I have a Ram, a Ram truck. It's white. It's nice.

Back to the bill, Mr. Speaker. I went on another tangent there.

**Interjection:** You're a mad scientist or something.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** A mad scientist. Bill 178, that we're debating here, is a bill that is amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to include products down the road to ensure that they fall into the right category, to ensure that the dangerous effects are limited, and the youth in our province are protected from having access to these products.

It will be interesting, when and if the federal government ever legalizes marijuana, if this Legislature will bring a bill forward to debate or whether they'll just utilize Bill 178 and that's that. I imagine that's what the design of Bill 178 is, down the road. It will be a more intriguing discussion between medical marijuana and the

legalization of marijuana and how that's going to go forward.

My main focus of this talk was, number one, this bill—Bill 45—was rushed and, due to the rushing, you forget things. So this bill has come forward after the government originally said you could smoke medical marijuana wherever you wanted and then decided they should actually rethink that and do some consultation. Now we have this bill to deal with that.

My advice to the government is, when you do this—when you rush through consultation and you forget something in a bill and you have to have a makeup bill to make up for the mistake you made—look at the bills that are sitting waiting for debate at committee or in the Legislature and see what you can incorporate into it so that we can save some time here. We have so many bills backlogged in private member business that are beneficial to Ontarians. How can we utilize our time better and incorporate these bills into place so that we can debate and get them off the backlog but also get them debated?

I know this bill will be passed through the House before we break for the summer, so that's one bill, but there are so many bills back here. The lung health bill, is that going to be passed by summer? Is the Prince Edward–Hastings bill going to be passed by summer? The radon bill, which I think was started before I even started being an MPP—we're still waiting. You had a bill, Mr. Speaker—your actors bill—to protect youth actors: How long did that take? That was years. Three years.

Bills like this, that we have sitting on the floor today: We can utilize those bills that are waiting, that have been waiting and probably have no hope of completing before either the election is called or we clear the decks and start all over with a new throne speech.

It's unfortunate—

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Bill 76, the LNG bill.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Bill 76, the LNG bill: I think that's at committee this week. Bob Bailey I think passes the most bills out of anybody on the opposition side. Well, maybe Mr. Speaker might, too.

I know I've kind of gone off topic a couple times—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** However, I'm hoping that I've taught you a little bit about the people in my riding. I talked about Joe Preston, a retired MP. He served 10 years.

**0950**

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** What was his licence plate again?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** MP Joe. He's changed it now. I think he's got an X put in front of it: XMP Joe. Joe's doing well. Joe still lives in the riding. He's in Lambeth now, which is the north end of the riding; it's in the London part of the riding. He's operating a Wendy's and Boston Pizza, so he's doing all right in his retirement. He's got a grandson, Elliot; Elliot's about one year old, so he's enjoying his grandson. He spent a couple of weeks in Florida—a good rest.

I hope many of you in this Legislature, when it's time for you to retire, that you get some time with your family and relax. I know the amount of work that they go through, and hopefully down the road—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Two years, three months, for some of us, yes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Some of them.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Some of them, sorry.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I call upon the government. I thank them for supporting Ryan's Law that we passed. May 5, I think, will be the first-year anniversary. I'm hoping to get a report soon from the Ministry of Education on how that rollout has done.

The Ontario Lung Association has done a wonderful job with the background information to educate the teachers, staff, the principals, the parents and the children about asthma.

The new pages—you guys can access your inhalers. If you're an asthmatic, you can have your inhaler now. As long as your parents said yes, you can have it in your pocket. You don't have to give it to the school nurse.

*Interjection:* You can have it in the chamber.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Yes, you can have it in your pocket right now, providing you have your parents' permission. That was the key: to ensure that you're safe.

The other part of my bill ensures that schools have the proper ventilation and such in the school system to ensure that the allergens are minimized. The first part of September every year is when asthma attacks skyrocket, usually the third week of September. That's why we have asthma campaigns in September. Kids are getting back to school. They are in enclosed spaces now. The schools have probably been shut down for a number of months. There are kids running around and there are bacteria and viruses everywhere, and they get access to the inhalers.

I'm almost done, Mr. Speaker. I'm on my last page. So as we get done, basically, as we head towards the end of my hour—and I've got to tell you, it's been tough to fit this bill in an hour, because it's a makeup bill. It's a bill that they put together because they missed it in Bill 45. They missed it because they rushed. When you rush, without consultation, you make unintended consequences.

I'm hoping with this budget that's on the floor—because the finance committee is still writing the report. The budget came out really early. There were really no consultations on it. It was something they had printed a while ago—maybe some tweaks after the bulk of it was printed. I hope there are no unintended consequences, although a \$300-billion debt is going to hurt. It's going to hurt down the road. A billion dollars a month is going to interest payments—\$1 billion. Think what you could do with \$1 billion—\$1 billion to go to the health care system. I've brought up mental health numerous times. A billion dollars could help fund the fight against contraband cigarettes, which should be included in Bill 178. It's unfortunate that that was missed.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, thank you for listening. I hope I've given you a little history of where we've come

from—from scraping out the ashtray in my pharmacy at eight years old, every Sunday listening to the Detroit Tigers, who, by the way, in 1984, had the best baseball team, I think, in history, with Jack Morris, Chet Lemon and Alan Trammell. Those were the days.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Al Kaline.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Who's that?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Al Kaline. Lou Whitaker.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Lou Whitaker.

*Interjection:* Cecil Fielder.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** He was later. Cecil Fielder was later. It was great.

We've gone from that to smoking in airplanes to, now, people can actually have a breath of fresh air when they're at their restaurant, when they're out having a beer, when they're flying in their airplane. And my daughter does not have to go to the pharmacy and clean out ashtrays. She can sweep, she can fill up the chocolate bars, but she does not have to clean out ashtrays at the pharmacy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to the comments. Any questions you have, throw them at me, and we'll see what comes forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you to the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, because you're right: An hour on this bill is a tough thing to do, and you pulled it off. It was shaky at the last few minutes, but you pulled it off.

That just goes to show you the arrogance, sometimes, of this government, who refuse to listen to the people of this province when putting bills together, and just chose not to. They didn't do the consultations, so they missed this very important piece that should have been part of Bill 45. The member talked about that in his very long hour on this very minimal bill. It's an important piece of the puzzle that should have been part of Bill 45.

I'm grateful to see that our children will not have to be put in the way of other people's need for smoking medical marijuana, and that that's something that people will not be able to do in a public place. The same as you would not be able to smoke a cigarette in a public place, you will have to take that outside. I know, personally, that I appreciate it, being a non-smoker myself, and a quitter.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** For how long now?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** A quitter—two and a half years.

The vaping is a big part of people quitting cigarettes, and so that is an important piece. I think that it needs to be outside. We need to not make it the norm for children in our province, because everywhere we look now, there's someone with a vaper. Personally, I have no idea what they have in it. That's up to them, and that's their business. But I don't think it needs to be the norm for our children or for people to have to just have it in their face.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions or comments?

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** It's a pleasure to rise to speak to this bill. Many, many years ago, my mother used to smoke, before I was born, and my grandfather used to smoke as well. I remember her talking to me, even when I was a kid, about how pleased she was, how proud she was that my grandfather quit, and how pleased she was that she quit. She did it, first and foremost, to protect my health and my sister's health when we were born, but also she protected her own health. My grandfather lived for decades after he quit smoking, and my mother is still with us and in fantastic health. So the importance of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, I can't underline that enough.

This bill is something I'm very proud of, because it's common sense, right? It's just common sense. I was on a panel on CFRB radio the other morning, with Moore in the Morning, the morning show—and a big thanks to John Moore and Becky Coles, who had me on the show—and we were talking about this particular proposal. A lot of the people on the panel, and even later in the day on the radio, were just saying that this is common sense. That's really what sticks out in my mind and why I think it's important that we get this bill passed as soon as possible.

It's common sense because what it does is say that no matter what you're smoking, the restrictions that are under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act should apply. Whether you're smoking a cigarette or whether it's medical marijuana, if you're in an enclosed space, if you're in a car with a child under 16 years of age, if you're in a restaurant or if you're on a patio, it doesn't matter what you're smoking, but those things should not be happening in those places, where they could compromise a person's health, or where they could compromise a person's comfort and they could compromise a person's ability to enjoy whatever it is that they're doing and to go through their daily life.

I think this makes a lot of sense, and I'm proud to support the act. By doing it, what we're doing is we're helping people live healthier, we're helping people live longer, and we're ultimately enhancing the quality of life of our constituents.

**1000**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions or comments?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I, too, have an airplane story. This was not all that long ago. I was flying to Dubai, through Kuwait. I was sitting on the aircraft, and all of a sudden I saw this smoke billowing forward from the back. This is not all that long ago. I honestly thought there was a fire in the plane. When was the last time you were ever on an airplane in modern days and you saw smoke? So I can tell you, I share your concern about your flight.

But the North Bay district, North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit is very concerned about the sale of illegal cigarettes and their impact on efforts to protect our children from the dangers of smoking. On January 27 of this year, our health board passed a resolution in support of Bill 139, the Smoke-Free Schools Act, put forward by my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings, Mr. Todd Smith. The resolution notes that Bill 139 includes a pro-

hibition on the sale of any tobacco products in schools, increased fines for offenders caught selling illegal tobacco and increased suspension periods of driver's licences of those convicted of using a vehicle to transport illegal tobacco. It also notes that Bill 139 has been endorsed by the Canadian Cancer Society, the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco, so I want to commend our member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

The health board in our area also points out that the number of daily and occasional smokers in the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit area is 7% higher than the provincial average, which underscores my concern in my riding. Bill 139 deserves due consideration in this Legislature, and I hope that that aids in the discussion that we're having today on Bill 178, the Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** This bill—obviously we needed to have it. There was a public outcry about why this government came out with a regulation that you could smoke prescribed products, kind of open-ended. So we heard back from the public, and the government had to rethink and come up with a plan to address the problem.

This is not the first example that we have, unfortunately, where this government hasn't had a thoughtful process in legislation. If you think about Hydro One and the sale of Hydro One, they're going forward with that even though 80% of the public has said, "Stop the sale of Hydro." Some 195 municipalities have given a resolution to stop of sale of Hydro, but they're not listening in that regard.

The other one, the legislation with regards to seniors' Ontario drug benefits: They proposed a 70% increase on the annual deductible for seniors who make \$19,500. We are now going out in our communities and letting people know about this particular legislation in the budget, because nobody saw it coming. There were no consultations. There was no warning. That's another problematic issue, so we bring it up. It's lucky that we caught that, and we're letting this government know that it's a wrong-headed idea. The Premier agreed to a 30-day consultation. These things should be done before a bill comes to this House.

Now we're debating this bill, which is needed, addressing a need that the public has asked for. People don't want vaping anywhere and everywhere. It talks about vaping in a car, prescribed products in your car and prescribed products in employment. There is a part in here, though, that's an exemption for prescribed products in scientific research and testing facilities. That makes sense; we have to know what kind of effects these products are having on people's health.

It's symptomatic of putting legislation through in this House, time-allocating things and rushing through without getting fulsome debate on legislation. I'm glad the government finally listened in this case and we're talking about it today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London: two minutes.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'd like to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain, who I'm looking forward to listening to in the next couple of minutes, and the members from Etobicoke Centre, Nipissing and, of course, London–Fanshawe—my neighbour back home.

Lots of points were raised. The member from Etobicoke Centre said this is common sense. Yes, it is common sense, and it was common sense to have been put in Bill 45. They rushed it. They made a mistake. They made a mistake with medical marijuana. They're making up for it—I get it—but at the same time, why not incorporate one of the other bills that are sitting here that's going to deal with lung health and/or smoking, get that bill off the table and start dealing with other problems in this province?

The member from Prince Edward–Hastings's bill to do with contraband cigarettes, especially those sold to our youth, is an excellent bill to put forward. On the other side of the House, the member from Cambridge: The Lung Health Act would be great to add in here. Unfortunately, they rushed to rush the bill. They came forward to fix it, and they're rushing again and aren't taking the time and opportunity to have a real common sense bill in the Legislature here to deal with more than just one fixer-up item.

They embarrassed themselves; they made a mistake. They're paying for it right now, because the opposition is going to hit them on this, as we should. We should point out that the incompetence in some of these ministries is unfortunate, and the people who pay for it are Ontarians. And because we're not dealing with contraband cigarettes in this province, our health care costs are going to increase, our youth are put at risk and there's quite a bit of tax revenue from the legal sale of cigarettes that we're missing out on. We know this government needs that money, because why else would you sell Hydro One if you weren't desperate for cash? There's no other reason for that.

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

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm pleased to be able to have a few moments to have my voice on record regarding Bill 178. It's a small bill, an important piece of the legislation that was missed, unfortunately, in Bill 45, so I'm happy to have a few minutes. I have to say that I'm pleased I don't have the same hour that the member before me did, because it's a pretty thin bill. But like I said, it's important.

Currently, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act applies to tobacco products only, so Bill 178 will extend the application of the act to include prescribed products and substances, so prescribed in cabinet by regulation. This is a legislative framework that will allow medical marijuana use to be governed by the same no-smoking law that currently applies to tobacco. That's an important piece, Speaker.

As we know, as we're moving into a future where we know that medical marijuana is sometimes a better choice

than narcotics, especially very highly addictive narcotics, we need to have things in place to ensure that we have a safe public, that we have responsibilities, that we have laws around how medical marijuana could be used. Personally, I would prefer to see people with medical marijuana than to be using very highly addictive drugs that we've seen many of our citizens in this province fall fate to. It's through no fault of their own that they've become addicted to these narcotics that are prescribed to them by their doctor, but there is also no real plan of getting them off those drugs because they become highly addicted and then are turning to methadone programs.

That is an unfortunate reality that we're faced with here in the province of Ontario. We see many, many folks who would not typically fall into the drug addiction realm of their lives and never would be expected to be there, but because they've been prescribed very heavy, hard narcotics, they are now finding themselves faced with addictions and with family members, quite frankly, who don't know how to deal with it. This, I think, will help along the framework of medical marijuana being used for pain control, and I'm fully in favour of that.

I'm happy to see that we have legislation that will now create a better environment and put rules in place so people will know the limits, because nobody wants to be sitting in a restaurant these days with somebody smoking beside them, regardless of what it is, whether it's for medical purposes or not. We know that not so many years ago, really, people were smoking in restaurants and bars on a regular basis. They were smoking here. I wonder where the ashtrays attached to our desks, because you can be sure that they were smoking cigarettes sitting in this very seat, in this very Legislature.

**1010**

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Big, fat cigars.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Yes, big, fat cigars. Boy, am I ever glad that I missed those days, Speaker, because that's the reality, and we have come so far. I'm quite sure that when my mother held me when I was first born, there was an ashtray on the side of her table. Let's think back to this, because that's the reality of where we have come from.

Now we have vaping instead of cigarettes, which, for many, has become a better solution. It has become something that people can count on now or try to lean on to try to quit smoking. Vapers are becoming the new norm. We need to make sure that we have rules in place, whether it's for vaping for nicotine or vaping to not have the nicotine but giving you the sensation and the pleasure of smoking to help you quit smoking or whether it's vaping medical marijuana—we need to make sure that we are responsible for society and that we put plans in place to make sure that it's done responsibly.

It's really unfortunate that the government missed the boat on this in Bill 45, because I know there would have been great legislation that we could have been talking about today instead of dealing with this very small bill, but a very important piece. Because it was missed in Bill 45, it now is before us, unfortunately wasting very precious time that we have here at the Legislature to put for-

ward good bills, good ideas that really make a difference for the people of this province. There are so many things that I wish that we could move forward on in this House when it comes to changes to the Child and Family Services Act, when it comes to our children's mental health and when it comes to our aboriginal folks in the north, when we know that they're in situations and in an absolute—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Crisis.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** “Crisis” doesn't even seem like it's enough. To have children who are covered in sores from head to toe is heartbreaking. It's shameful. It's beyond my words, it's beyond my thoughts, of how things have gotten so bad there and how not just a provincial government but a federal government has allowed the state of our Third World Canada to happen. It's a crisis, Speaker.

We're not talking about that here today. We're talking about a piece of legislation that is so very small because it is a missed opportunity in a past bill, Bill 45, where this should have been in place then, and it's not. So today we are here, making up for the government's mistake once again, for their failure to do consultation, for their failure to make sure that they get it right for the people of this province the first time.

Medical marijuana is something that we know is coming to our future. We need to make sure that we have rules and regulations around it to make sure that we have public safety, to make sure that all people in the province of Ontario have the right to a smoke-free Ontario. I just wish that this would have been done before. I'm hoping that there are some extra dollars in this for enforcement to make sure that we're not just creating another law but we're actually going to follow through on it.

Speaker, maybe I'll just let folks know that concerned citizens are able to submit their comments on this government legislation and regulatory proposals regarding medical marijuana and e-cigarettes until April 24. You can contact the Ontario Legislature, put your name on the list, put your proposals in and have your comments and your voice heard here in the Legislature by the government, by the folks who will be putting further rules together. Please have your say. This is your opportunity. It's not very often that the government asks—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Hamilton Mountain, thank you.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It's 10:15. This House stands recessed till 10:30 this morning.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** We all welcome Don McCabe, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and his directors here today.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** On that note, I want to introduce Mark Kunkel from Powassan, here with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a lot of guests visiting Queen's Park today from the University Women's Club North York. I'm going to read their names: Diane Johns, Joan Deleuze, Colette Simpson, Margaret McGovern—she worked with me when I was in public health—Dian Laycock, Barb Cook, Helen-Sue Gorman, Joanne Garside, Barbara Betts, Marion Goltz, Susan Goldenberg, Joanne Reilly, Barb Powell, Ann Lutterman, Carolyn Horton, Mary Ellen Hayes, Marie Blacklock, June Brown and June Gurvich. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Today I'm very pleased to welcome to the chamber Pat Jilesen, provincial director at the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. He comes from the great riding of Huron-Bruce. Welcome, Patrick.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Today I'm delighted to introduce good friends of mine from the Ontario Waterpower Association, which is located in the wonderful riding of Peterborough: Paul Norris, Bob Allen, Frank Perri, Stephen Somerville, Karen McGhee, Grant Hipgrave, Bill Touzel, Heather Ferguson, Michael Morgenroth, John Wynsma, Vince Kulchyski, Melanie Boyd and Nick Kaluzny. We welcome them here today. They're having their reception later today.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** It's my pleasure to introduce Mr. Keith Currie, who is no stranger to this place and a very important member of the board of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Today is Lakehead University lobby day here at Queen's Park, and we have a great contingent here from the university: Dr. Brian Stevenson, president and vice-chancellor; Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, vice-provost, aboriginal initiatives; Dr. Peggy Smith, member of the Ogimaawin council; Richard Longtin, government relations director; and Dr. Andrew Dean, vice-president of research and innovation. We invite them all to the reception this afternoon in room 228. Welcome.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I'm so excited to introduce my cousin Ariel Albin. She's a grade 10 student at CHAT, which is the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto. She's job shadowing with me today. Welcome, Ariel.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'd like to introduce Frank Perri from Horizon Utilities, for St. Catharines Hydro, here in the members' gallery, to my right.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I want to welcome some students from the Ryerson Politics and Governance Students' Association: Jaskaran Malhi, Philip Menecola and Katiana Moussa. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I'm so proud that we have page captain Vanessa Russell from my riding of Etobicoke Centre here. Her parents are here. Her mother, Jenn Russell, and her father, Troy Russell, are here in the public gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to welcome Troy Cockriell and Mitchell Shnier, who are here to go to lunch with their MPP. They're in the members' west gallery. Welcome.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, in the members' west gallery today, we forgot to introduce my good friend Don

McCabe, the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I too would like to welcome folks here from the Ontario Waterpower Association today. I don't have the full list of the names, but it's great to have them here. They've got a reception tonight. I remind the people that my riding has over 1,100 megawatts of clean waterpower at its disposal.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I'm going to add my welcome as well to the Ontario Waterpower Association and to Paul Norris and his gang. We had a great meeting this morning and, of course, they're having their day here. The reception is here this evening.

As well—they have just entered into the west gallery—President Brian Stevenson, from Lakehead University; Dr. Andrew Dean, the vice-president of research and innovation; Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, vice-provost, aboriginal initiatives; and Richard Longtin, government relations director. Lakehead University is having their lobby day here and tonight. We hope to see all the members out there as well.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I'd like to welcome some of my constituents visiting Queen's Park today. They're the Ryerson University Politics and Governance Students' Association, and I'd like to welcome them. They're up there somewhere.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** In the Speaker's gallery is someone I would like to introduce. If you think I can be the grizzly bear, don't mess with Mama Bear. That's my wife, Rosemarie.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Behave yourself today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to get a copy of Hansard and underline that, from the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. The chips are all high now. Don't worry about it.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The leader of the third party on a point of order.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I rise to correct my record from question period on Monday. During a question on aboriginal health issues, I referred to the Premier's previous role as critic for aboriginal affairs as opposed to Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All members have the right to correct their record. It was done well. Thank you. I appreciate that.

#### JIM HILLYER

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Point of order: the member from Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you, Speaker. I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to rise and observe a moment of silence to mark the tragic and sudden death of Mr. Jim Hillyer, the member of Parliament for Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds–Grenville, the deputy leader, is asking for unanimous consent to rise for a moment of silence in tribute to the fallen member. Do we agree? Agreed.

I would ask all members and everyone, please, to stand and pay tribute.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Every small tribute of respect is appreciated by the members in this House.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I rise today and, on behalf of all colleagues, say our profound condolences to the political community with the passing of Mr. Hillyer and, yesterday, of Mr. Ford.

My question is for the Premier. On October 28, the Premier said, "The agreements were in line with our net-zero bargaining framework" when she was referring to the secret union payouts with the teachers. On November 25, the Premier said three more times that agreements were made with a net-zero framework—four stretch goals in a very small amount of time.

**1040**

Now, today we find out from the CP's Allison Jones that the deals "actually come with an additional \$300-million cost." But that's just the tip of the iceberg, because we know the Auditor General has yet to return her report into her investigation of these secret payouts. I ask the Premier: How does net zero equal \$300 million?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Minister of Education is going to want to comment on this.

What we're talking about is nine agreements that have been ratified, that are consistent with our net-zero bargaining framework. Most importantly, students remain in school. There were no cuts to the classrooms. There were modest wage increases that were offset by finding other savings throughout the collective agreement.

Let me just say on the benefits: We're taking more than 1,000 different benefit plans for teachers and education workers and moving them to a handful of provincial trusts. I think that it would be interesting to the member opposite to know that for years, from the time I was a school trustee, from the time that the Minister of Education was a school trustee, there has been a conversation in the education sector about how to rationalize the benefits packages across the province. That will save money, and that's why making that bid was so important.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** This is at least \$300 million taken out of the education budget. That is not a rounding error. I know the Premier is not an accountant, but that's \$300 million more than she told this House. This is also, of course, the same Premier who told us the cancelled gas

plants were only \$40 million before we found out the true cost was \$1.2 billion. She is cutting demonstration schools across this province—special-ed cuts everywhere. Parents are fundraising for basic necessities in our classrooms.

I ask the Premier: What does \$300 million in education funding mean to her? Because it certainly doesn't mean pizzas and popcorn to me.

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, let me just—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Sorry; I didn't recognize you, Premier.

Carry on, please.

**Interjection:** I barely recognize her, too.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me just say that the changes in the benefits are changes that have been talked about in the sector for many years, because when the school boards were amalgamated, when the funding model changed in this province at the hands of the previous government, it only made sense to talk about how there could be savings in those benefits plans.

Finally, we've gotten to the point where we can do that, where those benefit plans can be amalgamated. There can be changes that will save money to the system. It will actually lower the cost of benefit plans through the power of bulk negotiation. It only makes sense. I actually would have thought that this is the kind of efficiency and savings that that party would support.

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

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The Premier of Ontario just had the audacity to look at this assembly and say that she found \$300 million in efficiencies when it cost more than net zero; it cost \$300 million. You can't trust this government anymore when they tell us it's going to cost one thing—

*Interjections.*

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

The chippiness is pretty high and I can read it, so I'm going to start looking at individuals.

Carry on, please.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The power worker deals had a net-zero deal until we found out that it was \$87 million more to buy Hydro One shares. The teachers' union deal was supposed to be net zero until we found out it's at least \$300 million more. You have one job and that is to find net zeros in this government in order to balance the deficit, which you have no objective of doing.

I would like to understand, from the Premier of Ontario—you have assigned somebody in the Treasury Board to find net-zero deals; you failed at every turn. What is the Deputy Premier's job anyway if she can't find deals here?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I'm delighted to answer this question.

There were a thousand different benefit plans. Some of those benefit plans might have had 15 or 20 people in them. They were extraordinarily expensive. We have been talking about this problem in education since I was the president of the public school boards, but we had no legal authority to do anything about it to bring everybody together. For the first time in this round of bargaining, because we had the authority to negotiate centrally, we actually have the ability to bring 1,000 inefficient benefit plans into five or six pools. But when you set things up like that, there's an upfront investment—

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated. It's not helpful to hear people using anything other than titles or ridings, and I'm going to put my foot down on that.

New question.

### SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Mr. Todd Smith:** My question is for the Minister of Education this morning. Over the last six weeks or so, Speaker, I've received all kind of letters, e-mails, phone calls and visits of support for Sagonaska Demonstration School in Belleville and the other demonstration schools in Ontario. I've heard countless success stories from kids who didn't think they had a future before going to these schools, and now they're breaking down barriers and reaching their potential at post-secondary institutions across Ontario.

A few weeks ago I met Chris, who is a grade 8 student reading at a grade 1 level. After just a few months in the program, he was back at his proper grade level when it came to reading. He was looking forward to going back to his home school and being a successful student at his grade level.

In spite of success stories like that, the minister won't commit to Sagonaska serving students next year. I understand the minister's going to be in Belleville this evening at Sagonaska. Will she finally commit to the school's future, or will she give parents and staff the same non-answer she's been given the House for weeks?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** As I've said many times, there is a consultation ongoing, and we have not made any decisions. Apparently, the members opposite know what the decision is, which is really quite mystical, because I don't know.

I'm consulting because we want to find out how we can ensure that thousands of children in Ontario who are reading below grade level can benefit from the sorts of programs that go on in the demonstration schools. We're not arguing about whether the demonstration school programs are successful; what we're bemoaning is the fact that there are thousands of children in Ontario who can't read. How do we solve the fact that thousands can't read?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Speaker, back to the minister: They've capped enrolment. They're not even accepting enrolment for next year. They're sending the teachers,

who are seconded to these schools, back to their home schools.

The minister has clearly mastered the five Ds of question period: dodge, duck, dip, dive and dodge. That's what she's doing on a continual basis here at Queen's Park. I've got another one for her: demand. The parents of Ontario's most vulnerable students are demanding an answer. They're going to be standing in front of the minister this evening demanding an answer to the future for their kids, a future that can best be provided by keeping Sagonaska school open. That's a future that this government and this minister are putting in doubt.

I've got another D for her: This whole process has been a disgrace.

**Interjection:** Disaster.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** It has been a disaster. It has been despicable, because the minister will not give an answer as to why enrolment has been cancelled. Will she stand up before these parents, students and staff tonight and tell them there will be demonstration schools—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Just a gentle reminder that when I stand, you sit. Minister?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I agree that there are a lot of people who are demanding answers, but some of the people who are demanding answers are the parents of children who don't have an opportunity to move away from home, to attend a residential school and to get remedial reading programs.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The question was asked by the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, and I'm sure you're going to listen.

Carry on, please.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Those parents are also demanding an answer. We know that there are a lot of children who have very severe learning disabilities. It's important to understand that this isn't all children with learning disabilities. These are children with very severe learning disabilities, of average intelligence or above, who are many, many grade levels behind in terms of their ability to read. We need to figure out how to deliver programs that work to all those children.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question: the leader of the third party.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Speaker?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Oh, sorry. Final supplementary: the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Back to the minister: Recently I met with a courageous constituent from my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex named Katie. She was diagnosed with a severe learning disability, and her reading level had not progressed beyond grade 3. After six months at the Amethyst Demonstration School in London, she is reading slightly above a grade 7 level. The school has given Katie the confidence to believe in herself, but she's worried that the government is considering closing her

school. Katie said, "If I was not given the opportunity to attend a demonstration school, I would have struggled through school and felt like a failure."

Please don't devastate these families, Minister.

To the minister: Can the minister assure Katie and her parents that her demonstration school in London will be open in September?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I apologize to the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex for losing track.

Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I think what we need to do is talk to all the Katies in the province who are having challenges reading and tell all the Katies in the province—right now, there's a maximum of 40 children at each of the four demonstration schools.

**Interjection:** It's capped.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** The member opposite says that that's capped, but in fact there are less than 40 children at each of the demonstration schools because that was how many qualified for the very specific criteria. So we have less than 160 children in the entire province who are getting the benefit of these very strong remedial reading programs. We need to make sure that we look after all the Katies in the province who need similar remedial programs.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier.

Seniors' organizations from across Ontario have written to the Premier; I'm sure she has received the letter. They said, "We are asking you to cancel the fee increases for seniors and uphold the principle of universality for our health care system."

Will the Premier listen to the nearly 60 organizations who have written to her and cancel her plan to increase the cost of prescription drugs for seniors?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the leader of the third party is very aware that there is a regulation that has been posted and that there is a consultation going on right now. Those organizations will be, obviously, very interested in giving us feedback, and we will be listening very carefully to them.

The leader of the third party also knows that our policy that was in our budget means that 173,000 more seniors will pay no deductible. Seniors who paid a deductible previously will pay no deductible. That was the intention of the plan.

We've said that on the second part of the plan, we were going to be listening to people as the regulation was posted, and if we didn't get that part right, then we would adjust it. I think the leader of the third party knows that. We've said that repeatedly.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Earlier this month, I asked the Premier whether she believed in universal health care. That means that if you need care, you can get it, no matter who you are and no matter what your income is. She

said yes. But what she is doing and what she just spoke about a moment ago is moving in exactly the opposite direction of universality.

Ontario seniors put it pretty bluntly in the letter that they sent the Premier. They said that she is abandoning this principle and “dismantling universality.”

Will this Premier do the right thing and cancel her plan to nearly double prescription costs for seniors?

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

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** There is no stronger defender of universal health care in this province than our Premier, Mr. Speaker, and she will remain that way.

When it comes to seniors, evidence of that is that our seniors in this province have by far the lowest out-of-pocket expenses for drugs. It averages \$277 per annum for our seniors in this province. Let's go to Manitoba, where the average out-of-pocket cost is \$982 per year; or Saskatchewan, \$884 per year; or in British Columbia, \$615; or in Alberta, where it's \$613, more than twice what it is in this province.

We have the lowest out-of-pocket cost to our seniors because we are so generous to our seniors when it comes to providing the drugs that they need, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, this health minister can stand in his place and spout rhetoric, but actions speak louder than words.

I know for a fact that seniors across Ontario are worried about the Premier's plan to nearly double their drug costs. Today, nearly 60 organizations wrote to the Premier to tell her to cancel this plan.

Our Queen's Park offices and our constituency offices have been getting letters and emails and phone calls from worried seniors. I'll bet that every Liberal backbencher is getting the same calls and emails and letters as we are on this side of the House, and they know what that means for their jobs if they ignore those seniors.

The Premier has acknowledged that she has made a mistake. Will she do the right thing for seniors and cancel her plan to increase their prescription drug costs?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, it's not surprising that the NDP doesn't support our efforts to move 173,000 more seniors so they pay no annual deductible because here's their record when they were in power: They removed coverage for over 230 drugs from the Ontario Drug Benefit Program, over 10% of all drugs on the formulary at that time. All that the health minister at that time would say is that these drugs would be available to low-income seniors for reasonable prices at pharmacies.

They closed 24% of acute hospital beds. They closed 13% of mental health beds across this province.

In their last budget, in 1995, they reduced hospital funding by 1%, which was the second year in a row of reducing total health care funding.

We don't need to take lessons from the NDP. Their government was a disaster when it came to health care.

## ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is for the Premier. But I have to say that what we don't support on this side of the House in the NDP benches is the abandonment of the universal health care system in this province by that government.

The Premier has received a letter that is signed by the Alliance of Seniors—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. I'm—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Well, there's going to be. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is now on notice. Anyone else want to comment?

Leader.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier has received a letter that has been signed by the Alliance of Seniors, local health coalitions, CARP chapters, Jewish, Chinese and Tamil seniors' associations, unions and retiree associations.

Will this Premier tell these groups how many seniors will see their drug costs nearly double?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, I will say that I really do understand that it serves the leader of the third party's political purposes to set a fire where there isn't one, Mr. Speaker. The reality is that our budget removes all costs for drugs from 173,000 students. There was a second part to that—

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Seniors.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Seniors, sorry; I'm talking about seniors. It removes the cost of drugs from 173,000 more seniors.

We've said that in terms of the deductible, we would consult and we would look at that. If we got the threshold wrong, we would change it. That's the process we're undergoing right now.

The leader of the third party knows that. She knows that seniors have an opportunity to give us feedback, and we've said we will change it, Mr. Speaker, if we got it wrong.

1100

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's not just myself, as the leader of the Ontario New Democrats, that is concerned about this. It's 60 seniors' organizations that are setting a fire, and that's what the Premier needs to pay attention to. The Premier just isn't listening to Ontarians, once again. First it was the decision to sell Hydro One, even though everybody knows that's a bad idea, and now it's her plan for seniors' drugs.

Unless the Premier cancels her plan, potentially millions of seniors in Ontario are going to see their drug costs shoot through the roof. Seniors' groups are telling her to cancel this plan because it will undermine the fundamental principles that our health care system has been built on in this province and in this country.

Can the Premier tell Ontarians what happened to the basic idea that government should be listening to people and governing for all Ontarians?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Listening to people is exactly what we did, which is why 173,000 more seniors will not pay any deductible. That is exactly what we did.

Now, as I have said, there is a regulation in place. There is comment on the regulation that we are receiving right now. We have said that if we didn't get that second part of the initiative right, we will change the threshold. But we will not do that because the NDP is ranting at us in an irrational way, when we've already said that we're going to consult on this. We're going to look at it and if we got it wrong, we'll change it.

The leader of the third party, for her own political reasons, can ramp up the rhetoric. She can pretend that somehow this is a cause that she has championed. Mr. Speaker, 173,000 seniors in this province will pay no more deductible. We will make a change if that's necessary. We will listen to the people of the province. We will listen to the seniors who are affected. We will not follow the lead of the NDP.

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

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

Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I know that this Premier doesn't like the fact that we have a democratic process here and the opposition has a role, but that's actually the truth and she's going to have to get used to it.

The Premier admitted that this plan was a mistake. She's being revisionist now by saying that she actually listened to people—

*Interjections.*

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

Question.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** She's being revisionist now in saying that she actually listened to people, when everybody knows she threw this into her budget without listening to anybody because they had it written before they even started their budget consultations. Nobody knew that they were going to be increasing drug costs for seniors.

She admitted that the plan was a mistake. She's given herself until next Wednesday to start making changes. She said that if people spoke up, she'd make a change. Well, people are speaking up. Today's groups representing hundreds of thousands of seniors are telling the Premier that the Liberal plan is wrong.

Will she listen to Ontario seniors, cancel her plan to nearly double drug costs and uphold the core value that health care should be universal here in Ontario?

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

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I can understand why the NDP won't talk about and doesn't appear to support 170,000 more seniors who will go from paying a deductible of

\$100 per year to zero. They will actually be added to about 300,000 people who are currently in that position.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** You forgot about the other two million—\$19,000 is affluent? You've got to be kidding

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, second time.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Disgraceful.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek is warned.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, when those 173,000 are added to the existing lowest-income seniors, almost half a million seniors out of the two million that are in this province will pay no annual deductible. That's nearly 25%.

But I understand why they don't support this. They didn't support us on the PSW wage increase—

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

New question.

## GOODWILL INDUSTRIES

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** My question is to the Minister of Labour.

Goodwill Toronto's bankruptcy filing shows that its 430 employees are owed \$4.2 million in severance and vacation pay. Mr. Speaker, they are unlikely to see a dime from the settlement.

Meanwhile, the outgoing CEO received all of her \$240,000 salary right up to the time she abandoned ship. By that time, the 11 board members were already gone. The Employment Standards Act is clear: The directors are personally liable for employees' vacation pay. They cannot run from this.

Will the minister guarantee that Goodwill's employees will get the money they are owed from the runaway board of directors?

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you to the honourable member for that question.

Certainly it concerns us all here in the province of Ontario when we see an incident like that happen. At the Ministry of Labour we have an Employment Standards Act that's administered by the group. We go in in situations like this and we ensure the people who have worked hard for that money are paid. What we have is an excellent track record of collecting funds. Obviously from time to time there are those people we can't collect from. I can tell you that work is ongoing with this file. We expect it to come to a successful conclusion.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Back to the Minister of Labour: Goodwill's board allowed the charity to run into the ground. Their decision to resign and abandon Toronto's most vulnerable is nothing short of cowardly. Chief among the dodgers is David Wai, director of design and policy at the ORPP Implementation Secretariat. Perhaps the minister responsible for the ORPP met Mr. Wai through the outgoing Goodwill CEO, her former colleague at Toronto Community Housing.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister throw the book at Goodwill's board members for unpaid wages, or will there be a special deal for friends of Liberal cabinet ministers?

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Speaker, that question is beneath—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Excuse me. I'm going to suggest to the member that he's desperately close to making an accusation that is not parliamentary. I'm going to let it go with the warning that those kinds of accusations are not acceptable in the House in terms of members of this place.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you, Speaker. I think most people in this House agree with you entirely in that ruling.

The federal government has got exclusive jurisdiction over bankruptcies and insolvencies and you know that. We have made our government's position known on—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Lanark knows better and he has got to stop doing that. I'm not going to tolerate that anymore because I've been hearing some nicknames coming from him and it's not acceptable in this place.

**Interjection:** Nicknames?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Yes.

Carry on.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** The ministry provided funding to Goodwill and that funding was provided on a monthly basis. As soon as the ministry became aware of the program closures, all payments were stopped. We've connected a number of these individuals with new employment supports. I think the ministry and this government have done everything it could—

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

New question.

#### STEEL INDUSTRY

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** My question is to the Premier this morning.

Premier, the member from Sault Ste. Marie continues to publicly raise a thousand reasons why the province can't do anything but watch the steel industry in his community and its good-paying jobs dry up and blow away. But the mayor and council have asked this Premier and this government to act now, to avoid Essar Steel Algoma's operations from going down the exact same road as happened in Hamilton with US Steel's, or Stelco's, operation.

The Premier met with Chinese officials. She has met with the owners of Essar Steel overseas. Will the Premier meet with the mayor of a city in her province who is looking for help for thousands of members in his community?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I appreciate the question, and I just want to say that there is nobody who is working harder to make sure that the steel industry in Ontario is healthy than the member from Sault Ste. Marie—

nobody. Nobody. And I know that the people of Sault Ste. Marie know that. I know that the steel industry in Ontario knows that. The member for Sault Ste. Marie is a fierce advocate for the steel industry, Mr. Speaker, and he will continue to look for solutions.

As a government, we have a responsibility to look at the steel industry in Ontario in the context of the steel industry nationally and internationally. That's exactly the point the member for Sault Ste. Marie has made. I will meet with anyone who is interested, who has some solutions as to how we might resolve this issue.

1110

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Premier, nobody is listening to the question. With 8,000 jobs tied to the mills and another 8,000 pensioners, the failure of the steel mills for the people of Sault Ste. Marie is not an option. The mayor has asked the province to play a leading role in the restructuring process of Essar Steel.

Speaker, here's the question again: Does the Premier agree with her minister's comments? Is she prepared to meet local municipal leaders, the unions, pensioners, creditors and potential buyers to tell them that this province values steel manufacturing and sees a future for it in this province?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, let me say that this is a national issue, and it's an international issue. I think it's page 128 of the federal budget. Page 128 actually commits to take actions that we have been calling on the federal government to take: a recognition that the steel industry is critical to this country. It's critical to the supply chain of so many of the industries in Ontario. We recognize that, working in partnership with the federal government, there may be a solution to this.

But Mr. Speaker, one thing that is not going to work is talking down the steel industry in Ontario. Make no mistake: We are going to do everything in our power to retain the steel industry in Ontario and support it in conjunction with the federal government.

*Interjections.*

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

New question.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** My question is for Minister Murray, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Yesterday, March 22, marked annual international World Water Day. Since 1993, it is held annually as a means of focusing attention on the importance of fresh water and advocating for the sustainable management of fresh water resources. It's been estimated that 650 million people, or 10% of the world's population, do not have access to safe water, putting them at risk of infectious diseases and premature deaths.

We are extremely fortunate in Ontario and Canada to have access to clean water. That's why on World Water

Day we all have a role to play in protecting and restoring our waterways.

Can the minister please inform the House about some of the work his ministry is doing to preserve clean water in our province?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Yes, yesterday was World Water Day. I also want to start by thanking the member for the leadership she has been undertaking. As you know, the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan is the model on which the Great Lakes Protection Act was advanced.

I want to thank my friends the ministers of OMAFRA and MNRF, our two key partner ministries in implementing the Great Lakes Protection Act. The guardian council had its first meeting today with nine chiefs and grand chiefs. It had AMO. It had my friend Don McCabe from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. It was 35 people who spent yesterday afternoon looking at priorities and solutions to improve the quality of the Great Lakes.

We are very quickly moving on this Legislature's leadership in passing the Great Lakes Protection Act, and the first meeting yesterday was described by everybody as a great success.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** Thank you to the minister for that answer.

I've seen the efforts of the government in protecting our water resources close to my home, as he has stated. In my riding of Barrie, our government launched the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan in 2009. It remains the most comprehensive watershed-based legislated plan to reduce phosphorus pollution and improve water quality and fish habitat in Lake Simcoe.

In October, we released the five-year report that shows that the health of Lake Simcoe is improving. Also, last fall our government passed the Great Lakes Protection Act legislation. The Great Lakes account for 21% of the world's surface fresh water by volume. We must take care of them.

Can the minister please provide an update on our government's efforts in protecting the Great Lakes, one of our greatest natural resources?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** We run something called the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund, which funds almost 100 community projects across the Great Lakes and First Nations communities and municipalities. They're partnerships that are already developing. One of the presentations yesterday was from our friend Don McCabe, the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and the warden of Bruce county, who is also the mayor of Bruce-Kinloss. The member from Huron-Bruce will know this: They are doing a partnership right now around tiling that's going to significantly reduce the amount of nutrients going into the lake.

We now have a whole system of coordinated actions, and we're improving data collection on the lakes. Working with natural resources and forestry, we'll have better data on the quality of fish and invasive species as well as pesticides, pharmaceuticals and other problems—road salt in the lake. It's a great way to celebrate World Water Day.

## RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** To the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs: In his most recent budget, the Minister of Rural Affairs quietly suspended the Rural Economic Development Fund. It's a \$14-million program specifically for rural areas. What does this mean, Speaker? Kemptville's business retention and expansion program is in limbo—no access to the grant. Meaford's barn business co-operative is waiting for an answer. What about the Ontario Water Centre project in Clearwater?

Speaker, when will this minister do his job, halt the suspension and actually fight for people in rural Ontario?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister of Agriculture?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I do appreciate the question from the member from Haldimand-Norfolk this morning.

Indeed, I remember that party, when the previous Premier of Ontario announced the Drummond commission—the Drummond commission looked at all the business support programs in the province of Ontario—I remember they would stand up, day in and day out, and implement all the recommendations for the Drummond commission. One of those recommendations was to move all our business support programs under one umbrella.

That's exactly what we're doing with the RED program: We're moving it over to my colleague Minister Duguid under the Jobs and Prosperity Fund. People who were formerly supported by RED will now be able to make applications to the Jobs and Prosperity Fund, and we'll continue to invest in rural Ontario.

*Interjections.*

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

Supplementary?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Again to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs: The minister once said, "With the help of the RED program, rural communities will be better positioned to attract investment, create jobs and sustain a highly skilled workforce." Despite the minister's obvious belief in the program, he suspended it.

However, when meeting with Oxford county farmers on February 22, the minister told them that the applications were "in the pipeline" and they would be reviewed shortly.

My question: Did the Minister of Rural Affairs not know that his government suspended his vital rural program, or does he simply not care what he tells people across rural Ontario?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank the member from Haldimand-Norfolk for asking me the supplementary.

We indeed certainly believe that the RED program is very important to rural Ontario. That's why we took the components of the RED program and, as the Drummond commission recommended, put it under one program, the Jobs and Prosperity Fund. We'll continue to look at those applications that are in the pipeline to make sure that they

are honoured because they have significant importance to rural communities.

I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that when they were in power they closed 32 ag offices right across the province of Ontario.

### SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Miss Monique Taylor:** My question is to the Minister of Education.

A few weeks ago, the Legislature hosted students for the model Parliament. Seamus McKenna from Hamilton Mountain was one of them. Seamus has struggled throughout his school years due to a severe learning disability. Last September, things changed dramatically for him when he started attending the Trillium Demonstration School.

A couple of months ago, he took it upon himself to apply for the model Parliament program. It was an incredible achievement that neither he nor his family thought was possible. It's a striking testament to the value of our demonstration schools and the positive effects that they have for our most vulnerable kids.

Will the minister tell Seamus and other families across this province that their specialized schools will stay open?

1120

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Once again, I'm pleased to respond to this question. Once again, no decisions have been made. We are reviewing the program, but what is very clear is that the program has been a success. We understand that.

This is one more example of a student who has fallen way, way behind—multiple grades—in terms of their reading. They have taken a very focused program at one of the demonstration schools. They have caught up in their reading, and they have been able to go back into the regular school with pride. We want that for more than just—about 150 is the enrolment right now in the four demonstration schools. We want that for more students.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I think the minister just said that closing down programs will make it equally inaccessible. It doesn't make sense, Minister.

Last week, Seamus told me that tackling the required 400-word essay to apply for the model Parliament would never have been possible without access to the demonstration school programming. Attending Trillium gave Seamus the confidence to apply, even without telling the adults in his life.

Seamus is only one of the many students whom I've heard from on this important access to a specialized environment in the school, especially when this government continues to cut special education funding from school boards. Some \$22 million was taken away from various boards last year. Families and kids deserve better from this government.

I will ask again: Will the minister commit, today, to keeping these schools open?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** First of all, the NDP does have a problem with the definition of cuts. Some \$22.5 billion two years in a row is not a cut, especially when there were fewer students this year than the previous year. That actually means we spent more per pupil.

But what I do want to do is congratulate Seamus on his wonderful achievement in being accepted to the model school. Students in the demonstration schools describe to me the wonderful experience of being able to read a novel for the first time in their lives, of being able to read a text book for the first time in their lives and about being able to write an essay for the first time in their lives. We want more students to have that experience, and that's why we're focusing on the consultation process, to find out how to improve the experience for more students.

### HYDRO RATES

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** My question is for the Minister of Energy.

We know that openness and transparency are key to good government. In fact, the more we know about how we are doing, the better a job we can do to create a strong, competitive environment for people and businesses in Ontario to thrive. In my riding of Halton, there are dozens of new and emerging businesses opening their doors all the time. For them to be successful, they must have strong, useful information, so they can plan for the future.

Yesterday the quarterly Ontario Energy Report was posted. It provides a wealth of information and data about electricity, oil and natural gas in the province. This is valuable information for Ontario businesses. The document included the reporting of industrial electricity prices for all Canadian provinces and US states. This is the first time that the Ontario Energy Board has provided jurisdictional comparison data.

Minister, can you please tell us more about this additional information on electricity pricing?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I thank the member from Halton for the question.

The Ontario government is committed to being the most open, transparent and accountable government in the country, and opening up government data supports this commitment.

We're proud to say that the IESO has made North American jurisdictional data for industrial electricity prices available through yesterday's release of the Ontario Energy Report. In their 2016 Emerging Stronger report, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce proposed enhancing the transparency of electricity pricing. We thank them for their helpful work. This report provides more information on industrial electricity prices in Ontario and a transparent comparison that demonstrates how competitive Ontario's industrial rates are within North America. We're proud to have made that possible.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I want to thank the minister for that answer and for his hard work in the energy

sector. This information will be extremely helpful to the business community and other stakeholders.

I've spoken with numerous Halton residents and business owners about the cost of electricity and they often ask for more information. People want to understand how and why rates change.

Measuring and putting our electricity rate into context through these comparisons is key to better understanding the electricity system and how it works. By improving access to vital data, we help businesses grow, spur innovation and solve problems. By increasing transparency, accountability and engagement, the result is better policy, better programs and better outcomes for all Ontarians.

Minister, can you please share with the House what the results of this comparison indicate?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Speaker, the results of this comparison indicate that our hard work to maintain competitive electricity rates is showing results. Industrial rates in northern Ontario are among the lowest in Canada and lower than 49 American states. Industrial rates in southern Ontario are lower than in Michigan, Wisconsin, New Jersey, California and below the American average.

While other jurisdictions are still burning dirty coal for two thirds of their power, our government is proud that we have achieved competitive rates while undertaking the largest climate change initiative in North America. The numbers are publicly available through the Ontario Energy Report website.

The members opposite should recognize these facts and stop discouraging industry investments in Ontario. The opposition may choose to talk Ontario down, but we will continue to work with our partners and industry to build this province up.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Bill Walker:** My question is to the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

We understand your government is prepared to repeat history with Ornge, as Ornge Air signs yet another lease with AgustaWestland, the same company under criminal investigation by the OPP anti-rackets branch.

For the past 13 years, your government has wasted billions of dollars on shady contracts. From SAMS to eHealth to Ornge, money is being squandered instead of being invested where it is needed the most: making our seniors' drug care affordable and increasing access to long-term-care beds.

I'd like to know from the minister, how does she feel about this continued waste and mismanagement at a time when her government is looking to double the cost of seniors' drugs, when 24,000 seniors are without access to a nursing bed, and when she has yet to find money to rebuild 30,000 outdated beds? Through you, Mr. Speaker, I ask: What is her plan to address these glaring and negative impacts to our seniors?

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** There were so many elements to that question, I hope you'll forgive me if I focus on one or two. I hope they're the ones that you intended, or we could, perhaps, in the supplementary—but again, as I said earlier this week, when it comes to Ornge, we're in a new regime, a new culture at Ornge as well, where patient satisfaction is as good as it has ever been. It's actually excellent in terms of the patient experience, those 18,000 individuals who depend on air transport, either fixed-wing or helicopter transport, across this province. We have a brand new board; we have a new governance structure, a new level of accountability and transparency that is so effective at providing that important care that people need at a time of crisis.

But I would hope that in the supplementary question, there is some guidance to me on specifically which issue the member opposite would like me to focus on.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Mr. Speaker, I'll make it simple: Maybe you should start respecting seniors.

Last week, I held a media conference here at Queen's Park to repeat my call for you to issue a plan of action on when and where you will build the needed beds that your government has promised and to halt your government's plan to double the cost of seniors' drugs.

If you denounced the waste and billions spent on failed programs like eHealth, Ornge and SAMS, started managing your budgets properly and didn't spend \$12 billion a year in interest payments, then you would have the money for the seniors' drug plan, and money to build the needed nursing home beds and eliminate the shameful long-term-care wait-list.

Mr. Speaker, how can this minister defend the Ornge contract and the amount spent on interest to support the government's overspending in the face of 24,000 seniors without access to a nursing bed and seniors facing nearly doubled prescription drug costs?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister.

**1130**

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Well, apart from the \$12 billion over the next decade that we're spending on capital investments for new hospitals, apart from the 345 million new dollars that we're investing in our hospitals—over one billion new dollars in health care—here's what we're doing for our seniors: an additional \$250 million each year and growing for home and community care; \$75 million over three years for community-based hospice and palliative care. We're expanding, as the member referenced, 173,000 more seniors going from \$100 deductible for their drugs to \$0 deductible. The shingles vaccine: Making that available is a savings estimated at \$170 per senior between 65 and 70 years of age. We're removing the debt retirement charge. We're adding \$10 million into our long-term-care homes for behavioural supports because we're seeing more dementia, including Alzheimer's.

There are many, many things that we're doing for our seniors so that we're providing them with the services they require and deserve.

#### HERITAGE CONSERVATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la première ministre.

The Premier knows that the Ontario Heritage Act and other laws protect archaeological and burial sites in our province. Yet, while the Premier was Minister of Transportation, she allowed the construction of the new Allandale GO station in Barrie; she allowed the digging through the ossuary, an area containing hundreds of bodies in one of the oldest Huron-Wendat villages found to date.

We have strict laws in Ontario to protect these sites. They carry severe penalties: millions of dollars and jail terms. What is the Premier going to do to hold to account the people who have done wrong and allowed the desecration of this historical First Nations site?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I want to first start by saying that our government has a lot of respect for the heritage and for the aboriginal community here in the province of Ontario and will continue to work to make sure that we continue to build a strong relationship. I also know that the Minister of Government and Consumer Services will want to weigh in on this issue.

I want to just say that we're the first government in 30 years to change the heritage act here in the province of Ontario. We made those changes to make sure that we brought in the consultation with the aboriginal community.

At any given moment, when we find human remains or any heritage-significant pieces through the archaeological process, it automatically goes to the third phase. We're currently in that phase right now, and it's a little bit too early to say what the next step is.

But we will make sure that this file is handled in a very respectful way, and I would like to thank the member for the question.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** There have been seven—count them, seven—archaeological reports done on this rare Huron-Wendat burial site, which is now the Allandale GO station. All of them said not to go ahead and to look for burial first.

But instead of taking these reports into account, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport looked at the one report that said, "Go ahead and dig." They ignored all of the others. They ignored their own work. They ignored their own letter that they wrote to the city of Barrie saying that this site needed further archaeological work because of the artifacts on site.

Speaker, the government broke their own law. There should be consequences to that.

Why was this government so negligent in their actions and when will they hold the people to account, and, more importantly, when will they fix this wrong? Chi meegwetch, Speaker.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** To the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

**Hon. David Oraziotti:** I'm pleased to take the supplementary question.

The determination as to whether or not the area is an aboriginal people's burial ground is made by the registrar of cemeteries, and we obviously take this issue very seriously. This decision is informed by archaeological reports that are currently being reviewed. They're being reviewed by MTCS, my colleague Minister Coteau's ministry.

We will not be accepting the final archaeological report until we are convinced that all of the content meets the highest archaeological standards and they've all been complied with in Ontario.

The former registrar, Michael D'Mello, was in contact with Chief Sharon Stinson Henry of the Chippewas of Rama First Nation and with legal counsel, as well. The current registrar, Nancy Watkins, is reviewing the file and speaking to them as well. My staff have been in contact with the registrar. We are ensuring that all processes that are required to be followed under the legislation will be followed.

#### SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

We know that children do better in school when they have a full stomach. Research, and my own experience as a teacher, demonstrates that hunger affects kids' ability to learn. But we also know that some children are not able to eat a full breakfast at home before school starts. Other families are not able to send a full lunch and snacks to school with their kids.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please share with us how her ministry is supporting schoolchildren in Mississauga-Brampton South and across Ontario with access to nutritious meals and snacks?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I'd like to thank the member from Mississauga-Brampton South for this very important question.

I'm very proud to say that the Ontario Student Nutrition Program helps support breakfast, snacks and lunch programs in schools in a wide range of communities and locations across our province. This program plays a very important role in supporting healthy development of children and youth and readying them to learn.

Over the past two years, the province has invested an additional \$13.3 million to expand and enhance this very important program. The investments are part of our Ontario Healthy Kids Strategy program and part of our Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy.

When fully implemented at the end of the school year, the funding is expected to provide approximately 89,000

more children and youth with access to nutritious breakfast programs in 540 higher-needs schools. There will be more students to be served, coming forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I would like to thank the minister for her answer.

This program is certainly impressive, and I'm glad to hear that it helped over three quarters of a million children and youth last year. This program, as I mentioned, clearly helps kids focus on their learning in the classroom.

It also sounds like the Student Nutrition Program plays an important role in poverty reduction in our province. We know that some First Nations communities experience higher-than-average levels of poverty. Mr. Speaker, can the minister share with us the steps her ministry is taking to provide nutritious food to First Nations youth in our schools?

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

She's absolutely right. We know that many First Nations communities have difficulty accessing affordable, nutritious food, and that is why we are investing more than \$4 million by 2017 to support student nutrition programs in First Nations educational settings. By expanding the Student Nutrition Program, more First Nations children and youth will have access to nutritious food that supports their learning and healthy development.

Over 60 First Nations communities have worked with their leadership to develop new program models that will suit the needs of their communities and incorporate cultural practices into the program, which I think we all agree is very important. New First Nations student nutrition programs will be phased in over the next two school years, and we're very, very pleased to support this program.

## PESTICIDES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** My question is for the environment minister.

The Liberal government has banned the use of a pesticide that farmers rely on across Ontario, while making the claim that this measure will save bees. But a scientific study released by Health Canada and the US Environmental Protection Agency earlier this year found that using this pesticide for seed treatment actually poses no potential risk to bees. Those are the facts; that is the evidence. Yet the Liberals keep on with their neonic ban, at a cost of \$630 million to Ontario farmers.

I have to ask the minister: Has he even reviewed this scientific evidence released by Health Canada, or is he choosing just to ignore it?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Let's just correct a few facts here. One, there is no ban. There are bans in the world. We chose not to ban it because we're taking a precautionary approach and we realize that there are farmers who need this.

I think all of us in this House would agree that with a systemic neurotoxin that is quite toxic, putting it in

places in Ontario where there are none of the pests it controls doesn't make much sense.

**1140**

There are several PMRA studies, and at the same time, there is a US EPA study that showed that over 50% of the non-managed bee losses are related to that. This is one of four stressors: varroa mites, viruses and diseases, climate change and weather impacts, and food deserts. Bees right now are under more stresses than they ever have been.

Quebec went through the same process that we went through and introduced the exact same approach we have, and that is increasingly the Ontario approach that's being recognized—

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

Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm going to paraphrase: No, he did not read the Health Canada study.

Again, back to the minister: This minister claims to care about evidence. In fact, he has even told his Twitter followers, "I have argued for evidence-based decision-making throughout my professional life." But when presented with scientific evidence released by Health Canada that challenges the foundation of this minister's neonic ban, he has chosen to ignore the facts. The minister's refusal to review the evidence contradicts his own statements and is, frankly, anti-science.

Will the minister, who is not a scientist, please explain why he thinks he knows better than a team of scientific experts at Health Canada and the US Environmental Protection Agency?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** One of the things that we feel very strongly about on this side of the House is that you don't cherry-pick science. There are over 1,000—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It's never too late to ask for attention, nor ask people not to come back.

Carry on.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** There are well over 1,000 major studies that have been done by Sussex, Purdue, Minnesota university, the US EPA and PMRA. If the member has reviewed the Auditor General's and the federal environment commissioner's review of the PMRA studies, she will probably realize that I'm not the only one who's raised some questions about it.

The vast majority of science suggests that there is a problem here. In fact, Ontario, Quebec, the Netherlands, the United States and some of the western provinces—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** They don't seem to want to hear the facts.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No, your time is up.

## GLORIA RICHARDS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As a reminder, I do have a few people who have points of order before we dismiss. I'm going to deal with them right away.

The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound on a point of order.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I would just like to remind members and their staff of the reception this afternoon from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the legislative library to honour Gloria Richards and her 42 years of public service to the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'd like to thank the member for stepping on my announcement.

#### VISITORS

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have two guests visiting us at Queen's Park. My good friend Eden Gajraj and his son Adnan Gajraj are visiting Queen's Park.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask your indulgence to welcome Dr. Mili Roy, the mother of our page Sohan Van de Mosselaer, who's with us this week and the following week. Joining her is his sister Maya Van de Mosselaer in the public gallery.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I just wanted to correct my record in response to the question and supplementary from the member for Haldimand–Norfolk. In fact, it was 42 agriculture offices that were closed, not 32.

#### VISITORS

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I would like to welcome—  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Question period is over. I'm trying to entertain people's points of order. Thank you.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I would like to welcome page Terry Kuang's mother, Yolanda Zhang, and father, Gary Kuang, to Queen's Park. Welcome to Queen's Park.

#### GLORIA RICHARDS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I am going to double announce it, but with an announcement that there was an email sent to all members. You need to check. I was told no, but I've checked and was told they were sent, so it's a matter of making sure the communication breakdown is not there.

However, more importantly, I'd like to remind the members that the retirement party for Gloria Richards is today at 1 p.m. on the third floor of the library. She would love to see you all.

She has all kinds of stories. I will tell you that we're working on her book. We're going to have some good storytelling.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Former Speaker Edighoffer is here, in the Speaker's gallery. Welcome to the former Speaker. We're glad you're with us.

He got the email; I don't know about you guys.

#### BANGLADESH INDEPENDENCE DAY

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Beaches–East York on a point of order.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Sorry, Speaker, I meant to stand earlier.

This afternoon at 12, we're raising the Bangladesh flag on the front lawn. I welcome all members to attend. It's the most-spoken second language in my community.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Okay, I think we got everything.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1146 to 1500.*

#### ESTIMATES

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

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I have a message from the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, the Lieutenant Governor, signed by her own hand.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2017, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly. Toronto, March 21, 2016.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Introduction of guests? The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Speaker, what a surprise.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I know it is.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'm not going to waste your time—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No, go ahead.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thanks. I'd like to welcome former Speaker of the House and former member of provincial Parliament for Elgin–Middlesex–London, Mr. Steve Peters, and your brother Joe, Mr. Speaker.

There are so many people here from St. Thomas—it's unbelievable that they—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That's why I'm allowing it.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Now you're deferring to me.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I think you should sit down.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Sit down? I can't sit down.

Could the people from St. Thomas and Elgin stand and be welcomed? The Cosens—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I do have to point out, Mr. Speaker, my favourite Liberal in the world. Mrs. Peters is here today, and I just want to point her out especially for being here, and I appreciate the time—and definitely Don Cosens and Mark Cosens, who are also here. I'd take the time to ramble off everyone, but I'm taking up too much time. I'm sorry, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Very well done. Quite frankly, all of us have those favourite other party members. That's a nice touch.

Further introductions?

I do want to mention my other brother, Joe, just to be on the record of Hansard. Thanks, Joe, for being here.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### POPE JOHN PAUL II

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'd like to take this opportunity to speak about Karol Jozef Wojtyla, known to the world as Pope Saint John Paul.

April 2 of each year has been designated as a day in his honour in Ontario. Through his tireless efforts, John Paul II is recognized as helping to end Communist rule in his native Poland and eventually throughout all of Europe.

He was born in Poland on May 18, 1920, and served as Pope of the Catholic church from October 16, 1978, until his death on April 2, 2005. It is one of those dates that I have in my memory, and I know exactly where I was when the sad news was delivered.

He dedicated his life and papacy to international understanding, peace and the defence of equality and human rights. John Paul II significantly improved the Catholic church's relations with Judaism, Islam, the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion.

His love for young people brought him to establish World Youth Day. The 19 World Youth Days celebrated during his pontificate brought together millions of young people from all over the world.

He was one of the most travelled world leaders in history, visiting 129 countries during his pontificate, including Canada. I remember sleeping outside in the rain in Downsview, waiting for his arrival and Mass, when I was 13 years old.

John Paul II's beatification mass took place in St. Peter's Square on May 1, 2011, and he was canonized on April 27, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, as a Canadian of Polish heritage, I am proud to rise and honour Pope Saint John Paul II. His life and legacy will always be remembered.

### NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** This past week, I travelled to a number of communities in northwestern Ontario where I heard from front-line health care providers and First Nations leadership about the most pressing and urgent health issues facing northerners. People are struggling right across this province, but I have to say that in the north, it is different. In the north, we have a patchwork system where services, if provided, are provided in silos across ministries and governments, with huge gaping holes left in between.

There are wait-lists so long for children who have experienced trauma that it effectively shuts the door to effective treatment and traps them into a lifetime of suffering. Diabetes is rampant and so accelerated that, within five years of a diabetes-related amputation, the patient will receive another amputation or be dead. A doctor told me that 34% of pregnant women who she treats in Sioux Lookout are addicted to opioids.

Funding is available for drug treatment, but not housing or clean water. Autism care is limited and all children with special needs in the far north are either left to the wayside or removed from their community. Most tragically, children as young as 10 are committing suicide. I heard from a doctor who described these failings in tears. Another nurse spoke about how it wears on her soul.

Speaker, we live in a prosperous province and we are all Ontarians. Northerners deserve a cohesive provincial strategy to address northern health care and for this government to step up to the plate and deliver on its commitment to treat First Nations people and all northerners with the dignity and respect afforded to all Ontarians.

### SYRIAN REFUGEES

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** As members of this House are aware, our government committed to bringing 10,000 refugees from Syria, and some are now calling my community of Kingston and the Islands their new home.

To welcome them in the most Canadian way possible, Dr. Waji Khan from Cataraqui Woods Dentistry donated 100 tickets to the most quintessential Canadian pastime: watching a hockey game. I would also like to thank Dario Paolo and his team for organizing this event.

It was an unforgettable moment for us, seeing them watch their very first game—in a place where hockey was born, nonetheless—and sharing the excitement and energy of our sport spirit and traditions. Their faces were something to behold. The night was only made better by our Kingston Frontenacs' incredible skill and talent, resulting in a 5-2 win in their last game of the season. Awesome!

I also want to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all of the local partners who have been coordinating their efforts and pooling resources to help sponsor families and enhance settlement efforts, such as the staff and volunteers at Kingston Community Health Centres, Kingston Immigration Partnership, Immigrant Services Kingston and Area, United Way KFLA, the city of Kingston, the Canadian Forces base, our school boards and so many more.

Initiatives such as this are ones that make our community the best place to call home, and it makes me immensely proud to be representing the generous and compassionate constituents of Kingston and the Islands.

### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Good afternoon, Speaker.

Families across this province are angry at this government's decision to double the drug cost for 92% of all seniors. At a recent Royal Canadian Legion convention held in Dunchurch, North Bay's Preston Quirt and Jim Thompson brought forth a motion expressing their displeasure. It reads:

"Whereas the proposed Ontario budget will have a drastic effect on the health and lifestyle of our senior population and may force more seniors into poverty;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the members of the Royal Canadian Legion attending the Zone H2 convention, strongly urge the provincial government to reconsider the changes to the Ontario Drug Benefit Program in their proposed budget."

Debra Cooper Burger, chair of OANHSS, a seniors' organization, was clear yesterday when she told our finance committee that seniors will be forced to choose between buying food instead of medication. Our seniors rely on their medications to stay healthy and out of hospital. Our most vulnerable deserve better.

I call on the Premier to stop making seniors pay for her government's waste, mismanagement and scandal, and to repeal the seniors' drug tax.

#### EARLTON FARM SHOW

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's the season before planting season: It is farm meeting and farm show season. It was an honour for me to attend the March Classic farm meeting put on by Grain Farmers of Ontario.

But there is one farm show that's near and dear to my heart, and that's the Earlton Farm Show. It's held on April 15 and 16. If people are interested in agriculture in northern Ontario, a good place to learn about that is the farm show. I would like to give a shout-out to Melanie Koch; there are lots of volunteers there, but she's the backbone of that show. It's fantastic.

1510

For those of you in southern Ontario who don't know how to get there, I'll give you some directions: Go up the 400, up 11, and you get to North Bay. That might be the gateway to northern Ontario, but it's not the gateway to agriculture yet. You'll drive through an hour and a half of pristine northern Ontario; you'll think you're in a Tom Thomson painting. Farmers, don't be depressed; some people like that. Then you'll crest this hill, and you'll see 200,000-plus acres of beautiful agricultural land. Keep going. You'll drive by the co-op feed mill, you'll drive by the Grant elevator, you'll drive by the Tem Grain elevator, you'll drive by Thornloe Cheese, you'll drive by Green Tractors, and then there will be a sign at Earlton to turn left at Koch elevators, but you might miss that because you'll be so busy counting the bins and looking at the equipment. You might miss that, so I advise you to go up another mile, do a U-turn at Brownlee farm equipment and come back and visit the show.

I hope to see you there.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I don't know if it's parliamentary to correct a statement: that is, you would want a Lawren Harris painting because he comes from my riding.

#### CAMBRIDGE SELF-HELP FOOD BANK

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I wanted to talk about the Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank, whose mission is to help those in my community of Cambridge and North Dumfries township by offering not just food to those in need, but also support, all the while encouraging self-reliance through various programs and services.

One of these programs is Small Steps to Success, a program designed to help women overcome barriers to employment due to social, economic or educational hardships. I, myself, had the opportunity and the honour of speaking to this group of women and heard some inspiring stories. Working in conjunction with staff from the Cambridge YWCA, they focus on life skills, job search techniques, education and building healthy self-esteem.

Last weekend, the executive director, Pat Singleton, got into a Dr. Seuss-inspired hat for the second annual Pat in the Hat fundraiser at the Cambridge mall. I'm pleased to report that Pat sat in her hat for 31 hours, encouraging shoppers to contribute to this worthy cause, and, in all, raised \$45,000 for the Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank.

I want to honour the staff and the executive director of this incredible organization. They go above and beyond the call of duty. They are there at every community event. They inspire others to contribute and to help all those that are less fortunate in our communities. So many thanks to executive director Pat Singleton and some of the staff—Jeff Hunter, Bonnie Dion, June Anderson, and their other staff and volunteers.

#### SPREAD THE NET STUDENT CHALLENGE

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Are you familiar with Plan Canada's Spread the Net Student Challenge? Ten years ago, Rick Mercer and Belinda Stronach founded the Spread the Net Student Challenge as a friendly competition between Canadian schools to raise funds for the purchase of bed nets to prevent the transmission of malaria. This year, more than 50 schools from across Canada participated and helped raise \$80,000 which will go towards the purchase of 8,000 bed nets.

Macville Public School in Caledon participated in this year's challenge after grade 8 student Clark Elliott watched the Rick Mercer Report that challenged students to get involved in this initiative. Clark thought that this was a great cause to get Macville Public School involved, and, wow, did they step up to the challenge. As a result of their efforts, Macville Public School, a school of only 247 students, raised \$11,454, the highest amount raised by any elementary school across Canada.

Rick Mercer's visit to Macville Public School congratulating them for their efforts will be featured on the Rick Mercer Report on March 29.

Once again, I want to congratulate and thank Clark Elliott and the students and staff at Macville Public School for supporting the Spread the Net Student Challenge. Well done.

### COMMUNITY AWARDS

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** I rise today to speak about an event held in celebration of International Women's Day in my riding of Davenport.

On March 7, my constituency office hosted an art gallery opening featuring works from the South Asian Women's Centre and Sistering. Both of these organizations provide vital services for women as they provide support, a place to talk about women's issues and a strong community network.

At the event, I was also able to recognize Gurbeen Bhasin and Isa Melo, recipients of the Leading Women, Leading Girls awards. This award, given by the minister responsible for women's issues, recognizes the women and girls who have taken a leadership role and made significant contributions in their communities.

Gurbeen Bhasin is the president and founder of Aangen Community Centre, a self-sustaining organization that provides vulnerable families in the community with immigration, counselling, housing, food and legal resources.

Isa Melo is the founder and editor of *Etc&tal* magazine, a periodic publication for Brazilian and Portuguese communities. This publication was awarded as the best ethnic magazine in Canada in 2011, 2012 and 2014.

I also want to take this time to personally thank the MPP for Brampton–Springdale, Harinder Mahli, for attending my event and engaging with the female community leaders about women's issues.

I am so proud to represent these fantastic leading women and organizations in Davenport.

### CAREFIRST SENIORS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSOCIATION

**Ms. Soo Wong:** This year marks the 40th anniversary of Carefirst Seniors and Community Services Association, a non-profit charitable organization headquartered in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, with nine satellite offices across Toronto, Peel and York region. This organization provides quality one-stop multi-services to over 10,000 seniors and adults with physical disabilities in the GTA annually.

Carefirst takes an interdisciplinary approach to deliver comprehensive preventive, primary, acute and long-term-care services in the community. This all-under-one-roof model allows frail seniors to remain independent and in a home as long as possible.

Besides the 40th anniversary, Carefirst recently moved into their 52,000-square-foot state-of-the-art building to better provide a variety of community-based programs like chronic disease management, adult day programs, elder abuse prevention and intervention, wellness programs, exercise classes, reducing seniors' isolation and a transitional care centre.

Like any successful organization, Carefirst has a dedicated staff of volunteers who are committed to providing quality social, health and supportive services to seniors and adults with disabilities.

I want to thank all the Carefirst staff and over 1,200 active volunteers for caring for their clients and putting their needs first.

### GLORIA RICHARDS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Before we move on, between 1 o'clock and 3 o'clock, we had a very special occasion to honour someone I believe all members appreciate and respect and understand.

In the Speaker's gallery today is someone who has retired after 42 years working here. She has brought with her friends and family from as far away as Jamaica to visit her, and she was kind enough to come back so that we could say goodbye. I know that the members would join me in thanking and wishing her well: Gloria Richards.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I do want to let you know that between 1 o'clock and 3 o'clock, I shook hands with her and we now have a deal. I'm going to be the ghostwriter and she's going to write a book about all the Speakers and the people she's known here. I get the preamble and the last chapter; the last chapter's about a page long, but Steve Peters has two chapters about what he's done.

Anyway, as you can see, a very kind welcome and thank you very much, Gloria, for all the work that you've done for the province of Ontario.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London on a point of order.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Speaker, I'm glad you gave me a few more minutes, because I know I took some time introducing.

Aside from my favourite Liberal, Joan Peters, who's here today, we have Karen McDade, also from St. Thomas. I didn't even recognize Brigitte Cosens—I mentioned Don Cosens and Mark Cosens—but we've got to have Aubrey Cosens stand up. Aubrey is 12 and carries a wreath every Remembrance Day for a family member who is a Victoria Cross winner. There's a bridge in Nipissing's riding named after your family member. Welcome, Aubrey. Thank you for coming and seeing what legislation is all about.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I definitely appreciate the camaraderie that's being displayed, so I want to blame Steve Peters for Aubrey's ability to wear red Converse shoes all the time. I just wanted to let that be known. There's an inside story for that. I'm older than Steve and I wore red Connies way before he ever wore them.

I thank all members for their statements and their kind reception of Gloria.

1520

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### WORKERS DAY OF MOURNING ACT, 2016

#### LOI DE 2016 SUR LE JOUR DE DEUIL POUR LES TRAVAILLEURS

Mr. Hatfield moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 180, An Act to proclaim a Workers Day of Mourning / Projet de loi 180, Loi proclamant un Jour de deuil pour les travailleurs.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** The bill proclaims April 28 in each year as a Workers Day of Mourning. In 1988, the Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a resolution recognizing April 28 as a day of mourning for workers, to remember those who had been killed, injured or suffered disease on the job. It also serves as a day to protect the living by strengthening our commitment to health and safety to all workplaces.

Raised awareness is necessary, however; not enough is being done within our MUSH sector to recognize this day. We need more institutions mandated to recognize this day by lowering their flags. This bill requires that all Canadian and Ontario flags outside the legislative building, government of Ontario buildings and other buildings such as city and town halls, schools, universities, colleges and hospitals be flown at half-mast on the day of mourning, April 28 of each year.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The deputy House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Minister?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice of ballot items 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31 be waived.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Bradley moves that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice of ballot items 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31 be waived. Do we agree? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** It's a pleasure for me today to rise in this Legislature to announce the next important steps in the transformation of Ontario's correctional system.

Transforming our correctional system is a priority for our government because we recognize that the status quo cannot continue. We know that we must address the systemic issues around corrections, creating a system that truly improves staff and inmate safety, enhances rehabilitation and reintegration programs, and strengthens inmate mental health supports to build safer communities for all. Simply put, our transformation is about putting the correctional part back in correctional services.

We also know that our correctional services staff, including our correctional officers and probation and parole officers, are the backbone of our correctional system. I have had the honour and privilege as minister to tour correctional institutions in our province and have seen the incredible job that our corrections staff do on a daily basis to keep inmates, our institutions and our communities safe.

Our government also recognizes that hiring additional correctional officers must be the first step in this transformation. That work is already under way. In fact, we have already hired 710 new correctional officers since 2013, and we are just getting started.

Earlier this week, I was proud to visit the Ontario Correctional Services College in Hamilton and meet the newest group of 140 correctional officer recruits. Seeing these new recruits prepare for their future is always an inspiring sight. These men and women have chosen to dedicate their careers to keeping our communities safe. They will bring professionalism, commitment and passion to their work, and we need more just like them.

While I was there, Speaker, I was pleased to announce our new correctional officer recruitment and training strategy. Under this plan, we will be hiring 2,000 new correctional officers over the next three years. Each and every one of these new correctional officers represents a strong correctional system, more effective rehabilitative programming and enhanced mental health supports. And they will be a reflection of Ontario itself, because we know that the best path to reach out to an offender in our custody—and to be seen as a role model—is for front-

line employees to represent and understand Ontario's diverse population.

We will also address cultural shifts in the inmate population, including the unique needs of female and aboriginal communities.

All new correctional officer recruits go through a thorough assessment process and must successfully complete a rigorous eight-week training program before being deployed to one of our correctional facilities. Those eight weeks include vital mental health training and inmate management techniques. The education of all correctional officers continues with ongoing job training throughout their professional careers. This is how we ensure that Ontario has the best of the best serving our communities by meeting the complex needs of inmates on the front line.

I was also pleased to announce the next intake of 17 new probation and parole officers that will start on April 4, because we know the vital role our probation and parole officers play in helping turn people's lives around and providing them with hope, opportunity and a chance to be a part of building an even safer place to call home.

Hiring 2,000 new correctional officers, in addition to the 710 we have already hired since 2013, is central to the government's transformation of Ontario's correctional system—to upgrade correctional facilities, increase staff and inmate safety, improve rehabilitation and community reintegration programs, enhance mental health supports, and significantly reduce the potential for inmates to reoffend.

Speaker, I am proud of these efforts, and I ask that members of this House recognize the tremendous job being done by our correctional, probation and parole officers, and welcome those who are training to follow in their footsteps.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Responses?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's a privilege to respond, on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and our leader, Patrick Brown, to the minister's statement on the transformation of corrections. We're pleased that the government is starting to comprehend the severity of the crisis in corrections, after the opposition has repeatedly called for action.

Patrick Brown, our leader, and myself have given our full support to Ontario's correctional staff, touring numerous facilities and repeatedly calling for immediate action regarding the deplorable conditions of many of our province's jails and detention centres, as well as pressing the government to improve safety, not only for our correction officers but also for our probation, parole and bailiff officers. I would be remiss, Speaker, if I didn't mention the safety of inmates as well.

We have continually spoken out on behalf of all correctional staff, with an emphasis on addressing chronic understaffing, and offering support for all staff suffering from PTSD—post-traumatic stress disorder.

I applaud the minister for committing to bring in more correctional officers, but I have concerns about the extended time frames for these hires. We need additional

staff now, not in three years. A staggering number of lockdowns have occurred due to chronic understaffing of correctional services. Not only does this abuse the basic human rights of inmates, many of whom have yet to be sentenced, but it also jeopardizes the health and safety of officers dealing with agitated inmate populations while being short-staffed.

For too long, our correctional officers have been faced with the challenge of heading out the door in the morning without knowing if they will return at the end of the day. We also know the tremendous toll that takes. Our friends in corrections are among the most likely to experience significant challenges from post-traumatic stress disorder, and that applies to all staff.

**1530**

Our caucus was pleased when the government finally introduced its own bill on PTSD, but we were baffled when the government left probation and parole officers and bailiffs out of their PTSD bill.

I've seen the pride that each correctional officer has for their job, their sworn duty to protect not only their brothers and sisters but also inmates as well as the public. I've also seen the frustration on their faces as they discuss Ontario's broken corrections system.

An alarming number of stabbings have occurred at the province's jails and detention centres, and I'm hopeful that the government will be considering expanding its successful pilot program of using body scanners to detect weapons that go undetected by traditional scanners, such as ceramics.

Ontario's crisis in corrections is not simply about understaffing; it's also about taking safety matters seriously. It's also about fixing the fundamental lack of respect shown to correctional, probation and parole officers across the province. We know that this must change.

Safety concerns raised by front-line staff must be welcomed and encouraged by the government. Instead, we have seen a government that has tried unsuccessfully to muzzle correctional staff. We will not be silenced. This must change.

When I raised the question on behalf of concerned correctional officers about alarming safety issues at the province's crown jewel facility, the Toronto South Detention Centre, it didn't take long for all staff members to receive a warning about confidentiality.

The minister is saying some very good things about the transformation of corrections, and to his credit, this government has in fact taken some very positive steps. But until trust can be restored between correctional staff and the ministry, the crisis in corrections will continue. It will be a long journey for the government to regain the lost trust of its correctional staff, but on behalf of the entire PC caucus, we will be there every step of the way to ensure that commitments are honoured and that the crisis in corrections is fully and properly addressed.

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

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm glad to be the NDP critic for community safety and correctional services and

to respond to the minister's statement on transforming corrections.

Speaker, I've travelled around the province and have visited 15 of our jails and about half a dozen of our probation and parole offices. I saw dire need, I saw deplorable living and working conditions and saw first-hand what government neglect looks like.

During the years of purposeful neglect and the short-sighted hiring freeze, staffing levels have fallen, workload has increased, and conditions have deteriorated. We need sufficient levels of staff or jails can't run efficiently, effectively or safely.

Lockdowns, lack of programming, and limited access to visits, showers and yard put unbelievable strain on everyone living and working in our facilities.

Hiring is clearly part of the story, but, Speaker, they can't just hire a set number and then stop, or we will eventually be right back here. A responsible employer would make sure staffing levels are appropriate as officers and managers leave the job or retire. All jails need to re-evaluate their base staffing needs—managers and officers—and ensure that the levels meet the workload demand and specific needs of each jail or facility.

Workload and caseload issues need attention. Probation and parole officers in Ontario have the highest caseloads in Canada. They're high-stress service providers who keep track of all of our former offenders and do their best to keep our communities safe, with insufficient resources. This is a government that piles and piles on the stress and casework but does nothing to ensure the system works well.

During Bill 163 submissions, it became clear to me that this ministry doesn't seem to know what the job actually entails. Perhaps as part of the system transformation, the government can figure that out.

Remember that almost everyone who goes into our provincial jails comes out and tries to reintegrate into our communities. We want that to be successful. We want them not to reoffend. We don't want them to come out worse than they went in, but they are. Things are so bad that judges are reducing sentences because of the harsh and punishing conditions.

Speaker, we read about deaths, violence and overdoses on a regular basis in our jails. Correctional officers and inmates are suffering the effects of a violent and unsafe environment. At Bill 163 hearings, we learned about the devastating effects of PTSD on our first responders, but don't forget the inmates, who live under constant threat of violence and trauma and then have to successfully reintegrate into our neighbourhoods.

This is a terrible situation. But the government can do something about it. For over a year, there has been a body scanner pilot project at Toronto South Detention Centre. Metal detectors don't pick up drugs, lighter flints or ceramic knives. Our jails are full of weapons and drugs, Speaker. I've seen a body scanner scan that showed a lighter and a three-inch ceramic blade carefully smuggled inside someone's person. Body scanners are

necessary. They would keep weapons and drugs out of our facilities.

The minister has my letter asking for timelines and formal commitment on body scanners and metal detectors in P&P offices; I'm looking forward to the reply. Officers need the appropriate tools to keep up with the threat. So, Minister, is safety going to be part of this transformation?

Officers also need current and effective training: suicide awareness, CPR, first aid, mental health, breathing apparatus, community escort, and the list goes on. Training may not be transformative or shiny and new, but it is necessary. Cut a training ribbon if you need to, but get the expired training up to date across the province.

Our jails are not silos. They are part of our society and social systems. When this government eviscerates our health care system and shuts down psychiatric beds in our communities, like another 25 beds in North Bay, those who struggle the most with mental health are the most vulnerable and they often find themselves on our streets and, more often than not, in our justice and correctional systems. Jails are not appropriate places for our mentally ill community members. They're unsafe and they deserve appropriate care in our communities so that they don't end up warehoused or segregated in our jails.

We do need to have a very real conversation about segregation. This government can't point at the inappropriate or problematic use of isolation without pointing at itself. When they have closed the beds and cut supports, they have to take responsibility for the consequences. Isolation exacerbates mental health issues, but many mentally ill inmates would be in very real physical danger if they were in the general population. So what's the solution? The answer isn't in our jails. What will this government do to fix the problem that they have worked so quietly to create? Cutting psychiatric services doesn't get rid of the problem; it just locks it away.

A careful look at our justice system and the process has to happen. As the minister talked about, inmates across our jails are on remand in massive numbers. A re-evaluation and close look at our bail system clearly has to happen, but those pieces fit with the others that I've discussed.

Actions have consequences, but so does inaction. As this government is realizing, this government can talk all day about transformation and rehabilitation, but it doesn't matter if they don't address the foundational issues. Nothing secure can be built if we don't make sure that we have a solid foundation.

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

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made in the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mrs.

Gretzky assumes ballot item number 31 and Ms. Campbell assumes ballot item number 43.

It's now time for petitions.

## PETITIONS

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** "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 agree with this petition, sign it, and will give it to page Khushali.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Miss Monique Taylor:** The doctors have been quite busy because I have more petitions of the same.

"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 couldn't agree with this more. I'm going to sign my name to it and give it to page Jack to bring to the table.

## ELDER ABUSE

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

"Whereas today, there are more seniors 65 and over than children under the age of 15, both in Ontario and across Canada;

**1540**

"Whereas there are currently more than two million seniors aged 65 and over—approximately 15% of the population and this number is expected to double in the next 25 years;

"Whereas Elder Abuse Ontario stated that between 40,000 and 200,000 seniors living in Ontario experienced or are experiencing elder abuse;

"Whereas research showed that abuse against seniors takes many forms and is often perpetrated by family members;

"Whereas financial and emotional abuse are the most frequently reported elder abuse cases;

"Whereas current Ontario legislation incorporates the Residents' Bill of Rights, mandates abuse prevention, investigation and reporting of seniors living in either long-term-care facilities or retirement homes;

"Whereas the majority of the seniors currently and in the future live in the community;

"Whereas Bill 148, if passed, will ensure seniors living in the community have the same protection and support as those seniors living in long-term-care facilities and retirement homes;

"Whereas Bill 148, if passed, will require regulated health professionals to report elder abuse or neglect to the public guardian and trustee office;

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

"That the members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly pass Bill 148, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, requiring health professionals to report any reasonable suspicion that a senior living in the community is being abused or neglected to the public guardian and trustee office."

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

### SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

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

"Whereas demonstrative schools in Ontario provide incredible necessary support for children with special education needs; and

"Whereas the current review by the government of Ontario of demonstrative schools and other special education programs has placed a freeze on student intake and the hiring of teaching staff;

"Whereas children in need of specialized education and their parents require access to demonstrative schools and other essential support services;

“Whereas the freezing of student intake is unacceptable as it leaves the most vulnerable students behind;

“Whereas the situation could result in the closure of many specialized education programs, depriving children with special needs of their best opportunity to learn;

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

“To immediately reinstate funding streams for demonstrative schools and other specialized education services for the duration of the review and to commit to ensuring every student in need is allowed the chance to receive an education and achieve their potential.”

I agree with this and am passing it off to page Sohan.

### LUNG HEALTH

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition. I give my petition to page Lauren.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** “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 agree with this, sign my name to it and give it to page Chandise.

### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Miss Monique Taylor:** “Petition to Stop the Plan to Increase Senior Drug Costs.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario will require most seniors to pay significantly more for prescription drugs, starting on August 1st, 2016, under changes to the Ontario Drug Benefit;

“Whereas most seniors will be required to pay a higher annual deductible of \$170 and higher copayments each and every time they fill a prescription at their pharmacy;

“Whereas the average Ontario senior requires at least eight different types of drugs each year to stay healthy and maintain their independence; and

“Whereas many seniors on fixed incomes simply cannot afford to pay more for prescription drugs and should not be forced to skip medications that they can no longer afford and to put their health in jeopardy;

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

“Stop the government’s plans to make most Ontario seniors pay more for necessary prescription drugs and instead work to expand prescription drug coverage for all Ontarians.”

I couldn’t agree with this more. I’m going to give it to page Cooper to bring to the table.

### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas a growing number of Ontarians are concerned about the growth in low-wage, part-time, casual, temporary and insecure employment; and

“Whereas too many workers are not protected by the minimum standards outlined in existing employment and labour laws; and

“Whereas the Ontario government is currently engaging in a public consultation to review and improve employment and labour laws in the province;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement a decent work agenda by making sure that Ontario’s labour and employment laws:

“—require all workers be entitled to a starting wage that reflects a uniform, provincial minimum, regardless of a worker’s age, job or sector of employment;

“—promote full-time, permanent work with adequate hours for all those who choose it;

“—ensure part-time, temporary, casual and contract workers receive the same pay and benefits as their full-time, permanent counterparts;

“—provide at least seven (7) days of paid sick leave each year;

“—support job security for workers when companies or contracts change ownership;

“—prevent employers from downloading their responsibilities for minimum standards onto temp agencies, subcontractors or workers themselves;

“—extend minimum protections to all workers by eliminating exemptions to the laws;

“—protect workers who stand up for their rights;

“—offer proactive enforcement of laws, supported by adequate public staffing and meaningful penalties for employers who violate the law;

“—make it easier for workers to join unions; and

“—ensure all workers are paid at least \$15 an hour.”

I agree with this petition and I give to it Jack to deliver.

#### HYDRO RATES

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Liberal government wasted \$2 billion, according to the Auditor General, on the flawed smart meter program; and

“Whereas the recent announcement to sell 60% of Hydro One and, in contravention of the law, use the proceeds to finance the building of infrastructure and not contribute the full amount to pay down the \$27-billion existing hydro debt; and

“Whereas with the removal of the Clean Energy Benefit, any increase in energy rates starting in May 2015 will see average household hydro bills increasing an additional \$205 per year; and

“Whereas home heating and electricity are a necessity for families in Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government’s mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario’s power consumers, including families, farmers and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity.”

I support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page MacFarlane to take to the table.

#### CAREGIVERS

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are over 2.6 million caregivers to a family member, a friend or a neighbour in Ontario;

**1550**

“Whereas these caregivers work hard to provide care to those that are most in need even though their efforts are often overlooked;

“Whereas one third of informal caregivers are distressed, which is twice as many as four years ago;

“Whereas without these caregivers, the health care system and patients would greatly suffer in Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support MPP Gélinas’s bill to proclaim the first Tuesday of every April as Family Caregiver Day to increase recognition and awareness of family caregivers in Ontario.”

I fully support the petition and give it to page Sohan.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“The recent decision by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services to put an end to funding for sheltered workshops and special employment services for people with special needs in Ontario. Community Living Chatham-Kent now supports 475 people and their families and employs more than 250 people. The Ministry of Community and Social Services provides 90% of the funding with the remainder coming from donations, fundraising activities, grants and foundations.

“We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now and put a stop to this decision and reinstate the funding and programs to their previous state.”

I approve of this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Terry.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** “Petition to Stop the Plan to Increase Senior Drug Costs.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario will require most seniors to pay significantly more for prescription drugs, starting on August 1st, 2016, under changes to the Ontario Drug Benefit;

“Whereas most seniors will be required to pay a higher annual deductible of \$170 and higher copayments each and every time they fill a prescription at their pharmacy;

“Whereas the average Ontario senior requires at least eight different types of drugs each year to stay healthy and maintain their independence; and

“Whereas many seniors on fixed incomes simply cannot afford to pay more for prescription drugs and should not be forced to skip medications that they can no longer afford and to put their health in jeopardy;

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

“Stop the government’s plans to make most Ontario seniors pay more for necessary prescription drugs and instead work to expand prescription drug coverage for all Ontarians.”

I agree with the petition and I’ll sign it.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SUPPLY ACT, 2016

#### LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2016

Mr. Gravelle, on behalf of Ms. Matthews, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 166, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016 / Projet de loi 166, Loi autorisant l’utilisation de certaines sommes pour l’exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2016.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Mr. Gravelle.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** The member for Etobicoke Centre will be speaking on behalf of the government. I just really wanted to say that, obviously, this is an important act, in terms of getting our expenditures paid for the end of the year. I’m certainly hopeful that all members of the Legislature will be supportive of this so that this important action can be taken.

I will now pass it off, if I may, to the member for Etobicoke Centre.

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

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I’m pleased to rise to discuss Bill 166, the Supply Act. As I was heckling the minister, I said, “How can we possibly support this? The people of Ontario don’t trust you with their money.” That will be the theme of what I speak about for the next 20 minutes. I’ll be sharing the time with the member from Lanark.

Quite frankly, and quite seriously, this government has been mired in waste, mismanagement and scandals. The people of Ontario have been speaking loudly and clearly about the fact that Ontario has become too expensive for them to live in. A couple of days ago, on March 21, my office sent me an email. My staff sent me this and said, “Vic, we just got a call from a fellow who asked to remain anonymous. He said that he and his wife just moved back here from 20 years being out west. They have five university degrees between them. They were shocked at how much hydro has gone up, how little jobs still pay and how much rent costs, when compared to housing. Also, they couldn’t find a doctor. So they’re moving back out west.”

Speaker, that’s one email. It’s just a reality that this government has made Ontario far too expensive. This last budget has hurt the population of Ontario, and people, quite frankly, just don’t trust this government with their money any longer.

I’m going to read you a letter, Speaker. This lady did give me permission to read her letter in the Legislature. Her name is Wendy Milne. She lives in my riding. She said:

“Hello, Vic,

“Firstly, I want to thank you for doing anything you can do to help seniors with the new drug proposed changes, which include raising the deductible from \$100 to \$170, as well as the copayment on individual drugs.”

Wendy goes on to say, “This is definitely going to create a hardship for myself and my husband, as we are seniors living on a low income. We both have chronic diseases that require numerous meds. We are over the max ceiling of \$32,300 by \$100. Sad state of affairs for seniors who have worked all their lives and paid income tax. We have had to sell our property, because we could no longer afford to maintain our home.”

This is an unsolicited letter. Wendy is somebody who just sent this—

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** Sure it was.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, I will not put up with this nonsense from that side again. This is Wendy Milne, who wrote a letter. If you don’t want to listen to Wendy Milne, then maybe our team will listen to Wendy Milne.

Speaker, they also heckled me when I read this letter from the Legion a few minutes ago. Now, if they want to heckle the Legions of Ontario, that’s fine. Heckle away.

Here’s what I read on the same topic in members’ statements. I realize, Speaker, that doubling the cost of drugs for 92% of seniors in Ontario really hurts this government. They’ve jumped into something; they’re looking for nickels and dimes and under the couch to try to pay for their waste, their scandal and their mismanagement, and that’s how they respond to Wendy Milne in North Bay.

Here is how they responded to the Legion. We’ll hear if they heckle again. This is the member’s statement I read a few minutes ago.

Families across this province are angry at this government’s decision to double the drug cost for 92% of all seniors. At a recent Royal Canadian Legion convention held in Dunchurch, North Bay’s Preston Quirt and Jim Thompson brought forth a motion expressing their displeasure. It reads:

“Whereas the proposed Ontario budget will have a drastic effect on the health and lifestyle of our senior population and may force more seniors into poverty;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the members of the Royal Canadian Legion attending the Zone H2 convention, strongly urge the provincial government to reconsider the changes to the Ontario Drug Benefit Program in their proposed budget.”

Speaker, I’m glad we didn’t have the Legion heckled this particular time.

Debra Cooper Burger, chair of OANHSS, a seniors' organization—come on, heckle away—was clear yesterday when she told our finance committee that seniors will be forced to choose between buying food instead of medication. That's what we heard. Our seniors rely on their medications to stay healthy and out of the hospital. Our most vulnerable deserve better.

**1600**

I ended my member's statement by saying that, I call on the Premier to stop making seniors pay for her government's waste, mismanagement and scandal, and to repeal the seniors' drug tax.

We're hearing from a large group of people. Whether it's the single person, Wendy Milne, whether it's Debra Cooper Burger of the seniors' organization, or whether it's the members of the Canadian Legion, we're hearing loud and clear that they no longer have faith in this government. They cannot tolerate the fact that they're doubling the drug plan for—

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** That is so misleading.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** You can drink all the Kool-Aid you want in the back row over there. They're doubling the drug plan, and it's obvious that these people disrespect Wendy and Debra and the Legion members, who have voiced their opinion loudly and clearly.

There was a time in Ontario, Speaker, where families looked forward to their golden years. This government is robbing them of those future memories. That's what we have to hear from this government.

It's obvious that the people of Ontario are speaking and do not care for this government and their punitive methods of making up for their waste, their mismanagement and their scandals by taking this money from seniors and families and cancelling the Children's Activity Tax Credit. They're taking the money from kids' sports—soccer, YMCAs. That's where they're digging in the couch for pocket change, to try to make up for the billions that they waste every day, every month and every year. It's a billion dollars a month, just on interest, for the bloated debt that this government has created.

When this government took office, debt in Ontario—it took 137 years for our debt to hit \$139 billion. It took 137 years to get there. This government has doubled that debt in 10 years, and now it will rise to \$308 billion after 13 years. That's unconscionable, the debt—the burden—that they've put on families. They have a Supply Act asking us to approve their money. Are you kidding? Not a chance, when they have proved that they cannot manage the money that the taxpayers give them. It is absolutely unconscionable that they do that.

Let's talk about some of the things that they're doing in this budget and where they're getting this money that they want to spend. Of course, they've gone to the usual sources: the sin taxes, the alcohol and tobacco taxes. They've done that. It's kind of an interesting thing how, during the last budget, they decided to sell Hydro One. One of the most heinous things that they did was put Hydro One up for sale, but again, under the guise that it will be used for transit. We now know—and it has been

proven by all financial institutions, and in fact the media have finally started suggesting—the actual fact from the Financial Accountability Officer that the money is going to artificially balance their deficit for two years.

The accountability officer has warned us that when that charade is over two years from now, and we no longer have that money coming in, the deficit will go right back up, because we have a structural deficit in this province. That's why the people will not approve of this Supply Act: because they have a structural deficit. That means it's built in; it's baked in. Their spending is higher than the revenue that they're receiving.

They're going to mask it for a couple of years with the sale of Hydro One—we've seen that—but that will end. The Financial Accountability Officer has told us that that will end in two years. You're going to have two years of pats on the back, and then, shortly thereafter—boom—you're right back, because you have not resolved the structural deficit that this government has created.

They're doing the same thing now with the cap-and-trade tax. They are taking that money and they are putting it right into the general revenue. They will be using it—ostensibly using it—for all programs that are already approved and already budgeted for. This is simply going to replace money that's already been committed. We've seen that; we now know that. We saw it in the actual bill. Schedule 1 of the bill itemizes the items that the money can be used for, and there it is, plain as day: vehicles, subways, subway vehicles as well—a list of everything that's already in the budget. That's why they have not increased the annual expenditure on infrastructure. They're merely using that money to put it in infrastructure and the money that was already there will be coming out. That's how they're going to be balancing the budget, and that's why we will never approve a supply bill from this particular government.

If you look at some of the other things that they're going to be doing, I talked about taking away the Children's Activity Tax Credit. I mean, how low do you have to go? Let me add the next item: the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit. I remember when they brought that in with great fanfare and how important it was and the photo ops. Boom, now it's gone. They got their day in the sun out of it and now it's gone. The child activity tax credit: Imagine that that's where you have to go in the province of Ontario to dig away at those vital tax credits that were once in place.

Of course, as we've said many, many times, if you look at page 191 and page 192 of the budget, you'll see that they're going to be increasing vehicle licensing—your vehicle licence, your driver's licence itself—special event permits, hunting and fishing licences, camping in provincial parks. Again, they're chipping away at the edges here. They're literally looking through the couch for nickels and dimes to try to think, "How can we make up for our multibillion-dollar deficit and all the sins of the past?" They're going to be making families, children and seniors pay for their waste, their mismanagement and their scandals. That's exactly what this government is doing, and that's just reprehensible.

If you look very closely at the budget, you're going to see what one of the results of this is. The Ministry of Finance themselves, in last year's budget, projected that jobs will be created in Ontario: 93,000 jobs, they said, would be created in 2016. Because they've put all those punitive taxes on children, seniors, and families, because all of those tax credits are gone and all of those other fees are going up, this will take millions out of the economy. And because of that, their own Ministry of Finance now has readjusted their job forecast for this year, down from the 93,000 originally forecast to 78,000. Because costs are going to be going up, and people will not have the money to spend that they originally were going to have, businesses are going to suffer and they're going to have layoffs and jobs will not be created. They've reduced their projection by 15,000 jobs. That is a number that's in the budget. It's not something we dispute. We agree that their punitive action is causing these job losses.

In fact, they also took last year's number, where they predicted a 1.3% increase in employment, and downgraded their own prediction to 1.1%. All of the added costs in this budget are going to reduce disposable income, they're going to depress consumer spending and cost the people of Ontario jobs. That's in their own document. That's not something that we would argue. These are some of the reasons why we can never support this government's supply bill.

I think one of the most concerning items that we have is what they've done to the energy sector. We heard from the Auditor General just in December, where she told us that they could have put in the same amount of green energy that they have put in today if they hadn't changed the contracts to this overly generous contract. We could have had the same amount of green energy for \$9.2 billion less. Can you imagine what we could have done in the province of Ontario with this extra \$9.2 billion? If I said "million" earlier, I apologize; it's "billion." This is the one that we hear most from people, their energy bills, where they just can't seem to make it.

I held a session in North Bay for seniors last week when I was home on constituency week, and Bonnie Beam was one of the seniors who came into my office. She told the media how she can only turn the heat on in her bathroom because the cost of hydro is, in her words, "astronomical." That's the only room she can afford to heat. She also told the media that her heat is turned off in the bedrooms. When the temperature drops below minus 30 degrees, she "might turn the heat on a little in the kitchen."

**1610**

This is the Ontario that this government has created. It was not the Ontario they stepped into in 2003, when our debt-to-GDP was a respectable and admirable 27%. Today, it's an embarrassing 40%. What that means in plain language is that we grew our expenses faster than the economy grew. Our debt grew because we spend more money than we take in. Our debt grew faster than the economy grew. Our debt-to-GDP skyrocketed to almost 40% today. That's awful when you look at world

standards and look what they inherited when they took office. Our debt-to-GDP was 27% and today it's almost 40%. This is the mismanagement that I speak about.

We talk about waste. You think of the smart meter program: \$1 billion, they announced. Now it turns out, according to the Auditor General, it's \$2 billion and the things don't work. They get no data coming in to help them make the decisions.

They say, "Vic, what do you mean when you talk about waste, mismanagement and scandal?" I could look at just the energy sector alone and give you waste, mismanagement and scandal. Sadly, it's now pervasive. It's in every one of the ministries: SAMS, if you remember that scandal; the MaRS scandal; and, of course, the gas plant scandal, which some would call the mother of all scandals, but I'm not even sure that that is accurate.

Speaker, I tell you, we bring these things out into this Legislature and talk about them, and we have to put up with the mocking and the huffing and the puffing and the eye-rolling, but I'll tell you, I remember the day, standing here, when we asked the government, on the gas plant scandal—I'm talking about why the people don't trust this government with their money. I remember, in the gas plant scandal, right—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It's a little noisy in the backroom there.

Continue.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I remember, in the gas plant scandal, when we asked the government how much it was going to cost to cancel the two gas plants, and the answer came back: \$40 million. I remember looking at the numbers and—we're talking about waste, mismanagement and scandal, and this kind of incorporates all of them in one—I remember saying, "Forty million dollars? That just doesn't seem right." Our whole caucus got together and thought, "This can't be practical." So we all dug into this, and a lot of our staff dug into this. We began to put a series of numbers together.

I remember getting the number; it was about \$890 million, at the time that our party assembled that, in terms of the cost. I remember standing here in the Legislature and saying to the Premier, "We don't believe the \$40 million. In fact, our number today, with what we now know, is \$890 million, but we think it's going to go higher." I remember saying, "It will cost more than \$1 billion," and I remember the laughter over there and the Inspector Clouseau lines and all the smug remarks that came from over there. I remember the Premier of the day saying, "Oh, now it's \$1 billion. Why not \$2 billion? Why not \$10 billion?", and laughter. Of course, the Auditor General comes out and says that it's \$1.1 billion.

This is exactly why we talk about waste, mismanagement and scandal. That's all we seem to get from this government, and that is exactly why. We can stand here. We all have thick skins; we're all elected. We can take the heckles and the barbs that come from the other side, but the people of Ontario have had enough. And the huffing—we can take that too. The people of Ontario are the ones who have had enough.

Their huffing doesn't cover over the fact that Bonnie Beam can only afford to heat her bathroom. She can't turn the heat on in her bedrooms. That's Bonnie—what she told the media last week. That's the Ontario that we live in today: Families have to choose between whether to heat or eat. That's unconscionable. And now, according to Debra Cooper Burger, families will have to make the decision of whether to eat or buy their medications. This is what it has come to in the province of Ontario. This is a terribly sad state of affairs, and that is why we will not support this government's supply bill.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's always an honour to stand in this House. Today we're talking about the Supply Act. We're not really talking about the budget that was just presented. We're talking about allowing the government to finish the damage from last year's budget. Does anybody recall the title of last year's budget? It was Building Ontario Up, and in parentheses it should have said "and selling it off piece by piece," because last year is when they started the sale of Hydro One. I believe they've sold 15%. What makes that such a terrible mistake is that Hydro One actually brings revenue to the province. They're selling off their own revenue tools. I'm a farmer, and that's like selling the cows to pay for the feed, so you have no more cows left and you lose the farm. That's pretty simple math. Why they're doing that is to try to make it look like they're going to balance the books. That's the simple fact of the matter. They're selling assets like Hydro One to make it look like they're going to pay off the deficit.

The electricity file in this province, for lack of a better word, is an incredible mess.

I spend a lot of time in the House listening. I'm the whip, so I spend quite a bit of time in the House. Yesterday, I heard the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, and I can't remember what he was commenting on, but he was surprised because some of our comments—it seemed like we were living in a different province. Well, Speaker, I'm from northern Ontario, and a lot of times we feel like it's a different province.

I'll give you some examples. I'm not sure that my daughter is going to appreciate me talking about her, but my daughter Steph works in northern Ontario. She and her partner have a condo in Etobicoke and they rent it out. In a casual conversation with her partner, R.J.—we were talking a couple of days ago about the hydro bill for the condo, and he was pleasantly surprised because they had leased it out and the hydro bill went down from \$32 a month to \$26. He was pleasantly surprised. We took a look at my hydro bill—granted, a condo is smaller than my house; I have a 1,200-square foot bungalow. I heat with wood, and my hydro bill is \$250 a month. Why? It's because of the delivery charge. Yet the Minister of Energy goes on and on about how we have the lowest hydro rates and blah blah blah. Well, do you know what? In northern Ontario, in rural Ontario, people are being driven out of their homes by energy costs. That isn't the

case, I've learned—because my daughter in Etobicoke certainly is not being driven out of her condo by energy costs. There's a huge difference. Let's say her condo is half the size of my house, so let's double her bill: That's 50 bucks, and that's with heat. There's something really, really wrong, Speaker. That's why people are being driven out of rural Ontario. It doesn't look like this government understands that, because we keep hearing things like "Well, no, we've got low energy costs, and we've got"—no, we don't. When you take the overall bill—and don't pick this and don't pick that; take the bill, what people actually have to pay—it's astronomical for people in rural Ontario. That's the problem. That is the crux of the issue for energy costs. And that cascades over into businesses who want to create jobs in this province. It's the same thing.

1620

But the example of my daughter's condo and my house, when I heat with wood—and I make a good buck. I'm not complaining about my salary, but there are all kinds of people in my riding and throughout rural Ontario who live in an equivalent house to mine, who are happy to be able to make the payments on the house, and they cannot afford that.

We look at what's happening now with this budget. Take seniors' prescription drug costs. They can say, "Well, there are so many hundred thousands who are going to benefit," but the basic fact of the matter is that the majority are going to pay more, and a lot of those people can't afford it because they're right on the tipping point of how much that's going to cost. This government can say we're wrong, but that's the fact of the matter from our perspective.

It's the same as what they're telling us: "We've got the lowest hydro rates in all of"—and they named all the provinces this morning, and they named the states. Well, not for people in northern Ontario, I'm sorry. That, quite frankly, is not the truth.

I'm trying to word this—

**Interjection:** Let it rest, John, let it rest.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Take your time.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** We're still dealing with the damage of the last budget. I'm going to back up for the last budget again, because this one I just can't let go. I should make better notes like Vic here, but I'm kind of an off-the-cuff guy.

We keep being told in the last budget, "We're selling off Hydro One to build transit infrastructure." Never has another government before built transit infrastructure. This is a whole new concept. Up until now, we've all been on dirt roads in Ontario, but that's beside the point.

But while we hear all this loud-and-proud about transit infrastructure—and we believe there should be more transit. I live here six months a year; I don't begrudge people in the GTA that they need better transit. I don't begrudge them a bit. But while we hear from the government, "You know what? We're going to build transit infrastructure and that's why we're selling Hydro One," you know what happens in my part of the world? You

close transit infrastructure. You close bus stations. You cancel bus routes. You couldn't cancel the train because you already did that.

So again, what we feel in rural Ontario—specifically in northern Ontario—is much different from what we hear. That's why people don't believe, because they've been through this before. We've lived it. We hear one thing, but what we see and what we feel is totally the opposite.

I'll give you another example, Speaker. In the latest budget, we understand there's going to be a tax as part of the carbon cap-and-trade—the word “scheme” comes to mind but I don't want to call it a scheme. I want to call it something more dignified than a scheme, because we believe that there is an issue with carbon and that it has to be fixed. But the first part of that was a tax on gasoline. Great. You guys want to put a tax on gasoline. If we had options in rural Ontario other than taking the car—but we don't. So, fine, the price of gas goes up to help with the carbon. Whether I agree or not, I can understand that part so far.

But then there should be an offset for the people who are paying that extra. So the offset—what we hear right at the same time is an announcement of a \$100-million program to help retrofit your home to use less energy, to create less carbon. Okay. The first thing that's announced is that it's going to be administered by Union Gas and Enbridge. You scratch your head and you say, “Okay, since a lot of people in rural Ontario aren't connected to Union or Enbridge, how are they going to access this program?” To our way of thinking, basically, they're not.

When we brought this to the government, it was, “No, no, you guys don't know what you're talking about. This program is accessible to everyone.” Our reaction was, “How?” If you're a customer of Enbridge or Union, you would likely get a little thing along with your statement: “Here's this program and here's how to apply.” So if you buy propane from, in my riding, Grant Propane, or if you burn wood or burn oil, how do you make that connection?

The President of the Treasury Board says, “No, John, you're wrong. It's accessible to everybody.” I said, “Well, how? Are you going to put an ad in the local paper? How are you going to make this program accessible?” Her response was, “Well, you know, maybe we'll have to work on that a bit.” “Okay. I'm willing to live with that.”

I get a call from someone in my riding who is a customer of Union Gas and who contacted Union Gas and wanted to participate in the program. The response from Union Gas is, “Well, currently, we don't really have people in your neck of the woods”—they didn't use those words—“in your area who can actually make this come to fruition.” So even the Union Gas customer can't access the program.

So I go again to the President of the Treasury Board and make her aware of this, and she said, “That's because we just announced this program and we don't really have the details yet on how it's going to work.” Well, you

have the details on how much it's going to cost for the extra gas; why can't you have the details on the other side? People are already—whenever this is going to come in, August 1—people know how much more it's going to cost them to get to work. In my part of the world, you can't take a train. You can't take a bus. Eight months of the year, you can't take a bicycle. So we know we're going to be paying more money to go anywhere.

But, on the flip side, well, *que sera, sera*; it's coming. The program is coming. That is what scares people. Specifically, and I'm speaking for rural Ontario right now, it frightens us, because we've seen other things that were coming down the pipe.

For this carbon thing to work, there has to be a cost. There's going to be a cost, but there has to be a benefit for people to buy in. If you're just going to shake people down for more money, without them seeing any benefit, it's not going to be successful. In the end, we can disagree totally on how to do things but I truly believe that all of us in this House want the province to be successful and want all the people in this province to actually feel like they're part of the province. Right now, Speaker, in my part of the world, people don't feel like they're part of the province. When they hear that our energy costs are low, when we hear that we're building all kinds of transit, and when we hear those things—

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** And roads and bridges and highways—

**Mr. John Vanthof:** And roads and bridges, which we have to drive on—we have no choice. We have no choice but to drive on them.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** In northern Ontario.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** In northern Ontario, because cars are the only thing that we have.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Having a little debate, are we? I think you go through me—as you smile—through me. Thank you.

Continue.

1630

**Mr. John Vanthof:** The Minister of Transportation said that they spend money in northern Ontario on roads and bridges, and they do; we're not denying that. We appreciate it when money is spent in northern Ontario on roads and bridges. But everyone has to realize that that's the only transportation we have, so there's no option.

I'll go back to my daughter who now works in northern Ontario. Down here, she had the option of using public transportation. She laments about the price of gas because she has to drive to work. Again, we're going to put the price of gas up or the price of home heating up to help with the carbon issue. One of the ways it can help, if you put the price of something up, is people will naturally try to find alternatives to use less. That's one of the ways to do it. But if there are no alternatives and if the programs that are announced aren't fully developed, or, quite frankly, aren't developed enough to be believable—I got another quote from the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change yesterday. He said in one of his comments that every single building in Ontario

is going to be retrofitted as part of this. Our question is, how and when? Because, again, we're going to be paying the bill for the gas. We're already paying the bill for the electricity. But we hear "every single building." Well, a lot of my constituents won't be able to afford to pay the bills. The house will be long gone before this kicks in. But we hear the minister saying that, and people want to believe the minister; people want to believe. But people don't see the results, and that is the biggest issue. That truly scares me. It scares the people in the north.

When I see stuff like petitions going around to separate northern Ontario—and I'm a proud Ontarian. I'm an extremely proud Ontarian. But those petitions, when I see some of the people who sign those petitions, it's not that they want to separate; in my opinion, they don't see themselves reflected in this province, because what's being put forward by this government doesn't reflect them. That's why we didn't support the last budget and we don't support this one.

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

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I'm honoured to speak to Bill 166, the Supply Act for 2015-16.

Before I get into the content of what I wanted to say, I just want to share an anecdote that I shared quite some time ago here in the Legislature about one of the early days after the last election when I was just the newly elected member for Etobicoke Centre. There were a number of people who came to offer me advice. One of them was a constituent. She came up and she said, "No matter what you do when you get elected, never forget that you're there to improve the quality of life of the people of Ontario. Never forget that, that that's why you're there. That should always be your focus."

I think of that today, because to me, this is what the Supply Act is about. The Supply Act is really about ensuring that we can continue to make those investments that will allow us to continue to improve the quality of life of the people of Ontario and the people in my community of Etobicoke Centre.

For those watching at home who aren't as familiar, the Supply Act is one of the key acts in the Ontario Legislature. If passed, it would give the Ontario government the legal spending authority to finance its programs and honour its commitments. Passage of the Supply Act would constitute final approval by this assembly of government and legislative office program spending for the fiscal year that is coming up at the end of March, in fact on March 31.

It's important to note that the Supply Act does not authorize any new expenditures. I think some of the members opposite were talking about forward-looking expenditures. The Supply Act actually isn't about forward-looking expenditures; it's about the expenditures for this current fiscal year that's ending on March 31.

All expenditures incurred under the Supply Act would be in accordance with the 2015-16 estimates. The estimates set out a comprehensive account of the government's intended expenditures for the fiscal year and

include details of the spending plans that were presented in our 2015 budget.

To recap, last week the Legislature gave its concurrence to the estimates for fiscal 2015-16—that's the year that's ending on March 31—and in doing so, it approved the estimates of seven ministries and offices that were selected for review by the Standing Committee on Estimates. The estimates for ministries that were not called to the standing committee and all legislative offices received what's called "deemed concurrence."

Today, as we near the end of this fiscal year, we are discussing the Supply Act. It provides the necessary legal spending authority for vital payments made to institutions and individuals—for example, institutions such as hospitals, schools, municipalities; people who are vulnerable who need our help. To stress, this is not about approving new spending; it's about providing authority for the government to finance its programs and honour its commitments. It's about approving spending on important priorities like schools, hospitals and income support, items that benefit the lives of people across Ontario, benefits that improve people's quality of life.

When I introduced the concurrence in estimates to this House, I spoke about how Ontario is well on its way to balancing the budget in a fair and responsible way by 2017-18. Today, what I'd like to do is to talk about some of the achievements of this past fiscal year to help provide context for this discussion as it ties in with the Supply Act.

For context, Ontario has taken great strides since the 2009 global economic downturn, which had a devastating impact on people and governments worldwide. I want to reiterate that our government is committed to balancing the budget by 2017-18 in a fair and responsible way. Our plan to balance the budget is focused on managing growth and spending, delivering on the best possible value for every dollar and improving outcomes for people with every dollar that we spend.

When I ran for office in Etobicoke Centre, one of the things that I committed to my constituents was that if I was elected, I would bring my experience as a businessperson, as someone who has taught at a business school at York University, who has been a management consultant, to help our government achieve that goal, to make sure that we manage growth and spending, that we get value for the dollar and that we improve outcomes for people. That's exactly what our government is doing.

The 2014-15 deficit was \$10.3 billion, down \$2.2 billion from the 2014 budget projection of \$12.5 billion. This has marked the sixth year in a row that Ontario beat its deficit target. In the 2015 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review, we projected lower deficits of \$7.5 billion in 2015-16, \$4.5 billion in 2016-17 and a return to balance in 2017-18. That is largely due to diligent management of growth and spending.

Ontario consistently has the lowest per capita program spending among all Canadian provinces. We have done this while continuing to invest in priority programs and services like health care and education.

The member for Nipissing spoke during his remarks about where he thought we were getting the savings; I think those were the words he used, more or less. Unfortunately, these are just not—what he said were simply not the facts. He doesn't have his facts straight in terms of how we're going about managing spending and balancing the budget.

We are not going to balance the budget by making across-the-board cuts, and we're not doing that. We're going to do it by doing government differently, by finding new and smarter ways of doing things to improve outcomes and deliver the best value for Ontarians. We're doing that through something called Program Review, Renewal and Transformation, or PRRT for short.

I'm proud to work alongside our President of the Treasury Board, Minister Deb Matthews, and the rest of the team at the Treasury Board—and, frankly, our entire caucus, who works on this every day—in terms of making sure that we spend our money wisely and get value for dollars. But specifically, I'm pleased to work with Minister Matthews on PRRT, where we are looking at how every dollar across government is spent and we're using evidence to improve better choices and to improve outcomes for people.

At a high level, I'd like to describe what we're doing. We are asking the following questions about each program and service: Is it relevant? Is it effective? Is it efficient? Is it sustainable? We're moving forward with opportunities that improve efficiency, reduce overlap across government programs and ensure government works better for Ontarians. We're being responsible.

#### 1640

The member for Nipissing talked about how he believes we should work towards a balanced budget, how we should manage the taxpayer dollars. Frankly, Speaker, when the PCs were in power, they had record GDP growth. They still ran deficits; they still grew the debt. They cut services. They downloaded services to municipalities. They didn't reduce the debt; they kept growing it—even though the member for Nipissing spoke extensively about how we're growing the debt. Actually, I should say they did make one contribution to the debt, which was \$3.1 billion, when they sold the 407, and we all know how that turned out. These are the folks who are now telling us how we should spend our money. I think their track record begs some questioning.

We're doing this in a responsible way, Speaker. Let me give you an example of how we're doing it. We integrated six existing dental programs for children into one program called Healthy Smiles. What we did was change eligibility, making it easier for families of eligible children and youth to get access to timely dental care. As a result, 70,000 more kids from low-income families can get dental services, and 460,000 children are now eligible.

We want to make sure that government programs are working at their best. That's why we've established a new Centre of Excellence for Evidence-based Decision Making Support that will help build capacity to assess how programs are performing.

We've appropriately managed our Ontario public service labour costs, working with our partners in the broader public service to reach agreements that are fair and reasonable to government employees and the taxpayer, and consistent with our fiscal plan.

We've made it clear that there is no new funding for compensation increases, and that any modest wage increases in a contract must be offset by cost-saving measures elsewhere in collective agreements, to create a net-zero outcome.

This is a responsible way to approach this, Speaker. This is in contrast, of course, to the Progressive Conservatives, who actually campaigned on a plan to address labour costs by cutting 100,000 jobs. I think our approach is responsible and, again, consistent with our fiscal plan, and preserves the services that Ontarians value.

We have achieved a number of net-zero deals: AMAPCEO in August 2014; a three-year net-zero agreement with OPSEU's unified bargaining unit in October 2015; a three-year collective agreement for OPSEU's correctional bargaining unit in January 2016. There are many other examples as well.

So again, just to recap, we're balancing the budget by 2017-18. We're doing it in a responsible way. We're going line by line, program by program, to make sure that we're delivering the best possible outcomes for people and, ultimately, the best value for taxpayer dollars.

Now, while we're managing spending, we're also making investments in the programs and services that Ontarians rely on: health care, education, roads, bridges and expanding transit. We're here with our Minister of Transportation, the member for Vaughan, and I have to say that he's doing a tremendous amount of excellent work on this issue of building important infrastructure, not just in the greater Toronto area, but also in the north, in the east, in the west and across our entire province. We're committed to invest more than \$134 billion in public infrastructure over 10 years, spending on priorities such as roads, bridges and public transit, hospitals and schools. This is the largest investment in public infrastructure in Ontario's history. These are investments that are going to support over 100,000 jobs per year, on average.

Since the 2015 budget, we've announced support for more than 200 infrastructure projects in communities across the province, including recent investments in major transit systems, 40 hospitals and 170 schools. In my riding of Etobicoke Centre, we have a school, St. Clement Catholic School, which recently received a commitment of funding from the provincial government, something that I'm very proud of and something that I was proud to work towards, alongside the community. Etobicoke General Hospital, one of those hospitals, is going to benefit tremendously from that funding, and they're breaking ground very shortly. That's one of the investments that we're making. This is just an example of some of the important investments we're making to improve health care, to improve education, to improve transit and some of the other things.

We continue to invest in the Ontario jobs strategy. We continue to invest in health care, in community care, in hospitals and in palliative care. We continue to invest in education—continually invest in education—because education represents the foundation for our young people's future. All of these investments are about improving the lives of Ontarians today and tomorrow.

We also know that our most vulnerable citizens need a hand, and we're giving them a hand. I know that the President of Treasury Board is also the minister responsible for poverty reduction. Our renewed Poverty Reduction Strategy, called Realizing Our Potential, builds on the progress we've made in the past, sets new goals, calls on new partners and focuses on investing in what works.

We're making strategic investments across government: in health, in education and in housing programs. The renewed strategy focuses on four areas:

- continuing to break the cycle of poverty for children and youth;
- moving towards employment and income security;
- a long-term goal of ending homelessness in Ontario; and
- evaluating and supporting workable and sustainable programs.

We launched the \$50-million Local Poverty Reduction Fund, which supports innovative and sustainable community-driven initiatives that measurably improve the lives of those most affected by poverty. Through the first round of the fund, we're supporting 41 projects in 20 communities.

We indexed the Ontario Child Benefit to annual increases in the Ontario consumer price index, and we increased the minimum wage and indexed it to the consumer price index.

We have a bold goal of ending homelessness in Ontario. When people have a home, they are healthier, happier, more ready for employment and better able to participate in the communities.

We have increased funding for our Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative by \$42 million annually, with a total investment of \$587 million over two years. We continue to build new affordable housing and repair existing units so that Ontarians with housing needs can find a place to call home.

Speaker, I started my remarks by talking about the constituent who reminded me that I'm here to improve the quality of life of the people of my community in Etobicoke Centre and the quality of life of the people across our province. That's exactly what this government has been doing and making a best effort to do. I think that we are protecting and improving the services that matter. We are being fiscally responsible; we're making every dollar count; we're getting better value for taxpayers' dollars. That's the commitment that I made to my constituents of Etobicoke Centre; that's, I believe, the commitment that we all made to our constituents; and that's exactly what we're doing here.

I want to reiterate that the introduction of the Supply Act is part of the government's economic plan. Without the spending authority that the Supply Act would provide, the government would be unable to meet its obligations to the people of this province, unable to make those important investments, unable to continue along a fiscal plan that is responsible, manages taxpayers' dollars wisely and gets value for money, and unable to deliver on what my constituent asked, which is that we improve the lives of the people of Ontario in the way we committed to. I urge all members of the Legislature to support this important act.

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

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It's a pleasure to hear that we're living in a utopia—in Etobicoke Centre, anyway—and that the world is perfect. It may be even better than perfect, according to the member from Etobicoke Centre.

I'm going to give my version of what I hear from my constituents regarding this government. First off, it is evident and it is beyond reproach that this government doesn't care about people. That's what I see. I see people coming in to my office who can't get assistance for their children who are intellectually disabled; I see elderly parents coming in who can't get assistance and help for their elderly children who are disadvantaged; I see people coming in who are on significant wait times for cataract and hip and knee surgeries. I could go on and on.

It's clear that this government is on auto pilot. The ministers have no interest in actually dealing with their responsibilities as long as they have a slogan to talk about or a sound bite. That's what they're interested in: a photo op and a slogan. That's what this government is all about: photo ops and sound bites.

Speaker, this Supply Act is about the money that is already spent for this year: final statutory authority for expenditures up until March 31. I want to speak about what I saw about expenditures. A week ago today, I spent three and a half hours walking through the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre. I had an interesting visit with the superintendent, Maureen Harvey; the assistant superintendent from St. Lawrence, Brian Patterson; and the president of the union local, Denis Collin. We toured the facility and had a wonderful, honest discussion about the state of our correctional facilities and the state of the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre.

**1650**

It's also interesting that, today, the Minister of Community Safety made a ministerial statement about transforming corrections in Ontario. Well, I'll tell you, it needs to be transformed. It needs significant transformation. The \$2.5 billion that was spent in corrections this fiscal year, according to Bill 166—let me tell you a little bit of what I saw \$2.5 billion bought us.

I saw a busted-up exercise yard. The asphalt was busted up at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre. The inmates are not allowed to get any exercise, because the busted-up asphalt can be used as a weapon. We couldn't fix an exercise yard for \$2.5 billion. They'd rather just

leave the inmates in their cells. In the same yard, the protective film on the windows was tattered, torn, in total distress, not functional—\$2.5 billion, and we couldn't even fix some windows. Does this government care? I don't think so. But there was much else that I saw there.

The minister spoke today about hiring 2,000 new guards for our correctional facilities. Well, we probably need 2,000 new guards because they won't spend a couple of dollars on technology to help the guards.

I was astonished, as I was speaking to the superintendent, about the level of drugs and contraband that come into the detention centre. They tell me that most of these drugs and contraband—tobacco—even things such as ceramic knives and various other unlawful products come in by people filling up Kinder eggs. You know those little Kinder eggs that you're supposed to get a little toy in? People open them up, fill them with drugs and either swallow them or insert them in a body cavity. Or they fill up condoms—again, the same thing. And our guards have no way of finding out what is being brought in.

I asked the guards, "Do you not do a cavity search?" I found out that we're not permitted to do that. Our guards are not permitted to do that unless there is consent. Now, if somebody is bringing in illegal drugs and contraband, it's unlikely that they're going to provide consent. The only mechanism at the guard's disposal is something they call a BOSS chair. They sit the inmate in the BOSS chair and do an X-ray. But the X-ray will only pick up metal; it won't pick up Kinder eggs. It won't pick up other things—it won't pick up ceramic blades—and all these inmates know this. I was surprised. I didn't know we had the BOSS chair, but we have no other search mechanism.

The superintendent and the president of the union local said this could be solved. They need body scanners, the same body scanners that CBSA has at our airports. If we had one of those in each of our detention centres, the level of drugs, ceramic knives, tobacco—whatever else—would be greatly reduced, if not eliminated. But I didn't see any expenditure, any investment in body scanners in this \$2.5 billion—zero. We couldn't fix the pavement, can't fix the windows and can't buy a few body scanners. So the problem persists and persists.

Let me put this in perspective, Speaker. This is not just a wee bit of a problem like somebody smoking a joint in their detention centres. These are members of gangs, people bringing in drugs—and the violence that occurs. In my three-and-a-half-hour visit there, I saw one inmate who had been beaten severely, just prior to me getting to that area of the detention centre. He was beaten severely, and he was being taken into protective custody for his own protection. I think the individual was powerfully pleased that there was someplace he could be relocated to.

That's what drugs and weapons do in our correctional facilities because we need to ask for consent to search somebody, and because we won't invest in a body scanner. We can go out and hire 2,000 more guards—and that's probably a blessing—but let's go out and buy a

couple of body scanners, and let's start putting a dent in the problem at our correctional facilities.

This idea of Kinder eggs coming into our jails full of drugs and our guards not being able to do anything to prevent it—keep this in mind: It was explained to me that most of these drugs are being brought in by people who are coming in on intermittent sentences. People who have been sentenced to 90 days or less, who are serving their sentences from Friday to Sunday or Friday to Monday, learn the system—they know how the system works—and the gangs within our facilities are demanding that they bring in contraband or they will be beaten if they don't. People are fearful for their lives in not complying with the ruthless behaviour by people in corrections.

The superintendent and the president told me that they've seen people—because the contraband is so profitable and so lucrative in our correctional facilities—actually go out and intentionally break their conditions of release so that they will be brought back to jail for the weekend, so that they can sell their drugs and contraband at such exorbitant rates. Imagine, our system has actually built in an incentive for people to breach the conditions of their sentence so that they can make more money by going to jail for the weekend. There's something wrong with this picture, Speaker.

When I said that this government doesn't care—they have allowed this to persist. They've allowed it to continue. They've done nothing. Body scanners are not new. This is not something that just got developed last week or last year. We've had them in our airports for quite a period of time. We've had a drug and violence problem in our correctional facilities for quite some time. Why have they chosen to do absolutely nothing? It's out of sight out of mind, and they don't care. They don't care if there are drugs being brought in. I think that's what we saw with our correctional facilities guards and the strike that they had. They recognized that all their pleading, all their requests for assistance from this government fell on deaf ears for years and years. They couldn't get them to act in any way.

**1700**

That's a couple of the things that I saw in three and a half hours. Maybe the member from Ottawa South would like to join me on a visit to the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre someday—or maybe the Minister of Transportation would—and go out and actually see what happens.

There's something else. I spoke with the Minister of Community Safety a little while ago about electronic monitoring for people who are violent offenders. We have no mechanism to track where violent offenders are or what they are doing. We don't know if they're breaching their conditions or not. We just don't have the program.

I was doing a little research. The city of Calgary, the city of Edmonton, the province of PEI and our CBSA authorities all have electronic monitoring. They have ankle bracelets that they can put on violent offenders. They know where that person is; they know if that person

is breaching any conditions. Lo and behold, to my surprise, when I was speaking with the firm that provides protective electronic monitoring ankle bracelets to all these places—that we don't have here in Ontario—the company actually monitors all those offenders from Sudbury, Ontario. That's where their service is provided from.

These ankle bracelets have a built-in cellphone. They have a built-in siren. They have a built-in vibration device. If the offender approaches a person or a place where they're not allowed to be by court order, the vibration goes off and a phone call is made. If it persists, the siren is initiated and the police are called.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I know the Minister of Transportation thinks this is all funny and there's nothing important to be heard here, because, again, they don't care. It would be nice if one day we had ministers of government who cared.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** The Minister of Transportation continues to heckle. The member for Ottawa South continues not to care.

But, listen, why do they permit and allow people to live in fear because they won't buy those ankle bracelets? They won't invest. This government is good at spending money; they are absolutely shameful and terrible at investing in anything. They don't know the difference between spending and investing. They are not the same. These guys are good at spending; they're reckless at spending. They have no idea what an investment is because they don't care about any return. The only return that they're interested in is their own return to this Legislature. They're not interested in any return for the public in Ontario. That's what the problem is. They've got their interests confused with the public interest.

So why is it? For \$20 a day, we could have this system in place in Ontario. It's been available for years. But, just like the body scanners, they haven't bothered. Nobody on the government benches could be bothered to get up off the couch and actually investigate anything. I'll tell you when this government investigates something: when the media has a story about their failings on the front page. When there's a story of their failings on the front page in our papers, then this government and their ministers take notice. But if it doesn't happen on the front page, they just don't care. They just don't care, Speaker.

So let's put this on the front page. Let's put this on the front page about how they don't care about the guards, they don't care about the victims and the people who live in fear, they don't care about anything.

I see the member from Barrie is heckling and laughing. That doesn't surprise—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Okay, here's the deal. If the member from Barrie wants to talk or talk back, she might want to get in her seat.

The Minister of Transportation is holding court and having quite a humorous laugh over there, with the assistance of the member from Scarborough—Agincourt.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would also like the barbs directly at the Speaker to stop and slow down. If you keep on the pattern you're going, the member from Barrie, you're not going to like the result.

So continue.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'll wrap up, Speaker, seeing that most of my time was wasted with these members heckling and laughing.

But it shows what the problem is. They're not interested in any discussion or debate. All they're interested in is sitting in their chairs and laughing and thinking about their own return to the Legislature.

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

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm pleased to be able to have some time to speak on the supply motion and bill that's before us today and to talk about my experience with this government and the challenges that I have heard are being faced by families in my riding and across the province, who contact me when they're in need. Typically, Speaker, that falls within the child and youth services mandate.

*Interjections.*

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Speaker, should I sit down and wait just for a minute? I'm not sure. I'm talking to myself in this House. It's kind of an odd feeling, Speaker, to be talking and to be completely ignored. Everybody is talking, in every direction, and that's pretty typical of what happens in this government. But it is my five minutes to have my say, and I'm going to hopefully get that out, without the distractions.

Speaker, some of the things that I wanted to talk about were our children and youth services ministry, the challenges that are being faced by families, and children with mental health issues—6,000 kids on a wait-list for mental health services in this province. If we don't do anything about it, it's estimated that that will double and be 12,000 kids on a wait-list next year.

Money needs to be put into our kids' mental health. We need to observe and recognize the fact that if we don't put funding and money into our children when they so desperately need it, then they're going to struggle. They're going to struggle as adults, as being participants in society, in community, if we can't help them fix the small issues. It may be small; it may be larger. But if we can't give them the tools to be able to help themselves later in life, then we're failing.

We are doing that, Speaker. We know we have 16,000 kids on a wait-list for autism services, and 6,000 kids on a wait-list for mental health. If we should be taking care of anything in this province, we need to start taking care of our children and helping them to have healthy lives, and making sure that they can get through the school system, that they can learn to read and that they can get a job when they come out of that. If they don't get these services that they need, some may not even be able to have a full conversation. It's something that could have been fixed when they were a child.

1710

Talking about kids with special needs in schools, we see this government shutting down special-needs schools, the Trillium schools, in this province. They're doing a consultation. They're capping enrolment. They're not allowing any more kids to be able to get into these specialized programs to help kids with severe learning disabilities.

I spoke this morning, and I asked a question regarding a young boy who lives in my riding. He was struggling all through school. He finally had the ability to get into the Trillium school. His mother told me the process was a year-long process to be able to get into the school—the binders, and the criteria, and the paperwork that had to be sent in, just so this kid could learn how to read, right? He finally gets into the program. Things are going well. The kid is flourishing. He is flourishing, Speaker. He wrote a 400-word essay all on his own and on his own accord, not being suggested to, or not being pushed by family or the teachers. He heard about the model Parliament program and thought, "I want to do that." If that child had not gone to those specialized schools, he would never have had the courage, the confidence or the ability to write that essay. We know that not many kids get to make it to the model Parliament. I'm so proud of Seamus and the accomplishments that he has made to be able to get and to be able to continue his education.

That's putting funds into our children. Yet this government is now blocking those schools, saying that no more kids are going to be able to receive these benefits of this specialized education. It's going to put more kids at risk.

The minister continues to say that all kids deserve equal access to education. Well, that's absolutely true, but all kids also deserve equitable education also. If someone needs extra special attention when it comes to their reading, and a specialized environment, then that child should have that ability to do so.

Here in the province of Ontario, we're failing. It's a big F when it comes to our kids with special needs in our education system.

We don't have nearly enough EAs to be able to assist. It's pretty much a babysitting job of kids who have special needs in the school. They're dealing with toileting and keeping the kid quiet so that the rest of the classes can get on.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** What an insult.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** It's not an insult. It's a reality that is brought to my attention from parents. The insult is that parents have to face this in their school system. That's the insult.

Our kids should be getting education, not just being pushed off into a corner and helped with their toileting or whatever else that they need. They need specialized education. They need treatment. They need to be given the skills and the opportunities to be able to flourish. They are being left out. The government is failing.

The other things that I would like to talk about are the children's aid societies, the budgets, the crisis that they

are finding themselves in once again. They were cut back 2% a couple of years back. A couple were given 2%, but that 2% still didn't bring them up to where they were able to balance their budgets, so they are still struggling. We have children's aid societies who are fundraising across this province, doing galas and doing all kinds of things to be able to keep their doors open and to provide the services in our child welfare sector.

On top of that, now, they've been given a CPIN program. They're being brought slowly into the process, and they are being given \$220,000 to be able to implement this program. Yet children's aid societies are reporting \$1.4-million to \$4-million costs of implementing the program. So, once again, that's a pretty big stretch. But this government is used to stretch goals, Speaker.

It's not me that's stretching the limits. They are the numbers that I'm given on the cost of implementation.

If we think that the cost of implementation isn't really a problem of technology in this province, let's talk about SAMS. We can talk about SAMS all day long because we know that municipalities are still bearing the brunt of the SAMS program, still not able to get all of their employees up to speed. Employees are finding themselves not able to deal with a program that this government refused to talk to people about. There was no consultation. They just rammed it through, bought a program off the shelf and said, "Here you go. This is what you're going to use." Nothing about that program suited the needs for our OW and ODSP situation, but this government decided that SAMS was going to be the program—and now CPIN is of the same nature.

Yes, they're doing things slower now because implementing it is a process, but it costs money; it costs money to do that. You can't just expect them to be able to fall into that program without running into trouble. When you already don't have any extra money, when you're already fundraising to make up the limits and you're already cutting front-line services to make up the difference again—you can't possibly expect to put more load on them and for them to not feel that brunt.

Our health care system: I've never seen the state of health care as I'm seeing it today. From residents who come to my office, from every single person that I talk to who has to go to the hospital, it's a fear. Nobody even wants to step foot into the hospital these days when we have a shortage of nurses—what we used to have as RNs are now not RNs; who is qualified to do what—and a mix of practitioners that simply can't keep up. I guess that would have to be the word.

We see patients who are falling behind. They're being left with bells ringing and soiled beds. They're falling out of bed and slipping on their own stuff because nobody is coming to their attention. We have adults who can't feed themselves. They're sitting there with plates in front of them for over an hour, two hours. The nurses can't possibly keep up with the cuts, and yet this is the reality.

What's happening? Where are the dollars going in our health care system? We know the huge amount of money in our health care system. How are we falling so far

behind? How is our system getting worse instead of better? Where does that happen when they claim that they've increased the budget? Well, they increased the budget, I believe, by 1%, and it's been frozen for four years in the hospitals. Even just to keep up with inflation it's 1.8%, but they gave them 1%. Now, they'll be able to say what a great job they did by increasing and not freezing the hospital budgets when, in fact, they are certainly frozen.

There are talks in Hamilton of bringing us into the future and the possibility of closing a large hospital that has specialized services for not just Hamilton—I know I'm very blessed to live in a city that has multiple health care facilities, but people from all over come into those specialized facilities, and they're already shutting down wards.

I'm going to have to stop soon, but it's a major crisis. They've closed down the mental health facility in your riding, Speaker, and are pushing patients up to my riding in the far west end, which is really far for people to have to travel when they have mental health issues. It's not something that is just a bus ride away; this is a serious jaunt up to get those services.

I know I will be voting against this. I appreciate having the ability and the time to have my say.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** I just want to stand and say to the member from—

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Hamilton?

**Mr. John Fraser:** No, not from Hamilton; from Lennox, Frontenac—sorry—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Lanark–Frontenac—

**Mr. John Fraser:** —Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington that I believe what he says, that he really cares about those things that he's talking about, but I think it's quite uncalled for for him to say to the people on this side that the people on this side don't care. What I do want to say is, I do have a basic understanding of what goes on in corrections, and it is something that concerns me. We may have some different ideas about how we can implement that.

1720

I do want to say very clearly that government is about choices. You have to try and invest that money in a broad range of services and things that people depend on. So you've got to pick some things. We heard some things this morning about what different parties did when they were in power about allocating that money. I simply want to say to the member on the other side that while I believe his sincerity, I don't think over there that you can choose everything. I think you need to pick a lane because you're saying everything to everybody about what you think they want to hear, and I think it's important to point that out.

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

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you for allowing me to speak today. I'm happy to rise and talk about the 2015

budget and the impact it had on my riding of Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie.

When I took over last year—I see a lot of success in my riding. In some places, this budget certainly failed. Let's start in Fort Erie, and I'm glad the minister is here.

I've been working on a topic for years. I am absolutely not giving up. This government needs to support the Fort Erie racetrack. Last year's budget did include funding for the Fort Erie racetrack, and I'm happy to say we've been able to save the track, but we need to go further. Fort Erie remains the only town in the province that has to kick in extra money. That's money that's coming from the residents through their taxes to support the track.

In 2015, it was \$500 million. I don't think that's right. Taking the slots out of Fort Erie was an absolute mistake. It should never have happened. We've managed to save the racetrack, but now we need to fix it and make it great again. With last year's budget, horse people from across the province were clear that we need a long-term strategy. We can do two things right now. We can save the crown jewel of the town, increase race dates and return the slots. Last year's budget failed the people of Fort Erie by not returning the slots that should never have been taken away from Fort Erie. Let's reverse that policy of this Liberal government today and return the slots to Fort Erie.

What does that give us? If you do that today, like we should have done in 2015, we can save 1,000 jobs and hire another couple of hundred people on the slots, just like they had before. That makes a lot of sense to me.

We have seen some good development in Fort Erie. I'm talking about the Canadian Motor Speedway project. Over the last year, we're finally seeing the roadblocks removed that have kept that project from going forward for eight years. The Canadian Motor Speedway has partnered with a number of universities, including Niagara College and Brock University in my area, to bring together some of the brightest minds in the province. They signed a partnership contract with Brock yesterday to work together on innovation and research projects, which are all good.

This is a project that's going to give back to Fort Erie and to the province of Ontario. It's a project that can create jobs and revitalize the town. I'm happy to say that, over the last year, we've seen incredible progress, and I'm going to keep working with representatives at all levels of government to make sure this project gets done.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on one aspect of government spending from last year that affects my entire riding and the entire region of Niagara. That's the new Niagara Falls hospital. When I was running in the by-election that first brought me to this House—and I'm very proud to be here—over two years ago, the Premier came to Niagara Falls and unveiled a banner at the site of the new Niagara Falls hospital which said, "Funding grant approved." If we go there today, the banner looks almost like it's going to fall off. We know we're in stage 1A, but some people are saying that this hospital is years away.

People in Niagara can't wait years. They have a right to decent medical care in a timely fashion. We need to

see movement on this hospital and we need to see it soon. We have a chance here to increase our medical services in Niagara Falls and put local people back to work. It's a win-win. Despite last year's commitment to health care, we still don't have a shovel in the ground here today. Let's change that.

There's an important issue for seniors in my riding. Everywhere I go in Niagara—people on both sides of the House can say whether I'm right on this—seniors tell me they can't afford their hydro bills, they can't afford their food bills, they can't afford their gas bills. It's heart-breaking. You heard some of those stories this afternoon. On these issues, I believe we made it even worse in the 2015 budget.

As these seniors get older, they need to have vital health care services. The longer we wait on projects like the new Niagara Falls hospital, the more we'll put seniors at risk. They spent their entire lives—their entire lives—making our communities great. I've seen this first-hand in Niagara. They absolutely deserve our respect. Let's make it easier for them to stay in their homes and live their senior years in dignity.

There are many positives that came out of Niagara last year. I'm happy to say that in the last year we continued to see growth in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The wine region down there is an economic force, and the entire province should be proud of the work they're doing. There are ways we can support the industry; namely, let's get them more space on the shelves of the LCBO.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** We just did that.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** No, you didn't.

The wine industry is a great example of a booming local market. We need to do everything we can to support it. It creates jobs, and it puts money right back into the local economy. Here's something that maybe the minister should listen to: When you buy a local VQA wine, over \$11 goes back into the local economy; when you buy a foreign wine, just over \$1.04 goes back into the local economy. That's why we need to support them and give them more shelf space—not temporary shelf space, but permanent shelf space that goes longer than three years, sir. I'm proud of the wineries in my riding and what they have been able to do. They can count on my continued support. I hope this government will do the same.

But it's not just the wineries in Niagara-on-the-Lake. We have so many young, talented, smart people coming into the riding and taking advantage of the craft beer and craft cider markets. I will say without a doubt that we have the best craft beer scene in the province, maybe in the country. Go to Oast, Silversmith, Brimstone, Exchange, the Niagara Brewing Company or Niagara College, and you'll see for yourself that we're second to none.

This is a market that is growing rapidly. This government missed a chance in the last budget to offer all the support it needs to fully flourish and create jobs. I hope they will take a serious look this year at what the craft brewing and the craft cider markets need and will give them the tools they need to succeed.

Some of these successes have come with some major failures in last year's budget. Last year's budget saw a continuous cut to education here in the province. I've seen the effects of these cuts first-hand. I worked with the community in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and we did everything we could to save the heart of the old town, Parliament Oak. These sorts of cuts are the reason that Parliament Oak and schools like it around the province have been closed down.

Let me say clearly—hopefully they can hear me over there—that this closure was an absolute mistake. It was the wrong thing to do, and it was a poor decision. It bothers me to think about all the other schools in this province that had to face what the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake faced. These education cuts only hurt our children and our grandkids. They're the most important parts of our lives, and we should stop closing schools.

Here, I had a meeting today about Ontario books and Canadian books that I didn't even know about. In the budget this year, you're looking at cutting 15% out of the Ontario Media Development Corporation, for example. We used to have a great book publishing industry here in Ontario. In my riding, we had a company called Coutts, that was actually Ingram, out of the States, which shipped textbooks across the continent but also to local universities. I knew the workplace well. They were members of my local union, Unifor CAW Local 199. They were incredible, hard-working men and women, and there was no support for them from the province or from the federal government.

Coutts closed down that workplace in Niagara Falls and moved it, putting all these great people—100 of them—out of work. It's a shame, and it should never have happened. I've seen it first-hand, and this needs to be stopped before it happens again. These cuts will only create more of that.

**1730**

I want to say on the books, really quickly: Does it not make sense to anybody—I'm not so sure how much time I have here—to be supporting our local book industry by having local books that are done right here in Ontario and right here in Canada in our schools? That makes absolute sense to me. Why are you cutting 15% out of that? It makes no sense.

The last thing I'll talk about in my last minute is that we've lost 317,000 manufacturing jobs since 2000. These are usually good-paying jobs with benefits. We have to protect them. We need to work harder; we need to protect these jobs and expand this. These are real jobs.

In my riding, in my area, General Motors is there. They still employ 2,500 employees. They also have 6,000 retirees still in Niagara. They're an economic force. We should support that industry. We don't want to lose any more. We're already being threatened with the potential closure of Oshawa, as we all know. Manufacturing should be a vital part of where we go.

I've got 11 seconds left; I can't go without talking about Hydro One. Listen, we don't want to sell 1% of Hydro One. The Conservatives want to sell 49% of

Hydro One; you want to sell 60% of Hydro One. Don't sell one bit of Hydro One. It's a mistake—the biggest mistake this province has ever made.

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

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I consider the member from Niagara Falls a very good friend of mine, but I think we just want to broaden the discussion a bit this afternoon.

This government has had unwavering support for the VQA wine industry in the province of Ontario. In fact, we consulted with them widely. They are going to get the opportunity to have increased shelf space in the province of Ontario. That's a very important development in an industry that is growing by leaps and bounds.

Collectively, we've also made some decisions. Craft beer and fruit wines will now be able to be sold in farmers' markets right across the province of Ontario. And I want to be very fair this afternoon. About 10 years ago, Bob Runciman—now Senator Bob Runciman, of course—had a private member's bill on this. I want to recognize his contribution on this particular debate.

Starting in the spring of this year, in all of the farmers' markets across Ontario, fruit wines and ciders will be available along with VQA wines. That's an excellent distribution channel for a product that now has an international reputation. When I was in China, they wanted to buy more Ontario VQA wines.

I just want to touch on horse racing for a moment. I have been to Fort Erie Race Track and it is the site, of course, of the second stop of the Canadian Triple Crown, when they host the Prince of Wales Stakes there. We've extended in our budget another two years for our horse race transition program, looking at ways that we can bring about a full integration of that plan to sustain many of these tracks right across the province of Ontario.

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, I might as well speak.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing—oh, sorry, you have no time left. You can sit down.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I tried.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Nice try.

Further debate? Last call for further debate.

Pursuant to standing order 64, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Gravelle has moved second reading of Bill 166, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell—oh, not yet. Here we have a little deferral, I imagine. This vote will be deferred until tomorrow morning after question period.

*Second reading vote deferred.*

## WASTE-FREE ONTARIO ACT, 2016

### LOI DE 2016 FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO SANS DÉCHETS

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 10, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016 and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur la récupération des ressources et l'économie circulaire et la Loi transitoire de 2016 sur le réacheminement des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.

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

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** As always, it's a great pleasure to rise and speak to this House.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I find myself rising to speak to a government bill that fits nicely into the pattern that most of their bills have created. We get these really excellent goals and bill titles that make for great sound bites, but what we don't get are the details. Time and time again, this government puts forward bills that lack the details that would ensure the goals of the bills are actually met.

Take this bill, for example. The Waste-Free Ontario Act sounds like an excellent bill. Who wouldn't want to live in a province where we don't produce waste? Unfortunately, while this bill has a title that makes it sound excellent, and while it recognizes the need for individual producer responsibility in Ontario, it falls short when we get to the meat of it.

First of all, there are no timelines in this bill for moving to a system of individual producer responsibility, which is important. If this bill becomes law, the day it passes absolutely nothing changes. Think about that: Absolutely nothing changes. Industry-funded organizations will still run our waste diversion programs, and there will be no real plan in place for them to move to a system of individual producer responsibility. That is a problem.

The industry-funded organizations that currently control waste diversion programs in Ontario simply are not doing a good enough job at diverting waste. As my colleague from Toronto–Danforth told us, these monopolies lack incentives to find creative ways to reduce packaging and divert waste from landfills. What does that mean? It means that, according to the government's own draft strategy, we're going to require 16 more landfills in Ontario before 2050. It means that many of the members of this House—except, I guess, the many members from that side of the bench in Toronto—are going to have to go into their communities and tell their constituents to plug their noses. I'm no expert, but I think it's pretty safe to say that telling members of your community that they're going to have to put up with a landfill for the rest of their lives is not going to make you very popular. So aside from the really negative environmental

consequences, I want the members opposite to also consider what the reaction of the people of this province will be.

Mr. Speaker—I see we've got a new Speaker. You're smiling. You're friendly. It's nice. Very good.

I want to make this very clear: I and all of my colleagues in the Ontario NDP caucus support the goal of introducing individual producer responsibility to Ontario. This is an idea that has been bounced around for a long time, and it's long past the time that we should have moved to this system. Only by introducing a system of individual producer responsibility to the province of Ontario can we ensure that more of our waste is being diverted from landfills. By introducing this system, we allow all waste producers in all sectors of our economy to develop their own methods for reducing waste. It creates competition to develop better and better waste diversion methods, and I'm sure the members of the other party on this side of the House will appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, it is critically important that we do more as a society to produce less waste and have less impact on our environment. We need to divert more waste from landfills so that it doesn't just sit there and hurt our environment. New Democrats understand that if we're going to ensure that the planet we inherited from our parents and our grandparents is the same one that we leave to our children and our grandchildren, then now is the time to act.

1740

Take my riding in Niagara Falls, for example. We have a series of communities that rely on good weather to grow our grapes and barley for our VQA wineries and our craft breweries. We are a series of communities that rely on tourists coming to visit, whether that means coming to Fort Erie for the racetrack—for the minister—Niagara Falls for the falls or Niagara-on-the-Lake for peach festivals. They all rely on their natural environment to some degree.

In other words, we are a series of communities that will immediately and harshly feel the impact of climate change if it continues at this pace. We are also a series of communities that understands the need to take action on climate change.

According to a 2012 report released by the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre at Brock University entitled *Adapting to Climate Change: Challenges for Niagara*, our region can expect to see a 20% decrease in summer rainfall by 2050, a three- to four-degree temperature increase, and growth in the conditions that give rise to thunderstorms with a likely increase in heavy rain, lightning strikes, high winds and hailstorms, which would have a serious impact on agriculture in Niagara.

The report goes on to say that farmers in the Niagara region can also expect more negative impacts. They should expect a shorter growing season for Niagara's signature ice wine; they should expect an increase in invasive weed species and agricultural pests; and they should expect an increase in crop damage from unpredictable freezing rain and freeze-thaw cycles. Not

only does this eye test tell us that the Niagara region is going to feel the impact of climate change, but the scientists agree. Clearly, something needs to be done.

This is a good story that I'm going to talk about because I think this is what should happen in the bill. This is what we should be doing in this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say that some of the people in my riding are already taking action. Walker Industries, for example—I'd like everybody to listen to this—is a company with hundreds of hard-working employees in my riding that does work on aggregates, construction, environmental project management, waste management, renewable energy projects and more.

The company has taken it upon themselves to introduce a sustainability framework to their business that guides their entire decision-making process. Well, think about this. The process helps ensure that they're able to integrate the need for environmental sustainability into their priorities, their metrics and their reporting capabilities.

And that's not all they've done at Walker. The company is the industry leader in beneficial reuse of biosolids, with multiple award-winning facilities right here in Ontario. They're also a company that operates landfills here in Ontario, and I'm happy to say that all of their landfills use some of the most advanced technology out there to help ensure that as little methane is released in the atmosphere as possible.

Even more than that, on an annual basis Walker is able—listen to this, Mr. Speaker, because this really caught my attention—to divert more than 300,000 tonnes of organic waste out of their landfills, making them, if not the largest, one of such organizations in the province.

Now, isn't that good news? Don't you think that's something that we should be doing in this bill, going to Walker and saying, "How do you do it?" and making sure other companies do the same thing? I think that's the way the bill should go.

Clearly, there are already companies out there taking a strong stance in support of the environment, and this piece of legislation would hopefully encourage more of them to join all of us in a fight to protect and preserve our province.

Mr. Speaker, the increase in greenhouse gas emissions that has occurred under the current system of industry-funded organizations managing waste diversion is appalling. No less a person than the minister himself told us that, "In Ontario, absolute greenhouse gas emissions from waste increased by 25% between 1990 and 2012."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the member from Welland.

Questions and comments?

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I'm very happy this afternoon to add my voice to the conversation that we're having about Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act.

I'm happy to speak on behalf of the residents of Kitchener Centre, my riding. In Kitchener Centre, we are no strangers to caring about the environment and recycling. In fact, did you know, Mr. Speaker, that in

Kitchener Centre we were the first jurisdiction in all of Canada to use the blue bin? In fact, we invented it.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Yes. And we were one of the early adopters of the green bin system. So we are showing leadership by taking action to support a circular economy, a system where nothing is wasted. Invaluable materials destined for landfill are put back into the economy without negative effects on people or the environment.

We can look at other places around the world to see how they are doing this. I know, for instance, that in some European countries there are manufacturers that are responsible for appliances from start to finish, for the entire life of the appliance. If you were to buy a refrigerator, a particular company would be responsible for the fridge 20 or 30 years later. After it breaks—it dies—they would have to come and take it away and worry about recycling this. So these are the sorts of things that we could be looking at.

The draft strategy that was introduced last November provides a road map for our actions to support a circular economy. This was developed in response to what people told us across the province, what they were looking for. We were listening, and we do want to achieve those goals. It's going to keep Ontario's actions current. It's going to align efforts with our key partners. By enshrining the strategy in legislation and by requiring regular reports and reviews by the minister, it will show that we are addressing this important issue.

I know I'll be supporting this bill, Mr. Speaker, and I encourage my colleagues to do so as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to Bill 151. I wanted to follow up on something the member from Niagara Falls said. He talked about the fact that some of these bills—in fact, all of the bills—have a great name, and usually the content of the bill has absolutely nothing to do with the actual name they've selected. It's always a great-sounding name but never really the content. I prefer to call what the government does two things: I always seem to speak on many of the bills with the expression “ready, fire, aim,” because they come out with these things without consultation. So it's ready, they fire, there it is, and then they realize, “Oops, we forgot to talk to everybody again,” and so they begin to aim.

I found in this particular instance as well that while Bill 151 does include some parts of the PC plan in it—and those are obviously the parts that we like—there were major problems with the bill that are meeting opposition from the stakeholders. Why? Because they didn't consult the stakeholders thoroughly and properly. The stakeholders' concerns are primarily centred on the authority, their powers, the winding up of the recycling programs, policy statements, and enforcement, all without consultation with those very stakeholders.

Other than ready, fire, aim, I also think about how this government comes out with these wonderful ideas. They're aspirational-sounding, but they're never operational. The sound bites are perfect, but they never give any real thought to how we are going to operate this, and I think that's what the member from Niagara Falls was referring to. It was aspirational but not really operational.

I've seen that in this one as well, Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this. I think that we require—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:**—several changes to be made, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I'll handle that; thank you.

The member for Kenora-Rainy River.

1750

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I wanted to thank the member from Niagara Falls for weighing in on this debate.

I wanted to pick up on one of the things that he talked about—actually, not that dissimilar from what the member from Nipissing talked about—and that is that the government, I think, sometimes gets stuck in their own frame of mind, thinking about how they're going to spin something to make it seem like they're doing something when maybe they're not, really. If you look at this bill, you see that there are two things that are missing: One, very obviously, is the substance—it's got a nice title—and the other piece, which is equally important, are the timelines.

What I wanted to do in the brief time I've got is bring that back to how a piece of legislation like this affects people on the ground. I wanted to particularly talk about some of the municipalities that are struggling with very high costs of operating landfills and recycling programs. The one I wanted to focus on, in particular, is that of Red Lake. Red Lake is in a unique situation, where it's essentially landlocked with mining claims. They have one landfill that's at the end of its lifespan and they're looking at ways to manage that landfill. They're also looking at how to deal with the extraordinary costs of shipping their recycling materials at least 250 kilometres outside of the community and how they do those things.

I also wanted to mention, very quickly, that I'm really proud of the work that Red Lake is doing, because what they did was they took a shed and they've turned it into a reusable shed to try to divert a lot of items that are still usable but that people maybe don't have time to sell or whatever. They're actually doing a bit of a freecycle thing, where they're taking those things out of the landfill.

Municipalities are leading the charge. They're doing their part in bringing down their costs to be mindful of the environment. It's really incumbent upon this government to put the rubber to the road. They have to follow up. There has to be substance, and there also have to be timelines.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I'm very pleased to speak to Bill 151. After listening to the debate, it has been very clear that the majority of the members are in support of this bill. It is about time that the bill passes second reading and be referred to the committee, where the real work happens. Members from all parties will have an opportunity to hear from relevant stakeholders and, if they so choose, they can bring amendments to strengthen the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Niagara Falls has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Well, thank you. I didn't finish my presentation, but there are a couple of points here that I think are very important, particularly this one: In 2013, the Ontario waste sector was responsible for nine megatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions—we understand that—5% of the provincial total. But here's the part that really jumps out at you: 93% of those emissions came from waste sent to landfill. So you can imagine what we could do if we fix it.

We as members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario—and simply as people who live in this province—have a responsibility to take substantial action to reduce our waste production, to reduce the amount of waste in landfills and, in turn, to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases we're putting into the atmosphere. We need to have proper waste diversion programs here in our great province of Ontario so that we can eliminate the need for new landfills cluttering up our natural beauty. Quite frankly, we need proper waste diversion programs here in the province of Ontario based on a system of individual

producer responsibility, and we need to ensure that missing details of this bill are not allowed to fall by the wayside, or end up in a landfill.

That was supposed to be funny. Nobody really—

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** That was a good one. I liked that one, Wayne.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** It was okay? It was all right? I wasn't sure on that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** You need some new writers, Gatesy.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Hey, I need new writers.

The bill has no meat, and that's an issue. The problem with that is that we need to do everything to fight and preserve our planet, and we need to do that not just for ourselves but for our kids and our grandkids.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Point of order.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker: When I was in the chair, I erred and I referred to the member from Niagara Falls as the member from Welland. I'd like to correct the record and let the record note that he's actually the member from Niagara Falls. My apologies to the member.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Apology accepted. Thank you.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It being five to 6, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1755.*

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

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Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism 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	
<b>Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)</b>	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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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
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
<b>Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille 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	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	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
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	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)	York–Simcoe	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	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)	Halton	
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	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)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	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)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	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)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Scarborough–Rouge River	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor  
Chris Ballard, Grant Crack  
Cheri DiNovo, Han Dong  
Michael Harris, Sophie Kiwala  
Todd Smith, Monique Taylor  
Vacant  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli  
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth  
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

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Lisa M. Thompson  
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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  
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la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney  
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha  
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris  
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri  
Laurie Scott  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jack MacLaren  
Granville Anderson, Chris Ballard  
Steve Clark, Jack MacLaren  
Michael Mantha, Eleanor McMahon  
Monte McNaughton, Soo Wong  
Vacant  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Han Dong, John Fraser  
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield  
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi  
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts  
Lou Rinaldi  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French  
Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat  
Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris  
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker  
Jeff Yurek  
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, Lorne Coe  
Vic Dhillon, Amrit Mangat  
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry  
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns  
Glenn Thibeault  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch





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