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**Official Report  
of Debates  
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**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 4 April 2016**

**Lundi 4 avril 2016**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
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Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Monday 4 April 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 4 avril 2016

*The House met at 1030.*

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

*Prayers.*

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I ask all members of the House to join me in welcoming—it's a great honour to actually welcome them—two artists known as the Singh Twins, who are here from the UK. They're world-renowned artists. I'd first like to introduce them and ask them to stand: Dr. Amrit Kumari Dhigpal Kaur Singh, MBE, and Dr. Rabindra Kumari Dhigpal Kaur Singh, MBE, are joining us today.

I also ask you to join me in welcoming their relative Balvinder Kaur Singh, who is also here; I ask you to stand as well. My brother, Gurratan Singh, is here as well.

In addition, we also have page captain Amelia Naidoo's family, who is here today. I ask you also to join me in welcoming her mother, Leila Puran Naidoo; father, Mervin Naidoo; sister, Megan Naidoo; grandmother Sarah Naidoo; grandfather Sunny Naidoo; and aunt Patsy Puran. They're all here in the members' gallery. I ask you all to stand and ask everyone to join me in welcoming them as well.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I'd like to introduce the president of the Windsor district chamber of commerce. Matt Marchand is in the building today and has asked us all to join with the chamber at a reception later on this afternoon.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Our page captain today is Harry Blackwell. He's joined today by his mom, Sally Blackwell; his dad, Geoff Blackwell; and his grandmother Pam Kay. They're in the public gallery this morning. Please give them a warm Queen's Park welcome.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** They haven't arrived yet, Mr. Speaker, but I'd like to welcome the mayor of Prince Edward county, Robert Quaiff, and one of his councillors from South Marysburgh ward—also in Prince Edward county—Steve Ferguson, to the Legislature for question period this morning.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I also have some guests here from PAMA, which is one of the jewels of Brampton. It's a museum and art gallery and archive. We have Erin Fernandes and Stephen Weir, who are also here in the gallery. Please join me in welcoming them.

ORAL QUESTIONS

FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Premier. Does the Premier believe that it's appropriate for ministers to fundraise from stakeholders with active files from within their respective ministries: yes or no? Is that conduct appropriate?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I do appreciate the member opposite's new-found interest in this issue. I think we can all agree that there's a need to raise money in order to campaign and to fund the democratic process. I've been clear about that publicly, Mr. Speaker.

Our government plans on introducing legislation—I have said in the fall, but we're going to introduce that legislation in the spring. I believe we can agree that this is an important issue and there needs—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** In fact, I had announced last June that we were committed to making further changes. We will introduce legislation this spring. I have responded to the letters of the opposition leaders. I have asked them to come and meet with me, to join with me to give some input into that legislation, and I look forward to that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. The member from Prince Edward–Hastings will come to order.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier: I'm not asking about future conversations the Premier may have around election financing reform and whether she's actually interested or not, whether it's sincere or not. What I'm asking about is the conduct of her ministers.

My question is this: As leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, did the Premier allow these fundraising targets, and does she still believe they are appropriate? Is it appropriate for members of the Premier's cabinet to have fundraising targets?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member—thank you. Stop the clock. The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, come to order.

Please.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** There has been a set of rules in place that every party in this Legislature has followed. We have followed—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** But you're the government. You are the one who can actually change the rules—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order. I've now decided I'm going to go after those individuals who have decided they're just going to chirp because they feel like it. Thank you.

Carry on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I've said, Mr. Speaker, I have invited both party leaders to join me for a meeting within the next few days to discuss important issues and to give input into legislation that we'll bring forward this spring. I want to give leaders time to consult with their respective parties so that their feedback and input can be reflected in the legislation that we introduce. That legislation will be debated—

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Six thousand dollars a chair.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Prince Edward–Hastings, second time. I'll move to warnings now.

Carry on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That legislation will be debated publicly. It will go through the committee process and there will be opportunities for the opposition and the public to participate. I would ask the members opposite to share their ideas with Ontarians and with the Legislature. We're committed to, especially, the intention to transition to a ban on corporate and union donations—

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

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Back to the Premier: Does the Premier acknowledge that setting fundraising targets for cabinet ministers forces them to fundraise from stakeholders with active files within their respective ministries? It is impossible to avoid that ethical contradiction. Will the Premier do something about this?

1040

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, I go back to my initial comment, which is that I think everyone in this Legislature agrees that there is a need to raise money in order to run campaigns. I don't think anyone would believe that only the wealthy should be able to run for office. There has to be a contribution and participation by other people and other organizations in fundraising.

There has been a set of rules in place. We have determined, and some time ago, that there need to be changes. We have started to make changes—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change is warned. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Carry on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** In fact, Mr. Speaker, we've already undertaken initiatives to make elections more accountable and transparent. In 2007, we introduced third-party advertising rules for the first time and

introduced real-time disclosure for political donations which, as the member will know, other provinces are just catching up with.

We know there need to be further changes. I look forward to the input from the opposition.

## FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, has a stakeholder with active files before any ministry been asked or made to feel obligated by the Premier, a minister, a member of her staff or a member of the Ontario Liberal Party to the raise funds for the Ontario Liberal Party in order to obtain a meeting, an approval or a policy change? Yes or no?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. The member from Newmarket–Aurora is warned.

Carry on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The exchanges that I have with Ontarians all across the province, whether in a fundraising context or not, are about gleaning the best ideas that we can so that we can write policy in government that reflects the needs of the people of Ontario. That is the intention and that is the sole purpose for my exchanges, the exchanges of my members—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry is warned.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** If you look at some of the major—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** If you do not understand my resolve, it's very clear: Stop heckling.

Carry on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I said publicly this past week, if you look at many of the major initiatives that we have undertaken in this House—whether it's increasing the minimum wage, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the investments in personal support workers, early childhood educators and developmental support workers—those are initiatives that have taken place because of feedback that we've heard from people around the province. It has absolutely nothing to do with anything other than—

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

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Back to the Premier: That was a lot of spin and talk for a yes or no question.

I will be more specific. On December 7, the Ministers of Finance and Energy took part in a fundraising dinner hosted by the people who ran the sale of Hydro One. Much of the Hydro One syndicate was in attendance—a syndicate that made over \$29 million from the sale of Hydro One. Further to that, the dinner raised a reported \$165,000 for the Liberal Party. That seems to me like a thank-you dinner.

Mr. Speaker, did the ministers pressure the companies to host—

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** That's innuendo. That is absolute innuendo.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure is warned.

Carry on.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, the other side appears sensitive in the face of facts.

Did the ministers pressure the companies to host and attend this dinner in exchange for being given the right to sell Hydro One—a bad deal, by the way, for the people of Ontario.

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I have said many times, the sole purpose of interacting with people in the province—and my experience of fundraising is that many of the people who give money to one party actually give money to all the parties. I assume that those conversations we have about policy are the same conversations that the opposition parties would want to have, so that they can be informed by the expertise of people who are in the field. I assume that that is the reality on the other side of the House. That is certainly the reality on this side of the House.

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

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Back to the Premier: Since I can't get an answer on the thank-you dinner from the Hydro One sale, let's talk about the overpayment for renewable energy, energy that could have been produced at a much lower rate if they did not hand out 20-year contracts to their Liberal friends at an additional cost of \$9.2 billion to the people of Ontario. Consequently, it seems that wind company after wind company donates to the Liberal Party coffers every year.

Did any of these companies that received wind contracts just happen to attend the \$6,000-a-plate dinner with the Minister of Energy on March 10—yes or no? Did the individuals who received contracts attend that dinner?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The member opposite can get lists of who donates to our party in real time, Mr. Speaker. Those lists are available.

I look forward to the policy initiative on this from the other side of the House that suggests that what we should do is bring back coal in this province and suggests that somehow renewable energy and a clean energy grid is not in the best interests of—

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm not waiting for the last person to say something.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I would just say to the Leader of the Opposition that if that's not the plan and he doesn't approve of what we have done in terms of a clean electricity grid, I would suggest that he tell us that he's not going to bring back coal and that is not the agenda that he is going to put forward.

## FUNDRAISING

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

Every voter in Ontario should have an equal voice, but Ontarians are concerned that their voice won't be heard by their government unless they write a big cheque. It's time to stop the undue influence that big money is having on politics in this province.

My question to the Premier: Does she agree?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the newfound interest on the part of the third party in this. We have, for some time, said that there needed to be changes. We have in fact brought forward changes and, as I said to the Leader of the Opposition, we intend to bring forward legislation this spring. I had said publicly that it was the fall, but we're going to move that up because I agree with the contention that people in the province need to have a good, long opportunity for input. If we bring forward legislation in the spring, there can be a good consultation with the public on that legislation.

In advance of that, I look forward to meeting with the leaders of the opposition so that they can bring forward their ideas as that legislation goes to completion of drafting.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I did receive the Premier's response to my letter, agreeing to meet with me and the leader of the other opposition party. We're looking forward to that meeting, but it shouldn't be the case that opposition parties provide input and the Premier makes the decisions. That's why I'll be calling on the Premier to establish a process that's undertaken outside of this Legislature, headed by Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer, because I don't think that these decisions should be in the hands of a single political party; they should be in the hands of Ontarians. So will this Premier agree to set up a process that engages all political parties and broader civil society in order to fix our broken system?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I understand the need for the public to have an opportunity to comment on and to give us input, Mr. Speaker. That's why we have moved up our intention to introduce legislation from the fall to the spring. There will be a good opportunity for lots of input to the legislation in the committee process.

It's pretty clear to me that we need to move to ban corporate and union donations. That, to me, is not a question at this point; I think it's clear. If we look at what's happening in other jurisdictions, including at the federal level—that's something that we are going to do. So what I'm—

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** What caused the epiphany? The Chief Electoral Officer has been calling for it for years.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Dufferin–Caledon is warned.

Carry on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What I'm interested in is hearing from the opposition leaders on what they think the transition should be to that. It took a number of years at the federal level to get to the point that they're at now. I'd like to know from the opposition leaders how that transition should work in Ontario.

1050

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I don't believe that changing the way political parties fund campaigns should be up to any single political party. Will this Premier agree that this process should be very broad, but should also include parties with significant support in the last election, whether or not they have representation in this Legislature?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** If the leader of the third party is asking whether Mike Schreiner from the Green Party should be allowed to take part in the process, absolutely. If we have a public process with legislation that can be amended, where we can get input on it, the public can take part in that process. That's how legislation works.

What I'm proposing is that the leaders of the opposition parties work with their folks, work with their parties, and bring forward to me in our meetings some proposals about what they'd like to see in the legislation. We draft the legislation, then that legislation becomes the grist for the public discussion and we can have a broad public discussion about where we should go.

But there are some givens. I think that it is quite clear that banning union and corporate donations is where we need to go, so I would look forward to their advice on how we would make a transition to that.

## FUNDRAISING

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

People in Ontario should feel confident that politics in this province is not under the undue influence of big money—bottom line. And as I've said, changing how all political parties fundraise shouldn't be up to just one political party. If we are going to give people the confidence in the system that they deserve, then these decisions shouldn't just be up to politicians.

Does this Premier agree that the Chief Electoral Officer should take the lead role and include representatives of academia, civil society, business and labour?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It makes me wonder what the leader of the third party thinks happens at committee consultations. When I sat on committees as a regular part of my job as an MPP for three years, I heard the most intelligent, most thorough analysis of issues. Whether we talked about health care or electricity, we heard a very full range of delegations and input from people across the province. That's what I know happens at committee.

That's why I fully expect that as this legislation goes out, and once we've had input from the opposition parties, there will be a very, very complete discussion around the province from academics, from community leaders, from people who are part of unions and from people who are part of corporations, who want to have a role and want to have their say in that political discussion. I look forward to that. I welcome it.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I don't think we need to tell the Premier what happens at committee: The Liberal majority shuts down the opinions of the opposition pretty much all the time.

On a serious note, getting big money out of Ontario's politics is a pretty obvious first step, but it can't be the only step. This should be about how we make our entire democracy more fair and not just about dealing with only the issues that are getting the highlight of attention right now.

Does the Premier agree that this needs to be a comprehensive and open process and not one that just benefits the Liberal Party?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think that this process can only benefit the democratic system and can only benefit the people of Ontario. That is the purpose of the democratic process in this province. That is the purpose of government, which is not separate from the people of the province, but is part of the way our society works.

The leader of the third party may want to denigrate "big money," as she calls it. I don't know what she means by that. Is she talking about the money from teachers' federations? Or is she only talking about money from the private sector? Because the reality—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** In some cases, some people, even when warned—maybe that's not enough.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The reality is that we have all been operating under a single set of rules. Those rules are going to change, and I look forward to the input from the leaders of the opposition parties on what they think should be in that legislation.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm going to end my questioning this morning with a pretty fundamental question to this Premier, because I think it's important that we understand whether or not she has an intention to make this process open and transparent.

Will the Premier commit to an open process that's headed by Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer, with representatives from all political parties, academia, business, labour and civil society, in order to ensure that the people of Ontario can feel confident about their electoral system and how it is funded?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What I would say to the leader of the third party is that I am committed to an open process. I am committed to making sure that we get input

from every corner of this province, from anyone who wants to give us input, starting with the leaders of the opposition parties.

But I think there are some fundamental directions that have been established for some time in this Legislature. Certainly, on our part, on this side of the House, we believe that there are some pretty clear directions that we need to go in. One of them is the banning of corporate and union donations. I would love to hear from the leaders of the opposition parties about how they think that transition should happen, and any other issues that they think should be included in legislation that can then be broadly and fully publicly debated.

#### FUNDRAISING

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** After 13 years in power, that's quite an epiphany.

My question is for the treasury board president. Has a stakeholder with active files before this minister been asked by the minister, a member of her staff or a member of the Ontario Liberal Party, to raise funds for this minister or the Ontario Liberal Party in order to obtain a meeting, an approval or a policy change?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, we obviously know where this is going. What I can tell you is that I meet with people every single day with a variety of opinions about what we need to do to make Ontario better. It's part of my daily job; I bet it's part of your daily job as well. All of us in this House regularly meet with people who have expertise, who have ideas. I listen to them, and we develop public policy on the basis of what is best for the people of this province.

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

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I didn't hear "no," so I'll try again.

Has a stakeholder with active files before this minister been made to feel obligated to raise funds for this minister or for the Ontario Liberal Party by the minister, a member of his or her staff, or a member of the Ontario Liberal Party in order to obtain a meeting, an approval or policy change?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Excuse me. Stop the clock. The deputy House leader is warned.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think every single person in this House ran for office because we want to make this province better. That's what we're doing. The member opposite says she's never fundraised. That's hard to imagine. It might be true. It's hard to imagine.

We made changes. The government party made changes to require real-time public disclosure of donations. That is a very important part of the transparency agenda of this government. Anyone can go online at any time and see who is making donations to what party. I encourage people who are watching at home or even people in this House to actually look and see who is making those donations.

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

While I definitely understand the thrust and parry of this place and the idea is to allow for some of the steam to be let loose, I just want to remind people that when I say you are warned, the next time I speak to you, you will be named—just to be clear. There are a few people who are on the edge now.

Your wrap-up sentence, please.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We believe that the transparency that we brought into donations is the right thing to do. We also think it's time to make the next step and, as you heard, we'll be making changes very soon.

#### FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** The media are asking about the legality of how cabinet ministers are raising money—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Who's the question to, please?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** The question is to the Premier.

The media are asking questions about the legality of how cabinet ministers are raising money for the Ontario Liberal Party.

1100

Now the question is: Has the Premier done her due diligence? Has she taken steps to ensure that assurances have been made very clearly from her ministers that their actions are beyond question and, in fact, legal?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes.

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

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Given that, in addition, questions are being asked about how cabinet ministers are raising money from organizations that have an interest in the decisions that these ministers themselves make, I'm sure the Premier wants to know that there is absolutely no question about the legality of how this money is being raised.

My question to the Premier is this: Can the Premier tell Ontarians whom she has asked to investigate whether these allegations are true, and will she make this report public?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I have said many times, we all operate in this House under a certain set of rules. Those rules have been in place for a number of years, and I can only assume that everyone on the other side of the House follows them. We are absolutely committed to following those rules.

We have been working on changes already. We intend to bring forward legislation in the spring that will allow for a full public discussion of changes that we need to make. But I think it's pretty clear that some fundamentals need to change. We need to move towards a ban on corporate and union donations. I think that is very, very clear.

I look forward to input from the leaders of the opposition and from their parties as we draft legislation and then we take it out for full public discussion.

#### FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Has a stakeholder with active files before this minister been asked by the minister, a member of his or her staff or a member of the Ontario Liberal Party to raise funds for this minister or the Ontario Liberal Party in order to obtain a meeting, an approval or a policy change?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** As my critic knows, I take my job as Minister of Health very, very seriously. An important part of that job is to make sure that I interact with, discuss and get the best possible advice from literally hundreds of individuals around this province on a regular basis.

We have one of the best health care systems because we have the best health care providers and experts. An important part of my job is to interact—I interact with many, many people over the course of a regular day while we're sitting. I've had opportunities to do that on an ongoing basis.

As all members of this Legislature, I believe, engage in fundraising activities, when I engage in fundraising activities, I do that according to the rules that are in place.

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

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** It's easy to note that we didn't hear a straight "no" to that question.

Back to the minister: Has a stakeholder with active files before this minister been made to feel obligated to raise funds for this minister or for the Ontario Liberal Party by the minister, a member of his or her staff or a member of the Ontario Liberal Party in order to obtain a meeting, an approval or a policy change?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No, that's not how it works.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Yes, the member knows that's not how it works.

What I'm very proud of is that, long before the Progressive Conservatives first raised this issue today, long before the NDP first raised this issue today, our Premier has been engaging in a process, which she's outlined, where fundamental changes to the way donations—

*Interjection.*

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

Carry on.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Long before it was raised for the first time today—or in the last days since media attention has been drawn to this issue—this Premier has recognized that important changes can and should be made. She has indicated that in the foreseeable future she will be introducing those changes. I look forward to seeing those and I look forward to getting the good advice from the members opposite on how we can further strengthen those rules.

## FUNDRAISING

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is to the Minister of Finance.

Does the Minister of Finance see any issues with asking the companies that he hired and paid to sell off Hydro One to attend his fundraiser dinner and donate thousands of dollars to the Liberal Party of Ontario?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Again, as the Premier has explained, it's interesting that the NDP, who receive funds and do fundraisers, like the Progressive Conservatives—we all abide by the rules in this House, as we should, to enable us to support our campaigns.

Let me be clear: My priority is around policy initiating the concerns of Ontarians. That's why the document in the budget is one of the most progressive that we've had in history, talking about the things that matter to Ontarians. That's my priority, that's what drives me, and that's what I care about.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's been reported that the Minister of Finance has a quota and he needs to raise half a million dollars for the Ontario Liberal Party. That's a lot of money. Has the minister ever discussed his quota with the Premier of the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Actually, I haven't. I haven't discussed it with the Premier.

What I do discuss with the Premier are issues around policy, the preparation of the budget, the concerns that we share, as a government, to support the policies that are important to the people of Ontario. That is what we talk about and that is what initiates.

The member opposite, who also fundraises, also does the very same thing as the rest of us to support her campaigns. That is a reality that we have as the rules pertain to it.

I look forward to, and we welcome, any opportunities from the opposition to support the Premier in her initiative to reform the system. We welcome it; we're open to it.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** My question is for the Minister of Education.

Ensuring students receive the best possible education across Ontario is our government's top priority. Ontario has a lot to be proud of in terms of student achievement, thanks in large part to our great educators and our staff. Our schools are recognized across the country and around the world for excellence in education, and this is something we are extremely proud of.

Minister, this morning you announced the renewed math strategy to help students across the province become better learners. Speaker, through you to the minister, what is the Ontario government doing to raise student achievement in mathematics?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Thank you to the member, who I suspect uses her math skills every time she plans a cycling route across the province.

To talk about renewed math, supporting effective learning and teaching in mathematics has been identified as a top priority for Ontario schools. This morning, I was proud to announce that we are dedicating more than \$60 million to help support students across the province to achieve better results in math. Math is a critical requirement for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

The renewed math strategy is informed by research and lessons learned from the education sector itself. It focuses on the needs of students, their families, educators and schools, while encouraging the shared responsibility to support student learning. This strategy also supports our renewed vision for Ontario education with excellence in math.

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

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** We are extremely proud of the investments made towards education. It is important that we will continue to focus on improving the achievement of all students in mathematics, because it not only helps to enhance their full potential, but it contributes to our economic strategy by ensuring a skilled workforce. In fact, that skilled workforce is just one of the reasons Ontario leads North America in terms of foreign direct investment. So I'm pleased to hear that the students in my riding of Burlington will have better supports in place when it comes to mathematics.

Minister, can you please tell this House what types of supports and opportunities you and our government will be providing as part of the renewed math strategy?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Starting next September, key elements of the renewed math strategy will be introduced, including:

- a minimum of 60 minutes each day of protected learning time for effective mathematics instruction and assessment for students in grades 1 to 8;

- up to three math lead teachers in all elementary schools;

- coaching for principals of select secondary schools to lead improvement in math among their students;

- support for learning at home through parent resources that provide helpful tips and information on the math curriculum;

- better access to online math resources and math supports such as Homework Help or SOS Devoirs;

- math support for grades 6 to 9 outside of the school day; and, finally

- opportunities for educators to deepen their knowledge in math learning, teaching and leading, including a dedicated math professional development day to further their school improvement.

#### FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Mr. Speaker, has any stakeholder with active files before this minister been asked by the minister, a member of his staff or a member of the Ontario Liberal Party to raise funds for this minister or the Ontario Liberal Party in order to obtain a meeting, an approval or a policy change?

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**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** No.

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

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is back to the minister. Has any stakeholder with active files before this

minister been made to feel obligated to raise funds for this minister or the Ontario Liberal Party by the minister, a member of his staff or a member of the Ontario Liberal Party in order to obtain a meeting, an approval or a policy change?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** No.

#### FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Premier.

The Minister of Energy told the Ottawa Citizen that he didn't have any ethical issues with using his ministerial portfolio to raise money, but he told the Globe and Mail that he wanted reform.

Can the Premier tell us if the energy minister is okay with the current ministerial quota system or not?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I don't know how the NDP operates. I don't know what their team ethic is and I don't know how well they work together, but here's the thing: We know as a party that we have to fundraise in order to run our campaigns and do our work. We're a team, and everybody does their bit. That's how it works on this side of the House.

I have no idea how it works in the church basements of the NDP.

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Has the Minister of Energy ever discussed his quota with the Premier? And did he ever tell the Premier he wanted to see campaign finance reform?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I have not talked with my ministers about quotas. We are part of a team. The only reason I used "church basements" is because the leader of the third party was suggesting that somehow, the fundraising done by the NDP was more pure than the fundraising done by everyone else.

The fact is that we are all working in the best interests of the people of Ontario, talking to people around this province, running our parties so that there can be a political dialogue as part of our democracy.

There has been a set of rules. We are going to change those rules. I look forward to input from the opposition parties.

*Interjections.*

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

#### ELECTRIC AND AUTOMATED VEHICLES

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation.

I was at the 20th annual Newmarket home show over the weekend and had a number of constituents ask me about changes to the Electric Vehicle Incentive Program. Perhaps it was the launch of the new Tesla vehicle that sparked this interest, but actually, I believe it's my constituents' genuine concern for the environment.

I understand the minister recently announced some changes to the Electric Vehicle Incentive Program. Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell members of this House more about these changes and what Ontarians can expect to see under the new program?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I want to begin by thanking the member from Newmarket–Aurora not only for his question, but for taking a very keen interest in issues relating to transportation and how we modernize some of these important programs.

As many members of this Legislature will recall, our government launched our first Electric Vehicle Incentive Program back in 2010—a program that has provided incentives for the purchase of nearly 5,000 electric vehicles in Ontario. I was very pleased to join with Premier Wynne, the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure in February to announce some changes to this program, changes that will help make it even easier for Ontarians to switch to an electric vehicle.

Our new modernized program increases the current incentive range for e-vehicles to between \$6,000 and \$10,000. It also provides an opportunity for an additional \$3,000 incentive for vehicles with larger battery capacities. The program will also give up to \$1,000 for the purchase and installation of chargers for private home and business use.

Our government continues to make investments that will help us secure a healthy, clean and prosperous low-carbon future for all Ontarians.

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

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I want to thank the minister for his response. I know that those living in Newmarket–Aurora are glad to hear about these changes. In fact, this initiative actually builds on our government's December 2015 announcement that an additional \$20 million from Ontario's Green Investment Fund will go towards creating a network of fast-charging public EV charging stations.

This is only one of the progressive investments we're making in the vehicles we drive. I understand in January we also launched a new automated vehicles pilot. Can the minister please tell members of this House more about this new pilot and how it will change the way Ontarians drive?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I thank the member again for his follow-up question. He is quite right. On January 1, our government launched a new pilot to allow the testing of automated vehicles on Ontario's roads and highways. The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers has forecasted that, by 2040, autonomous vehicles could account for 75% of all vehicles on North American roads. That is a potential massive shift with respect to how we live and drive, and that's why I'm so proud to see Ontario leading the charge on this new and innovative technology.

Ontario is the very first province in Canada to permit the testing of automated vehicles and related technology on roads. This means that we are the first to enable the nearly 100 companies and institutions involved in the sector to conduct research and development in Ontario rather than in competing jurisdictions. This is another

example of our government's commitment to making those investments that will ensure that Ontario remains a global leader in this sector.

#### FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** My question is for the Minister of Finance.

Has a stakeholder with active files before this minister been asked by the minister, a member of his staff or a member of the Ontario Liberal Party to raise funds for this minister or the Ontario Liberal Party in order to obtain a meeting, an approval or a policy change?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** No, but I do see a great list from the Conservative Party which includes very much those very stakeholders. But no, I have not had that pressure.

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

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Back to the minister: While we all may raise funds, Speaker, this minister is selling access to meetings—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Come to order, please. Thank you.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** While we may all fundraise, it's this minister who gives out contracts and sells access to the government, so my question: Has a stakeholder—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Excuse me. Stop the clock, please. I'm going to have to ask the member to withdraw because of what he said.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I withdraw, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You may finish the question.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Has a stakeholder with active files before this minister been made to feel obligated to raise funds for this minister or the Ontario Liberal Party by the minister, a member of his staff or a member of the Ontario Liberal Party in order to obtain a meeting, an approval or a policy change?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, I have already said that that's not the case, but let me be clear: What we are concerned about is this document—the work we do to put policies in place to provide for an increase to minimum wage, free tuition for those students that are most vulnerable, to ensure that we support those with autism, increase funding for hospitals and education, support infrastructure projects and ensure that we have a fair society by breaking the cycle of poverty. All those things, Mr. Speaker, they have voted against. They have voted against the very principles that are important to the people of Ontario. That's our priority—nothing else.

*Interjections.*

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

New question.

#### FUNDRAISING

**Mr. John Vanthof:** My question is to the Premier.

The Premier has acknowledged that former cabinet minister John Gerretsen complained to her about his fundraising quotas. Will the Premier tell Ontarians what she said to John Gerretsen when he complained about the ethics of cabinet ministers being given fundraising quotas?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What I've said publicly, and the member opposite can look at my comments from last week, is that many of the comments that John Gerretsen made have become part of the discussion that we're having right now and they have fed into my conviction that we do need to make changes, that moving to ban corporate and union donations is the direction we need to go in. As I've said, I look forward to input from the opposition parties, and then I look forward to a full public debate, Mr. Speaker, as legislation goes to committee.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** The Premier has acknowledged that John Gerretsen complained about using his ministerial portfolio to raise money for the Ontario Liberal Party. Other ministers are calling for changes.

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How many other ministers have complained to the Premier about having to use their ministerial portfolios to raise money for the Liberal Party?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As has been said, that is not how it works. We are a team. We raise money. We raise money to do the work of the party, as I expect the NDP and the Conservatives both do. We all operate within a set of rules, and those rules are going to change.

I look forward to input from the opposition parties and I look forward to a full public discussion as legislation goes out for consultation.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Minister, last January, you officially launched four new streams for the Jobs and Prosperity Fund, a 10-year, \$2.7-billion support fund, which includes the new economy stream, the Food and Beverage Growth Fund, the Forestry Growth Fund and the Strategic Partnerships Stream. As you've said before, we are focusing our investments in order to help smaller businesses scale up, to continue to strengthen our commitment to innovation, to create high-value jobs and to target key industries that will act as our anchor investments in Ontario.

But at the same time, there have been critics who have suggested that we are picking winners and losers, and they have expressed concerns about the transparency of our investments. Mr. Speaker, could the minister please inform this Legislature if those concerns are legitimate?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Let me begin by saying how proud we are of the investments we've made in our business support initiatives through the years. In fact, I want all Ontarians to be aware of each of those investments, because they've proven to be hugely successful in creating jobs and attracting investment to our province. Most of our

investments are already available online, and we welcome any public interest in those important initiatives.

In all, we've invested \$2.8 billion since 2004, leveraging \$29 billion in private sector investment, and creating and retaining 160,000 jobs.

As for picking winners and losers: We are picking winners. We're investing in growth firms and innovation leaders, and we're driving to compete globally. That's what you need to do to compete in today's competitive global economy. We're trying to help our fast runners run faster so we can build an economy we can be proud to pass on to our kids and grandkids.

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

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I'd like to thank the minister for his answer. It's very encouraging to learn that there are measures in place to ensure transparency and accountability for all our businesses, as we're providing strong supports.

Minister, I know that you've been very busy lately announcing partnerships across the province of Ontario in Waterloo, Ottawa, Markham, Brantford, London, Hamilton and other areas of the province. In my own community of Kitchener–Waterloo, my constituents were very excited to welcome new jobs at Sandvine, an innovation leader that is going global. I know that we were very happy to host both the minister and the Premier at a recent tour in my community.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please tell this House about that visit and other companies that we have been partnering with lately?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'd be delighted to. I want to share a few of our recent investments with the Legislature. We've partnered with Mitsui High-tec, an advanced manufacturing company producing parts for electric vehicles, creating 48 new highly skilled jobs in your riding, Mr. Speaker, of Brantford. Our \$2-million investment leveraged \$38 million in private sector investment.

We've partnered with Baylis Medical to support a research and manufacturing expansion in Mississauga. We invested \$4.2 million, leveraging \$32.5 million in private sector investment, creating 84 jobs and retaining 194 more.

We also partnered with Sandvine, as the member indicated, in KW, an ICT innovation success story here in Ontario. We invested \$15 million, leveraging \$169 million in private sector investment, creating 75 new jobs and retaining 267.

These are good investments contributing to, in all, 160,000 jobs created and retained here in the province of Ontario.

## FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Bill Walker:** If sincere, I wonder why the Premier and her government did not make the changes when the electoral officer, Greg Essensa, raised this twice in this Legislature during his report, and myself—I raised it as a private member's bill last October, and my colleague Rick Nicholls raised it before me. If they were truly

sincere, if they truly felt this was unfair, they would have already had legislation changes. They wouldn't be dragging it out so they could continue to fundraise over the next year, probably by the time they get it done, to their benefit.

I ask the Premier: Are you really sincere? And why is it not already in legislation like the rest of the provinces of Canada and the federal government?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I've said we're bringing the legislation in this spring. We're going to have a public discussion about the legislation.

But as I have said—make no mistake—there will be a new set of rules. That doesn't mean that people will stop having to raise funds. The reality is that in order for our democracy to function, parties need to be able to work with, communicate with, run campaigns and work with the public. That is part of our democratic process.

So there will be new rules in place. I look forward to the input from the opposition and from the third party.

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

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Mr. Speaker, it's a matter of trust. This was brought to this Legislature by an officer of this Legislature, who said that you need to make changes—two reports ago. This is yet again, "We got caught. We've got the heat turned up by the media," and now the Premier and her cabinet are saying, "Oh, we need to do something, but we need time." If you were truly sincere, there are other provinces whose legislation we could borrow today. If she was really sincere, we could already have had this.

We do need to get it to a select committee so we actually have some say. We're very concerned that they would just take this, like they did with the Green Energy Act, for example, and ram it through under their provisions.

But we need to ask about the sincerity. We need to ask about how much Ontarians trust this Premier and her government to truly make changes. Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that this government will actually do the right thing for a change and ensure that there is fairness in all of this legislation. I want to ask the Premier: Have you held any fundraisers with donors in the room who could truly—

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

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As the member knows full well, we announced last June that we are committed to addressing the recommendations that have been made by the Chief Electoral Officer, recommendations that were made on the 2014 election. We are committed to that. We said we were, and we're moving forward.

But I have to say that when I read in the press that the opposition was looking for a select committee, on top of bringing legislation forward and having a public discussion as a result of committee hearings, the first thing that came to my mind is that they actually want to stall, that they actually want a longer process, and that's unacceptable. The status quo is not acceptable.

We're bringing forward legislation this spring and we're going to move forward and make those changes.

## FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Speaker, good morning to you. My question is to the Premier. Good morning, Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Good morning, Percy.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Speaker, can the Premier explain why she believes the Liberal government should be making the decisions about all political parties' fund campaigns and why she believes this process should not be led by Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I don't know if the member heard what I said to the last question. The fact is that the Chief Electoral Officer has made recommendations. Some of them pertain directly to this discussion that has been happening in the public realm in the last couple of weeks, and some of them go beyond that, but we have accepted those recommendations, we're working on them and we're going to be bringing forward legislation.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that there will be a broad and complete public consultation as we bring that legislation in the public realm. I look forward to the input from the opposition leader and the leader of the third party, after consultation with their colleagues about what they would like to see in the legislation, so that it can be debated publicly. I look forward to that process.

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

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Speaker, the Premier insists that she'll take this process through committee. As we know, she also said that the budget would reflect input from the finance committee's pre-budget consultations. But as we all know, the ink was drying on the budget before the committee was done hearing from the experts and Ontarians alike.

We need to ensure that this process is open and isn't up to one single political party. Will the Premier agree to have this process headed by Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think I've been clear about what the process should be, going forward. I look forward to the input from the leaders of the opposition parties. I trust that they will be talking to their colleagues and that they will engage in a very energetic and enthusiastic way in the public discussion that will follow as legislation goes forward. That is what is required of us. It is what is necessary in order for us to come to good policy decisions.

As I said, I think there are some very clear directions, whether it's from the Chief Electoral Officer or the public debate that has ensued for the last couple of weeks around the banning of corporate and union donations. We need to get on that. That's why we're moving the legislation up. We're going to bring that legislation forward in the spring rather than in the fall.

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## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Mr. Grant Crack:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Minister, as you know, every day there are women across the province who experience domestic violence, and this devastating reality can affect people from any community or any walk of life.

I know that your ministry provides violence-against-women agencies across this province with funding to support women and their children who have experienced domestic violence. These hard-working agencies, such as Maison Interlude House in my riding, in Hawkesbury, provide vital services such as emergency shelter, counselling services and housing supports to help women and their children who require these services.

But we all know that there are unique challenges experienced by shelters in rural, remote and northern communities. Speaker, through you: Can the minister please tell us how her ministry is recognizing and helping to address these challenges?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you to the member for the question. I understand he celebrated his birthday this weekend, so happy birthday.

Our government certainly takes the role of supporting women and their children who have experienced domestic violence very seriously. I have had the opportunity to visit some 21 VAW shelters across the province since I became minister. I'm very aware of the unique service delivery challenges being experienced by rural, remote and northern shelters. That's why, in January, I visited the Women's Rural Resource Centre, Strathroy and Area to announce that we would be establishing a Rural Realities Fund. This new two-year, \$1-million fund will help shelters and agencies in these communities address their local challenges. I'm pleased to let this House know that my ministry is now welcoming applications to the Rural Realities Fund.

We know this is just part of the solution. We will continue to work with the agencies in these communities.

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

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Thank you, Minister, for that information on the Rural Realities Fund. I understand that rural shelters and agencies were very pleased with this recent announcement. For example, I know that the chair of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses and executive director of the Leeds and Grenville Interval House said that she was thrilled with the recent announcement for the Rural Realities Fund. She commended our government on our commitment to improving the lives of women and girls in Ontario, and she looked forward to continued collaboration. She said that for her shelter, their front-line staff cover over 3,300 square kilometres and a population of over 96,000 people, and these funds would be used to improve their outreach and counselling services to women living with violence.

Minister, I understand that in your recent announcement, you also spoke about the crisis response framework that will help your agencies develop coordinated plans. Could you please share with this House the work the ministry is doing on this file?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** When we consider the tragic shootings in Wilno last fall and the most recent shootings

in Odessa last month, we know that there is more that we must do. That is why I also announced that we would begin working with agencies, my ministry's VAW expert group and with other ministries to develop and implement a crisis response framework. We need to work together with the VAW sector and other community partners to help identify the steps we can take to prevent these tragedies from occurring, and we will work with VAW agencies to find ways to better support them when crises do occur.

The creation of the Rural Realities Fund and crisis response framework were recommendations to the province from the Premier's Roundtable on Violence Against Women. Both of these initiatives support the Ontario government's goals of ending violence against women and providing better supports for survivors.

## FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Michael Harris:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation.

Has a stakeholder with an active file before this minister been asked by the minister, a member of his or her staff or a member of the Ontario Liberal Party to raise funds for this minister or the Ontario Liberal Party in order to obtain a meeting, an approval or policy change?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Of course, I thank the member opposite for his interest in this topic. As the Premier has said repeatedly today, as have colleagues on this side of the Legislature, in consultation with both other party leaders and other stakeholders interested in this topic, over the next number of days and weeks there will be a modernization or an update brought to political financing laws here in the province of Ontario.

Speaker, I think it must be clear by now, because there have been multiple responses on this side of the Legislature, of course, that we look forward to working closely in collaboration with members from both opposition parties and others external to this building to make sure that we get it right, which I think is of utmost importance to the people of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Back to the minister: Has a stakeholder with active files before this minister been made to feel obligated to raise funds for this minister or the Ontario Liberal Party by the minister, a member of his staff or a member of the Ontario Liberal Party in order to obtain a meeting, an approval or policy change?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I believe I've answered that question by and large with the first response that I gave.

What's interesting to me, I have to say, is that last week I know a number of people on this side of the Legislature, in the government caucus, were out across the province of Ontario making fundamentally important announcements in a variety of communities across Ontario.

Within my own area of responsibility, I remember being in Wellington-Halton Hills last week to announce funding support for the Morriston bypass, for example. I

also remember standing alongside the member from Barrie in Orillia announcing cycling infrastructure funding, and doing the same thing in Markham—Connecting Links funding.

To what the finance minister said earlier today about Ontario budget 2016, this is what this government is focused on: building the province up, moving it forward, a stronger economy and a better quality of life. That's what this Premier and this government are working hard on.

*Interjections.*

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

### FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Premier.

My leader and our caucus have put the proposal forward that the Chief Electoral Officer be charged with looking at what changes need to happen to the fundraising rules in the province of Ontario. We know if the Chief Electoral Officer does it, it's going to be non-partisan. It will be an issue that the public will be involved in and we're going to come back with something that's workable.

Why does the government and why does this Premier refuse to go that route and instead have a process where she's going to control the outcome? Why should people have any trust in you, considering your record on fundraising?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm sure that the public would like to know that the NDP and the Conservatives would bring forward suggestions on that legislation. I said earlier that I've responded to the letters from both the leader of the Conservatives and the leader of the NDP. I've said I welcome a meeting with them so that they can bring forward their suggestions. Then we need to have a full public discussion as part of the commentary on the legislation. I think that is absolutely the way to go.

I think it's quite clear from having looked at this—this last week was not the first time that we have thought about this.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The member opposite may want to chuckle, but the fact is that we have been looking at this. We understood that there needed to be changes. That's why we're able to bring legislation forward this spring and move on it quickly. As I say, I look forward to input from the parties opposite.

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

*The House recessed from 1138 to 1300.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### ROB FORD

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I rise today to pay my respects to a friend and to a public servant who had a truly unique bond with his constituents.

There have been many tributes paid to Rob Ford. Many politicians, such as myself, and journalists have offered eulogies of one kind or another for a man who loved his family and the city of Toronto above all else. While I like to think Rob would appreciate this, I know the much more meaningful tributes have come from his family, the kids he coached and the thousands of people who turned out to say a final goodbye at city hall.

Rob dedicated himself to being a father, son, brother, coach and mayor. He was a champion for a lot of people who don't often find politicians in their corner. Over the last couple of weeks, I know thousands of people have been retelling their personal stories of meeting Rob—having him help them out or call them up. Those anecdotes and the bigger story they tell about a man who had a radically down-to-earth approach to public service are a powerful legacy.

I admired Rob for his leadership. He stood up for everyday people and always tried to do what was right for taxpayers. His constituency work was absolutely legendary.

Rob Ford was larger than life, and his loss has been profoundly felt. Our prayers and thoughts remain with Renata, Stephanie, Doug Jr., the city of Toronto and Ford nation.

### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Miss Monique Taylor:** April is Autism Awareness Month, and this government has chosen to mark it by announcing changes to the Autism Intervention Program that would deprive children of IBI after they were told they would get it. Under the new rules, IBI will not be available to children over the age of five.

I have raised the issue of extensive wait-lists for autism treatment before in this Legislature. Not once did I expect that this government's solution would be to simply deny service to the many who were on the list. Over the past few days, I have heard from literally hundreds of families affected by this decision. Disappointed, devastated, shattered, shocked, disgusted, angry, ashamed and scared—these are just some of the words that they have used to describe their feelings as they recount their personal stories. Many of them tell me of the startling improvement they saw in their child after the age of five as a result of IBI treatment.

Now the government is pulling the rug out from under them. In some cases, they were told within the past few weeks that IBI would be starting this month, only to be told just a few days later that, because their child had reached the age of five, this was no longer the case. One parent reports that she was told just weeks ago that her son was an ideal candidate for IBI.

This government needs to think again about this plan and the effect that these changes will have on the children who so desperately need treatment.

### ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** April 1 marked the beginning of Be a Donor Month here in Ontario. Each April,

the Trillium Gift of Life Network, through their Be a Donor campaign, raises awareness of the issues surrounding organ and tissue donation and those who are waiting for organ and tissue transplants.

Over 1,600 people in Ontario are currently waiting for organ and tissue transplants, and, unfortunately, we will lose someone every three days due to the lack of a suitable donor. With close to 30% of Ontarians registering their consent to be a donor, it is clear that the people in this province care deeply about helping their friends, their loved ones and their neighbours. But we can and must do more. Initiatives like Trillium Gift of Life's Be a Donor Month help underscore the importance of registering to be a donor, as a single organ and tissue donor can save up to eight lives.

This year's campaign focuses on the reasons why people support organ and tissue donation. Speaker, I'm proud to say that I'm a registered donor. I encourage all of my colleagues in this House and every Ontarian to lend their support to this initiative by sharing photographs of themselves, their family and friends, with messages of why they support organ and tissue donation, with #myreason and #beadonor. By sharing these powerful messages of love and support with our social networks, we can encourage more Ontarians to become donors. Most importantly, if you have not already done so, please take a moment to register to be a donor. Or, you can do so at any ServiceOntario location. It only takes a few minutes, which can help save many lives.

#### HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** More than 30 years after discussion on the Highway 6 Morriston bypass began, last week we were able to welcome the Minister of Transportation to Wellington-Halton Hills as he announced the approval of this needed project. Working together, we've been pushing for the bypass for years, and I want to thank Mayor Dennis Lever, the township of Puslinch council and staff, the county of Wellington, the Morriston bypass coalition and many others who expressed support, including the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Education.

However, I need to remind the Minister of Transportation that there are still many other important transportation needs in Wellington-Halton Hills. For example, last August I was approached by the town of Halton Hills about the need for a long-term truck strategy, including the possibility of a bypass on Highway 7 around Acton. We immediately went to work on it. I have approached the minister on several occasions in the Legislature to discuss this issue with him and have also written to him a number of times.

Last fall, I also tabled a resolution calling on the minister to place the Highway 7 Acton bypass on his ministry's five-year plan for highway construction. I also arranged a meeting in January with the minister's office between the minister and a delegation from the town of Halton Hills, which included Mayor Rick Bonnette and

regional chair Gary Carr. The town has offered to cover half the costs of the study as an initial step towards a constructive partnership. But we all realize that an Acton bypass is not going to be built overnight. It's important that we get moving forward because we know that, working together, we make progress.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Today I would like to bring to the House's attention the critical status of health care delivery in London. The health care system in our city is buckling under pressures caused by lack of proper funding from this government.

Recently, the system failed Sarp and Vicky Hankali when they took their baby daughter Alexis to Children's Hospital for a diagnostic surgery. They were instructed to stop feeding their daughter on Sunday night for surgery Monday afternoon, only to have the hospital continually push back the surgery while Alexis suffered hunger and confusion for two days. News reporters say that a surgeon apologized for the delays, citing staff cuts as the reasons they could not get baby Alexis into surgery on time. CBC News requested a response from the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Health distanced itself from their responsibility.

The Hankali family experienced first-hand the devastating impact of continued cuts to our health care system. London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Hospital both announced last week that they would be forced to cut staff hours and positions due to lack of adequate funding from the province.

Londoners deserve a health care system that delivers. I am calling on the Minister of Health to stop the cuts to Ontario hospitals.

#### COMMUNITY AWARDS

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** On Saturday, March 19, I had the privilege of recognizing the contributions of two outstanding Barrie residents by presenting them with Leading Women/Leading Girls Building Communities Award. Shannon Murree and Suzy Kies exemplify community leadership, volunteerism and advocacy, and have become mentors to many through their dedication to improving the lives of women and girls.

A local real estate consultant, Ms. Murree is head of the Mompreneurs of Simcoe county, mentoring professional women in Barrie by using her ability to build women up and support them in their business endeavours. She organized the Shoebox Project, which provides necessities to battered women, and has been a long-time supporter of the Women and Children's Shelter of Barrie. Shannon has also worked with Dress for Success, a program that provides business attire for women in need who are searching for a new career. She is the recipient of Barrie's Order of the Spirit Catcher and has been nominated multiple times for the Women in Business awards. She is a passionate advocate and philanthropist, focused on empowering women.

Ms. Kies is a leader in the indigenous community and is currently president of the Aboriginal Peoples' Commission of Ontario. She also works at the Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre, where she develops programs for children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders while also helping women expand their employment skills. She has put in countless volunteer hours mentoring young women, and is now also involved in the Youth Quest program, demonstrating an openness to and acceptance of youth.

It is a privilege to recognize the outstanding contributions of these women on behalf of the government of Ontario.

1310

### CANADIAN DAIRY XPO

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'm pleased to rise today in anticipation of the fourth annual Canadian Dairy XPO. The Dairy XPO is taking place on Wednesday and Thursday in Stratford. It is the largest commercial dairy stage in Canada, showcasing the latest in dairy innovations.

Since its inception in 2013, attendance has grown from 10,000 to over 15,000 people. It attracts farmers from across the country and the world. It has grown so much that this year there will be a new cow coliseum to accommodate the growing number of exhibitors.

There is also a new initiative at the Dairy XPO. Organizers have partnered with the Dairy Farmers of Canada to run the Blue Cow Spirit campaign. All attendees are encouraged to wear their blue cow gear to create a sea of blue travelling through the XPO. Mr. Speaker, I must say, that's a great colour choice. Wearing your blue cow apparel will save you \$10 on your admission charge.

I always enjoy attending the Canadian Dairy XPO, and I'll be there again this year. I welcome everyone to attend. I'll be serving breakfast on Wednesday and Thursday mornings and touring the XPO to learn about the latest innovations.

I would like to recognize Jordon Underhill, the general manager of the Canadian Dairy XPO, and his entire team for the hard work that goes into organizing each year's event. I would also like to extend my thanks to all the volunteers who make the event possible. Finally, my thanks to the city of Stratford for their contribution to the success of the XPO.

I invite you all to attend the Canadian Dairy XPO from April 6 to 7 at the Stratford Rotary Complex.

### PUBLIC HEROES AWARDS

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I rise in the House today to congratulate Constable Jim Lambe from the Toronto Police Service 12 Division, in my riding of York South-Weston, on being awarded a Public Heroes Award 2016.

I first met Constable Jim Lambe about nine years ago, when I was first elected as an MPP. His unwavering passion to build a safer community through his work as an

officer, volunteer and community liaison became apparent to me immediately.

Constable Lambe is a tireless community leader. His participation in the community at countless events throughout the years demonstrates his dedication to the residents of York South-Weston. He is a mentor to people of all ages, especially youth and newcomers. His drive and determination is admirable to all.

The Public Heroes Awards started in 2011 to recognize the outstanding service of Toronto police, fire and paramedic services in maintaining public safety in the city of Toronto. In 2014, the scope was broadened to the entire greater Toronto area. The goal of the awards is to recognize the dedication and excellence of individual members of the police, fire and paramedic services in the GTA for delivering their services in an ethnically and culturally diverse environment.

Congratulations, Constable Jim Lambe, on receiving a Public Heroes Award. It is well deserved, as you are a hero to many of us.

### GRANDVIEW CHILDREN'S CENTRE

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I'm pleased to stand in the House today to follow up and to acknowledge, once again, Grandview Children's Centre. Grandview is the only children's treatment centre in Durham, providing expert pediatric treatment and rehabilitation services to well over 5,000 children and youth with special needs and their families. Grandview has been operating in the region of Durham for 63 years. Its headquarters have always been in Oshawa, and they've always done a great job.

The Minister of Children and Youth Services, MPP MacCharles, officially announced on March 29 \$333 million in new funding for autism, as promised in the recent Ontario budget. We listened to families and the clinical experts and heard that the current system was not working, and we have responded with an investment that will help more children receive the critical services that they need.

I want to proceed and tell you that I know that Grandview Children's Centre is very happy with this investment. In fact, executive director Lorraine Sunstrum-Mann has said, "Grandview Children's Centre is thrilled by these significant investments in children's services. This will change the lives of families with kids with special needs. For families in Durham region, this means getting the right services sooner."

Grandview Children's Centre has much to be excited about these days, including a very recent donation from TD Bank of \$200,000 during a ceremonial puck drop with the Oshawa Generals Hockey Club at the GM Centre. The cheque from TD represents the largest single monetary donation ever received by Grandview Children's Foundation. We want to acknowledge the town of Ajax for their great contribution—

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

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

#### COMITÉ PERMANENT DE LA JUSTICE

**M. Shafiq Qaadri:** Je demande la permission de déposer un rapport du Comité permanent de la justice, et je propose son adoption.

I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and move its adoption.

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

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

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

*Report adopted.*

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

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I beg leave to present a report on pre-budget consultation 2016 from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Ms. Wong presents the report by the committee.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Mr. Speaker, this past winter, the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs conducted its pre-budget consultation from January 18 to February 2. Public hearings were held in Hamilton, Windsor, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Ottawa and, for two days, in Toronto in the Legislative Building.

The committee heard from 146 witnesses and received some 114 written submissions from agencies, associations, community groups, local administrative bodies, municipalities, organizations, transfer payment partners, unions and individuals. On behalf of the committee, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank each one of them for taking the time to share their views with the committee.

I also wanted to thank the committee members and the staff for their commitment, hard work and co-operation.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the member for the report.

Just a note: it's very rare that I would hear any heckling during reports by committees.

*Debate adjourned.*

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I beg leave to present the second report of 2016 from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Ms. Naidoo-Harris presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would like to thank the committee and support staff for all their hard work and diligence in preparing this thorough report. I know that all involved have put a great deal of time and effort into this, and it's fantastic to see it culminated in this important document. It makes several recommendations that will be key to our progress moving forward.

Thank you again, and I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Ms. Naidoo-Harris moves adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS MODERNIZATION ACT, 2016

#### LOI DE 2016 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES ÉLECTIONS MUNICIPALES

Mr. McMeekin moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 181, An Act to amend the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and to make complementary amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 181, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales et apportant des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois.

**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.

**1320**

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I rise today to introduce the Municipal Elections Modernization Act, which would amend the Municipal Elections Act. Our proposed package of reforms would, if passed, help ensure that the rules governing how municipal leaders are elected are clear and reflect how to run modern campaigns and elections. This package of reforms responds to the real and evol-

ing needs of our communities, including providing municipalities with the option to introduce ranked-ballot voting for the 2018 municipal elections.

ONTARIO DOWN SYNDROME  
DAY ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA JOURNÉE  
ONTARIENNE DE LA TRISOMIE 21

Mr. Dickson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 182, An Act to proclaim Ontario Down Syndrome Day / Projet de loi 182, Loi proclamant la Journée ontarienne de la trisomie 21.

**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. Joe Dickson:** The bill proclaims March 21 in each year as Ontario Down Syndrome Day.

PETITIONS

RURAL SCHOOLS

**Mr. Bill Walker:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it is right for Ontario youth to be educated in their home communities;

“Whereas accessible schools that students can walk, bike or take a short ride to promote healthy lifestyles, a cleaner environment and emotional well-being;

“Whereas the economies of smaller rural towns are directly strengthened and vitalized by high schools in their own communities;

“Whereas community schools best serve special populations;

“Whereas rural high schools more than 15 km from the next high school should be considered eligible for enhanced top-up funding;

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

“To direct support and resources to Ontario rural community schools, such as Harrow District High School, so as to provide and sustain accessible education for youth within their home communities, preserving and sustaining rural town culture that diversifies the fabric of the province of Ontario.”

I support this petition, affix my name and send it with page Sohan.

AUTISM TREATMENT

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I received this petition from a woman in my riding named Michelle Campbell and her daughter Avery, and it reads as follows:

“Don’t Balance the Budget on the Backs of Children with ASD.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government recently announced plans to reform the way autism services are delivered in the province, which leaves children over the age of five with no access to intensive behavioural intervention (IBI); and

“Whereas in 2003, former Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty removed the previous age cap on IBI therapy, stating that Liberals support extending autism treatment beyond the age of six; and

“Whereas applied behaviour analysis (ABA) and intensive behavioural intervention (IBI) are the only recognized evidence-based practices known to treat autism spectrum disorder (ASD); and

“Whereas the combined number of children waiting for ABA and IBI therapies in Ontario is approximately 16,158; and

“Whereas the wait-lists for services have become overwhelmingly long due to the chronic underfunding by this Liberal government;

“Whereas some families are being forced to re-mortgage houses or move to other provinces while other families have no option but to go without essential therapy; and

“Whereas the Premier and her government should not be balancing the budget on the backs of kids with ASD and their families;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government of Ontario to immediately ensure that all children currently on the waiting list for IBI therapy are grandfathered into the new program so they do not become a lost generation.”

I couldn’t agree with this more, Mr. Speaker. I’m going to affix my name to it and give it to page MacFarlane to bring to the Clerk.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
AND HARASSMENT

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

“Whereas one in three women will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime. When public education about sexual violence and harassment is not prioritized, myths and attitudes informed by misogyny become prevalent. This promotes rape culture.... Sexual violence and harassment survivors too often feel revictimized by the systems set in place to support them. The voices of survivors, in all their diversity, need to be amplified. Survivors too often face wait times for counselling services as our population grows and operating costs rise for sexual assault support services.

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

“Support the findings and recommendations of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment’s final report, highlighting the need for inclusive and open dialogue to address misogyny and rape culture; educate

about sexual violence and harassment to promote social change; fund sexual assault support services adequately....; and address attrition rates within our justice system, including examining 'unfounded' cases, developing enhanced prosecution models and providing free legal advice for survivors."

I agree with this and will attach my initials and give this to page Harry.

#### HYDRO DAM

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition in support of public safety in Bala. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas to select a proponent for a hydroelectric generating station proposed at the Bala Falls, the Ministry of Natural Resources (now the MNRF) released a request for proposals in 2005 which included the requirement that 'For the North Bala dam, demonstrate consideration of the extensive aesthetic, recreational, social and economic (i.e. tourism) values in the area of the proposed development'; and

"Whereas through a competitive process, a proponent was selected based solely on their proposal, which included the commitment that their proposed project would 'not generally diminish the public's enjoyment of the area for swimming, boating, fishing...'; and

"Whereas the tragic 2008 drowning of a 16-year-old boy at the nearby hydroelectric generating station due to the turbulent water exiting that station confirms that such generating stations can be deadly; and

"Whereas it would be unprecedented and dangerous to locate a hydroelectric generating station in the middle of an extremely popular in-water recreational area, and the public has not been informed how this could be done safely in Bala; and

"Whereas the Lifesaving Society is a national organization with expertise that includes assessing the safety of in-water recreational areas and measures; and

"Whereas the township of Muskoka Lakes has declared they are an unwilling host municipality for this proposed project;

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

"That the government of Ontario not allow construction of the proposed Bala generating station to proceed until a safe operating plan detailing the required safety measures, such as start-up warning and the location of fencing and the downstream safety boom, has been presented by the proponent to the public, and this plan has been found to be acceptable by the Lifesaving Society."

Mr. Speaker, I support having a safe operating plan for the Bala Falls, and I'd like to present this petition to Vanessa.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** I have a "Petition to Stop the Proposed Changes to the Age Grouping and Ratios in Child

Care." These petitions are from across the province. There are nearly 6,000 signatures here, and there are more coming.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current proposal will allow younger children to be placed in a child care setting with less adults to have quality interactions with, as well as provide significantly less educational opportunities;

"Whereas research has proven that the quality of provisions in child care is directly related to ratios (number of teachers to number of children), staff qualifications and training, and group size;

"Whereas reducing the number of RECEs in the ratio setting disregards decades of research and evidence on brain development and the need to have individuals with very specific knowledge and training who can translate this research into practice;

"Whereas Ontario already has one of the highest ratios of young children to adults, these changes will ensure that Ontario has the lowest quality of child care;

"Whereas the changes to the age grouping will provide less quality care for children aged 12 months to 30 months, by placing them in groups with higher ratios of children to adults. The workload will increase for the RECEs, leading to a decrease in quality and education for the children;

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

"Stop the government's plan to change the age groupings and ratios in Ontario child care centres."

I fully support this petition and will sign my name to it and send it to the table with page Ariel.

1330

#### ELDER ABUSE

**Ms. Soo Wong:** 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;

"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 fully support this petition, and I will sign it and give my petition to page Jerry.

#### SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I have a petition entitled “Stop the Closure of Provincial and Demonstration Schools.” It’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas provincial and demonstration schools in Ontario provide education programs and services for students with special education needs;

“Whereas there are four provincial and three demonstration schools for anglophone deaf, blind, deaf-blind and/or severely learning-disabled students, as well as one school for francophone students who are deaf, deaf-blind and/or have severe learning disabilities;

“Whereas even with early identification and early intervention, local school boards are not equipped to handle the needs of these students, who are our most vulnerable children;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“(a) oppose the closure of provincial and demonstration schools and recognize that these specialized schools are the last hope for many children;

“(b) stop the enrollment freeze at these schools in order for students and their families, who have exhausted all other available resources, to have access to equal education for themselves without added costs, to which they, like all students, are entitled to.”

Mr. Speaker, I have affixed my name to this petition.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** “Petition to Stop the Plan to Increase Seniors’ 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’ll sign my name to the petition and give it to the page.

#### WATER FLUORIDATION

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly entitled “Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I have an important petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas a 61-year-old Alzheimer’s patient was kept in a hospital ER for eight nights due to lack of beds;

“Whereas the crisis centre isn’t set up to help patients whose needs are so great they need treatment in a psychiatric ward;

“Whereas the crisis centre only has five beds;

“Whereas none of the beds are high-needs beds;

“Whereas the number of people seeking help from the Alzheimer Society has soared 50% in two years;

“Whereas patients have the right to be treated with dignity and care;

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

“Immediately reform existing health care legislation and policies, and specifically provide emergency funding to increase staff and available beds in all ERs in Ontario;

“Provide immediate funding to increase number of long-term beds in SW Ontario;

“Provide immediate funding staff a team of experts to find ways to reduce violence among those with dementia in long-term care....”

I support this petition and send it with page Aarbhi.

#### SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I’d like to read—thousands of signatures—a petition, on behalf of students, parents, alumni and concerned staff and teachers, to stop the closure of provincial and demonstration schools.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas provincial and demonstration schools in Ontario provide education programs and services for students with special education needs;

“Whereas there are four provincial and three demonstration schools for anglophone deaf, blind, deaf-blind and/or severely learning-disabled students, as well as one school for francophone students who are deaf, deaf-blind and/or have severe learning disabilities;

“Whereas even with early identification and early intervention, local school boards are not equipped to handle the needs of these students, who are our most vulnerable children;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“(a) oppose the closure of provincial and demonstration schools and recognize that these specialized schools are the last hope for many children;

“(b) stop the enrollment freeze at these schools in order for students and their families, who have exhausted all other available resources, to have access to equal education for themselves without added costs, to which they, like all students, are entitled to.”

I support this petition and give it to page Joshua to deliver to the table.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### SUPPORTING ONTARIO’S TRAILS ACT, 2016

##### LOI DE 2016 SUR LE SOUTIEN AUX SENTIERS DE L’ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 24, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act to enact the Ontario Trails Act, 2016 and to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 100, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur les sentiers de l’Ontario et modifiant diverses lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I recognize the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Thank you, Speaker. Before I begin, I believe we have unanimous consent to stand down the NDP lead on this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane is seeking unanimous consent of the House to stand down the New Democratic lead on this bill. Agreed? Agreed.

The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Thank you, Speaker. It’s always an honour to be able to stand in this House and speak on legislation that might affect the people of Ontario—in this case, Bill 100, An Act to enact the Ontario Trails Act, 2015 and to amend various Acts.

This legislation could and will have a big impact on the residents of my riding. I’m going to let our critic focus on the whole province; I’m going to focus on Timiskaming–Cochrane, and some of these issues will be very relevant to the rest of the province.

As you all know, I live in northern Ontario. One of the biggest winter sports we have in northern Ontario is snowmobiling, and it actually brings—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I thought it was feeding the fire.

1340

**Mr. John Vanthof:** We do that out of necessity.

Snowmobiling is not only for locals. We bring in millions and millions of dollars annually from people who come from throughout the province, the country, the continent and from around the world to snowmobile in northern Ontario. That’s only possible because of the hard work of snowmobile clubs across the province.

I’m going to give a shout-out to the snowmobile clubs in my riding for starters. I’ve got the Polar Bear Riders, the Jackpine Snowmobile Club, the A14 Task Force snowmobile club, the Golden Corridor snowmobile club, the Near North Trail Association, the Elk Lake Trail Blazers snowmobile club, the West Nipissing Snowmobile Club, the Nipissing Veuve River Snowmobile Club, and the French River Snow Devils. And the two nearest and dearest to my heart are Club Echo, because I’m a property owner who allows Club Echo to use my land, and the Tri-Town Sno Travellers, because I’m a member.

So I have a conflict of interest here because I am a snowmobiler. I started out on a 250 Elan a long, long time ago, a Ski-Doo. It was broken and frozen all the time. We had to become mechanics. We did a lot more fixing than we did snowmobiling. Now I have a Renegade Backcountry, and I put on quite a few kilometres with my friends. Snowmobiling has come a long way because we snowmobile; we no longer fix. They've come a long, long way. It's a great feeling.

Why this sport is possible is because all the people and these snowmobile clubs groom the trails. What's unique about snowmobiling is that a lot of the trails are on private land, and the private landowners give permission for the clubs to use their land. That's what makes the sport truly fantastic: On a snowmobile, you can see parts of Ontario that are inaccessible to the public in any other way. You can drive, depending on where the trail goes, past livestock farms, past people's personal picnic spots. You can drive by fantastic spots. It's one of the things that makes it so incredible.

I'm just going to give a shout-out to my colleague from Timmins-James Bay, because on my birthday we went from Cochrane, stayed at the Westway Motel, and we went to the Abitibi Canyon loop on the snow machine. We started off in my riding and went to his riding. One of the 10 things you've got to see on a snowmobile before you give up your career is the Abitibi Canyon.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Been there.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes. The fact that you can go on private land is a blessing, and what makes it really unique is that private landowners have no material gain from this at all. Typically, when a snowmobile trail goes across farmland, the farmer loses money because the crops are impacted. So farmers—and I'm going to speak as a farmer because that's who I know best—do this as community members, because they know how much it brings to the community and they're proud to be part of this system. So the system is working fairly well.

And then we get Bill 100. Actually, there are some good provisions in Bill 100. It creates a Trails Week, which is great. It does make some changes regarding liability—so taking liability away from the landowner. That's great. People have been pushing for that for a long time. Where it gets kind of murky and where landowners—and there's a group called the Ontario Landowners. I'm not a member. Sometimes I say "landowners"; I should say "property owners," because I don't really agree with some of the things the landowners are saying on this issue. If I say "landowner," I'm not speaking for them. I'm a property owner. Sometimes I mispronounce the word.

What this bill proposes to do is that a property owner could give an easement—to a snowmobile club, in this case—and there's a reason for this. I'll give a shout-out to the president of the Tri-Town Sno Travellers, Bill Ramsay. I talked to him about this bill. He gave me an example: If there's a farm or a piece of land that you're going to go across and the snowmobile club needs to put a bridge there and the bridge is a quarter-million dollars,

right now there's no guarantee other than a handshake with the landowner that they can access that bridge after it's put up. If they could have an easement to get to that bridge—that's why this would be a good bill. That's a good point.

I'm not going to give them in the House, but there are places in my riding where this bill makes a lot of sense. But where it causes some issues is with easements, because when a farmer hears the word "easement," he hears the words "loss of control of his land." He hears the word "lawyer," which is going to cost him money, right? And you say, "Farmers must be a very suspicious bunch." No, they're not. Neither are the other property owners.

This whole trail system was built on trust. I guess the best way I can explain it is how Club Echo started in my riding. When Club Echo first approached me, it was a man by the name of Leon Gravel, and may Leon rest in peace. The only reason that Club Echo got access to my land is because I knew and I trusted Leon. He was a fellow dairy farmer. He said, "We want to make this trail. We're going to mark it off. We're going to do all these things. If somebody goes off the trail, we'll make sure that doesn't happen again. We're going to put gates where we break through your fences. We're going to make sure the fences are better than they were before." And they did all those things.

We gave permission because we trusted Leon. Part of that—anyone who gave permission to Club Echo got an Echo pass. That was a little piece of paper, and if you happened to have a snowmobile, you had the right to go on Club Echo's trails. For those of you at home, I believe it was to Englehart and halfway to New Liskeard. That was lots for me. I didn't want to go any farther. I couldn't make it any farther. But that's how it started, and Club Echo ran very well. Then Club Echo went together with the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs. Good move, but we didn't have any relationship with the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs. All the property owners got a nice letter in the mail: "Club Echo is now part of the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs. Thank you for letting us cross your land, but if you want to get on the trail, you're now going to have to buy the \$250 pass; end of discussion." But they never asked us.

I was president of the Temiskaming Federation of Agriculture. A few farmers called me, and we said, "No, we never had a deal with OFSC." So we called OFSC up and we announced that we closed the trails.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That got their attention.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It did get their attention. The folks from Barrie drove right up and were prepared to read us the riot act. It started with: "How dare you close our trails?" To which we replied—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's my land.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** "It's our land. You never asked for permission. We gave our permission to Club Echo; we never gave permission to you." All of a sudden the tone changed. We've developed a very good relationship with OFSC, based on—this was years ago—a mutual respect of whose land was whose.

That's why we hear the word "easement," and that's giving away power over your land. Farmers are not going to go for that. The fine print says "with or without covenant," and they read "lawyer." There's a real danger that farm groups led by younger radicals than me are going to pull their support. You can ask Bill Ramsay. He's as worried as I am that the trails will collapse because of this. I know that the farmer doesn't have to grant an easement, but it's just the idea that we're talking about—you need much clearer English on what the rights are and what they're not.

Further in this act, if the landowner does grant an easement, you read, "An easement may be assigned by an eligible body to another eligible body," which means that if you don't have something written right at the start, someone who you never had a relationship with could give the use of your land to someone else 10 years down the road. Farmers are happy having a snowmobile trail cross their land, but if it's an ATV trail, it's a whole different story, because then you're trampling over our crops. That's a whole different story.

**1350**

Someone's going to say, "Oh, John, that never happens." I'll give you another personal example of how this happened.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Was this when you were a young radical?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yup.

TransCanada PipeLines has an easement across my land, as it does with all kinds of other people in the Little Clay Belt. They put two pipes through. TransCanada PipeLines are great people to deal with. But then TransCanada PipeLines rented their easement to Bell Telephone, and Bell Telephone put a fibre optic cable in between the two pipes and cut the tiles. It was a nice little machine, a little plow. It only made a hole this big along the top, but everywhere where there was a tile, it cut them. They didn't fix them, and TransCanada PipeLines was in no mood to fix them because they didn't cause the problem, so that's the way it stayed. Whenever you fix a tile around a pipeline, you've got to get a pipeline guy there. You don't want a backhoe close to a pipeline, because bad things happen.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Boom.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Boom.

The farmers paid to fix all those tiles, but we remembered.

Then TransCanada PipeLines came to put a third pipe in, and they needed to make the easement bigger. You ask anybody who has worked for TransCanada PipeLines about the negotiations that went on with the farmers of Timiskaming. They almost had to go around the bedrock because we remembered.

That's the case. When we signed the first easements, fibre optic cable didn't even exist.

So, again, when farmers read this, they get nervous. You've got to remember: The property owners are the stakeholders in this. They have nothing to gain but everything to lose. There is absolutely nothing to gain,

and they're not asking for anything to be gained. They don't gain personally from the trails. They want to help the community by having the trails. But when they see easements and covenants and "Perhaps you should call your lawyer," they're going to say, "Why bother? Why go through this bother? I'm just going to close the trail."

It doesn't take a lot. It takes a few in certain spots, and the trail system could collapse. That would be a huge, huge shame.

I urge the minister—and I had a good discussion with the minister, by the way. I walked across and he understood exactly. He understood completely what the issue was. I commend him for that. He understands; we understand; hopefully the people watching this understand. So how do we proceed?

We're willing—I'm certainly willing, and I believe my colleagues are—to support this in second reading, but there have to be amendments made before and if this law passes. The amendments have to make—actually, the legislation doesn't really need that many changes. The purpose of the legislation has to be spelled out within the legislation, because the legislation leaves lots of room for interpretation by folks like the Ontario Landowners. The minister put out a couple of press releases stating what the government's intention was, and the press releases were good. But the press release—basically, that should be in the documentation. It should be in the bill. That way, when OFSC or someone comes to use your property and they say, "No, you don't have to sign the easement. Here's what we would like you to do and here are your options," it should be laid out in plain, plain English. As soon as you have to start saying—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** "Get a lawyer."

**Mr. John Vanthof:** "Get a lawyer," or "The minister promised," or "We're the government. We're here to help"—as soon as you hear things like that in rural Ontario, the odds are not good.

That's got to be done within the text of the bill, for OFSC's sake, too, so when they come—because they're going to have to come and ask for my permission. If they are going to need an easement someplace, at least they can lay out in the bill, "Here's what we want to do."

They have to clarify this part about how one body can transfer the easement to another body. That's just a non-starter. That is just a non-starter, because there's no way that I'm going to tell a farmer that that's a good idea. That has got to be changed.

Something else that we rail about a lot in this House and on this bill—it's a prerogative. This is a bill that has to travel to places where they actually have these trails.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, downtown Toronto; like Queen's Park?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** No. Well, they can talk about it, but stakeholder groups in downtown Toronto are not the people who are going to make the trails fail. It's John Vanthof and people like me in the back roads of Ontario who have lots of better things to do with their time and who are doing this as a public service. That's really important. I would implore the government, when and if

this passes second reading, that you take the time, that we all take the time to do this one right for rural Ontario, so that the snowmobile industry and all of the other people who use trails throughout the province—I'm concentrating on snowmobiles; they're a big thing in my part of the world—so it actually continues to flourish and grow.

If this bill is explained correctly, there are good things, even about the easements, like the bridge thing I told you about. But if the government does its usual thing and time-allocates this bill and holds a few hearings in Toronto, farmers and property owners across the province are, one by one—and sometimes in groups—going to withdraw the right to use their land, because they won't see themselves in this bill. As much of rural Ontario doesn't see itself reflected in a lot of government regulation, it doesn't see itself reflected here.

It wouldn't take big changes. It won't take a wholesale overhaul. It will take respect for rural Ontario. Then we can actually use this, make it a really good piece of legislation and make it a big step forward for the snowmobile clubs, for the property owners and for the hundreds of restaurants, motels and hotels that depend on snowmobiling and other such sports in the province. We can do this right. I implore the government to do this right.

If for some reason the government stops and the agenda falls and starts anew, you'll be better off letting this bill die on the order paper than ramming it through. You're better off to do it right than ram this one through. This isn't an earth-shattering bill, but believe me—and I know from personal experience. When I was president of the federation of agriculture and we closed the trails in Timiskaming–Cochrane for that week, it was pretty earth-shattering for a lot of those hotels and restaurants. But now, I don't just represent farmers; I represent those hotels and those restaurants and all those people and the Ski-Doo dealers and the gas stations. Ski-Doos have gotten a lot better. They're much more economical than they used to be, but they still do use a bit of gas.

I represent all of those people and I want this sector to flourish and I want this province to flourish. I implore the government, do this one right. Let it pass second reading. Hold legitimate committee hearings throughout the province. Let's all work together to come up with legitimate, good amendments that will make this bill better and stronger and make it represent everyone in the province. Let's all work together on this one. We have the capability to make this good. The minister understands; I know he understands. Let's hope that his government does, because if his government doesn't understand what's happening here or what could happen, snowmobile trails in lots of parts of the province will close. And it will be on their heads.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act. I want to thank the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane for some excellent points, and certainly points made out

of a breadth of personal experience with these issues. I'm sure everybody on our side of the House values very highly those opinions that were expressed, some very good points.

Mr. Speaker, this bill seeks to further open up some of the most spectacular areas of this province for people to enjoy, to experience—and also to provide economic opportunity for many other parts of this province that would desperately benefit from the increase in tourism that more trails in Ontario will create.

**1400**

I'm also particularly excited about the fact that this bill also speaks to water trails, something that hasn't really been that well known in Ontario to date as a formal type of trail. I think that's a very interesting aspect of this bill.

Certainly, what the member opposite mentioned about the issue of easements and different mechanisms to ensure access to privately owned land and other lands—I think it's important to note that this bill lays out different options for how access to these lands could be secured. Easements are one option, and if it requires further explanation of how that would work, that's certainly something that I would encourage, that we need to do.

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, we want Ontarians and people from around the world to experience the beauty of our province, and there's no better way to do it than by exploring it through the various trails and waterways around all of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on Bill 100, An Act to enact the Ontario Trails Act, and on the speech from the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane. I agree with his main ask, which was that the purpose of the bill should be stated within the bill. He was talking about the possible effects on snowmobile trails. I'm seeing that in Parry Sound–Muskoka, which also has some wonderful snowmobiling trails around the area.

In fact, I want to get on the record a letter from the Snowcrest Riders president, Bob Clarke. He wrote to me and said, "I felt it very important that I inform you that Snowcrest Riders Snowmobile Club in Gravenhurst will have trail closures as of April 1, 2016. One trail closure affects our Top D trail south that features the bridge that crosses all four lanes of Highway 11, and our Beaver Creek bridge that was opened in February 2010. Combined, these bridges cost \$1.4 million, and were largely funded by provincial and federal dollars...."

"Mr. Miller, the landowners I have talked to want section 12 of proposed Bill 100 to be amended to include the simple wording below that Minister Michael Coteau has already stated.

"An easement pursuant to Bill 100, if passed, would be a voluntary agreement between a landowner and an eligible body or bodies. No property owner would be compelled to provide an easement unless they agreed to do so."

“Add the above statement from the minister to section 12 of Bill 100, and we may address the concerns of the landowner.”

He goes on to ask why there needs to be an easements section at all when it's already dealt with in other ways.

I share his concern. I think this is essentially what the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane was asking for: that the purpose of the bill be stated right in the bill, to put some of the landowners' concerns at ease, because these trails that are in Timiskaming–Cochrane and Parry Sound–Muskoka are so important for the folks who live there, for tourism, for people who enjoy outdoor activities. I very much support what Mr. Clarke from the Snowcrest Riders is asking for in this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm pleased to be able to make comments after the 20 minutes that we just heard from my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane, who was commenting on Bill 100, An Act to enact the Ontario Trails Act, 2016 and to amend various Acts.

I always find it interesting to hear from our colleagues around the Legislature and to learn some new things. Today, I learned that snowmobiling and ATVs are two very different things.

Normally, I stand up and I bring voice on behalf of my constituents in Oshawa. But I've lived in a few places, Mr. Speaker, and one of them was in the little town of Palgrave, off Highway 50. As children, we took full advantage of the former train tracks and the trail system and had a wonderful time along there. We appreciated being able to cross-country ski, go off-trailing or off-roading on property that belonged to a tree farm, and that they were glad to offer that land for public use and for the community to appreciate in the winter. That was part of growing up. I can only imagine, if some of our trails and our trust systems—if we see boundaries spring up so that people can't take not just full advantage, but fully appreciate these spaces.

To the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane's point that this is the beginning of what needs to be a fulsome conversation—to not just travel the province, but maybe travel the trails and have the conversations with those who don't have things to gain but recognize how they fit in with community appreciation of the land.

Over the intercession, I drove around the riding with the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, and there was so much to see just from the car window. It would be a shame to miss it from the back roads perspective.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** It does give me great pleasure to rise today to speak on Bill 100. It's something that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport has been working on since 2005. It has been, I can assure the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane—and thank you very much, by the way, for your wonderful words and your commitment to your riding and trails in general. I wanted to also say that it has been a process that has involved 11 ministries.

There has been quite a bit of conversation about this new strategy.

The other thing that I wanted to address quickly is that this act, if passed, would be an agreement between a willing landowner and an eligible body that grants the eligible body access to the owner's land for trail-related activities or purposes. The easements would have to be negotiated between willing landowners and these eligible bodies, and be registered on the title of the land. I hope that does rest the member opposite assured that nobody is going to be coerced into granting easement.

With respect to consultation, we have done consultations with people from Thunder Bay to Toronto, Ingersoll to Ottawa, and received very positive and valuable advice. We have received feedback from an Environmental Registry posting, engagement with aboriginal groups and five regional sessions across the province.

I know I don't need to spend a lot of time—I would like to, but I can't—on the wonderful benefits of the use of our beautiful trails that we have. I have many in the area surrounding Kingston and the Islands. I use them often, and I'm very excited about supporting this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our time for questions and comments. I return to the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane for his reply.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd like to thank the members from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Parry Sound–Muskoka, Oshawa and Kingston and the Islands. I'd like to thank them for their thoughtful comments, because we appreciate that.

One thing that the member from Kingston and the Islands said was, “We've been talking with 11 ministries.” But you've got thousands of landowners—property owners—that you need to talk to because, once again, they have no need to negotiate. As soon as they have to hire a lawyer to negotiate, they're going to say no. Why? Why would I? Why would they?

You've got the government with lawyers, you've got the eligible bodies and the other eligible bodies that may be coming down the road who will have representation. Then the property owners are supposed to—well, you know, “You should maybe get a lawyer.” As soon as that's said, it will be deal off—and rightfully so. It should be written in very plain English, so you don't need to get a lawyer to even think about it.

I understand this legislation, hopefully, and I'm sure the members opposite understand it, but that doesn't mean that every landowner or every property owner is going to take the time and take this to a lawyer for \$500 or \$1,000. They're going to say, “No, thank you.” That's the point I'm trying to get across.

A consultation process: We're going to need it to make sure that everybody really understands, because it won't take a thousand people to take away the right to cross; it will take 10 in the right places. I know; I've done it. It will take 10 in the right places. That's why I'm so passionate about this, because I know it's possible, because we've done it before. At that time, it was used as a negotiating tactic. This time, it could be the failure of the sector, and I certainly don't want to see that.

1410

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

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I'm pleased to stand in the House today to represent my great riding of Newmarket–Aurora—which is very passionate about its trails—and the government by starting off the debate on Bill 100, the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act. Just for the record, I'll be sharing my time with the member for Kitchener Centre and the member for Ajax–Pickering.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start the debate this afternoon by saying how proud I am to be part of one of the strongest and most cohesive governments in Ontario's history, a cohesive government that promised in our 2014 platform to support the expansion of Ontario's trail network, and a cohesive government that has taken coordinated steps to achieve that objective.

As we're all well aware, the Ministry of Transportation has been encouraging environmentally friendly, active forms of transport through its #CycleON strategy. By improving cycling infrastructure by making our highways and streets safer, the Ministry of Transportation is supporting the expansion of our trail network and encouraging a culture of wellness in Ontario. As part of the #CycleON strategy, I was pleased to announce just a few weeks ago that the town of Newmarket—part of my riding—is receiving \$325,000 in funding towards the construction of a new, five-kilometre bike lane.

I just wanted to take a few minutes to talk about my experience, because I have experience with two different types of jurisdictions. I live in an urban area, a residential area of Aurora. I was a town councillor there for a number of years. Aurora has some of the most beautiful off-road trails that you can find, that meander through the Oak Ridges moraine. I walked those trails with my children for many years, Mr. Speaker, and took my dog there for walks. What I learned through the advocacy of phenomenal people like Klaus Wehrenberg, who lives in Aurora and is a real urban active-transportation advocate, is that there's a difference between a recreational trail and an active-transportation trail. I hadn't realized until I became a town councillor that with good urban planning, we can put in place trails that lead from a child's house to the school that lessen the need for them to walk along a busy, smelly, dangerous street, and that businesspeople, when they are leaving the St. John's Sideroad to the north end of Aurora, can walk through the beautiful Aurora arboretum in a beautiful trail setting down to the GO station on Wellington. I'm constantly amazed at the number of people who do that sort of thing, who move from point A to point B on business or shopping or school using off-road trail systems.

So not all trails are recreational. There are many trails in urban settings that get us from point A to point B, and it's exceptionally important that those who are involved with urban planning make sure we put those plans in place.

This year, we saw the Pan/Parapan Am secretariat also taking steps to fulfill the promise to Ontarians. Those

games inspired us to lead more active lives and then went a step further, leaving Ontario with an amazing legacy in the Pan Am trail: over \$3.5 million invested to fill in over 250 kilometres of gap in our trails network.

Of course, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport is leading the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act with support from the Attorney General, who is overseeing the modifications to the Occupiers' Liability Act, and Natural Resources and Forestry, who oversee changes to the Public Lands Act—five different groups overseen by four different ministers, all working in tandem to achieve one purpose, a purpose created and driven by stakeholders.

This is a grassroots piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. We engaged over 250 stakeholders to develop Bill 100, and before the opposition asks: Yes, of course, we consulted numerous property owners. We held regional consultation sessions not only in Toronto; we held them in Thunder Bay, in Ingersoll, in North Bay, and in Ottawa. Our government held in-person conversations with aboriginal groups, 80 municipalities, health organizations, tourism organizations, academics and farmers, and of course, Mr. Speaker, with our trail organizations.

After that, we posted Bill 100 on the Environmental Registry, where it was open to public comment for 48 days. We took each of the 80 online comments to heart, Mr. Speaker. They were reviewed by senior policy staff and lawyers from four separate ministries.

I know in their leadoff speech the opposition claimed that we didn't consult on Bill 100. I can say, Mr. Speaker, that that simply isn't true. The record bears this out.

The bill has been in development since 2013. And while our government has taken great care to understand what the sector wants and needs, to balance the desires of diverse stakeholder groups, I got the impression from the PC leadoff speech that they listened to one stakeholder, and just one stakeholder.

As we start debate, I think it's important to remind everyone that Bill 100 is an enabling piece of legislation. What I mean by that is that Bill 100, if passed, would provide landowners with additional options and additional tools for establishing land arrangements. Landowners will have the option to continue to use existing arrangements if that's what they want to do.

When we were doing our broad consultations, we heard from landowners who said that the current system was working for them, and farmers who said they wouldn't use a trail easement because each year they rotate which section of their land they allow local snowmobile clubs to use. We talked with landowners who wanted a way to carry on their generosity into perpetuity by registering an easement on title. We spoke with trail organizations who had invested large quantities of money in building bridges for trail users and wanted some assurance that they would be able to continue to use the infrastructure they had paid for.

You see, Mr. Speaker, this option isn't for everyone, and was never intended to be used by everyone. That is why Bill 100 would create an additional voluntary sys-

tem to establish trail easements that individuals may or may not choose to use.

As we continue to debate, I know that our members will continue to highlight what Bill 100 will do, if passed, and we will continue to debunk the misconceptions that some members of the opposition seem adamant in articulating during their speaking turns.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the continued debate on the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, and would call on all members of this House to support both Bill 100 and Ontario's amazing trail network.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Kitchener Centre.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I'm very pleased to join the debate this afternoon in the House to speak about Bill 100, the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act. Trails in Ontario are one way that we can connect with our heritage while enjoying the great outdoors and staying physically fit.

I'd like to share some insights with you, Mr. Speaker, if I could, on trails in my community of Kitchener and Waterloo region. On a warm day, you can find cyclists, rollerbladers and walkers all actively using the Walter Bean trail. I see you smiling there, so you're obviously familiar with this trail. It's a very favourite place for my family, and we've enjoyed it for many years, as have many people in Kitchener Centre. At 11 kilometres long, the Walter Bean trail runs along the banks of the Grand River and connects to Schneider Park. In addition to being very scenic, the trail features highlights of our great Canadian heritage. Throughout the trail, there are displays that remind trail users of the indigenous populations that lived along the banks of the Grand River. When it's completed, the trail is going to run 76 kilometres, connecting Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich.

Our government recognizes that trails are a fantastic way to showcase our unique Canadian culture, and to champion the social and economic benefits of active living. That's why I was very excited two weeks ago when the Premier announced \$975,000 over two years for the region of Waterloo to build additional cycling and walking trails. We made this announcement inside a small bike shop in Cambridge. We were joined by some of our municipal partners, and they were very excited by this announcement. They're looking forward to the funding flowing so that they can get started with the construction of these trails.

**1420**

I'm looking forward to new and accessible paths connecting my communities' two universities. I look forward to a wider path along the Courtland Avenue area in Kitchener to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians. This is just down the street from where my constituency office is, and once all the snow melts, I look forward to riding my bicycle to work during constituency weeks.

Each and every time our government invests in trail infrastructure, we do renew our commitment to cultivating a culture of wellness and recreation in Ontario. It's

because of our commitment to that culture of wellness that we've brought forward this particular act.

We've already heard members speaking in support of the economic benefits of trails, but I would like to address some concerns raised by some opposition members regarding Bill 100, specifically regarding how it impacts landowners and trail organizations. It's important to offer some clarity on what's called duty of care that falls to trail users by landowners and how that's going to result in a lower level of liability.

Currently in the province, there are two standards of care as described in Ontario's Occupiers' Liability Act. One level, the higher level, requires that an owner protect a person entering his or her property against all reasonable, foreseeable circumstances. If you're a grocery store owner, for instance, that means taking care in case there is a spill: You get a mop and you mop it up. You want to make sure that your customers don't slip and injure themselves, and you face a lawsuit.

If you're a landowner who is volunteering his or her land to a trail organization, a higher level of care would mean that you'd have to fix the potholes and clear fallen trees in a very timely manner. But if you are willingly volunteering your land for the enjoyment of others, holding you to that level of care seems rather onerous. It's a level of care to which we do not intend to hold owners of trails. Unfortunately, when trail users pay minimal fees for something unrelated to the use of a trail—say, for instance, parking—it becomes very ambiguous as to what standard of care a landowner owes to a trail user. If it's passed, Bill 100 is going to clarify that. It's going to make it clear that only the lower standard of care is owed to the trail user.

By transferring the responsibility from landowners to trail users, our government does a number of things. First, we're going to further protect landowners, and by protecting landowners, it's our belief that it's going to increase access to trails by removing one of the barriers that discourages landowners from volunteering their land. Secondly, by clarifying what standard of care is required, we can help ensure that organizations pay insurance based only on that lower level of care. Sometimes, volunteer trail organizations may indemnify landowners in an effort to cultivate relationships. I'm glad that our government is helping to promote owners to look at the lower-level costs for our volunteering organizations by outlining language within the Occupiers' Liability Act.

I'm encouraged by what our government is doing to remove red tape and to protect both our generous landowners and our active volunteers.

I would call on all members to familiarize themselves with Bill 100 and to support this very important and beneficial piece of legislation, such as members have already done—who are with Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington and the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who is sitting across from me there. He has said that he supports this. I've had the opportunity to go along some trails in Bruce county, and they're absolutely lovely.

Once members read the bill for themselves, I am certain that they will see that there is great merit in Bill 100.

Mr. Speaker, if you are ever in the Kitchener-Waterloo area any time soon, I encourage you to check out the Walter Bean trail. It's magnificent. It's remarkable that it exists in the heart of a growing urban area.

This is an important bill, and I encourage all members of this House to voice their support in favour of it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ajax-Pickering.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I'm very happy to be here to stand in front of you today to speak to Bill 100, Supporting Ontario's Trails Act. Ontario has the largest, if not the second-largest, network of trails in Canada. It's a contest between Ontario and Quebec. With over 80,000 kilometres of trails, we enjoy here in Ontario some of Canada's most iconic trails, trails that we share with millions of visitors from outside the province each and every year.

We have already heard that trail tourism supports over 18,000 jobs across the province and annually contributes over \$1.4 billion to our GDP. We've already heard that Ontario has invested over \$130 million to support our trail network since 2009, investments and supports which includes the Waterfront Trail, which runs all the way through my riding, from Cliffview Park next to Petticoat Creek Conservation Area, around Frenchman's Bay to the Ajax waterfront park. For me, it's kind of a very special time because I've had the honour of being the longest-serving waterfront chair in those communities. We have just continued to grow. Trails and waterfronts go hand in hand. They're just a natural fit and they both draw more people each and every year.

I want to take a moment to speak to a different benefit. I want to speak to the health benefits associated with trail use. They support healthy, active lifestyles through exercise, promote social interaction, and encourage active transportation like walking and cycling, as the doctor sitting in front of me reminded me recently. It's well known that physical activity relieves stress and tension and can help prevent obesity, heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and depression. Less known is that active trail use has been shown to enhance mental well-being and brain health throughout life. In fact, the 2014 Ontario trail survey found that respondents experienced significant personal benefits from using the trails, with 91% of those surveyed stating they experienced improvement in mental health and 90% indicating a better sense of well-being.

We've been active in expanding trails in Ontario and announced just under \$1 million for trails in the region of Kitchener last month, which was mentioned earlier. It never ceases and everyone in Ontario benefits, every visitor to Ontario benefits.

In reference to the Pan Am Games and all the trails, I can tell you that our Premier was out our way several times because there's hundreds of acres in what's called Greenwood park, which covers both Ajax and Pickering, and there were many hundreds of kilometres of trails completed during that time frame.

Research tells us that for each additional kilometre walked per day, there is a cumulative 4.8% reduction in the likelihood of obesity. The members of this House might find it interesting to learn that the medical benefits and costs saved as a result of the trails are almost three times greater than the cost of trail construction and maintenance.

We should mention, especially with the introduction of this legislation, that our government has acknowledged the importance of trails and their contribution to our culture, our communities, our economy and, most importantly, the well-being of Ontarians. If passed, Bill 100 will clarify the standard of care owed by landowners to trail users.

As a fellow snowmobiler, my friend from Timiskaming-Cochrane, I must go up and visit you.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** You're welcome any time, Joe.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** And you can come down and visit me. I've done trail warden, I've done citations from the clubs. We do the maintenance in the early winter to clear the trails, and all of that. You know what? People keep forgetting that farmers use all those trails through the bushes, too, to run their equipment. It's all available to them. It's their land; we take care of it. A snowmobiler will tell you, and the world will tell you, that snowmobilers, whatever they take, they bring back with them. If it's a can of pop, they bring the can back; if it's a piece of paper, they bring it back. They will actually stop and pick up any debris along the way.

I also want to explain skiing. When you see a double black diamond, you instantly have an idea how challenging the slope can be. Currently, there is no system in place to help a trail user understand how difficult hiking a particular trail will be. That will come with a change. If Bill 100 is passed, this will address the concern with a number of others. The government, after consulting over 250 different stakeholder groups, has put together this amazing bill, and it's just the beginning.

I'm glad you spoke about snowmobilers, because I would be remiss if I didn't say that snowmobilers can't operate without the co-operation of landowners. Snowmobile owners—if they reference some 30,000 permits at an average of \$200 a permit, you would see that that's \$6 million that snowmobilers take care of themselves. They pay to operate the equipment. They pay the men and women who run the equipment. They pay for the grooming of trails. They pay for a lot of other things. But mostly, they provide a surveillance on property.

**1430**

As a warden, I can tell you that it's my right—give me five seconds—to go in and charge that person as a trespasser. We do that already, and this is expanded for the benefit of landowners.

I wish to thank the Speaker for being so generous with the time this afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** This bill is an unnecessary bill. We currently have a system of snowmobile trails in the

province of Ontario that works very well. It has been carried on for 40 or 50 years. It is a voluntary arrangement between property owners—often farmers—and the local snowmobile associations. Over the years, a very respectful and co-operative arrangement has been developed between the two groups. It's well established now that snowmobilers are a responsible, respectful group of people who cause farmers no problems. There's no litter, no damage; no problems whatsoever. As a consequence, the farmers have grown to trust these organizations, to trust the snowmobilers to be good citizens and to be responsible.

It's a respectful arrangement both ways. Landowners respect that snowmobilers would like to have trails across the province of Ontario. As the landowners co-operate, these trails are there for them. That is the system we have now. It works very well, and it has worked very well for a long time. There is no problem, so why do we need a bill? If there's nothing to fix and everything is working well, the government doesn't need to be here. We have private groups of snowmobilers and property owners who respectfully get along and have happy arrangements where everybody gets what they want.

If the bill doesn't do anything for anybody—and it doesn't do anything for anybody—why do we need it? I think this is a piece of legislation that I would truly call red tape that we do not need and does no good.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It was a pleasure to listen to the members from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Kitchener-Waterloo and Ajax–Pickering. I would like to say that I agree with many of the things that they said. Specifically, the member from Kitchener-Waterloo was talking about the Occupiers' Liability Act. Those are moves in the right direction. I, as a property owner, have no problem with that. That's a step in the right direction.

Where we still run into problems—and I'm going to read the parts: "An owner of land may grant an easement, with or without covenants, to one or more eligible bodies." That has to be explained in layman's terms to the laypeople who actually own the property.

When you get to subsection 12(8), "An easement may be assigned by an eligible body to another eligible body, but the assignment must be in writing and must be registered on title to the land," that is a huge problem. If a snowmobile club wants to build a bridge on my property and they want an easement to it, I could live with that. But 15 years from now, if they give that easement to an ATV club just because we forgot to put it in the covenant in the first place because I couldn't afford a lawyer, right there you're going to say, "Forget it. We're not going ahead." So that needs to be clarified.

If you go a little bit further, there is a protection for owners. "The owner of land may enforce against the eligible body any covenants contained in an easement that is registered on title to the land," provided he goes to court and gets a lawyer. Why should he bother? Again, those have to be fleshed out.

There are very good parts in this bill, but there are parts that are going to make landowners very nervous. We have a good relationship with snowmobilers. We want to keep it that way. We need to fix those parts of the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Again, I would like to acknowledge all of my colleagues in the House who have spoken to this bill, particularly the member from Newmarket–Aurora, who made a reference to this piece of legislation as being a real grassroots piece of legislation. I have to say that I agree. There has been an awful lot of collaboration. There have been trail associations who have been working very hard on this bill since 2005. They've put a lot of time and energy into it. They were here at Queen's Park when the bill was first introduced.

I would also like to acknowledge the member from Kitchener Centre. She brought forward comments regarding the indigenous recognition. This is extremely important, and we need to be conscious of this in all areas of legislation and in every single ministry. She also made a reference to the social and economic benefits, a culture of wellness, and also the Occupiers' Liability Act. These are all very important aspects of this bill.

The member from Ajax–Pickering also made reference to the economic benefits and said something that was very important that related to black diamonds on ski runs. What happens when you enter a trail and you've got some kids in tow with you? You need to be sure that you can manage the trail. This piece of legislation will lay out that strategy.

So I wouldn't really call this an unnecessary piece of legislation. I think it's very necessary. In every area that we work with and every piece of legislation that we bring forward, it's very important to consider the safety of our citizens. We need to make sure that those classifications are done properly, and I thank all of my colleagues for bringing their voices forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I rise to offer my comments to the members opposite speaking about Bill 100.

If they have consulted with all the groups they say they have consulted with, why am I getting phone calls into my office from snowmobile clubs and property owners with concerns about this bill? Why is that happening? I don't think the consultation went on as they thought it had. I certainly wasn't there. I wish I was there when they were consulting these people, because then we would have a better understanding of what was going on.

This bill needs clarity. That should have been done first, and then we wouldn't run into problems with explaining bills to our constituents.

If a government is going to introduce any kind of legislation, they should think about what the ramifications are down the road. I don't think they've done that here at all. In fact, even last week I've been talking to property owners in my area, trying to explain to them the

differences in the bill and what they're concerned about. If that had been done in the first place, we wouldn't even be having this debate here today.

We're a very trusting society in rural Ontario, until that trust is broken. Then we get very suspicious of anything else that's coming down the line. The Green Energy Act is a perfect example of that. What this government has done to rural Ontario with the Green Energy Act, and certainly what they did with the horse racing business—now they're asking us to trust them that this bill is going to benefit everybody? It probably could have, if it had been explained in the first place what was going on here. But we in rural Ontario get very concerned when we have to start hiring lawyers and whoever else to help us understand a bill, and that's when our suspicions start to rise.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time that we have for questions and comments for this round. One of the government members can reply.

The member for Newmarket–Aurora.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I'm pleased to respond to comments made by my colleagues, MPPs representing Carleton–Mississippi Mills, Timiskaming–Cochrane, Kingston and the Islands, and Perth–Wellington—a lot of very good comments.

I will say that at the outset, when I kicked off debate, I mentioned the fact that I live currently in a more urban area with a lot of trails, a lot of kilometres of trails, but I also own some property in the north end of the Muskokas and have ridden snowmobiles from Dorset up to North Bay and back, and I know the snowmobile trail system there extensively. I know how important that trail system is to local realtors, gas stations and cafes along the way. I know that, for many of them, without that type of income from snowmobilers during the winter months, they simply couldn't exist. It's very important to tourism in that part of Ontario and, of course, across Ontario.

1440

I wanted to address the comments by the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills because the reason this bill, Bill 100, is before us is very simple: Stakeholders asked us for it. We heard from property owners, from municipalities, from trail clubs—we heard from these organizations that said, "There need to be some changes." That's why we responded with Bill 100.

Mr. Speaker, we talked to landowners who wanted a way to carry on their generosity into perpetuity, as I said before, by registering an easement on title. We spoke with trail organizations who had invested large quantities of money—in the millions—in building bridges for trail users and wanted some assurance that they would be able to continue to use the infrastructure that they had paid for.

This bill has been widely consulted.

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

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'm pleased to rise today and speak on Bill 100, An Act to enact the Ontario Trails Act, 2015

and to amend various Acts. It's also known as the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015. This bill has been brought forward. It changes quite a number of pieces of legislation. When you end up changing plenty of legislation, it's very important to make sure that we've had a close look at the implications of the changes going forward and that Ontarians understand the bill before it reaches final passage and moves into regulation.

Our party has talked to numerous members here of the importance of trails and the importance of preserving and promoting Ontario's trail infrastructure. Quite a bit of the economy in rural Ontario can be derived from usage of these trails and having access to these trails. We wanted to make sure, with this bill coming forward, that there was enough consultation that was listened to. You hear the government say that they have consulted and they were asked to come forward with it, but I couldn't tell you the number of calls that members on this side of the House are receiving with concerns about this bill, which leads to the question: How great was this consultation process, then?

This government has a history of saying they consulted but doing the opposite. We only have to look at this past budget, where the finance committee of the House toured the province and was in the midst of writing a report, and the budget was already printed and ready to be reported. Or we can talk today of, in the budget, the government coming forward about changing the deductibles for seniors' drugs, raising it up to \$130 a year and adding an extra \$1 copayment. Today they announced, "We're going to put that on pause." That just leads me to believe that they didn't consult on that.

With the history of the lack of consultation or the smokescreen—the smoke and mirrors, I guess you could say—of saying they have consulted, it raises flags on this side of the House. We want to bring these concerns forward during this second reading debate. We're hoping the government takes a second look at this bill and reaches out to those groups that have concerns before going forward, because there are serious concerns that property owners were not properly consulted when this bill came forward, nor were some clubs throughout the province.

As I said earlier, Ontario has numerous trails, and they are a huge draw for outdoor activities. We need to ensure that not only are there proper protections in place but at the same time we need to promote our local trails. We do support the intent of Bill 100 to promote trail preservation and increased awareness but, again, referring back to the consultation processes that we on this side of the House have concerns about. We would like to see that fixed going forward.

As a result of these poor consultations, my office is getting calls from property owners who have trails on their properties. I have had a municipality call my office inquiring what's going on with Bill 100. Unfortunately, what I'm hearing from municipalities, I'm also hearing from private landowners: that access is being cancelled to the trails. When you shut down the trails, you're not

helping local rural economies, you're not helping the promotion of trails. What you're doing is actually damaging the various aspects that make Ontario beautiful, and that's a concern here.

You would think that if we had started properly and had proper consultations, besides the three locations the members have stated—I don't think they went to Owen Sound. I'm pretty sure that Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound has tremendous amounts of trails that I think would have been a great place to sit down and talk.

I don't know if they reached out to northern Ontario or not either. I realize that with this government northern Ontario is Barrie to them. But, in fact, it goes far, far north. I think reaching out and talking to us—Ingersoll is a great place; that's the member from Oxford's locale and it probably could take in some of the surrounding areas.

Toronto: I guess you could include Toronto. It's going to be where the committee hearings are going to be held.

But the fact is that you've missed some key areas of this province with regard to input into Bill 100, and I think that's something we need to ensure happens, so that the future access to Ontario trails isn't put at risk due to Bill 100.

I don't know why the government doesn't sit back and pull the bill back and have real consultations. This bill has sat on the order paper since May of last year. We're almost at the one-year anniversary since they introduced the bill. It wasn't a priority to push it through and get it done because it just sat. We're actually starting to debate it now almost a year after it was introduced.

So for the urgency of this government, why not pull it back? There's enough outpour from the rural communities of this province to take another look at this bill. Take the time. You've waited a year. If the trails are still operating without this bill—although some have shut down because of the fear of this bill—why not take it back and have a proper consultation? Go to northern Ontario. Go to Owen Sound. Take your time. We'd help you with this consultation process. We would be part of it and help draw out the people to talk about the problems with this bill.

So we request that the government delay this bill. Hold back. Let's have some more public consultations and ensure that we get it right. Because if we look back to Bill 45, we're dealing with Bill 178 right now because they rushed through a bill. They didn't do proper consultation and now they're going, "Oops, we need to do another bill to fix Bill 45." As I said before, why do you have to deal with that? You missed putting that part of the legislation of Bill 178 into Bill 45. We saw that in, I guess it was, December when they had to backpedal with regard to medical marijuana and come out with this bill to kind of fix things.

So why not step back and fix this trails act? There are 2,500 trails in Ontario; 80,000 kilometres of land; and, from what I've read, almost \$2 billion of economic activity each year is generated. Snowmobiling alone generates \$853 million—and that's for the 2013-14 calendar year—

and created roughly 11,307 jobs, according to the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs.

They're not only important for the economic activity, but Ontario trails also support active lifestyles and improve health and well-being. It's great to be in the outdoors and enjoying the trails. It's a great family event. You can take your kids out and you can take your wife out—speaking from my side of things—and enjoy what nature has to offer in our areas. My wife usually makes me go for walks to try to keep in shape and alive, I guess, further down the road, but sometimes we like to go off into the ravine behind our house and just walk through what nature has to offer. We have many opportunities throughout my riding to do so. Maintaining and enjoying Ontario's trails is a great way to learn about the environment and stay healthy, and the offshoot is a stronger economy for Ontario.

#### 1450

So what does the bill do? Schedule 1 of Bill 100 establishes a process for property owners to grant easements to one or more eligible bodies. Then that body would register the easement. One issue that raises up is that the easement may be assigned or transferred by one eligible body to another one without the consent of the landowner. That's a concern that has been flagged quite a bit from conversations I have had. Original restrictions on use of the property would run with the land but the landowner could not restrict. One thing that's a concern is that once the easement is created, it can't be revoked. Although this act will design to preserve and entrench trails, when the property is sold the new owner cannot shut down that easement. That's a concern.

Schedule 5 of Bill 100 contains provisions to enhance protection of crown lands from damage and strengthen enforcement. A section is added which states, "Any person who causes a prescribed type of damage to crown land or crown property ... is guilty of an offence." If that person is found guilty they're required to rehabilitate or repair the damaged land—in addition to a fine. I think that's an important part of the bill. Many of the trails in my riding—there are private landowners but there are a number of crown lands that do have the trails that we do enjoy.

Schedule 6 of Bill 100 is meant to increase the maximum fine for those convicted of trespassing to \$10,000. It eliminates the \$1,000 limit on compensation for damages a court may award upon a trespassing conviction. I think it's key to point out that the private member's bill of the member from Dufferin–Caledon, the Respecting Private Property Act, did just that. It raised the maximum fine. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture supported Bill 36, but they're disappointed with the government on the fact that these schedules do not go far enough to address the concerns relating to farm safety and biosecurity relating to trespassing. Our farms are becoming more high-tech and trespassing is becoming a serious concern. It's not just with trails. If you talk to your local anglers and hunters, that's a great concern for landowners, to have trespassing occurring on their properties.

Last year—I have to give credit to the Aylmer district stakeholders—they coordinated a project with the OPP and came up with an educational program with posters, handouts and flyers, and distributed them throughout the riding to help decrease the incidents of trespassing. It did settle it down a bit. But when you start getting the landowners worried, the farmers worried that possible trespassing can affect their business, or in fact that they could actually lose oversight of their own land through these easements, you might see these trails shut down. We did see the threat of that and the shutdown. I had a trail in the northern part of my riding. He actually shut down his trail for the winter. There wasn't much snow anyway for the snowmobiles. He was so uncertain of what was going on, he just said, "Forget it. We're going to keep it shut down for this session."

The concerns that I have been worrying about, and many, many landowners in this province are worried about, is that eventually the government will force them into an easement. I know this legislation. It stated that it's a voluntary process. The government assured us it's a voluntary process. This government also said a year ago, with regard to wind turbine projects, that local municipalities would have a say in allowing wind turbines in their area. They were assured some of the autonomy that the Green Energy Act took from them. If you look in my riding, we've got Malahide township and Dutton Dunwich. Both had projects going forward for wind turbines. Malahide said, "Yes, let's have wind turbines." Dutton Dunwich said, "No, we don't want wind turbines." Government says, "Okay, we'll give them to Dutton Dunwich."

So the fact that this government says that municipalities are going to have a say of some sort, be a part of the process—their actions don't follow through. So when they say Bill 100 is going to be voluntary for landowners with regard to these easements, they don't have the credibility to back up what they're saying. Landowners, people in rural Ontario especially, do not trust this government's words with regard to that, Mr. Speaker. The fact that the easements can be transferred from one body to another causes quite a bit of worry with regard to landowners.

Our member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills has spoken a little bit with regard to this bill, and I'm sure we'll hear more from him, but he raises quite a few fair points when he questions why easements have made their way into this legislation to start with. Farmers didn't ask for them, snowmobile clubs didn't ask for them, and the easements didn't offer any benefit to either party, so why are easements necessary or even in this legislation, Mr. Speaker?

In my riding of Elgin, we have a number of clubs that I'd like to point out while we're talking about Bill 100: the Elgin Hiking Trail Club, which just celebrated its 40th anniversary last year; the Talbot Trail ATV Club; and the Elgin Trail Riders Snowmobile Club. It's interesting with the snowmobile club that we don't really usually have enough snow for good trails; you usually have to go up to—

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, a beautiful area.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** —the Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound area. They would really like to point out, too, that they wish they were part of the consultation process during this development.

Our own member from Leeds–Grenville wrote a great letter to the minister. He has been in contact with plenty of stakeholders and is just asking them to pull the bill back until they can do proper consultation and ensure that all property owners are part of the process.

As I mentioned earlier about the different clubs in my riding, there are numerous trails. I could list them all off, but I have enjoyed quite a number of them myself, walking along them or taking my daughter out, because they're mostly adjoined to a lot of the conservation areas.

But there are private trails in the area, and these are the ones we don't want to shut down. This bill is not going to shut down the crown lands, the conservation area lands; the problem is that this bill is going to shut down the private trails which usually connect these trails to one another and ensure that people have access to them.

Just to summarize: Many of the farmers in my riding have contacted my office. Many trail users have contacted my office. There is a lot of confusion with Bill 100. There is a lot of explanation needed with Bill 100. We don't think enough consultation was given to areas of Ontario which this directly affects, especially in the rural areas which depend on the economic activity of their trails. They don't have the diversity to draw on other areas.

So we're asking the government to take a second look at this legislation. They've waited a year. We're almost at the one-year anniversary since it was introduced. We can wait longer if they pull it back. We've got the summer coming up. Let's sit down and have some great consultation in those areas of the province.

At the very least—they'll probably push this bill through with their majority—when it reaches the committee level, let the committee outside of Toronto. You're not going to get people from northern Ontario coming down to speak to this bill. You're probably not going to get many people from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound to come and talk about this bill. Let the committee travel to these areas and have a discussion on how to fix this bill. Answer the questions and bring those amendments forward.

Hopefully, when we get those amendments and bring them forward in committee, the members of the government side will listen to the opposition side and maybe adapt some of those amendments. I just sat in on Bill 119, and the government shot down every single amendment that both the third party and our party brought forward, and it was quite disappointing that that occurred.

So let the committee tour. Utilize the aspect in rural Ontario. Try not to make it so complicated a system that we have to get lawyers involved. For the majority of the private trails, it's a handshake and the honour system,

which we still have in this province of Ontario. We don't need to have the mountains of work and lawyers.

We're seeing it with our grain farmers with the neonics and the amount of paperwork that they're having to go through. They are throwing their arms up in the air, and they're going to get more paperwork for their trails, which are voluntary. They're going to say "Forget about it," and these trails are going to be shut down. That's going to be a tragedy for Ontario.

So I'm hoping they listen. I'm glad I had this opportunity to speak, and I'm looking forward to questions and comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

1500

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I am pleased to rise to offer some thoughts on the comments that were given to us by the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London. His riding and my riding of London West are, in fact, joined by the beautiful Thames Valley trail system. It's a 115-kilometre trail that passes through amazing Carolinian forest. It is a wonderful asset. It's the jewel in the crown, quite frankly, of the London area's trail system.

In London, we recognize the benefit of having access to this kind of trail system because of the recreational opportunities that it provides for families and individuals who live in our city; the improved health outcomes that come along with access to trails and participating in these kinds of recreational activities; the tourism benefits of drawing people to the region to take advantage of the trail system; and, of course, the economic development benefits of being able to draw new workers to our community and keep them there because of the amenities that are available in our region.

So I'm very troubled by what is happening as Bill 100, the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, moves forward. This is an example of those unintended consequences, when the government doesn't think through the implications of what it is proposing. As a result of all of the confusion and the concerns that have arisen because of Bill 100, we see sections of this treasured trail system that we have in Thames Valley being closed. One third of that trail system passes through private land, through farmland, and that trail system is now at risk.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I just wanted to respond to a couple of the comments that have been made from the opposition parties. The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London made some wonderful comments about enjoying the trails in his riding, in particular with his wife because his wife wants him to stay around longer. I think that's a very good thing. I hope that happens, as well.

I want to talk about that a little bit more. The member from London West has also spoken about the wonderful benefits of the trails: the tourism benefits, the economic benefits and the improved health outcomes. She has really spoken very passionately about the trails in her area of London West. I did want to acknowledge that.

But there was also a reference made by the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London to wind turbines and the government listening. One of the reasons why we changed the legislation with respect to the siting of energy projects was exactly so that we had the mechanism in place to listen to communities. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport has been listening to the trails communities and associations. Since 2005, we have been working with them and understanding some concerns that there are. We've attempted to remediate those concerns within this legislation.

If there is continued confusion about the bill, as has been stated, I hope that those constituents' inquiries would come forward to the ministry so that they can be addressed appropriately.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to commend the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London on such a wide dissertation on Bill 100.

We have three public trails in Sarnia–Lambton that I'm most familiar with. The Howard Watson trail, which is on the old railroad right-of-way, goes from Sarnia up to points near Camlachie—about 23 miles or so. There's talk of extending that further. It's unfortunate that over the years a number of these municipalities let the land go back—they should have kept them open, the old railroad rights-of-way, because now it's going to be very difficult to further extend these. They go across a lot of nice scenery and some nice territory.

We have a new trail, and that's from Wyoming to Reeces Corners. It's probably about three kilometres. A lot of municipal co-operation and local fundraising went into bringing that trail in. There's talk of extending that from Wyoming to Petrolia. I know I spoke with a gentleman the other day who has been involved with the trail group there, and they'd like to extend that. It will take a little bit of work and some co-operation. There are still a couple of railroad right-of-ways that are available; I was checking them out the other day. So that's something I'd like to work with the local community on.

The other trail that we have is in St. Clair township along the beautiful St. Clair River. The Bluewater Highway trail, they call it there; that's along the old Highway 40—very scenic. That has been developed in conjunction with St. Clair township, with volunteers and with a number of corporations that front the river that have offered land as well.

As the other member said, we should make sure we have extensive hearings, because this affects not just the north but other parts of Ontario as well.

I look forward to the rest of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Once again, it's a good thing to be able to get a couple of minutes on Bill 100, the trails act, and to follow the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

There are just a couple of points I'd like to re-emphasize. I've stood in this House I don't know how many times and said that it's great to make laws and legislation in this House but we have to make sure it works out on the field. This is an example. The basis of good legislation is here. It's the duty of the government to work with the process to make this legislation actually work in the field, because if this legislation doesn't work in the field, it's going to have the opposite effect; it's actually going to close trails in a lot of the parts of the province.

Why that is is because the typical stakeholder who comes to government and is going to call the ministry has a vested interest, but a lot of the stakeholders in the trail system have no vested interest. They're doing it out of the goodness of their hearts. Most farmers have a trail going across their farm out of the goodness of their hearts. If they see a piece of legislation that has any type of risk that they don't understand, they're not going to call the ministry and talk about consultations; they're just not going to sign the current agreement. So they're going to stop trails across their farm because it's just not worth the risk, and that would be an incredible shame because we have a good system.

If this bill is done correctly, it could help the trail system, but with the record of this government, how many amendments from the opposing side have ever passed here? None. That's what we're so worried about, because if this bill passes the way it is, there is a good chance that some of those property owners will see what happened and say, "Look, my life isn't reflected in this bill, so OFSC, you know what? I'm just going to cancel the deal we have now because it's not worth the risk." That's what we have to avoid here, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London for his reply.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much to those who made comments. The members from London West and Timiskaming–Cochrane are strong voices for your communities—and excellent points, which I'm hoping people are taking note of.

The member for Sarnia–Lambton: It's always great to hear his comments and about his trails. I'm surprised you didn't mention your liquid natural gas bill that has come forward.

To the member for Kingston and the Islands: Thank you for your comments.

We totally agree that trails are important in Ontario. We totally agree on their health benefits, their economic benefits, and their increase in tourism. That's why we're so strong in our opinion that we need proper consultation. We don't want a good thing broken. We don't want to have to have a makeup session. It's very important that they get it right, and we're hearing in our own ridings across the province that certain areas and groups were missed in the consultation process and they have fear of this bill.

We have a fear of this bill passing through second reading and having committee meetings in downtown

Toronto, and not reaching out to those areas that have fear of this bill. If this bill goes forward without any amendments, as the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane has noted, trails are going to be shut down, which is going to negatively affect rural Ontario.

Since it was brought up in questions and comments about how the government was listening to rural municipalities, and they made changes—they said they made changes to municipalities' say with regard to wind turbine projects. My riding is a living example of how they do the opposite of what they say. Dutton Dunwich said no; the government said yes. Malahide township said yes; the government said no. I don't know who they're listening to. They're not listening to rural Ontario, and that's a concern that extends to other bills that are going to affect rural Ontario, outside Toronto: the fact that they don't listen. They say one thing and do another, and that's got to change.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**1510**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I'm pleased to recognize the member for Niagara Falls.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I'm certainly pleased to spend the next 20 minutes talking on Bill 100, Supporting Ontario's Trails.

I've actually enjoyed the first part of the afternoon, listening to a lot of my colleagues talk about different parts of Ontario, whether it be in the north or London West, and all those concerns around the trails and some of the stuff around amendments and getting it right, and around snowmobiling.

I'm going to talk in my 20 minutes a lot about my riding, so I want everybody to sit back and enjoy. I'm sure you've all been to Niagara; you've all done the trails.

So I'm going to start by saying thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always, it is a pleasure to rise in this House and talk about an important piece of legislation for my riding, Bill 100, Supporting Ontario's Trails.

Speaker, here in our province of Ontario, we have one of the most extensive trail systems in the entire world. With more than 2,500 individual trails stretching over 80,000 kilometres in our great province, it is clear that if you want to see the beauty this province has to offer, you need only put on a pair of shoes. That is a wonderful thing. It's a wonderful thing to be able to walk out your front door knowing that unless you've been walking for a very long time, there is always going to be more to see in the province of Ontario.

I want to start today by just briefly acknowledging all the hard work and the long hours that go into maintaining and protecting our trails. I know that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals and clubs out there who do tremendous work. As volunteers, as city employees or as regional workers, they're all out there all year, in any kind of weather, making sure that our trails are clear, usable, and safe. Without their incredible dedication, their hard work, and, in some cases, public resources, we

would not have such spectacular trails right across this province. So I want to just make sure to say thank you. Thank you for being out there keeping the trails clear and usable all year round.

Having our trails is about more than just seeing the sights. It's about keeping yourself healthy. One of my colleagues talked about that here today, and then one of my other colleagues said it's nice that his wife wants to keep him healthy as well. I didn't understand that, but she did say it. It's about promoting our province. It is about building our economy.

In Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake, we have lots of seniors who come to my riding, quite frankly, to enjoy their retirement years. They come because my riding is beautiful, a quiet place to relax alongside some of the best craft brewers, like Silversmith, Oast House and the Niagara Brewing Co., and our wonderful VQA wineries.

I spend a lot of time in those communities listening to our seniors and learning from their experiences, and recently I started to hear some things that were troubling. I hear from seniors that their hydro bills are going up, that their food costs are going up, and now, based purely on a decision of this government, their drug and health costs are going up. To me, Mr. Speaker, that is not acceptable. They are the people who built our province and they deserve better from this government.

But in fairness, I also hear happier stories from the seniors of my riding when I speak with them. I get to hear about their grandkids' hiking trips into our provincial parks. I get to hear about how the dirt paths they remember from their childhoods have become full-fledged trails. I always get to hear about what they heard or saw the last time they went out for a walk. Speaker, the fact that they're able to get out on our trails for a walk is a great thing. It's a great thing for our seniors and, really, for everyone in this province because it helps them stay active.

We all know that the cost of health care in this province continues to rise. The more we can encourage everyone to get out and be active is better for everyone and certainly better for health costs in the province of Ontario. Prevention is one of the best methods we have when it comes to controlling health care costs. By encouraging people to stay active, whether that means hiking the trails in our provincial parks or going for an afternoon stroll along the Niagara River and the Niagara Parkway, we are helping our health care system, our communities and our residents to stay healthy.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that promoting and protecting our extensive network of trails in this province is beneficial for both our health care system and, especially, to the health of our constituents is just one of the reasons that the goal for this bill, the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, is one that I and my caucus colleagues can stand behind—with some amendments.

Protecting, promoting and preserving our trails also has other benefits that I think we need to acknowledge. As I'm sure you all know—and many probably have

first-hand experience—my riding of Niagara Falls relies on tourism for a big chunk of our economy. People come to visit the craft brewers and the VQA wines that I mentioned, as well as many more. They come to Niagara Falls to see the Falls themselves or to visit one of our casinos. They don't take a lot of money home from those casinos when they come to the casinos; it creates jobs. They come to Niagara-on-the-Lake to see the performances at the Shaw Festival or to enjoy the fruits of our farms at the Peach Festival. They come to buy local—locally grown fruit, vegetables and wine. They come to Crystal Beach, which is in my riding, to enjoy the beachfront trails. They come to Fort Erie to watch the races, to visit the historic fort, and hopefully—and hopefully the Liberal Party is listening to this—someday they'll come to play the slots again at the Fort Erie Race Track.

In my riding there is a huge variety of activities you can participate in, depending on which community you're visiting. But, no matter where you go, there's one thing you can always do: You can go outside and you can walk along or ride along one of our beautiful trails. In Niagara-on-the-Lake, you can see the end of the Bruce Trail at Queenston Heights, which starts 10 ridings and 900 kilometres away as part of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, or you can walk out into the 45-hectare Woodend Conservation Area and admire the beauty of the forest. In Niagara Falls, you can walk six kilometres along the Niagara Parkway—or ride a bike or motorcycle; whatever you need—starting at the Niagara Gorge and making your way through the Botanical Gardens to the Floral Clock.

How many of you here have been to the Floral Clock? Anybody been to the Floral Clock in Niagara Falls? Is anybody listening to what I was saying?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I've got one.

Have you been to the Floral Clock? Anybody on that side? You must have been—in Niagara Falls.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Yes, I've been there, actually.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you. I'm glad. Yes, it's beautiful.

Or you could pick up that 56-kilometre section of that Trans Canada Trail link that starts at Fort George in Niagara-on-the-Lake and ends at Anger Street in Fort Erie. You can see how the trails take care of that whole riding.

**1520**

Finally, in Fort Erie, you can walk on the 16-kilometre Friendship Trail beside Lake Erie. Starting at the border of Port Colborne—which is in my colleague's riding—in the west, the trail runs along an abandoned rail track, through lush farmland, quiet villages, wetlands, and quiet residential areas until you make it out to historic Old Fort Erie. From there, you can head out to Ridgeway, where you can enjoy the history or the view. Both are certainly worth doing.

These trails are part of what makes my riding of Niagara Falls and the entire Niagara region so unique.

You can easily walk through the history of our great country while at the same time exploring the beautiful natural landscape that has been preserved here.

That uniqueness is important. It's a big part of why we, as a riding and as a community, have been so successful in the tourist industry. We can offer you a mix of entertainment, from casinos in Niagara Falls to world-class horse racing in Fort Erie—and I'll just say this—where we need more race days and the slots back, by the way. We can offer you history and natural beauty that makes, I truly believe, a combination that would be hard to match anywhere in the world.

Our trails and the sights on them attract thousands and thousands of visitors to my riding every year from all over the world. They come to spend their days walking along and enjoying the beauty of our community, and the province of Ontario, and they spend their evenings in our hotels and our restaurants, supporting our local economy and helping to maintain jobs in our riding. By protecting, preserving and expanding our network of trails in this province and by promoting their use, we'll help grow the number of tourists visiting every year, not only in my riding but right across the province.

More tourists means more money being spent in our communities. More money being spent in our communities means more jobs. More jobs in our communities means that the people who live there are better off.

I know, from talking to people in my riding, that good jobs are one of the top priorities for them. The more we can do to create jobs—good, stable, full-time jobs—in our province, the better. This is one of those things that we can do, so I support the goal of doing it. Clearly, supporting Ontario trails is a good thing for Niagara Falls, for Niagara region and, quite frankly, for the entire province of Ontario.

Unfortunately, I find myself once again in a very familiar position. Other people have said this already. In fact, it almost seems like every week that I stand up to speak in this House, we are discussing the same sort of problems with a government bill.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear: Supporting Ontario trails is an important and well-meaning goal. As I just outlined, the trails in my riding are a big part of the economy and our community, and I am positive that the same is true for many of you in the House today talking about your ridings. However, once again, I find myself looking at a bill that falls short in details.

When this bill was first debated for second reading, on February 18, we heard concerns from several different members from vastly different parts of the province—which is really interesting—from the southeast, compared to the northwest, about how this will affect their communities. We heard that rather than promoting, protecting and expanding our trail systems here in Ontario, this bill is actually causing trails to close down.

Mr. Speaker, that is a big problem. When the outcome of a bill in fact is the exact opposite of the stated goal of the bill, then something hasn't gone according to plan.

One of the issues that has been raised with respect to this bill is how it handles points where public trails cross into private farmland. According to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, nearly 20,000 kilometres of the 80,000 kilometres of trails in Ontario run through municipalities, including trails that run along farmland, and these are the points where they have concerns about trespassing on private property.

The OFL—the OFA; the OFL is a different organization. The OFA has expressed concerns both about the lack of enforcement of the current trespassing law and about the fact that low penalties currently do little to discourage trespassing. These concerns are very real, particularly in rural communities where snow machine trails often go across private farmland, and they need to be addressed in this bill, moving forward.

An area of concern for me, when I am reading through the bill, also relates to the interaction of trail users and private property. In my research, it became clear to me that current rules around liability of property owners need to be updated. As it currently stands, a trail user who is injured while crossing over private property would be entirely within their rights to pursue legal action against the owner of that property. That means that by simply opening up their farmland for people to cross over as part of the trail, these farm owners are putting themselves at risk.

One of the possible ways to address this concern is by limiting or eliminating the property owner's liability if someone were to trespass off the prescribed trail and get injured in the process. Now, I am not a lawyer, so I won't claim that this is the best or the only solution to this problem. But I can say, with absolute certainty, that if we want Ontario farmers to open up their land for people to cross as part of a trail, we need to do everything we can to ensure that those farm owners are protected, their land is protected and their crops are protected.

I know that this is an important piece of legislation, so I really do hope that the government is going to take these concerns of the OFA and the farmers of our province very seriously. I hope that they are going to go out into rural communities where this is going to have a big impact to talk one-on-one with farmers to address these real concerns. I hope that they are going to have meaningful, ongoing consultation with people that this will affect so that we can get it right the first time. Remember: The outcome of the bill needs to match the goal of the bill for it to be successful.

I am coming to the end my time, but I want to make sure that you all know about some of the people who support this, as well as those who have concerns with it. Just last week, I had a wonderful opportunity to welcome the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects to Niagara Falls for their 48th annual conference. The OALA was originally founded in 1968, and under the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects Act of 1984, has the responsibility for regulating professional standards, accreditation for the profession, maintaining and improving the examination process, and for approv-

ing educational and professional development standards in the industry.

The landscape architects that I had the chance to meet with were all wonderful people who care deeply about protecting and preserving our environment—our air, our water—and who understand the importance of our trail system in doing that. In fact, the keynote address of the conference was entitled “Great Lakes Waterfront Trail: 20-Year Celebration of Innovation and Partnership.” According to the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects, some of Ontario’s finest landscape architects were among the founders of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail in the early 1990s. This year, the trail is going to be celebrating its 21st anniversary, and I want to make sure you all know that it’s going to be a big celebration on April 26.

1530

I’ll stop there, because I see my time is up. Thank you very much; I appreciate it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions or comments?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I am quite delighted to respond to the member opposite and add my support to the Supporting Ontario’s Trails Act—Bill 100, it seems to be called. Now, when I think about Bill 100, I think about some historic school board legislation, but the current Bill 100 is our trails act.

The member talked about the wonderful trail network in the Niagara area, and I think that when we think about trails, that’s really one of the models in our province. It lends itself to hiking; it lends itself to just casual walking while you’re sightseeing and seeing the historic sites; it lends itself to cycling. We now have people who travel from Toronto to Niagara just so they can cycle on the trails and enjoy the wonderful Niagara countryside. Those are the sorts of models that we want to expand.

My daughter and son-in-law live in Bracebridge, and the Trans Canada Trail actually goes right along the river behind their house. So that just becomes the way we walk to the park, along the Trans Canada Trail, when we’re babysitting. But again, it’s another great trail network that’s building up all not just across Ontario but across Canada that lets people get out and enjoy our province.

Where I see this as Minister of Education is that we want our students to be more physically active, and what better way to be physically active than to be out there walking or running or biking along one of our wonderful trails in Ontario?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I’m happy to be able to comment on Bill 100, An Act to enact the Ontario Trails Act, 2015 and to amend various Acts.

I thought the member from Niagara Falls did a good job in his 20 minutes with the overview of this act and how it impacts his riding of Niagara Falls. I know in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, we have a number of trails, and these trails are very important to the economy in my riding. I represent about 100 towns,

villages, hamlets and little communities within Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

But, Mr. Speaker, when this bill was brought forward and since that time, we have had a lot of calls to our office. There seems to be a lot of confusion around this bill. I think that speaks to what my colleague and my friend from Elgin–Middlesex–London mentioned: that there just wasn’t enough consultation done with different groups and people, at least in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, and I suspect across southwestern Ontario and other parts of the province.

This government really does have a poor track record. I’m sure this is what happens after being in government for 13 or 14 years. They just start making decisions here at Queen’s Park and they forget about people out there. I know in my time here—it’s only been less than five years—we had, as the member from Niagara Falls mentioned, the lack of consultation with the horse racing industry. I think a local example for me is in the riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London—the member from there, Mr. Yurek, mentioned it—with the whole situation around Dutton Dunwich with the wind turbine development. In fact, we had another 16 or so wind turbine developments announced, and these communities don’t want those in their communities.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I am pleased to offer some thoughts to the comments that were made in this place today by the member for Niagara Falls on Bill 100, Supporting Ontario’s Trails Act.

In his remarks, the member did an excellent job, I thought, of making the case for trails, reinforcing why Ontario’s trail system is so important to the economic, social and community well-being of this province. He talked about the Bruce Trail. The trailhead begins in his riding and runs 840 kilometres up to Tobermory. There are 960 landowners along that Bruce Trail system who allow voluntary access to the trails. These are historic agreements based on decades of partnership and trust that have been developed.

That is somewhat similar to my riding. We have the Thames Valley Trail system. That’s a 115-kilometre trail that passes from Port Stanley up to St. Marys. A third of that trail system passes through private farmland.

In both of these trail systems, the Bruce Trail and the Thames Valley Trail systems, what we’re seeing, as a result of the botched, quite frankly, implementation of Bill 100, is that parts of this trail system are being closed now by landowners. There is incredible concern that has arisen about what this bill will mean to property owners. As a result, instead of celebrating our trail system, building up our trail system and making it more accessible to Ontarians, we may have inadvertently caused the potential loss of that very important trail system we value so much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I particularly was pleased with the local references the member for Niagara Falls

made, because there are occasions when we are parochial. He and I are both proud of what we have in the Niagara Peninsula in terms of the trail system. What you always have to be careful of is that it doesn't disappear. For instance, I compliment the Niagara Escarpment Commission. When it was established a number of years ago, in the 1970s, I thought it was an excellent system that we had, and the plan that we have that protects much of the province of Ontario, at least that part which is located within the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

The great danger is there are people who can't wait to undo that. Their idea of a wonderful vista would be a Holiday Inn in the middle of the escarpment, or some other development, because they just obsess with development: "We must develop everything; we must pave everything." That's why I think, when we have a system of trails such as this—and I know the member from Niagara Falls would agree with me—we have to preserve it. One of the organizations that has the opportunity to do so, and can be helpful, is the Niagara Escarpment Commission, the people who serve on the commission, who are there to protect this land for the benefit of the people of the province of Ontario.

As well, we think of the Oak Ridges moraine; we think of other special parts of the province that contain many of these trails. I compliment those people who, on their private property, have of their own volition allowed the use of this land. These people are to be complimented. It was of their own volition, and they recognized the public good. But I think they have a right to expect, as well, that those who use the trails are going to do so in a way that's going to benefit everyone and not be detrimental to the use of the land itself. I think the member captured that well in his speech.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Niagara Falls.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Once again, Speaker, I'd like to thank you and I want to thank my colleagues. It's been a very enlightening debate.

I think one of my colleagues hit it on the nail on what we want to do. We want to make sure, at the end of the day, that we don't hurt the system. We want to make sure that what I talked about for my riding, from Fort Erie to Niagara-on-the-Lake to Niagara Falls, continues. How do you do that? You bring a bill forward that may have some good intentions, but that's not what's going on. You have to get out.

I appreciate the one comment from my colleague that talked about consultations on the Fort Erie Race Track and what we've gone through there.

**1540**

You have to get out and talk to farmers. That's what has to happen. I said in my speech that it might be a good idea if you talk to them individually, because when farmers or property owners hear the word "lawyers," you've got a problem. With no disrespect to the lawyers—it's probably a great job to have—but at the end of the day, if you've got to fight for the rights that

you already own—because you own the property. You're already allowing people to use your trails, to use your property, and then you're saying, "Well, we've got other issues in the bill," and they're concerned about it. If I'm going to give any advice to the government on the bill, it's to make sure that you talk to farmers. Talk to the property owners and make sure that you understand what their concerns are. Don't go down the road of forcing farmers and homeowners to say, "I'm sorry. I'm not going through this. I'm not going to court. I'm not spending thousands of dollars on lawyers. I'm just not going to let them use the trails." That would be one of the biggest mistakes I think the province of Ontario could make.

The way to fix that is to go and talk to them. That's what I think the big problem is. I've heard it from the north. I've heard it from London. I've heard it from Kitchener. I've heard it from everywhere. They said that you haven't taken time to go and talk to them. My advice is, please talk to them.

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

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** I will be sharing my time with the Deputy Premier and the member for Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I'm excited to lend both my voice and my support to Bill 100, the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015. Ontario is home to some of the most historic and longest trails in Canada, which provide affordable and accessible venues for many activities. Trails offer a place to explore with family and friends, and a place to experience the breathtaking beauty and rich cultural heritage that we identify with Ontario.

I am especially delighted and excited to speak this afternoon because my riding, the great riding of Davenport, is actually named after a trail. Our archaeologists tell us that before bike lanes were added to Davenport Road in the 1990s, or paved with asphalt in the 20th century, long before it was paved with wooden planks in the mid-19th century, Davenport was a trail. Davenport Road follows a native trail along the foot of the scarp of the old shoreline of Lake Iroquois. The road follows the longest First Nations trail to exist in Ontario. Davenport Road was an ancient footpath known in Ojibway as "Gete-Onigaming," for "at the old portage." Davenport Road was a portage route used by indigenous populations to travel between the Humber and Don rivers. My community, Mr. Speaker, started as a trail. What started as a link to two waterways has now become a link to our cultural heritage.

All throughout Ontario, there are a number of trails that trace long-established aboriginal routes, like the Toronto Carrying-Place Trail, which links Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe. Our history is remembered by our trails network, Mr. Speaker. And just as trails act as bridges to our past, our trails connect us to all of the natural wonders Ontario has to offer.

Cycling lanes, like the one on Davenport Road, encourage and support environmental stewardship through

active transportation. Active transportation like cycling and walking helps reduce harmful emissions and contribute to clearer air and reduced respiratory health issues.

Toronto Public Health estimated in 2007 that air pollution from traffic gave rise to about 440 premature deaths and 1,700 hospitalizations per year in the city of Toronto. That air pollution alone had a negative economic impact of \$2.2 billion per year on our economy.

Bicycling and walking help to alleviate some of the negative effects of intense motorization and help to contribute to national and global efforts to combat global warming. That's why our government has invested over \$130 million in trails since 2009. That's why our government committed to investing \$25 million in cycle-friendly infrastructure, and why we invested \$3.5 million to build the Pan Am Path, filling in over 250 kilometres of trail gaps in the province of Ontario. Those are investments in physical fitness, investments in our environment and investments in our health, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, the medical benefits and costs saved as a result of building trails are almost three times greater than the cost of trail construction and maintenance. Bill 100, the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015, complements our government's investment in trails by increasing the support for landowners.

Other members have spoken to how Bill 100 lowers the liability that landowners take on. I would like to address how this legislation protects landowners by increasing the penalties for trespass and by streamlining the process of suing for damages. Currently, a person who is convicted of trespassing may be assigned a fine of up to \$2,000 and could be awarded damages of up to \$1,000. From time to time, trail users will trespass on property adjacent to trails or traverse parts of land where the owner has not allowed users to travel.

During our broad, wide-reaching consultation process from over 250 stakeholders, we heard from farmers who stated that sometimes fences were cut, leading to damages well in excess of the \$1,000 cap when livestock escaped. That is why, if passed, Bill 100 would remove the cap for damages and would allow a judge the ability to award higher fines, up to \$10,000. If a farmer can prove damages, we think that they should be able to sue for them.

Of course, Ontarians have a diverse set of needs. That's why our government has opted not to put in place a minimum fine. There is only one jurisdiction in Canada with a minimum fine for trespass, and it is set at \$2. Instead of minimums, we rely on our judges to decide what level of punishment matches the crime. Through you to members of the opposition seeking a minimum level of fines, Mr. Speaker, I would ask if a teen trespassing at a mall should be automatically fined \$500, or a postal worker cutting across a lawn. Our government trusts our judges to deliver measured punishments that match the crime, so Bill 100 takes a balanced approach, enhancing protection for landowners without punishing indiscriminately.

I'm glad that our government is supporting our trails through investment in cycling lanes, through direct and

indirect investments in trails, and through protecting landowners with Bill 100, the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015. I hope that as members of the opposition familiarize themselves with Bill 100, they too will be in favour and vote in support of the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm pleased to recognize the Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you so much, Speaker. I can't tell you how happy I am to be able to speak in support of Bill 100, the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act. There are many reasons to support this legislation and support Ontario's trails, not least of which is the economic benefit that trails bring to Ontario.

In early March, I met with Valerie Pringle. She is one of the co-chairs of the Trans Canada Trail, and we discussed their goal to build a trail that runs right across Canada, through every province and every territory in this great nation. It was a fantastic meeting, and a meeting that drove home just how important trail tourism is to our economy and our quality of life.

Some surprising statistics: In 2014, hiking contributed over \$550 million to Ontario's GDP. Trail tourism generated over \$800 million in labour income and supported an estimated 18,000 jobs across this province. Hiking contributed over \$250 million in provincial taxes because the trail tourism sector is alive and growing. It's one of many reasons why our government is committed to supporting Ontario trails.

Bill 100, if passed—and I'm hoping it certainly will be—will improve access to Ontario's vast trail network, building both a healthier and more prosperous Ontario. I've outlined a few of the economic benefits; more of my colleagues will explain how our government is improving access to the trail network with this legislation, and some will speak to the health benefits of using trails.

We have made significant investments. Since 2009, we've invested \$130 million in direct and indirect funding to support Ontario trails. We've mapped 21,000 kilometres of trails and approximately 4,000 trailheads. We've funded a variety of local and regional trail projects, improving accessibility for people with disabilities. We've developed an award-winning central website for trails. I'm sure people are excited about our investment of \$3.5 million as a result of the Pan/Parapan Am Games, a legacy that added more than 250 kilometres of trails, filling in key gaps along the Trans Canada Trail.

**1550**

This is, I think, something we can all celebrate. As a result of our investments in support of trails, by the end of this year you'll be able to walk all the way from Niagara-on-the-Lake to just east of Cornwall on continuous waterfront trails. Think of that, Speaker: You can walk from Niagara-on-the-Lake to beyond Cornwall, all along the waterfront. That is a fantastic legacy that this government is leaving for future generations.

I do want to raise an issue, though, that I've been hearing about today that causes real concern. We have

spent years supporting the trail network. We've invested years in consultation on this bill, but, unfortunately, some members of the opposition have jumped to conclusions about this bill and are now spreading fear and misleading, I am afraid—I'm sorry; are not telling—Speaker, I just don't know what words to use here. I am going say they are spreading fear about what is in this bill that, in fact, is not in this bill.

Sadly, that fearmongering has led to the closure of trails in this province. That's just wrong, Speaker. Just last week the Manitoulin Expositor reported three major sections of trail across Manitoulin Island are closed for the foreseeable future. That is just not the way it should be, because the minister has been very, very clear—and I am going to read from it, if I can find it. I'll find it, Speaker. The minister has been very clear—here we are—that this bill “would provide an option for willing landowners to consider entering into an agreement to allow some or all of their land to be utilized for trail-related activities.”

He writes in a letter to the editor published in many newspapers across this province, “To be clear, an easement pursuant to Bill 100, if passed, would be a voluntary agreement between a landowner and an eligible body or bodies. No property owner would be compelled to provide an easement unless they agreed to do so.”

This is entirely voluntary, contrary to some of the assertions of some members of this Legislature. I think it's really important because we're all—you listened to us—so proud of the trails in our communities. I'm going to talk a little bit about that. We're so proud of these trails, I don't know why anyone for political reasons would spread inaccuracies about what's included in this legislation.

This legislation is the result of extensive consultations. Over 250 groups across the province have weighed in. Unfortunately, instead of taking the time to understand this grassroots, ground-breaking legislation, the PCs—the opposition party—have shaped their entire argument around the opinion of one organization. Interestingly, several opposition members have supported—the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, I believe, supports this legislation and has said that publicly. Other members, too; the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington supports this legislation. An organization he used to be affiliated with does not, but that doesn't mean that he doesn't support it. I applaud his support of this legislation. Those members understand that misconceptions are just that: misconceptions.

We will continue this debate. We will also address and clarify the portion of Bill 100 that speaks to trail easements. Speaker, I stand here in support of a bill that, if passed, will bring continued sustainability to our trail system and protect one of our province's greatest treasures.

My connection to trails is one that goes back to my childhood. My dad took us out on hikes. Every weekend, part of our weekend was spent walking the trails with my dad. In fact, he would say that his greatest accomplish-

ment—he just turned 90, by the way; my dad, Don Matthews, just turned 90—was being part of something called the joint parks committee in London. This was a committee composed of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, the POC of the city of London and the Kiwanis Club of London. Those three groups got together and what they did is they got rights for trails that now run 30 kilometres along the Thames River, from one end of the city to the other end of the city, north branch, south branch and main branch.

If you go out on there on a weekend—and I actually took my dad, because I wanted him to see what he had done. We sat on a bench and we saw strollers and wheelchairs and bikes and runners and joggers and any kind of transportation you can imagine. People were out enjoying the trails. That's one of the great things that we can do in government: create that kind of trail where we can all enjoy the great outdoors. So I really ask members of this House to understand the intent of this legislation, to take the minister's clarifications seriously and to stop spreading the—

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** The inaccuracies.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —inaccuracies—thank you—that they have been doing. This is great legislation. We can all take pride, years from now, when we have an even stronger trail system, that we each had a part in making it better.

It's about health. It's about getting out and enjoying the great outdoors. No matter how old or how young you are, no matter what your abilities or disabilities, and no matter how much money you have, we all have equal access to these fantastic trails. We should be supporting this legislation.

If we can make it better, that's what this process is all about. It will go to committee; we will have those discussions there. But this is really important legislation, and I do hope that everyone will stand up and support it, and when it makes a difference in their community, be there and cheer it along.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Etobicoke Centre.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thanks very much, Speaker. It's an honour to speak in support of Bill 100 and to follow the member for Davenport and the President of the Treasury Board in supporting this bill.

This morning, I was late for question period. The reason I was late was because this morning was the day when I hold my monthly seniors' advisory group meeting. The topic for this morning's meeting, coincidentally, was exercise classes for seniors. We had a number of special guests come and speak to the seniors and lead a class with the seniors on how they can remain fit—the kinds of activities and exercises that they can do to make sure that they're as healthy as possible. This is something that's important not only for seniors, of course; it's important to people of all ages.

One of the guests who came, just to give you a sense, was Alli Serguatis from the ESS Support Services group exercise program. She had a kinesiologist demonstrating

exercises. We had Maria Kuntz from Bayshore Therapy and Rehab seniors' wellness; Sandra Daniele-Socci from Edenbridge house; and Charlotte Rouse was speaking about exercise programs for seniors at the Islington Seniors' Centre. These were the kinds of activities that were taking place at this meeting this morning.

The reason I raise this is because, to me, the importance of exercise for people of all ages cannot be overstated. To me, one of the wonderful things about this bill is that this bill will allow us to strengthen what is a natural resource here in Ontario—one that we've built up over time, but one that flows from the beautiful landscape of Ontario, of our province, of our cities—and make sure that we give people opportunities to enjoy that landscape, to enjoy that nature, but also be healthier and happier.

I'm not a big hiker myself, but I have at least a couple of friends who are. I know one or two who hike almost every week, and they drive quite a distance to do so. As someone who comes from a suburban community, I value those trails that are available to people close to home. In my community of Etobicoke Centre, we have some wonderful trails that neighbour the Humber River. I, myself, in growing up, grew up around James Gardens, which is a beautiful city park but also is adjacent to a trail that flows all the way along the Humber River. Those folks in Etobicoke who know Etobicoke well will know that it's a beautiful part of our community. There are many others in Etobicoke as well.

**1600**

This bill does a few things that I think are important. It allows us to better manage trail activity and protect public land and property. It allows us to strengthen the consequences for trespassing on private and agricultural land. I think that's important. I have spoken to constituents who have had people pass through a trail, and sometimes they trespass. Giving private landowners the protections that they need is also important. We all share responsibility in not only making sure the trails are available, but also respecting the rights of private property owners. So that's an important component. Related to that, we're increasing the amount that landowners can recover for damages caused by trespassers. I think that's important.

We're going to establish a voluntary trails classification system. That allows trail users to have consistent information about the most appropriate trail and how difficult it is to navigate. I mean, I'm a novice. If I went hiking right now, I'd be hiking near the Humber River. I wouldn't go out to the Bruce Trail because that, to me, would be a big step. Maybe eventually I'd get there, but for me, knowing how difficult a trail is, what I can expect, what precautions I can take—particularly if I were there with somebody younger or even a senior, I'd want to know what it takes to navigate that trail, not unlike what we do with ski hills when we go down a black diamond or a blue square. That helps me know whether I'm going to be able to navigate that and enjoy my time there. It recognizes Ontario trails of distinction to increase trail awareness.

Speaker, I started by talking about fitness for seniors. I talked about the importance of fitness. I talked about the importance of enjoying our beautiful landscape here in our city of Toronto, but also across Ontario. I think this bill will help us do just that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I do have a comment. Actually, the minister opposite talked about how they've consulted for years—I wasn't aware of that—suggesting that those on this side of the House are spreading fear.

I'll just read an e-mail that I received a week or so ago. I will say snowmobiling isn't that big down in my area. We don't get an awful lot of snow, other than last night and maybe one other day in this past winter. But "Concerned" from this email came into my office. The person is concerned that if the bill is passed, it gives the government the right to make any or all trails easements on private land. The concern with these kinds of easements is that they would give any body or group the right to access and use the trail, even though the permission to use it was only granted to one specific group.

The minister has indicated that, well, this kind of an easement is voluntary, but why was this issue raised in the first place? We've had snowmobile trails for a number of years. I know a number of us in this House, when we were in government, worked with snowmobile associations. We helped them set up a protocol—helped them to organize, really, at a provincial level, and this was a good thing. I'd like to see more of this with the ATVs, for that matter.

But by putting that word "easement" in here, it has cast doubt. It was a mistake to include that in the legislation. Obviously, there is a lot of confusion around that term with respect to a sport where landowners and snowmobilers got together, the same as we see with people on horseback and what we're seeing with ATVs. It's something we see with hunters. You get permission—not for seven years. It's usually for the coming hunting season.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to stand in my place on behalf of the citizens of Kitchener–Waterloo and weigh in on this important debate.

I've been listening to the debate all afternoon, and the takeaway for me and I think for most people is that when you have a flawed process and you don't do your due diligence and you don't do the consultation and you sort of march ahead because you think that you know best—and in this case, it would be the Liberal government—then you have a flawed policy.

You actually do have a flawed piece of legislation and you definitely have a lot of confusion on this issue across the province of Ontario. That tension between private landowners and those who believe in conservation and those who believe in a very comprehensive and inclusive trail system was needlessly created, I think, by this government because you didn't follow a clear process.

One has to wonder why this keeps happening. Today, I just got my final report on the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. I just got it. Of course, you know by now that the budget was introduced seven weeks ago. This is the first time ever that a report has been filed seven weeks after the budget has been tabled by the government of the day. I could successfully argue that we have a flawed budget because we had a flawed process.

The comparator in this instance, as it relates to Bill 100, is that if you don't do the hard work at the beginning, you end up with confusion at the other end of the debate, and that's where we are today.

I would agree that a strong trail system is a valued principle of the people of this province. It's unfortunate, though, that we're having this debate about the confusion of what that means for the people of this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's a pleasure to stand today and speak in support of Bill 100.

I too have been following the debate here in the Legislature, and it's evident to me that—I mean, all members have spoken about how they're proud of the trails in their riding and how the trails that they've lived through their own family experience and the experience of the people who live in their communities really have a very deep meaning to them. It's a very big part of our cultural heritage. I think that it's timely that this legislation takes place.

I'm not convinced that we have a flawed process here. I don't think involving 11 ministries and 250 groups is something that's necessarily a flawed process. I believe that this is part of the process here in debate.

I do agree wholeheartedly with the Deputy Premier when she said, quoting the minister, that the easement process is voluntary. I understand that the opposition's duty is to oppose us, but that does not mean—

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Only when you're wrong.

**Mr. John Fraser:** It does not mean taking a piece of legislation and interpreting that in a way that causes some of the confusion that exists. So the Deputy Premier is perfectly right in saying that.

I would encourage all members to support this legislation. Just simply, it gives us an ability to better manage and protect those natural resources that we have. It will provide an opportunity to clarify landowner and land user responsibilities. I understand the debate about process—I don't agree with it—and I wholeheartedly disagree with the misinterpretation, or the misuse of the misinterpretation, around easements.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'm going to be speaking for a full 20 minutes to this, but I do want to put on that a number of the members of the Liberals have spoken, particularly the Deputy Premier, who has referenced me being a supporter of this bill. You're going to find, Mr. Speaker, that I am going to support this bill and I'm going to give you very valid reasons why I will.

But a key contingent of that is that it needs to be voluntary for these easements. That's the biggest consternation that I've heard in my riding; it's the biggest consternation I've heard across the province. I want her to accept my challenge. If she's truly sincere, I'm going to challenge her—she used the words, I believe, “Make it better.”

One of the key things I've been asked by the clubs in my area and, in fact, the landowners' association is to put it in writing to make it explicitly clear what the easements are and mean, and that it truly is voluntary. I think that's a reasonable amendment, Mr. Speaker. My hope is that it will get through second reading and go to committee so we can make this the most effective piece of legislation that there is.

There's also an issue in regard to the transferability, the assignment by an eligible body or group to another eligible body. I think that one of the concerns that people have is just how easy this can be or not be, and what happens 20 years down the road if it goes from an ATV club to a club that has got nothing to do with trails and clubs.

I think those are things that, had they consulted properly and perhaps included the landowners' association, which has very serious concerns—and I have heard those first-hand—that they would have actually had this legislation and had this discussion prior to bringing it forward.

**1610**

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to the minister directly. I believe that the intent of this is voluntary. But if it truly is, particularly with the issue of lack of trust that this government has created, sadly—if they put it in writing, in black and white, that is there for everyone to see—and if they won't, that leaves people very suspicious of why they would not put that in there as an amendment, to truly make it better, as the Deputy Premier said. I hope that they all will do so and accept those amendments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The Deputy Premier can now reply.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thanks to the members from Haldimand–Norfolk, Kitchener–Waterloo, Ottawa South and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for their contributions.

I'm going to start by commenting on the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, who referred to our budget as a “flawed” budget. I tell you, if a budget contains free tuition for low-income kids and more reasonable, more generous student aid for everyone else, that is not what I would characterize as a flawed budget.

However, I do want to address the issue that several people have raised around the voluntary nature of easement.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the OFA—don't take it from me—carefully reviewed Bill 100, and it provided comments back in June 2015. It noted that “section 12 ... is clear that an owner's decision to enter into a trail easement ... is completely voluntary.”

It's already in the bill. It's in black and white. It has been validated by the OFA. So I think people need to

really look hard at this legislation, and really look hard at themselves in the mirror when they criticize this bill for containing something that it does not contain.

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

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a pleasure to speak today to Bill 100, Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015.

As I just mentioned in my two-minute response, I will support this bill in principle because of a number of reasons, the first of which being the positive economic impact of tourism in my great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. Second, the importance of the trails infrastructure in perpetuity: It's a huge thing, from the perspective of tourism, small business, student employment, from anybody coming to the great area of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and the Bruce Trail. Third, equally, is the active living, the ability to live healthy lifestyles, and encouraging and promoting—I'm a recreation director by trade, and I'm always going to be a person who's looking for opportunities to keep our people healthier rather than trying to fix them once we allow them to go the other way.

“The purposes of this act”—and I'm going to read them from the actual draft that is here—“are as follows:

“(1) To increase awareness about and encourage the use of trails.

“(2) To enhance trails and the trail experience.

“(3) To protect trails for today's generation and future generations.

“(4) To recognize the contribution that trails make to quality of life in Ontario.”

Those are four fundamental things that I wholeheartedly support, and I'm not certain how I could stand in this House and say I don't support those.

Equally, in his leadoff, Minister Coteau suggested—I did have a very good discussion with Minister Coteau—and I'm going to again read from this. This was (1), to advance sport and to move active lifestyles forward.

(2) To support tourism dollars: “We know that trail tourism ... represents around 4% of our GDP in the province of Ontario. We know that tourism supports 350,000 jobs ... The trail tourism component of that larger \$28-billion sector represents about \$1.4 billion in economic benefits, and supports an impressive 18,000 jobs.”

(3) To add clarity to the Occupiers' Liability Act: “Currently there exists some legal ambiguity around what standard of care is owed to the users of trails. For example, if an ATV club charges membership fees for coordinating rides on a portion of an Ontario trail network, it is legally questionable what level of care is required from the business and from the owner of the trail. If Bill 100 is passed, it will clarify legislation, encouraging further participation between businesses and the owners of trails.”

(4) To increase access to trails by protecting landowners: “Currently, if a hiker trespasses and causes significant damage to property, the landowner would have to file two court claims. If passed, Bill 100 would streamline that process....

“Making it easier for property owners to recoup damages will increase the number of property owners willing to allow easements on their property.”

The challenge that we're all caught up in here is the poorly consulted, poorly executed rollout of Bill 100.

Perhaps, had the minister worked with our critic Steve Clark from Leeds–Grenville, who has done a great job on this bill, we could have alleviated a lot of the concern out there. There are a lot of things: There's misinformation and a lack of consultation, as I said earlier. They referenced that there were 250 groups that they had consultations with. It's interesting that, again, the Ontario Landowners Association, to my knowledge, was not one of them. You would kind of think that that's a fairly significant group that might have some concerns with this bill. Had they had open dialogue and consultation, we might have avoided a lot of this.

There's a lot of mistrust with regard to the Green Energy Act that was rammed through, and in the horse racing industry, for a lack of consultation. Seniors and prescription drugs—we just went through this. They went out and said, “We're going to do this.” Today—and I'm thankful that they've actually reconsidered this—they've actually decided not to double the deductible. That's a good step, but why didn't they consult broadly and ensure that it was there before they ever rolled out that legislation?

There are lots of unintended consequences that have already happened in my great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. I have people who are property owners who have had the trails come across their property. Because of misinformation, because this wasn't clear and they hadn't consulted broadly and widely enough, they have actually decided the trail is not going through. That's going to have and has had significant, huge consequences, not just to the economy of my area but certainly to the livelihoods of some people and to the recreation and health benefits that I have mentioned.

It has created bad property owner relations. One of the local snowmobile club members called me and said, “Bill, I have 29 property owners that I work with. I'm going to have to go to every single one of them.” They have their own form. They have it reviewed annually to make sure it's a legal document and it works well. It actually provides liability insurance for the property owner, to ensure that if someone gets hurt while they're utilizing their trail, they have indemnification and coverage. There's a lot of misinformation, so there's unintended consequences.

People fear this bill creates unwanted or automatic easements, and takes away any property rights. We just heard from the Deputy Premier, who assured us this is voluntary. She tells me it's in the bill. Obviously, there are people reading the bill who believe that they don't see it as clearly as they would like. If she's truly sincere to her word, and her government is truly sincere to what they're saying publicly, then why would they not initiate the ability to have a review, do some wordsmithing and ensure that it's crystal clear to the people that are

opposing it? That, to me, makes sense. That's why we as the opposition are here. That's the democratic process. Certainly they have the right to bring a bill forward; we have the right to represent those users that come forward to us, asking for amendments. I'm certainly hopeful that that is—I believe it's voluntary. I've been suggesting in my riding that it's voluntary.

Because of the way they have rolled this out, it's pre-emptively calling off any verbal arrangements they have had with trail users. I have had, as I said, concern from snowmobile clubs in particular, but I keep reassuring them that you would hope, with good faith, that there is the opportunity to ensure that this is so.

I am going to offer two quotes. One: "We have used this trail for over 20 years, but now neighbours are rescinding permission from here on. Trail use looks grim for the future." It's not a good place to be in, Mr. Speaker. It's not good for any of us, and it could have been prevented.

A second one: "Rescinding trails is what we want to stop."

What I hear a fair bit from people in my riding is that no one understands why the old system had to be tweaked. I'm going to step up and offer a couple of things that I believe. It's the case, I think, that the minister has a duty to actually review and ensure that there is a trails plan. I'm just going to flip to that page: "The minister is required to maintain an Ontario trails strategy and must review the strategy and publish reports about the progress made in implementing the strategy."

I'm assuming the minister, as part of his mandate letter, thought that this was a good thing. He's sharing that he consulted with 250 different user groups and that this was a good way to change. But the biggest issue here is about trust—not of the minister; I have found Minister Coteau to be a good guy. I can go and talk to him, he actually listens and we can work together. It's mistrust of this government. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be very specific: the Green Energy Act. My colleague the great member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, Jeff Yurek, has shared in this House today as part of this the reality of Dutton Dunwich, an unwilling host. They were assured that they would not end up with wind turbines, but the reality is that they are ending up with them. It's about a trust factor.

**1620**

I've taken a bit of a leap of faith. In fact, I've taken a risk in my own riding. I wrote a letter to the editor to try to clarify some of the misconceptions and some of the misinformation that was out there, to ensure that everyone didn't pre-emptively stop the use of their land, which really would negatively impact all of our trail users.

Some have said to me, "Why, Bill, are you supporting Liberal legislation after all of the things that we can't trust them on? Why are you supporting a government that has messed up so many things?" They said the gas plants would cost \$40 million, and it ended up being a billion-dollar scandal for the taxpayers of Ontario. The Green Energy Act, again, the non-willing hosts that we've

talked about so much in this House—and, close to my heart in my current critic role for seniors and long-term care, their commitment in two elections to redevelop 30,000 beds. Mr. Speaker, after 13 years, probably I think 15% would be a generous suggestion that they've got to. When I ask for the plan of when they're going to build these beds and where, they don't even have the ability to give it to me.

I believe that what we need to do as legislators is to work to ensure that it's the best legislation possible, that it's actually in the best interest of all Ontarians—not for political partisanship, not because a minister wants it, but because it is the right thing to do. It really is a leap of faith for me, with their track record—their abysmal track record, frankly—on a lot of issues over the last 13 years. But, in this case, I believe it is a good piece of legislation. It can be improved, and I've asked for certain amendments. I'm going to talk about those a little bit later in my discussion. But the priority for me, in standing up the way I have, is because I believe that I need to be here and to make the health and the sustainability and the success of the people, first and foremost in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound but also across this great province, my priority. I believe that this piece of legislation, with some amendments, can in fact be a good piece of legislation.

For decades, snowmobile trails have existed through partnerships between individual property owners and their local snowmobile club, utilizing written agreements from that property owner, or sometimes verbal. I believe, having talked to the minister and other colleagues of my caucus, that those can stay exactly as they are. If it's been a handshake for 20 years, there's nothing compelling anyone to do anything different. In the case of the snowmobile clubs, if they come along and they have their form that they have actually provided for you to provide indemnification, you can sign that with no fear that there's anything else in there.

An easement is a very specific piece of documentation. You, voluntarily, as the property owner, have to initiate that process. Yes, there are big concerns. A number of people have shared here that, as soon as you hear the word "lawyer," as a property owner you start to worry. But, at the end of the day, this is a very significant piece.

Minister Coteau has promised that "an easement pursuant to Bill 100, if passed, would be a voluntary agreement between a landowner and an eligible body or bodies. No property owner would be compelled to provide an easement unless they agreed to do so." That, Mr. Speaker, is what I believe. I hope he stands true to his word and I hope his government stands true to their words.

As I've shared, Ontarians remain at unease. Who can trust anything this Liberal government has had to say? I'm going to repeat: gas plants. They stood in this House and said that it's only going to be a \$40-million-dollar mistake; it was a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker. What could we have done with that billion dollars for the less fortunate, for education, for our young people that are just starting out in life, our health care system and our long-term-care beds that I bring up? It's regrettable.

Promoting the use of trails is good for tourism, good for people's health and well-being. Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound has a multitude of trail experiences: ATVing, cross-country skiing, equestrian riding, mountain biking, snowmobiling, trail running, snowshoeing and the Bruce Trail. The Bruce Trail is 890 kilometres long, connecting communities from Niagara all the way to the tip of Tobermory in my great riding—960 property owners actually give access to that trail. Trail use in my riding alone generates over \$24.5 million annually between the two counties.

We're asking this government to get out there, to truly consult all user groups and all stakeholders and fix the mess that they've created with miscommunication—or at least, not as clear as they could have been in their communication. The trail sector may be at risk of actually collapsing. We want to challenge this government to give faith to the people of Ontario that you are here to do the right thing, to accept improvements, to work collaboratively and to create the most effective legislation possible—not just buzzwords, but truly engage with the opposition, with the third party and with those people that we represent in the stakeholder community.

There are two key issues that I have already shared here. The first is that voluntary component—those easements. The Deputy Premier suggests that the OFA suggests that there's wording in there that they're okay with. That's okay. I respect greatly the OFA and the membership of the OFA. But that doesn't mean that that appeases all groups or that it makes it right. There are other groups that obviously have some concerns. So why would you, as a government, not be willing to engage with other people and bring their thought processes to the table?

A favourite phrase with this government is, "We want to consult." Well, there are groups out there that feel that you haven't consulted enough, and they want to offer you their opinion. They want very specific—one group in particular in my riding, the landowners group, I've asked to put their very specific concerns in writing, the exact wording that they want, and I'll hand-deliver it to the minister so that there can be no confusion on what's being expected from a stakeholder that I represent.

The other one is transferability, the ability for an easement to be assigned by an eligible body or group to another eligible body. As has been explained to me, there may be groups that exist today and it might be that you transfer it from a snowmobile club to an ATV club, because lots of things change. But there could be a group that comes along, and you need some control of who that will go to, because it could be a group that doesn't even want trails. So there has to be some wording in there to be able to control that. It can't just be an automatic transfer. I think that if we can find wording to do that, we can certainly appease some people.

This has been a very interesting one for me. I've shared already that, in my own riding, I've been challenged by people who are my supporters, who actually elected me. They said, "Bill, why are you standing up

and supporting this government?" I shared with them that Randy Hillier, a member of my caucus, a former president of the landowners association—and I'm paraphrasing, but I believe the words he used were, "I've been here for a lot of years. I've read a lot of legislation." He believes fundamentally that this is a good, solid piece of legislation. Can there be improvements? Absolutely. There can be any piece of legislation.

My colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane, John Vanthof, raised a good issue a little earlier with regards to a very specific situation. Where there is a group, for example, a snowmobile club, that wants to put a bridge on a property owner's land—they're going to invest whatever the number may be; let's just say it's \$80,000, and they've done that voluntarily in the past—what happens if that landowner decides tomorrow, for whatever reason, "I don't want you coming across my land?" Now there's an \$80,000 asset that's of no value to anyone. That's the whole intent of the easements.

The word that I believe my colleague Mr. Hillier used was that it provides "certainty" for all groups. You can voluntarily, if you want to, have an easement that specifies a very specific period of time, very specific terms and conditions, and yes, if you've entered into that and three years down the road you sell your piece of property, the new landowner is certainly going to have to honour those easement conditions, terms and all of the restrictions that may be in there. But again, that's certainty for the group that's investing that \$80,000, perhaps half a million dollars, in whatever that improvement or enhancement to that trail would be. I don't see anything wrong with that because it remains voluntary to the property owner. It's crystal clear for everyone: If you're buying that piece of property and there's an officially registered easement, you know exactly the terms and conditions that you've bought that property on. It's not something where someone can come along and say, "Oh, no. Me and Bob had our own little handshake discussion and this is really what was intended." It's black and white, and it's there for certainty for all users.

Mr. Speaker, I think what we want to do here is ensure that, at the end of the day, we look for some of the positives as well, when people say to me, "What's good in this bill?" Well, at the end of the day, there are some changes in here with regard to fines and rehabilitation.

Section 69.2 is added to the act. If a person is found guilty of this offence, a court may, in addition to imposing a fine under the act, order the person to rehabilitate the lands and repair any damage to crown land or property. So if a bunch of people get in there, let's say on motocross bikes, and rip up the farmer's land and they're caught trespassing, not only can they be fined now, they could actually have to spend some money to rehabilitate that land. I don't see why that would be a bad thing from a property owner's perspective, so I see that as a plus.

Part of the credit should go to my colleague Sylvia Jones from Dufferin-Caledon. Her bill, Bill 36, Respecting Private Property Act, 2014, asked for increases to the fines. Currently, a person who is convicted of

trespassing under subsection 2(1) of the Trespass to Property Act is liable to a fine of not more than \$2,000. An amendment provides that the person is liable to a fine of not more than \$10,000. The cost of doing some of this stuff, the challenges that people are facing—because of her efforts to bring in her legislation, we have actually increased those fines.

Under subsection 12(1) of the act, a court is permitted to award damages against a person convicted of trespassing under subsection (2), but the award cannot be for an amount in excess of \$1,000; there's an amendment to remove the \$1,000 limit. So again, Mr. Speaker, it might be a \$5,000 or \$8,000 actual impact. This ability is in there, so I think that's a good thing to actually be in the act.

**1630**

I think the key comes down to, again, that this is a piece of legislation where this government had an idea, and I think the intent is right. I believe that the minister and the government—I hope the government—wanted to improve the trails and ensure their sustainability, and they know and have realized the economic and health impacts and just the reality of what happens when you have access to such a great trail network. A number of our colleagues here have worked on ATV bills to try to make that industry even more successful and accessible for people, and I think that is something we want to do.

I believe that if they had consulted more broadly, if they had ever actually brought a piece of legislation and let us look at it before they brought it to this House, particularly a bill that, for the most part, impacts a great deal of rural and northern Ontario, we might have been able to suggest those thoughts and we wouldn't be having this debate right now, because it probably would have sailed through with the support of all three parties.

Mr. Speaker, the economic benefits, the health and environmental benefits, the social and the heritage benefits of all trails in communities in Ontario are what I am standing here trying to promote today. I'm going to ask the minister and I'm going to ask this government—I will vote in favour to get it to second reading and expect the minister and the Deputy Premier to honour what they have said, that there are reasonable amendments and input from stakeholders, the two being that, again, the voluntary component from the easements has to be put in very explicit black and white, to the satisfaction of all user groups, and the transferability assigned by an eligible body or group to another body or group needs to be massaged to ensure that the intent is truly honoured.

The Deputy Premier said in this House, "We want to make it better." Here's your chance, Minister. Here's your chance to restore faith in the people of Ontario that you'll actually stand behind your word, you'll accept improvements and you'll make this legislation the best it can be.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** It's always a pleasure to rise and join in debate, even if it's only for two minutes at this

point, talking about Bill 100 and talking about Ontario's trails.

In Windsor and Essex county, we have many beautiful trails. I encourage everybody to come down and use our trails. We have a beautiful waterfront trail that runs from my riding all the way through the member from Windsor–Tecumseh's and beyond, one that I think everybody should come and walk along. Come at night when you can take in the sight of the Detroit skyline. It's beautiful.

To touch on the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound's comments, I think he said something really important right at the end as he was wrapping it up—

*Interjection.*

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Well, we used to have a beautiful area back there, a naturalized area. The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound was talking about racetracks and such. We used to have a beautiful racetrack and slots actually, and now it's been bulldozed and they are looking to develop it. From what I hear, they're going to put in a Walmart, which is quite unfortunate, because we have a naturalized area which is also a beautiful area to visit. It has a beautiful trail. So it would be nice if the government would come down and have a look at the destruction of where the track used to be and see the damage that it's doing.

But back to the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and his wrap-up at the end, when he said the part about how the voluntary granting of easements must be clear. I absolutely agree with him because, as we've often seen with this government, the wording is not rock-solid wording; it's not really pinning them down to anything. They can spin it any way they like. I think it's really important for property owners to know exactly what their rights are as property owners and what the government is expecting of them. So I would agree on that. It's not often that our party and his party agree, but on this I do. I think it's really important—

**Mr. Bill Walker:** That's not true.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Well, you're a little more like us right now. You should probably all buy membership cards, but I'm sure how you really feel will come out eventually.

But I agree that with this government, we need to have everything rock-solid, in writing, so people are clear on what the expectations are.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak in support of Bill 100.

I really would like to acknowledge the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. Every time he speaks in this House, he does so with such passion. As we have all seen, the topic of this piece of legislation has really encouraged all of us to speak passionately. It's obviously something that is very important to each and every one of us. I'd also like to acknowledge the member for Windsor West for her words.

I do want to say very clearly that there is no spin here. It is very clear, with respect to the easements, that an

easement under the proposed act would, if passed, be an agreement between a willing landowner and an eligible body that grants the eligible body access to the owner's land for trail-related activities or purposes. It's really important to remember that.

I just want to say quickly that I'm reminded again of a conversation I had with Bishop Michael Oulton when we discussed one of the trails near my area, Lemoine Point. He described it as being one of those thin places. A thin place is a place where the distance between heaven and earth is very thin. You're overwhelmed by that when you are out in the environment. It's something that I was very touched by. I can see from the conversation that we've had in the chamber that we've all been very touched by those beautiful spots in our regions.

I understand and respect that we all feel concerned and we want to do the right thing by this legislation. I hope everyone will do the right thing and support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** It's a pleasure to rise and comment on the comments by my colleague the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. Yes, he is a passionate person. You see him travel around his riding. Actually, I got a glimpse of him a week ago, and I just went to put my arm up to wave and he was gone. That's how quick he was going around the riding. I think he ate a bunch of pancakes up at Purple Valley or something, which is up on the Bruce—it's a beautiful part of the country—and he was headed for another event.

I think he brought up a good subject, and I think we've all spoken about this on this side of the House; it's called trust. This didn't have to happen. This debate did not have to happen if this had been presented to the people who own property—especially in my riding—if it had been presented properly. And it wasn't. We are still getting phone calls into the riding about what this bill is doing. We've got people ripping up the snowmobile trails right now because they don't trust this government, because of things that have happened in the past. Introducing a bill like this doesn't help build the trust again. They're frightened of the government; they're frightened of what can happen.

Certainly, if it had been explained to them properly in the first place, the trails wouldn't have been ripped up. At least, they would have called us first—called our offices, called your offices first—and got an explanation of what was going on. Maybe it would have put them at ease. But that's not what's going on here right now.

It goes back to things that have happened in the past, certainly out in rural Ontario, where I remember the day the Premier said “willing hosts,” and we're going, “Oh, boy. If we're an unwilling host, we don't have to put up with wind turbines anymore.” Well, guess how far that went?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** How far?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Not very far. In fact, the member down in Elgin county was saying that one group wanted wind turbines and one didn't, so they gave it to

the one that didn't instead of the one that did. It's just incredible how these things work.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I think the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound actually does a very good job of advocating for those voices that are not heard in this place. I think that this goes back to the consultation comments that I referenced last time.

I think that we have now a growing body of evidence that this government brings forward legislation that has huge gaps in it. The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound mentioned the voluntary easement agreement. This is a major factor which will affect the effectiveness of the trail programs.

As we move forward, these snowmobile associations don't have the money to go to a Liberal fundraiser to make their case for policy effectiveness going forward. They don't. There are multiple little groups all across those trails that are fighting for their rights to actually be part of the conversation. They just want to be invited to the table, Mr. Speaker. They could afford to go to my \$20 spaghetti dinner at the Legion, but they can't afford the victory dinner at the Metro Convention Centre.

**1640**

To hear the Deputy Premier talk about how “we consulted enough”—what is “enough” for them? When policy is directly going to affect your land, your livelihood, your life—and it's true; the member makes a very good point. This piece of legislation could have been one of those pieces of legislation that came to the floor of this Legislature without any conflict whatever. But what did they do? They forgot voices that they're supposed to be remembering, that they're supposed to be representing across this province. They left them out, and this turns this debate to this point.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'd like to thank the member from Windsor West. She brought up a good point about the slots at racetracks. Again, the lack of consultation and listening to the stakeholders—what's the negative impact?

I would just like to offer one little friendly amendment, though. She said that we almost never agree. I don't think that's true. Her seatmate particularly, Mr. Hatfield, he and I get along fabulously. Mr. Vanthof from Timiskaming-Cochrane—

**Interjection:** He's a Conservative.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** He's a Conservative, so that's probably why we get along better. He doesn't have his blue shirt on today. And a number of their caucus I actually work very closely with.

She talked about the voluntary granting of easements. It's an easy, simple thing to make clear.

Kingston and the Islands: Thank you so much for your kind words. I do bring passion to this House. I hope that we can extend this spirit of collaboration to all pieces of

legislation, to work collaboratively and truly listen to the stakeholders and the people of Ontario, and make the best legislation we can with all members, listening to all members of all parties, not partisan stuff. Let's just get on with doing what we were all put here to do.

Perth–Wellington, my good colleague: He mentioned the word “trust.” Proper consultation could ensure that there's trust. They brought out yet another piece of legislation without enough proper consultation, and now we're back into this churn again. They can make amendments to the easements and the transferability, and they can make that pretty simply. I want to thank him. Yes, I do try to work hard for my constituents and yes, I apologize for missing you when we passed on the highway.

He also brought up the willing host, again an opportunity for this government to actually have earned some trust. But they missed out on that Dutton Dunwich decision.

My colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo: I appreciate the comments with regard to advocating for the voices that are not heard. I do try to do that; I believe you do the same thing very well at your end.

You brought up the lack of consultation. I believe the Liberals have an opportunity here. They maybe missed it again, but they can actually return that trust by putting something as simple as black-and-white, clear wording around easements to allay a lot of the fears and misconceptions that are out there, and ensuring that we have good legislation that will serve all people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I'm pleased to recognize the member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Thank you, Speaker, and good afternoon. It's always an honour to stand in this provincial Parliament and speak on behalf of my residents in Windsor–Tecumseh about the pressing issues of the government's legislative agenda. Let's see, what's today? The 4th of April, and Toronto was hit with 10 or 12 centimetres of snow overnight, more than the combined total of December and January or something like that. I heard it on CBC Radio this morning. Speaker, I have to confess, I may be the cause of all of this bad weather. I'll tell you why towards the end of this presentation.

Maybe my friend from Ajax–Pickering, Mr. Dickson, has already had his snow machines out today, enjoying this spring surprise, as I know he loves his trails.

Speaker, as you know, Bill 100 is legislation proposed to amend the Ontario Trails Act. It's an act that has already caused alarm for many people. It's been said that's because there was not enough consultation on the bill before it was introduced. That led to rumours and uncertainties. Alarm bells have sounded throughout the farming and agricultural communities, and with landowners who have questions about how this bill could impact them and the quality of life of their families.

There was no reason for that. It has already led to a war of words between some landowners and organized trail users. Because of this, access agreements, or ease-

ments, between snowmobiling clubs and some landowners have been terminated. Some trails are being closed.

The intent of the bill was to promote tourism and make trails more accessible and yet, in certain areas, because of the ambiguous wording in the bill and uncertainty about the meaning of the legislation, we are seeing nervous people hunker down rather than welcoming this legislation with open arms.

My good friends at the Ontario Federation of Agriculture have concerns. They want the bill to be amended so that if people trespass and are convicted, the fines imposed will be much higher than proposed. The OFA wants stricter police enforcement of the act as well. My buddy Don McCabe, the OFA president, has said this bill does not encroach on the freedoms of individual landowners. He's also been quoted as saying there's a bogus rumour out there claiming farmers risk having their land expropriated for trails, and that is not true. I read somewhere recently, maybe it was in the London Free Press, that the executive director of the Ontario Trails Council is of the opinion that it could take years for the misunderstandings to be cleared up.

There is a good deal of ambiguity in the section dealing with easements, and it has raised red flags with all kinds of people. Critics lay the blame for this squarely at the feet of the government, for not taking the time to consult on the specific wording of the bill with the public, the user groups and the property owners before the bill was actually tabled.

We should all be in favour of enhancing the use of our trail system in Ontario because of the tourism factor, as well as the health benefits we derive from the recreational aspects of walking or cycling along the trails, but this bill has been poorly structured. We have work to do in this bill—a lot of work—to smooth over the troubled waters, if you will, because so far, what has been put on the table has proven too bitter for many people. That is unfortunate. We want more trails to be available. We want people to use them. If we cross-country ski or snowshoe, it keeps us healthy.

There's a pretty famous quote out there from Raymond Inmon. It goes: “If you are seeking creative ideas, go out walking. Angels whisper to a man when he goes for a walk.” Now, I'm sure they whisper to women as well, but the quote given just mentioned a man, so don't blame me for that.

We all know more trails, be they for walking or sledging or skiing, lead to more tourism. Tourists spend money and local communities then do better, and I think we can all agree, we want more communities to do better in Ontario.

The bill has problems. Let's hope they're not insurmountable. Having said that, let me turn my attention to trails in general, not necessarily the ones running along or through farmland and not necessarily the ones frequented by people on snow machines. These have value and are appreciated by many of us as well.

I live on Blue Heron Point in east Windsor, on a man-made pond, one of those that collects stormwater runoff.

We have swans, geese, ducks, turtles, koi, carp, snakes, frogs, ring-necked pheasants and songbirds galore. I have a wonderful walking trail right outside my back door. I'm told when you walk the trail all around the pond, you've walked a mile. The trail is full of people all the time, and more in warmer months, obviously, but every day of the year there's a steady parade of passers-by, joggers, cyclists, folks on Rollerblades and skateboards, mums, dads, grandparents, grandkids, and neighbours just out for a walk with their dog.

We have a wonderful trail system in my area. We have a hill just south of Blue Heron pond. Trails run up and down that hill, all around the base, and not far away, the eight-kilometre Ganatchio Trail is a two-lane, paved pathway. Speaker, in case you were wondering, Ganatchio is a First Nations name for Lake St. Clair.

One of the most beautiful trails in all of Ontario, I believe, would be the riverfront trail in downtown Windsor. It's more than five kilometres. It runs along the Detroit River. Most of it is in Windsor West. I have some of it in Windsor-Tecumseh. At one end you have the University of Windsor and the Ambassador Bridge, at the other Olde Walkerville and the Wiser's distillery, and in between the award-winning Odette outdoor sculpture park and our beautiful Dieppe Gardens, which, because of the bend in the river, puts us due south of Detroit.

**1650**

Now, I know and you know that we in Canada call our American friends our neighbours to the south. But I didn't get it wrong a second ago, Speaker: Downtown Detroit is due north of downtown Windsor. This is why we in Windsor sometimes refer to ourselves as living in south Detroit.

Across from downtown Detroit, Windsor's Dieppe Gardens is where our young soldiers marched across the cobblestones to board ships that ferried them to the Great Wars. We have several military monuments dedicated in memory of those who served, many of whom paid the supreme sacrifice for our country.

Not far away is Festival Plaza, in front of Caesars, where we have pretty well continuous concerts, parties and festivals all summer long. To the east of Festival Plaza, along the Riverfront Trail, we are very proud of an elaborate fountain and reflecting pool named after Bert Weeks, a former mayor. Toronto has David Crombie, who wanted to save the waterfront here; well, we had Bert Weeks, who did save our waterfront. He led the fight to keep our waterfront open and free from high-rises and crass commercial developments. It was a successful struggle and our waterfront is open, free and accessible to all.

Between there and the distillery is the Joan and Clifford Hatch Wildflower Garden. Mr. Hatch was a former Canadian owner of the Hiram Walker distillery and a great supporter of Windsor's waterfront renewal project.

The Great Western Railway came to Windsor in 1854, the same year we were incorporated as a village. Much of our waterfront in subsequent years was overrun with train

tracks and cross-river railway barges. We honour that heritage with Great Western Park, next to the Hatch wildflower garden. The tracks are gone, as are the railway barges.

The Riverfront Trail, with the skyline of Detroit as a backdrop, may be our most popular trail. We have well more than 60 kilometres of trails throughout the city. I hope you and my colleagues in the House will seize the opportunity to see it first-hand when you attend the AMO conference in Windsor this August. As a matter of fact, I was still on the AMO board when we voted to hold this year's annual conference in Windsor. That will be in mid-August, of course, a wonderful time to visit the most southern parts of the province, Windsor and Essex county.

When you get out into the county, Speaker, we do have 17 wineries, by the way, and I know my friend from Niagara Falls and the former mayor of Welland, Ms. Forster, my colleague, would like to jump in at this point and remind us there are 96 wineries and breweries along the Greater Niagara Circle Route, but they can do that on their own time, Speaker.

Down in Essex county we also have the Chrysler Canada Greenway, a 50-kilometre, multi-use trail maintained by the Essex Region Conservation Authority. The greenway is the southernmost portion of the Trans Canada Trail. As you know, the Trans Canada Trail is the world's longest network of recreational trails. Work on that network began nearly 25 years ago. Eventually it will stretch for 24,000 kilometres, from the Atlantic to the Pacific and up into the Arctic waters.

That's not the oldest trail by any means. My good friend from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound would be the first to tell us that the Bruce Trail is the oldest and longest marked footpath. It follows the Niagara escarpment for 890 kilometres and has another 400 kilometres of associated side trails—but, Speaker, I took one of those associated trails there for a moment, so allow me to get back to Windsor.

We also have the Little River trail and trails along the McHugh, west Windsor, south Windsor, central, Devonwood, as well as Southwood Lakes.

I can appreciate the concern some people have with trails and I would hope the government can clarify for them what the impact of this bill will be. On the one hand, we hear the legislation takes snippets or provisions from nearly 50 other pieces of legislation and puts it all into one coherent set of rules. On the other hand, we have those concerned with the rights of landowners, who see the proposal as an infringement on their individual property rights.

I even read in the Pembroke Observer that the president of the Renfrew Landowners Association has raised the alarm that the government was out to take away privately held land and force rural landowners into urban areas. That's pretty scary stuff, Speaker. I would hope no member of this House is feeding into that scenario.

I've mentioned before, I believe, that I was born in St. Martins, New Brunswick, a long time ago. I was down

there again just before Labour Day last year. The government is making great strides in developing the Fundy Trail, which starts just outside of St. Martins. It has, at this point, something like 23 scenic lookouts. You can explore four secluded beaches.

Eventually, the Fundy Trail, alongside the world's highest tides, will stretch all along the coastline to Fundy National Park, near Moncton. I don't know if it will ever rival the Cabot Trail and the highlands of Cape Breton, in Nova Scotia, but if you're ever down that way, Speaker, check it out. St. Martins has two of the beautiful and historic covered wooden bridges, and it is a very picturesque little village.

I mentioned the highest tides in the world. Speaker, at one point, you can step off the wharf onto a lobster boat and, a few hours later, come back when the tide has gone out, and that boat is now resting 40 feet below, on the clay seabed. Forty-foot tides: quite an amazing sight, as are the natural caves and stony beaches. But again, Speaker, I digress.

I want to come back to Bill 100 and some of the problems associated with the proposed legislation to enact the Ontario Trails Act.

Sometimes I wonder—I really do—why we do things in this House the way we do them. For example, in schedule 1, the minister is clear, very clear. The act reads, “The week beginning on the Monday immediately before the first Saturday in June in each year is proclaimed as Trails Week.” That's clear to me. The Monday immediately before the first Saturday in June each year is when we recognize the beginning of Trails Week in this province—the Monday immediately before the first Saturday in June. Now, Speaker, it's clear to me, and I hope it's clear to you and the rest of us here in the chamber this afternoon.

So why, pray tell, Speaker, does the next line in this bill state, “The minister may, however, declare that Trails Week begins on any other day of the year.”

Who writes this stuff? Do they get paid by the word when they write it? Charles Dickens started his *Tale of Two Cities* with this: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness....”

Talk about foolishness. Are we trying to pull a Dickens here? The week will start on this date—or not. It will start whenever the minister wakes up in the morning and says, “I'm going to start Trails Week today.” Give me a break.

Give me legislation that makes sense. Give me definitions that I can understand. Tell me in no uncertain terms what an easement is and what an easement isn't. Don't give me the “nudge, nudge, wink, wink” bill. Give me the handshake bill, and make it clear and not subject to interpretation.

The week begins every year on the Monday immediately before the first Saturday in June. I get it. I don't need this: “The minister may, however, declare that Trails Week begins on any other day of the year” he deems it. That goes to the credibility of the bill. That sets the stage for all that follows in this proposed legislation,

One could argue that's why this bill has been so badly received, so poorly reviewed and so roundly criticized.

You want trails of distinction? Give me words of distinction. Give me words of distinction in this legislation. Be distinct, be clear, be upfront, and be respectful of the people who will have to live within the terms of this legislation.

You didn't consult with them on the actual wording. You didn't ask for their input on the actual wording before the bill was tabled. You weren't listening then. The larger question perhaps is, are you listening now? Will you amend this bill? Will you improve this bill? Will you go out and clarify what this language means? Maybe then, we could have a real conversation with all of the parties concerned and a new Trails Act that does everything it's supposed to do, not one that is as messy as the roads outside today.

**1700**

Speaker, maybe I did jinx us. As I said when I began this presentation, I put my snow shovels away a couple of weeks ago. I know I shouldn't have; I should have listened to Robert Frost. In his *Two Tramps in Mud Time*, from 1926, he wrote:

The sun was warm but the wind was chill.  
You know how it is with an April day  
When the sun is out and the wind is still,  
You're one month on in the middle of May.  
But if you so much as dare to speak,  
A cloud comes over the sunlit arch,  
A wind comes off a frozen peak,  
And you're two months back in the middle of March.

That's what it feels like today, and it looks like that in downtown Toronto—like the middle of winter as opposed to the beginning of spring. It's baseball season. The Jays won yesterday, for God's sake. Those with snowshoes got around easier today than the rest of us.

Trails get us closer to nature; they get families out of cities into small towns and villages. We get to enjoy the woods, see wildlife close up, maybe see the stars—really see the stars—for the first time without the neon lights or the street lamps interfering.

Trail life can be an adventure. Let's hope we don't share the same experience that the Nunavut MLA who just spent eight days lost in the far north had. Pauloosie Keyootak went off on snow machines for a tour of his riding with his son and a nephew. They got lost in a blizzard in one of the most forbidding environments on earth. Fortunately, they were able to build an igloo with a small knife and survived in minus-30-degree temperatures. It was a good thing that they were also able to shoot a caribou. They had just run out of supplies and were rescued at a good time.

Sledding on trails can be dangerous. That's why it's important to carry a GPS or emergency locator. Cell-phones don't always work. Most of the trails in our part of the country aren't as hazardous as those farther north, but they can be just as dangerous at times. I'm not a big

sledder myself, but I understand the thrill of it all, the connection with nature and the exercise component.

We should be able to work together to fashion this bill into a coherent piece of legislation that can be taken to the public—and why not take it to the public, as opposed to making them come here to Toronto to speak to any amendments? Take it on the road. Take it to northern Ontario—the northeast and the northwest—and take it to eastern Ontario as well. Listen to those who will be impacted. Listen to their concerns. Assuage their fears, if you can. Clarify any misunderstandings. Consult, consult, consult, then make changes to the wording. Make it work; make it a piece of worthwhile legislation. Clear up any ambiguities. Maybe we'll see more trails opened up, maybe we'll see a boost in tourism and maybe we can get back to the good-neighbour policies that used to exist between individual landowners and the trail riders' associations.

Thank you, Speaker, and happy trails.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I rise to support my honourable colleagues, particularly with reference to Bill 100, Supporting Ontario's Trails Act. I would also like to compliment the NDP MPP who just spoke from Windsor–Tecumseh. I would suggest, however, that his request for poetry, or for elevation, is actually to be found in the trails of Ontario itself.

As you know, UNESCO designates world heritage sites. It's remarkable that many of the 80,000 kilometres of trails—whether it's through parkland or waterfronts—are, in fact, also designated by UNESCO as world biosphere heritage sites. I would encourage all Ontarians and, of course, particularly tourists from across many, many borders to come to Ontario.

Speaker, with your permission, if I could speak not merely as a parliamentarian but also as a physician—because as someone who hopefully this summer will graduate up from my stationary bike to an outdoor bike on these trails, I can think of few exercises, few activities, few endeavours that are not only as physically enhancing, but also soul-calming.

For example, we as physicians know that there is something special about the colour green. Maybe that's why the folks who designed this Legislature, in their wisdom, chose this carpet. Of course, I'm not talking about neon green or offensive, shocking-to-the-eye green, but the green of nature. There seems to be something that resonates with the human soul, with the biology, with blood pressure, with heart rates, when we immerse ourselves in that experience.

So whether we're looking from a cardiovascular point of view, or a neurological or soul-calming effect, we need to support the Ontario Trails Act, and that's what this bill does.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Again, I'm happy to rise today to add some comments to Bill 100, An Act to enact the Ontario Trails Act, 2015 and to amend various Acts.

I have to say it was a pleasure, listening to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh from your chair, Mr. Speaker, as well from here. I always enjoy listening to your comments on debates. They're very well-thought-out debates and very informative to all members here.

Of course, being from southwestern Ontario, it's always great to hear about the city of Windsor and surrounding areas. I know the area very well and, of course, love the information about Detroit being north of Windsor. Is that correct? Yes. Great.

Ontario PCs, as my colleagues have stated, support the goal and the intent of Bill 100. I think it's a worthy goal, to better promote and expand Ontario's trails infrastructure. One statistic, or a number of statistics, actually, that amazed me—and I'll quote a couple of them: Ontario currently has some 2,500 trails, which total more than 80,000 kilometres and generate an estimated \$2 billion in economic activity annually. That is fascinating and, really, quite the statistic.

I know, as I said earlier, that in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and in other ridings around me—Elgin–Middlesex–London and Sarnia–Lambton, of course, where my good friend Mr. Bailey is from—trails play an integral part of our local economy. The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs, or OFSC, which endorsed Bill 100, published a study that found snowmobiling generates \$853 million in visitor spending every year.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** It gives me great pleasure to get up and join the debate and add my two cents' worth—or in this case, two minutes' worth—to what the member from Windsor–Tecumseh said.

I'm looking at the clock. I was supposed to have 20 minutes to speak to this bill today, and I don't think I'm going to get it, so I'm going to relish every moment that I get to add my voice right now.

As the member from Windsor–Tecumseh pointed out—and you can tell that he has been through the bill—he must have really studied the bill—because he brought out the piece about making it Ontario Trails Week and how it's supposed to correspond with its international equivalent, according to what the bill is supposed to do.

I found it really interesting when he pointed out that it says in the bill that the commitment is to make Ontario Trails Week begin the Monday immediately before the first Saturday of June, which seems pretty clear. But now there's some confusion, because then it goes on to say—and these aren't the exact words, but it's what is implied—“or whenever the minister feels like making it Trails Week.”

Again, this is the language that we often see, which is why I have said earlier, as have members from the other party, that we want to see things in writing that are clear for people, so that they know what the expectations are or they know what their rights and obligations are. That wording certainly doesn't clear up confusion. That's what is creating the confusion—not this side of the room, but that side of the room, the government side.

I would like to take an opportunity to talk, as well, about a point that I have in my notes and that the member from Windsor–Tecumseh touched on, which is the Chrysler Canada Greenway. In that greenway, there are trails that interconnect all the way out to some incredible wineries and agricultural lands.

People may not know that, although not right in Windsor but in Windsor and Essex county and beyond, we have wine. There are wineries. Windsor can't claim them, but we can claim fame for some of our micro-breweries and some award-winning whisky that came out of the area. So I encourage everyone to come down, enjoy our trails and the beer and the whisky.

1710

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** You know what? I might take you up on that offer. You had me at “whisky.”

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to offer a response to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh, who spoke very eloquently and very poetically on this issue, as he often does.

It's really interesting this afternoon, hearing various members get up and speak with pride about the trails in their communities. It's fascinating to hear what you all have to offer. There are some members, however, who have tried to assert that Bill 100 is unnecessary and unimportant. I want to challenge this. As you heard earlier today, the relevance of the bill is in part to protect landowners and trail organizers. It is offering clarity on this issue of the duty of care. What is that? If you are an owner who is offering up your land to a trail organization, you should have a lower level of care, meaning that you're not going to be legally responsible for the maintenance and the safety. By doing this, it's going to encourage more landowners to offer up their properties. If you are generous enough to allow this to happen, then by all means, we want to have this lower level of care.

To my colleague the member for Etobicoke North—he was here a moment ago, but he has just exited—I want to say to him as a medical doctor that I agree with him wholeheartedly: Getting out and enjoying trails is a great attribute to a person's health. Too many of us have a sedentary lifestyle. What better way to improve your health and to connect with family and friends than to get out on your local trail and either walk it or cycle it? Perhaps you're going to rollerblade. By all means, we should all be doing more of this.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude by saying that in my riding of Kitchener Centre we are great supporters of trails. We have many. I'm looking forward to the widening of a path on Courtland Avenue, which is just down the street from my constituency office.

I encourage all members to support Bill 100.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our time for questions and comments. I return to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh for his reply.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Thank you to all who responded to what I had to say. My physician friend from Etobicoke

North talked about the healing effects of the colour green. It made me green with envy that he got into that. I'm not sure envy is naturally calming, but I would have thought that with all the green in this room, we'd be less excited during question period at times, but I'm not sure. And thank you to my friends from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Windsor West and Kitchener Centre as well.

When we fashion bills, you'd think we would have learned by now that when we put language in there, we should do so in a very coherent, understandable fashion. We should be very clear in the words we use. We should leave no ambiguity out there for people to misinterpret what we're saying. I believe that in this bill, unfortunately, because of the—people were consulted as the government was preparing this bill, but then when the actual wording came out, it led to a lot of confusion, a lot of mistrust and a lot of misunderstanding. I don't think there's any doubt about it; we've heard from various parts of the province that it has caused some landowners, because they're nervous about the wording in this bill, to shut off the trails that they used to have open to the public. That should never have happened.

The wording in the bill should have been more clear. The words should have been more distinct. They should not have led to the confusion that's out there, the rumours that are out there: “Land is going to be expropriated,” and all this kind of stuff. There was no reason for it, but the government just didn't take enough time to get it all together.

I would hope we can get it all together during the committee hearings and we can move forward with something that is more understandable and acceptable.

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

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Before I start, I would like to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I'll be sharing my time with the Minister of Labour and the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Speaker, it's a real privilege to stand before you in support of this proposed new legislation, Bill 100, the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act. As the member from Ottawa–Orléans, I want to take a moment to speak to the importance of tourism in Ontario and how trails and tourism interact. Each year in Ontario, tourism contributes over \$28 billion of economic activity and supports over 350,000 jobs in Ontario. In Ottawa, tourism helps to fill over two million hotel room nights. That's \$255 million in revenue for our local hotels, our hotel chains and in more spending from our visitors.

We know that trail tourism supports 18,000 jobs across our province. If passed, Bill 100 will provide additional supports for our trail system and give the province additional tools to help market trails across this wonderful province of ours.

I want to refer to a few of the trails that I would like to highlight in terms of being, almost, trails of distinction. That would be maybe trails like the Rideau Trail, a 387-kilometre network of interconnected hiking trails between the city of Kingston and the city of Ottawa, located

in the general area of the Rideau Canal and its tributary waters. The Rideau Trail crosses terrain ranging from placid farmland to the rugged Canadian Shield. Or trails like the Cataraqui Trail, which stretches 104 kilometres from Strathcona to Smiths Falls on a trail that crosses the UNESCO Frontenac Arch Biosphere. Cataraqui Trail was famously an old railway bed before volunteers turned it into a trail.

Both of these trails—both great Ottawa trails, if I may say—have one thing in common: The continuation of both trails is entirely made possible by the generous permission of both private and public landowners. We know that Bill 100, if passed, will provide greater protection for landowners by lowering liability and by streamlining the process of claiming damages from trespassers. We know also that Bill 100 provides landowners with additional tools to provide trail users access to their land.

We know that trails stimulate economic activity by attracting tourism businesses that are associated with outdoor activities and regular recreational users. In communities, they benefit restaurants, local businesses, retail stores and accommodations. In particular, trails can be beneficial to the economies of smaller, rural, northern and remote communities, where economic opportunities may be limited.

A number of studies report on the economic benefits of trails, and I would like to highlight some of them. The Ontario trail survey, 2014, estimated the economic benefit of hiking in Ontario at almost \$1.4 billion for that year. In 2011, 7.2 million Canadian visitors participated in a trail activity during their trips to Ontario, spending \$1.3 billion. That's actually 8.7% of total visitor spending by Canadians.

The Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance manages 2,370 kilometres of trail and has 25,000 users who spend \$6 million annually, generating an economic impact of \$2 million per year. The Trans Canada Trail, when complete, is expected to generate \$2.4 billion in annual economic impact.

I also want to talk—and we heard a little bit—about snowmobiling. I would say this was almost a part of my growing up. My family owned a cottage property and we used to go snowmobiling. I really enjoyed this. I think that provides a way for Ontarians to explore the vast backyard of the stunning scenery of our wonderful winter. In fact, in Ottawa–Orléans I have snowmobile trails, and this hobby creates significant economic activity. If I look at Ontario, snowmobiling generates an estimated \$1.3 billion to \$1.7 billion per year. In summertime, the trails are used by ATV enthusiasts. In 2005, ATVing generated an estimated \$6.2 billion

I also would like to talk to you about benefits. When you talk about economic benefit, the Great Waterfront Trail Adventure event on the Waterfront Trail in 2011 involved 125 riders biking 730 kilometres in eight days and spending \$73,000 on food and accommodations alone.

1720

Trail activity: We heard the member who sits beside me, who's a doctor, talk about the impact and the benefit

of trails from a physical activity perspective. It certainly can combat the economic burden of physical inactivity and obesity, estimated at \$7.9 billion, according to 2009 data. The members of this House may find it quite interesting to learn that the medical benefits in costs saved as a result of trail use are almost three times greater than the costs of the trail construction and maintenance. That means that for every \$1 investment in trails for physical activity, it leads to \$2.94 in direct medical benefits.

As much as we can talk about the economic and the health benefits, I want to address a few issues that were brought throughout this debate this afternoon. As we continue the debate with my colleagues, our members will also clarify the portion of Bill 100 that speaks to trail easements.

Our Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015, if passed, will allow for the establishment of a voluntary classification system and will provide users with a more holistic perspective of the Ontario trail network. That will help stakeholders promote trails more effectively and ensure consistency across the province while increasing trail awareness and local tourism.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, this legislation will help sustain our trails and those who allow the use of their land as part of our trail system.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm pleased to recognize the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It is a pleasure to rise on Bill 100. We are hearing some criticism across the way, but I also think we're hearing a grudging support for the bill as well. I think there's a reason for that.

Ontario as a whole, if we take the partisan politics out of it, should be extremely proud of its trail system and what it has built up over the years. Certainly, I don't think any one level of government can take all the credit for it. I don't think any one generation can take the credit for it either, Speaker. It's been a cumulative effect of people who have taken the interest to make sure that the next generation has the ability to explore some of the wilderness areas, the green space areas of this province, and to get into areas that perhaps they wouldn't typically have access to.

I've been surrounded by trails all my life, Speaker. For the past 30 years, I've lived right on the Waterfront Trail that goes along the GTA. People who are out for a stroll, and maybe walking from Hamilton to Mississauga or from Hamilton to other areas, walk right past my front door. It's something that I've just become accustomed to and it's something that I am very proud of.

I also don't live very far from the Bruce Trail, Speaker. Certainly, if there is a trail that has become famous around the world, it's through people who try to hike the entire Bruce Trail. They start doing little segments, and the idea is that you do a little segment at a time, and eventually, over the years, you find out you've covered the entire Bruce Trail. It's an area that's famous, certainly beyond Ontario's borders, and beyond Canada's borders as well.

I come from a community, Oakville, which takes its trails very, very seriously. As I have said before, it's

because of some of the people who have come before. I think of Mayor Harry Barrett. Oakville used to be a community where there were a lot of large waterfront estates that were right on the lake. You had the Eaton estate, you had the Hindmarsh estate, the Bailey estate, all sorts of large tracts of land that eventually, over the years, because of economic pressures and other reasons, became areas where people decided to build smaller homes. They became subdivisions, basically. Mayor Barrett said, "When we're taking our parkland dedication, we're going to take the part along the waterfront, the part along the lakefront." At first, when he tried it a few times, I think people thought it was a futile exercise to try to return the lakefront to Oakville. In the fullness of time, however, it has proven to be one of the best strategies that's ever been employed by the town of Oakville. I think right now, as we speak today, Oakville has got back about 40% to 50% of its waterfront along the entire length of the town.

So, Speaker, there have been people that have come forward, I think, on a regular basis and have kind of reminded us that we need to do something and that we need to leave the world a better place than the one we found. A way we can do that is through our trail strategy.

Speaker, we have a family cottage. It's about 200 or 300 yards off C trail. Those of you that snowmobile will know that C trail is the equivalent of the 401 in snowmobiling. It's where all the other routes branch off. Basically, I can go 100 yards on my snowmobile, 200 yards beyond C trail, and I can get to just about anywhere in this province: I can get to the state of Michigan; I can get to the province of Quebec. It's because people in the past—and the incredible volunteers that I buy my trail passes from every year, the incredible volunteers in the snowmobile clubs around this province.

I'll tell you that I like going to the cottage in the summer, but I like it even better in the winter because I can get to places on my snowmobile that I would never get to in the summer because of either bugs or the swamps aren't frozen. When the swamps freeze up, you can get back into lakes that you simply could never get to in the summer. So we owe an awful lot to the people who work on these trails on a volunteer basis and also, I think, the people who designed the trails in the first place.

Speaker, in your chair, we used to have a gentleman; his name was Mike Brown. He was the former Speaker and also the MPP for Algoma–Manitoulin. What he would do is that, every winter, he would organize a tour around the areas of his riding. The idea was to bring us southerners up from the south to understand what the economic impact of snowmobiling was on ridings like Algoma.

When it snowed, there was all sorts of economic activity. The restaurants were open; the cleaners were in the hotels—everything that goes along with people visiting. When there's no snow, those people get sent home. There's no other economic activity. I think, in the south, we truly underestimate the impact that trail systems have on the province of Ontario and its economic activity.

Like the member from Ajax–Pickering, Joe Dickson, I am a sledder and an ATVer, and the odd weekend now that I can still find some time to get up to the cottage, I take advantage of it.

It's a pleasure to go into the ridings of other members—like the Seguin trail. The Seguin trail runs out of Parry Sound and winds its way into Huntsville. It's an old train track. A train used to run along there. It's as straight as an arrow. They've taken the tracks up. You can just go along there. The animal life along there is incredible. You end up at the tavern in Sprucedale, and often all the bike clubs come together in there, and the ATV clubs come in. There's not much in Sprucedale until you get a bunch of clubs coming in there at the same time.

Speaker, I think we owe an awful lot to the people who came before us in designing the trails in this province. Bill 100, I think, really adds to that legacy, adds to the heritage of this province, and really should be supported by all parties.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** It reminds me of the old Roy Rogers song, "Happy trails to you"—Sunday afternoons—

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Sing a few bars.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Bob will remember that; I don't think Jack would.

Anyway, I was just thinking about the snowmobile. I'm a city guy, so I don't have an ATV or a snowmobile. But I have my Ford Ranger, so I go back and forth on the back roads in my Ranger pick-up. That's a great way to see the back roads of Ontario, which are really friendly and very, very interesting.

In terms of this act, Bill 100, there is a lot of complexity. It looks like it's an easy thing to do: map out very complex relationships between the landowners, the trail associations, the municipalities and the province's crown land. So it is a very delicate balance. It's not something that a bureaucrat can just sit back in an office here in Queen's Park and draw lines. You can't do that. You have to get out there and talk to the people and get their input. Every piece of these trails, one might say, has got a story of its own.

Years ago, I did walk from the other side of the Northumberland Hills all the way across the top to Orangeville. There was an interesting part of Ontario I had never seen, because you just drive by and you never see the real people on the ground. So it was an interesting walk, to say the least.

In terms of trails, the other thing that's critically important is that, as it says here, it's really part of a future economic driver.

**1730**

More and more people are hiking, walking, climbing, plus fishing and hunting and the other sports, so this is a future commercial enterprise that's very promising. There's not just the so-called tree huggers that are doing this. Really, it's good business. If you look at all the trailhead-type shops and stores all across the province,

you can see that a lot of people work in this industry, providing everything from boots to clothing and waterproofing, and canoes, kayaks and everything. Anyway, it is a good business decision to invest in trails, because you're really investing in local tourism and local small business. That's the other part of it that we shouldn't forget.

I would also think of the incredible example we should take from Europe. I think we have all heard of these El Camino walks through France and Spain, where people go for months at a time. There are literally millions of people who go each year, walking through these old pilgrimage trails, monasteries, old churches—through the back 40, up there in northern Spain and through France. It is a huge, multi-million dollar business, the tourism that the El Camino brings in. I've always thought of doing it one day, but time is running out. I've got to get there—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I've got to get there soon, while I can still walk.

Then there's the great Pacific trail that goes almost from the Arizona border all the way up to Oregon—and that's huge—and the Adirondack trail down this side. There are great examples of what trails mean to local business and what they mean to tourism.

In Ontario, we've got, obviously, the waterfront trail. We've got the Bruce Trail. We've got the beautiful Niagara escarpment, a series of trails through the Niagara Peninsula. Even in Ottawa, along the Ottawa River, there are great walking and cycling trails.

Through every city, there are trails being developed by local municipalities which try to get hooked up with the more regional trails of the province or the cross-Canada trail. There's a lot of complicated negotiations that have to go back and forth. There's a lot of planning. This takes years.

I know that in my own riding, about 30 years ago, there was a city councillor by the name of Kay Gardner. She had a vision to turn an abandoned rail line into a walking trail, and that was through the middle of the city of Toronto. There used to be a whole series of electric railways running through the whole city of Toronto. They were called beltlines. Kay Gardner had a vision that this old beltline that goes from Mount Pleasant Cemetery, in the east, all the way to the Keele-Black Creek corridor in the west—that that abandoned line could be turned into a linear park.

It took her about 10 years. Eventually, the city of Toronto dedicated that abandoned rail line, the beltline railway, into a city park. Today, in the wintertime—it is winter today, I guess. In the summertime, there are thousands of people who walk and cycle along the Kay Gardner Beltline Park. If you ever go up Yonge Street, just south of Davisville, you can see that her name is on the bridge overpass: the Kay Gardner beltline. That was the dedication and the vision of one person, who was way ahead of her time. They said they couldn't do it, and it was too complicated, but she did it.

I think this is what this Bill 100 is. It's a challenge for us to look ahead, plan ahead, and make sure that our great-grandkids have someplace to walk.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Our Minister of Labour, the member for Oakville, is not listed on the sheet here. He mentioned Harry Barrett and his work with trails. You made mention of the Bruce Trail. Coincidentally enough—I think it was when I was in high school—I spent a number of days working on the Bruce Trail. We were up on the escarpment. It would be east of Waterdown. I think we could overlook part of your riding from that height. I spent a number of days working up there with Harry Barrett. This was another Harry Barrett; this was my father. There was a crew of us up there.

Harry Barrett was a—

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** The author.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Yes, the author. We were members of the Norfolk Field Naturalists and the FON, as it was known back then. It was such an experience to be up there with outdoorsmen. We built a bridge with a log. About 12 of us could walk this log down the trail and across the creek.

I know the other Harry Barrett down my way—I've known him since he was a young man; he's 94 now—had the vision for the Lynn Valley Trail, which runs down through Simcoe-Port Dover along the LE and N, the railway tracks down our way. Back then, that was a tough go, dealing with farmers and landowners to get permission.

The member from Eglinton-Lawrence talked about a number of very interesting trails. He had to mention his Ford Ranger. I think we were talking about that the other day. I've got a little story. I was at the dump a few days ago. I have a GMC truck, and it had a big clevis on the back. A guy came up on a big earth mover. He jumped out and comes running around, looking at the back of my truck. He says, "What's that clevis for? Is that to pull Fords out of the mud?" As they say, friends don't let friends drive Fords—although I own one as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's once again an honour to be able to stand in this House and talk about the Ontario's Trails Act.

I'd like to take a moment and talk about another trail in my riding. It's the South Temiskaming Active Travel Organization. They started a trail along Lake Temiskaming, and I'd like to thank the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport for the help that they've done. It's a testament that when we work together, we can accomplish great things. That organization worked really hard, along with the municipality, and the trail is a true testament to their work. I think that with the trails act, again, if we work together, we can accomplish great things.

There are a few things in the trails act that need to be changed so that people fully understand what we're all

trying to do. I've heard a lot of good things in this House. The stuff about the easements has to be clarified.

I think another issue that would go a long way is that when people sign an agreement with the snowmobile club to allow the use of their trail, that isn't sliding into an easement—that there are two distinct things. It's either you sign this, and this gives you full control over your land, or, if you want—and there are cases where an easement makes a lot of sense. Where a bridge needs to be constructed or where you want a long-term agreement, an easement makes sense. But there has to be a clear delineation between an easement and a right to use the property. It's the little things like that that we have to make sure are included in the text of the bill, and that will go a long ways.

I've heard some good things from all sides. I've heard some movement from the government. I think today was a really good day, as far as debates go in the Legislature, because I think we did have a true debate about how to make this work better. I sincerely hope, if and when this bill passes second reading, that that true debate continues and we actually come together to make amendments to make this bill what it could be—a bill that benefits all the trails in Ontario and all the landowners who participate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I was very intrigued by the speeches that were made by the three members: the member for Ottawa–Orléans, the member for Oakville and the member for Eglinton–Lawrence. All three, I thought, captured the essence of this legislation very well and made a very good point for probably moving this to committee at the earliest opportunity, so that the input that the opposition and government members are looking for could be heard.

I think it is beneficial to hear that. I always believe that the committees are beneficial places to make those cases. We've had a rather lengthy debate at this time in the House on this portion of it, but I like that. I find it very instructive.

I don't think that in terms of partisan delineation, you will find much of that in this particular legislation. You will find quarrels with certain parts of the legislation, and that's natural, but I do want to say that it's been very, very good to hear the various experiences people have had within their own ridings.

1740

The member for St. Thomas's wife making him go out to walk so he will stay in shape: That's very good.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** She loves me too.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, she must do that, for sure. I should be walking more than I do as well; I must confess that.

This is a very good piece of legislation; it has a lot of support. I know a person who is interested—I won't attribute it to this legislation, but former Premier William Davis was interested in the Canada trail, for instance, and was a strong promoter of that even until recently, when there was much discussion about funding in that regard.

I compliment my colleagues for the excellent speeches that they delivered, and I hope that we will move this to committee at the earliest opportunity and proceed with this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** I believe this bill is a threat to private property rights, not so much because of what is written in it, but what is not written in it. It leaves room to be suspicious.

I would like to read you a few words from a couple of lawyers and the president of the Ontario Landowners Association.

This is Terrance Green, a lawyer from Ottawa:

"Now, if I was representing the farmer, I would tell them to write the president of the snowmobile club and inform them that at the end of this season they are to close the trail over the farm as any and all permissions to cross over the farm are revoked with the delivery of this letter."

From Kurtis Andrews, another lawyer in the Ottawa area:

"My opinion is that the bill does nothing but cause serious problems for landowners. To be even clearer, it is obvious that the sole purpose of this bill is to take away property rights from property owners."

He closes by saying, "The 'trail bill' is a terrible piece of proposed legislation with nothing but downside from a property owner's perspective."

I would like to read you a couple of sentences from Tom Black's letter. Tom Black is president of the Ontario Landowners Association and has some very serious concerns about this bill.

"At first glance, most people will think that there is not much to worry about concerning Bill 100, 'Supporting Ontario's Trails Act' but the Ontario Landowners Association (OLA) has learned the hard way, that if you let bad legislation pass, then the only way to fix it is in courtrooms at great expense to the individual."

This is the closing of his letter, after much explanation:

"One thing for sure, most people on the rural roads know that when you mention conservation authorities, private property, and easements in the same act, nothing good will come of it."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. The member for Eglinton–Lawrence can respond.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I want to thank the thoughtful comments from all the members—from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, some very good commentary there that I think we should be alerted to; the members from St. Catharines, Timiskaming–Cochrane and Haldimand–Norfolk for their very helpful, I think, input.

As I said before, I think we all agree there are some complexities here. It's not as simple as it looks in terms of building trails. There are some competing interests sometimes. Hopefully, the legislation will be looked at as a way of trying to mitigate those competing interests for the best of everyone. That is not an easy thing to do, but I

think overall the attempt here is essentially to try and bring greater coordination, greater definition, let's say, to a lot of these complex land issues, severance issues, easement issues—I should say more easement than severance. These are things that this bill tries to do.

Is it perfect? By no means, but hopefully, through the input of the assembly and through stakeholder input at committee, we'll be able to iron some of these things out.

Will the bill ever satisfy everyone? Well, I think it's not going to do that, because if you look at this great province, from Kenora to Cornwall to the banana belt there in Amherstburg and everywhere, you've got a huge province with a lot of different geography and a lot of different history. This is an attempt to try to bring in a comprehensive approach to this issue of having trails for future generations. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'd like to begin with a part of a letter that the member from Leeds–Grenville wrote to the minister concerning this. There's a reason I'm going to do this first.

It was written to him by the president of one of his local ATV clubs. It said, "We are being bombarded with requests from landowners to shut down our trail system...."

This comes after a news article brought to light the most damaging bill, Bill 100, to power sports in history.

"The landowner agreements for the Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicles can be a delicate one. Most of our agreements come with a one-year trial.

"Luckily we have not had an issue and have not lost a single part of our trail due to abuse. However the minute Bill 100 was presented to us in a newspaper article, we are struggling to survive.

"The bill will not only make it hard to keep what we have right now but it will make it impossible for us to create a much larger trail system.

"With the ATV and power sports industry growing with much-needed trails that you yourself have played a part in will be gone forever.

"I understand what the bill is trying to do but it is more damaging than good."

This is just a sample of what we're getting in our office. The bill certainly wasn't presented properly. It created quite a bit of angst in rural communities because of previous government bills. We've all talked about—at least, those on this side of the House have talked about—the Green Energy Act and what happened to horse racing in the past. There's a real lack of trust here with this government.

The reason I read that article is because it speaks about building trails and maybe not being able to keep what we have.

I go back a few years—and I remember the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane talking about his busy land. Well, you know in time there's AD and BC. Well, I go back to about 1968 BT; BT is before trails. All we used to do was go down the roads and maybe cut across a

farmer's field somewhere. We'd go curling in a little town called Brussels. A bunch of us would take off. Or we would go into Listowel or south into Mitchell or into Monkton—that's Monkton, Ontario—on our snowmobiles. I think mine had 12 horsepower. I think that's what I had.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Is that what you had?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** It was called a Dauphin. I don't know if anybody has ever seen a Dauphin before, but it was made in Dauphin, Manitoba, and it was purple. That's the colour of this thing. They blew up about every 20 hours, so you had to keep a supply of pistons around. We all had to carry spark plugs and froze our hands off changing spark plugs and whatever else because they would foul up if we didn't have the gas mixed just right.

But that's before we had trails. One of the reasons they started the trail system was not only the popularity of snowmobiling—which was very popular. Through the 1970s and 1980s, they started building these trail systems. It was a safety thing.

Two of my neighbours, if you look at them carefully—and they're people my age—have cuts across here, right across their face right to their ears. In fact, there was one guy decapitated one year. That's from running through fences. Barbed wire was the worst, but a page wire fence would do a lot of damage too. We had windshields on the snowmobile; it would bring that wire right up here if you were a snowmobiler. There were some pretty serious accidents with fences, because back then—I'm going back into the late 1960s and early 1970s—farms still had fences. They don't have them anymore because the farms have got so big that cattle and the like are all kept inside pretty much or within a limited pasture area.

**1750**

Something had to be done because people were getting hurt. You can imagine being 10 or 15 kilometres away from a small town or a hospital and a bunch of snowmobilers dealing with somebody who has been very badly injured, because the loss of blood was incredible when this happened; they probably lost teeth and everything else when that fence went into their mouth. It was a desperate situation.

They started to embark on a trail system. They started to embark on asking farmers for their permission to use lands on their farms so they could have these trail systems. I know that where our farms were, we had a trail going through it. The first year wasn't too successful—it was back in 1975, I think, that they had a trail by us—because of some abuse, littering the trail with different things and whatever else.

All we had to do was go talk to the organizers of where they had made the trail and say, "Look, we've had some issues with this. If you guys still want to have the trail through our property, clean it up." And they did. They were very apologetic. There were a few bad actors who made the issue, but the people involved—it was the

Kinsmen Club in Moncton, actually—came out and they cleaned it all up.

That's goodwill on their part and goodwill on our part, and that's the way it was done. It's still done to this day, where they mark the trails now. I think a lot of us have seen the way they mark trails. There's an agreement there with the farmer, and it's usually done with a handshake or just saying, "Yes, this is what's going to happen"—nothing written down—that they will look after those trails and they will keep them clean. Any bad actors will be either kicked off the trail; or the OPP, who are around our area and, I suppose, around other parts of Ontario, will go after them because they are out there on their snow machines too, riding the trails looking for impaired drivers, littering and that type of thing.

That's the trust that farmers—that property owners; you don't necessarily have to be a farmer—property owners have with the people that build these trails and with snowmobilers and people who use ATVs. You go up to the Bruce Peninsula. We have a place up there near Lion's Head. I'm about two miles from the Bruce Trail, and it's the same thing. The Bruce Trail, where I am—you certainly couldn't take an ATV or a snowmobile up there. You have to walk it and crawl up rocks and everything else. But people don't abuse the trail. They keep it clean. There are stations around. There are volunteers around that help with this. I have seen a couple of bears there, which was interesting. They looked at us, and it was sort of, "Well, you go your way and I'll go mine," and that was the way it ended. But it was quite interesting to see these animals out on the trail.

As I've said in some of my comments this afternoon, it's a trust between the groups that want exercise, the groups that want to snowmobile, the groups that want to four-wheel or ATV—a trust built up between landowners and themselves that has been going on for, gosh, I don't know, 30 years, 40 years maybe.

Now we get a piece of legislation, rightfully or wrongfully, that has been portrayed to landowners as, "Uh-oh, here's a problem, and it has to do with easements." As I have said earlier on this afternoon, this didn't have to happen. If it had been portrayed properly, we probably wouldn't have had the issue we're having out there right now.

The people who have called me—and I have gotten I don't know how many phone calls into the office, I've gotten letters into the office, from our regular farm owners, property owners and snowmobile clubs. The government says they consulted with the snowmobile clubs. Well, they didn't talk to the ones in my area; they didn't know what was coming. I have had property owners call up, and they said, "We don't want anything to do involved with government anymore," so out come the stakes.

We didn't have a great year this year for snowmobiling. I think they only had about a day and a half, and that was the end of it. But they're not going to have it next year because these farmers have pulled these stakes out. They say, "We don't want anything more to do with

government red tape. We're tired of it. We don't trust them because of things that have happened in the past."

Now, instead of increasing the size of our trails or maybe having more trails, we are going to end up with less or you're going to have trails cut up so you can't go across one property; you have to stop and go around it somehow. I don't know how they're going to do it. They're just going to mess the whole thing up.

It's too bad. When we have a good, snowy winter where I live, you'll see people coming up from the south that don't have the snow, don't have the conditions to snowmobile or ATV, and at dinnertime or lunchtime or suppertime they're packed around the restaurants. There might be hundreds of them in there. They're going to the restaurants; they're buying our food; they're buying our gas—whatever they're doing. Some stay overnight at the local motels that we have around the area. This is money coming into our economy in Perth-Wellington, and now here's a chance of really messing it up unless the government backs off a little bit, just like they have done with the seniors' drug bill, where they've put it off a little bit: "We're going to just back off a little bit here and put it on pause."

Maybe that's what we should have done with this bill—and for the government to truly get out there and consult with the very people that these trails are impacting. I hope the government would consider that because I know that if this gets to committee, whatever the opposition asks them to do, because they hold a majority on committee, is not going to get listened to, as we've seen in the past with other committees where we sit there and ask questions and maybe throw an amendment or two into the bill, and guess what happens? We're ignored.

The frustration level that you see in rural Ontario with this type of thing is high. It's very high. I would hate to see people that enjoy the sport—they spend thousands and thousands of dollars on these snow machines. That little one I had: I think it was about 200 bucks when I bought it or something like that. It wasn't very expensive. It was a used one. You can spend \$10,000 on these machines, or even more. You can get power steering on them now, which I thought was kind of neat—and hand warmers and whatever else. You can hardly get cold on snowmobiles. They even have them on the ATVs: You get power steering on ATVs now.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Power steering and electric seats.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Electric seats—the whole deal.

Do you want to kill an industry? This is a great way of doing it. The trust that property owners had with these clubs—they had the trust with clubs; it's the trust that they have with government when they throw something at them that, did we need? I don't know. I don't think we really need a bill, especially the way it's proposed here. We just didn't need this to happen. We would probably be going on to something that's a lot more important than this. This is like, as it was said before, we are trying to fix something that didn't need fixing. You don't do things like that, at least in my opinion.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Good time to wrap up.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Thank you, sir.

I listened with interest this afternoon—this will be short. I listened with interest this afternoon to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. I was born and raised down there, and I remember the trails in the part of the city he was talking about, around Riverside Drive and Dieppe Gardens and places in there. It wasn't very nice at one time. They've done an incredible job—volunteer people, mostly—really fixing that up. I've been down there a couple of times. Amherstburg is gorgeous now—a really nice place. People all over Ontario have done that, and they didn't need government interfering in what they

were doing and telling them what to do and changing a system that really didn't need to be changed.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Before I adjourn the House, I just want to compliment the members for the debate this afternoon. I don't think I called the House to order once. I didn't ask a single member to withdraw an unparliamentary comment. So thank you very, very much for the way you've approached the debate this afternoon.

It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

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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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Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
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Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
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Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
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Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

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French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
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Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
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<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
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Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
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<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
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Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
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Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
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Vic Dhillon, Amrit Mangat  
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry  
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns  
Glenn Thibeault  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch





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Ms. Soo Wong ..... 8299

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**Municipal Elections Modernization Act, 2016, Bill  
181, Mr. McMeekin / Loi de 2016 sur la  
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loi 181, M. McMeekin**

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**Ontario Down Syndrome Day Act, 2016, Bill 182,  
Mr. Dickson / Loi de 2016 sur la Journée  
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**Sexual violence and harassment**

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