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Thursday 19 May 2016

Jeudi 19 mai 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 19 May 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 19 mai 2016

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WASTE-FREE ONTARIO ACT, 2016
LOI DE 2016 FAVORISANT
UN ONTARIO SANS DÉCHETS

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 18, 2016, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016 and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur la récupération des ressources et l'économie circulaire et la Loi transitoire de 2016 sur le réacheminement des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When we last debated this issue, the member from Toronto–Danforth had completed his comments. It is now time for questions and comments.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm pleased to rise and speak in response to the comments by the member from Toronto–Danforth. First of all, as I said earlier, at public hearings under the Standing Committee on Social Policy in April we heard broad support from a range of stakeholders, including producers, municipalities, service providers and environmental organizations. I would like to thank all of those stakeholders for their input.

I would also like to thank all of the members of this House who have spoken either during the debate or participated in questions and comments for their input and thoughts. I also want to thank all of the committee staff for working it through and all of the staff members in either the minister's office or other offices for their efforts.

I would like to especially thank the member from Huron–Bruce for her insight and input towards further strengthening and improving the bill. She commented yesterday that she liked working with me and I want to share my thoughts with her that I also like working with her. She and I have worked on two bills by now: Great Lakes and the Waste-Free Ontario Act.

But I disagree with her when she said that a new authority would be created. It's very important to remember that under the new model the responsibility will be with the producers. It's very important to have an authority. Previously the responsibility was with funded organizations under the Waste Diversion Act. That was creating a monopoly. It's very important for the smooth transitioning of all the diversion programs that we have an authority.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I was here yesterday when the member from Huron–Bruce spoke for an hour on Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act. We do have other acts that address recycling and that ensure we have as little waste going into landfill as possible. But I really learned a few things yesterday that I haven't forgotten. I've even been thinking about them this morning while walking over here. The blue boxes: Apparently the fact that they're the colour blue is no coincidence. It was a PC government that brought in the program. I had absolutely no idea.

The member who just spoke mentioned a monopoly in the recycling business, as though she's almost agreeing that there are cartels out there that we have to address. We have to ensure that recycling is being done in Ontario for the right reasons, and that it's not a for-profit cartel that is taking advantage. We've heard stories this past year about recycled cans. They get more money in, I believe, Alberta, than they do up in the Yukon, and these intelligent people figure that out very quickly and start shipping aluminum cans from one province to the other. So there's a lot more we can do in Ontario, but also with our sister and brother provinces, to ensure that more recycling is done.

In terms of a waste-free Ontario, well, we're all surrounded by paper here. We're not allowed to read from electronic devices; I want to let people at home know that. If there is prorogation of the Legislature this summer, what a waste that will be, because all the paper we use to speak on all the bills we've already spoken on will be thrown out and we'll have to start all over again. Not my idea of a waste-free Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I, too, had an opportunity to listen, although at a distance, to what my colleague had to say. I think he put the views of the NDP pretty clearly: The NDP supports individual producer responsibility,

which is the goal of the bill, but we have serious issues with the bill.

Speaker, the bill is entitled the Waste-Free Ontario Act, but when you look at the bill it is just a wish for a waste-free Ontario. There is no concrete measure in the bill that brings us to a waste-free Ontario. Well, already I would say the title is rather misleading. Behind the title, what is in the bill is also sort of vague. My colleague certainly went into a whole lot more detail. There are no timelines.

So this bill will go through, it will receive royal assent and the next day nothing will change. We will still have this monopoly. We still won't have individual producer responsibility, and the overall goal of reduce, reuse and recycle that we all want will be no further ahead than before we did all this work. Why, Speaker? Because all of this depends on regulations: regulations that nobody has seen, regulations that may or may not come and regulations that may be helpful or may not be.

My colleague certainly explained some of what could be achieved and what should be achieved to support what Ontarians really believe. We believe in reducing, reusing and recycling, and a government shows its leadership by bringing us there. We have a bill that has a title that is not really what is in the bill, and then we have a bill that has no teeth.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I listened to the member from Toronto–Danforth. As he was going through some of the history of these battles to reduce waste and what to do with waste, I was recollecting my days on Metro council with two people he knows well: Dale Martin and Richard Gilbert. I think Richard Gilbert spent his whole life trying to alert us to the whole issue of what we are doing with our waste and that we have to have a plan. It was extremely challenging work, to say the least.

I also remember another amazing person who did a lot of work on this whole awareness thing, who should go down in history. That's Charles Caccia, who advised Richard Gilbert on this stuff.

0910

The thing is that this is a battle that has been going on for a long time. It's not going to stop with this bill. It's an ongoing effort that we've got to make to keep on making steps toward reducing our waste and linking this whole activity of reduction to the new economy, because we always forget that these activities of reducing waste and making our local community and our plan more sustainable create a lot of economic opportunity and employment opportunities. We can't forget that. Think of all the people who work in waste reduction now, hundreds of thousands.

The other thing I'll mention again that I mentioned before is, the only fault I find in a lot of the approaches, and partly in this bill, is that we don't talk to the people who don't use blue boxes. There are so many people in our communities who are older, who don't buy canned food, don't buy Kellogg's Corn Flakes. God forbid, they

don't buy pizza in a box. They don't waste. They don't buy waste. So think of those people too and ask them how they do it, rather than just keep buying those pizza boxes.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to turn back to the member from Toronto–Danforth to wrap up.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I want to first thank my colleagues from Mississauga–Brampton South, Thornhill, Nickel Belt and Eglinton–Lawrence for their comments. I was appreciative of the fact that I had the opportunity yesterday to talk about the bill for about an hour. There are two things that I want to comment on in the time remaining to me. The first thing is that, as I tried to emphasize yesterday, I think it's a very substantial mistake to give the powers of enforcement and compliance to this authority. I believe that those powers have to remain in the hands of the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. I think privatization of enforcement is a mistake no matter what realm we're talking about.

We actually don't do well in this province when we've turned over those very substantial powers to stand-alone, quasi-autonomous bodies such as the TSSA. This government doesn't need to actually spin off the compliance and enforcement to this private authority. It shouldn't do it. It's not being compelled in any way, shape or form to do it. It may see it as a cost-cutting exercise, but it is not good for waste management and it's not good for Ontario.

The other thing I want to speak about, Speaker, is the whole necessity of making sure that we end garbage incineration in this province. There is no way that garbage incineration is compatible with a circular economy. It is not compatible with reduction of waste, because garbage-burning operations constantly want more and more waste generated to provide them with fuel. The government had an opportunity to make it explicit in this bill that garbage incineration was not something that would be promoted or supported. It didn't take that opportunity. In fact, the Minister of Energy has a program where Ontario is giving money to garbage incineration companies to generate electricity. These are two major flaws in the government's approach.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I recognize the member from Ottawa–Orléans.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Merci, madame la Présidente. I would like to let you know that I'll be sharing my time with the great member from Ottawa South and the member from Kingston and the Islands.

I'm proud to rise this morning and share and speak on Bill 151. I actually last spoke about this bill when it was in second reading, and I'm proud to speak on it again on this third reading. As members of this House may know, I'm a passionate person about protecting the environment. Actually, about two years ago I brought forward a private member's bill, Bill 75, the Microbead Elimination and Monitoring Act. It was introduced so we could protect the environment and our ecosystem.

We need to improve our waste diversion and recycling in this province. Waste creates GHG gases. As we are

looking to reduce the GHG in this province, this act would be another tool in the toolbox to reduce the GHG footprint.

There's also a great need in this province to increase our rate of waste diversion and recycling. Our Blue Box Program, a cornerstone for the recycling movement in the 1980s, has become commonplace in this province. We've been a leader in recycling. I also want to take a moment to applaud my colleague the Chair of Cabinet for what he has done to change the way we look at waste.

As some of you know, other jurisdictions in North America have a patchwork of recycling frameworks, from the sorting of bottles and plastic to paper and organic waste. Other jurisdictions often do not do the same as Ontario.

But that doesn't mean that we should not do more to address the issue. Our residential waste diversion is around 47%, but our industrial, commercial and institutional hovers at a low of 13%.

This legislation and the draft strategy provide numerous tools and opportunities to increase diversion from landfills and incinerators. Increasing diversion is about using the right tools for the type of waste materials. These tools are also helping increase recycling among the commercial, industrial and institutional sectors and can allow the reintegration of materials into our economy.

Waste diversion also gives a boost to the economy. We can create seven jobs for every 1,000 tonnes diverted from landfill. This is a 10-job-creation increase as compared to just sending the waste to a landfill.

The lifespan of many materials sent to landfill often has not been met. We have been sending waste materials off after only one year. This eight million tonnes of waste we cart off represent \$1 billion worth of recoverable materials. By increasing recovery of waste materials that would otherwise be destined for landfill, we harness their economic value.

Madam Speaker, I hope, after all the back and forth between all members of this House, that we will support this bill to protect our environment, create jobs and benefit our economy.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It's with great pleasure that I rise today in the House to once again offer my support for Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act.

Just yesterday we saw Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, pass, and I'm proud to see another bill before the House that will continue the province's effort to fight climate change.

As it stands, our province is generating waste at rates that are unsustainable in the long term. Our landfills are projected to be full in less than 20 years, and more needs to be done to extend the lifespans of existing disposal sites.

In my riding of Kingston and the Islands, I know that the city of Kingston has been doing their best to reach their goal of diverting 60% of waste by 2018. The city has launched campaigns such as #WasteNotYGK that encourage Kingstonians to share their tips and ideas on how to recycle and compost more.

Similarly, scheduled giveaway days of unwanted items help turn one neighbour's trash into another one's treasure, while keeping items out of garbage dumps.

Despite our best efforts, Kingston has continued to struggle to increase the amount of waste diverted every single year. Aiming to be Canada's most sustainable city, Kingston has set an ambitious target of diverting 65% of their waste by 2020.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Very good.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Not bad.

In order to help reach these targets, however, they require strengthened legislation at a provincial level that will help increase waste diversion and resource recovery on a much wider scale.

Bill 151 helps municipalities such as the city of Kingston to achieve their environmental goals by making producers more accountable for recovering resources and reducing waste associated with their products and packaging.

Producers are best able to control the amount of waste being produced by designing long-lasting, reusable and recyclable products. By making producers fully responsible, this bill also gives them the flexibility of tailoring waste management in a way that works best for their company and is most cost-efficient and effective.

0920

The proposed legislation will help benefit Ontario households, who will be empowered and encouraged to recycle more because producers will be made responsible for providing customers with clear information about how to manage their end-of-life products and packaging, including information on drop-off sites. Ninety-two per cent of Kingstonians are already using their blue boxes and grey bins. This legislation will only help to ensure that even more is put into the bins.

Madam Speaker, it is also important to note that this bill will not only have tremendous environmental impacts, but it will also have incredible economic benefits for our province. It's estimated that for every 1,000 tonnes of waste diverted in Ontario, seven jobs have been created. Not only that, but studies have shown that Ontario's existing waste diversion programs can create up to 10 times more jobs than waste disposal. If, as a province, we recovered 60% of waste material, we could create almost 13,000 jobs and contribute \$1.5 billion to Ontario's GDP.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to visit the facilities at the Kingston Area Recycling Centre. It was great to see so many employees so focused on waste reduction. I do look forward to seeing the waste diversion in Kingston and the Islands continue to grow.

I have to say that when this bill was originally introduced, I was very, very pleased because I'm a bit of a recycling nut, and I have been focused on recycling for an awfully long time. I heard a story some number of years ago that occurred in either Norway or Sweden—actually, some number of decades ago, truth be told—about the problems that were being experienced in grocery stores, for example, and how much waste was happening in gro-

cery stores. Products were being delivered packaged. A bunch of broccoli had a piece of Styrofoam on the bottom and it was wrapped in cellophane. I think we can all remember times like that when we were seeing products that were very much over-packaged. What the citizens did was they refused to buy that material. There was a bit of an activist movement that happened. They unwrapped the material in the grocery store, left the packaging behind, ensuring that the grocer was obliged to tell the wholesaler they weren't going to buy their products anymore if they continued to have that much packaging. So there's many things that can be done. I think that individual consumers and residents of our ridings are working hard toward it. I think that we're ready for a change in our way of thinking with respect to recycling.

We will continue to work on that. Through legislation such as Bill 151, as well as Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, this government is taking decisive action and proving its commitment to creating a greener, cleaner and more sustainable environment and economy for generations to come. I hope that all members in this House recognize the importance of this bill and will support it.

Merci beaucoup. Meegwetch. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member from Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Again, it's good to see you in the chair.

I'd like to begin this morning by thanking the minister for bringing this bill forward and congratulating him on that, and thanking all those in his office, those in the ministry and legislative counsel, who worked very hard on this bill; the stakeholders who came and presented, took their time, sent in submissions; and all the members of the committee. We had over 200 amendments at committee and there was a very collaborative—

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Two hundred and forty.

Mr. John Fraser: Two hundred and forty, I've just been reminded by the member from Mississauga—Brampton South. She did great work at committee as well.

It was a collaborative effort. There was a potential to really get bogged down and not get this done. So I'd like to thank everybody for their efforts in that regard.

This is a very important bill that connects with Bill 172. As the member from Kingston and the Islands said, we just passed that yesterday. These two things very much connect together.

I had the opportunity yesterday afternoon—luckily, I was able to get here at about a quarter after 5. I listened to the member from Toronto Danforth—not his full hour but a good portion of that hour—and I could see his passion and deep understanding. He has been following this file for a while, and I'd like to thank him for his support of the bill.

I don't necessarily agree with all of his criticisms. Some of the things that he did raise are of concern to me; I don't think we necessarily had to address those in the bill. I think that the roles of delegated authorities in terms of providing a service to Ontario and ensuring that things

like the Technical Standards and Safety Authority ensure public safety, for instance: I think that they do a good job in that regard. I don't share his misgivings about the delegated authority model for recycling.

I would also like to say a few words about the concern that there's nothing specific in this bill with regard to goals. I want to remind the member from Nickel Belt that these things will be set through regulation, and that regulation can set targets through the minister. It's an effective way of ensuring that we can make those targets, adjust those targets, and respond to the needs and the changing things that are happening in our communities.

I was happy to hear the member from Kingston and the Islands talk a bit about what she had read about what happened in Norway with regard to packaging in stores. My background is in the grocery business. I spent 22 years in the grocery business. We were great recyclers in some ways, especially around the areas of cardboard and deposit return bottles, but not so much on food waste and packaging.

If you look around the world right now—this is actually something that doesn't directly relate to this bill, but I do think it needs to be raised in this Legislature: food waste. Right now, France has taken a very hard stance against wasting food. It is absolutely incredible, the food that's wasted in this world. We have enough to feed everybody, except we just can't seem to get it to everybody. As we move forward, not just in this Legislature but in our communities and in society, we're going to have to address that issue of reducing that waste because there is an issue not only of value and an environmental concern with organic waste, but there is a social injustice with the waste of food.

I have to let you know that when I open up my fridge when I get back to Ottawa and I have to clean it out and I'm throwing out things that are either a leftover or something that we purchased that wasn't fully utilized, I find that very difficult. It's from the perspective of, "That's a waste; that's not right."

I think we've taken that position on other things when we look at this bill in terms of the need for us to reduce the amount of IC&I waste and how much we're putting into landfills. I think those measures are important, and that's what our communities are asking us to do.

I'll go back a bit to what the member from Toronto—Danforth said in terms of the thing that we want most. The thing that we want most is reuse. Recycling is a good thing to do, but it does leave a carbon footprint. It does require more work than simply reusing a bottle. Also, when we reduce packaging we reduce that waste.

The challenge is that what you want to do is incent innovation so that people are looking at those challenges, those problems, that waste that we have, that packaging that we have, and look at it in a way that drives some economic value to the people who are producing that. There's a balance between how you regulate things in government and how you set targets. You don't want to prescribe, because if you prescribe, you run the risk of stifling innovation. It's a delicate balance. That will be the challenge going forward in the regulations.

0930

On a lighter note, I was really pleased to learn from the member from Thornhill this morning that blue boxes are actually blue because—we can thank the Conservative Party for that. At the time, I resisted time saying it may be an indication that they're good at recycling some old ideas.

Sorry. I just thought I'd share that with you. That dropped like a rock. There we go.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Keep your day job.

Mr. John Fraser: Keep my day job, yes. Mum is watching. I'm sorry, Mum. I tried. It just didn't roll out the right way.

I do want to say, in closing, that as with most things in government, as with most initiatives that occur in this Legislature and through government, our work is never done on this. I'm looking forward to this bill and the support of the Legislature for the measures that are in this bill and the regulations through the minister, but even when those are done, we won't be finished.

I believe that we have to address the issue of food waste. I don't think it's just an economic issue or an issue of greenhouse gases in the environment. I think it's a serious social justice issue, and we need to look at that. We need to find a way, collectively, not just as government and as legislators, to make that an issue, as they made that an issue in Norway with the packaging. Consumers demanded that. They took action. In this case, I think it would be very much taking action, not just with businesses in terms of—as they have in France—what their responsibility is toward food waste, but what is our responsibility as individuals, as we consume, as we purchase food, as we, quite frankly, like I do when I get home on weekends, spend time throwing things out of the fridge, which actually causes me great concern. It's not just because I'm parsimonious. It's because throwing out food is just not the right thing to do.

Anyway, I want to thank the members of the Legislature for their support of the bill and their co-operation that we had in committee, and, I think, the genuine commitment that every member in this Legislature has toward ensuring that we do the right thing in terms of advancing the environment as an item of critical importance in this province, not just for us right now, but obviously for our children and our children's children.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I didn't support the bill for a lot of different reasons. But I do support what the member from Ottawa said about food waste. I read the same article in the *Globe and Mail*, and I also read the article about France.

I have a great interest in food because I was fortunate enough to pass a private member's bill that was made part of the Local Food Act, where it gives farmers a 25% tax cut. I noticed in one of the articles I was reading the other day that they talked about that. I know it has had a major impact. I'm waiting till June to get the numbers from the Ontario food banks, if they can show us—I

know what it has done locally in my riding of Samia-Lambton. They increased their receipts that they issued to farmers from—I'm going from memory now—33,000 to 53,000. They have what they call a mobile market, where they go out to areas of the city and the county where people don't have transportation to get in town to their regular market. They've added three new locations that they stop at to get fresh fruit and vegetables. They have a number of new donors in the farm and greenhouse community that are also supporting this program.

I just noticed one of the numbers here, a statistic. It said that of the \$31 billion worth of food that Canadians send to landfill every year, 47% is from the home. That would be out of the member from Ottawa's fridge and my fridge, as well. It bothers me, too.

I don't do the shopping at our home. The odd time I get sent out, I always come home with more things than I'm supposed to. I don't get sent very often because I buy things I like. I know that stuff gets thrown out at our house, too. I hope my wife is not watching. It always bothers me. I think, "Why did we buy this stuff in the first place if we're not going to eat it?" So I share—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is my pleasure to rise on behalf of the people I represent in London West to offer some comments in the wake of the speech from the member for Ottawa South. I have to say, I was delighted to hear that there were 240 amendments introduced to this bill at third reading. That is certainly a welcome departure from many of the other pieces of legislation we have seen come through this House at third reading. I think that this is a great precedent. It's a great model that we should be using going forward.

I know that many of those amendments were because of the tireless advocacy of my colleague, the member for Toronto-Danforth. I have heard, on many occasions, members across the way talk about the leadership that has been shown by the member for Toronto-Danforth on this bill, the Waste-Free Ontario Act, as well as on the cap-and-trade bill and the climate change bill.

I know that his expertise, his knowledge of the environmental sector and also his ability to listen to what people who come before the committee have to say and to capture their feedback and to propose amendments has been very valuable to the government, but also to the people of this province because what we have, in the end, is a bill that more broadly reflects the concerns that Ontarians have.

However, there still is a lot of room to grow. There remain some issues around the lack of timelines with this bill. The cost of blue boxes continues to be a concern for municipalities. This is a good step forward, but—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

Questions and comments?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to be able to say a few words on the Waste-Free Ontario Act. We've got a really interesting opportunity to do some good work here. One of the things that we note is landfill and the fact that so

much goes into landfill that creates greenhouse gas emissions.

Guelph, actually, my hometown, was one of the early adopters in terms of green energy. We have equipment where we capture the methane from the landfill and use it to generate electricity. But that's actually a pretty expensive way in some ways of dealing with greenhouse gases. The better way is not to put the organics into landfill in the first place.

We also in Guelph have a specific organic waste stream. When my garbage goes out in Guelph—and if you live in Guelph, when you move to town, you have to get an instruction manual for your garbage. We have three bins that go out. One of those bins is strictly organics, so it's being separated at the house to get the organics out of the stream that goes to landfill. That's one of the things that we all need to be able to do as we think about the ways in which we handle waste in Ontario so that we, in fact, are having less of an impact on the environment in the long run. I think this bill will be very helpful in getting us there.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I want to just add a few comments to the debate. I also want to talk about it from a slightly different angle, and that is the degree to which this has penetrated the public mind. What I want to use as my example of the lack of penetration, I would argue, is what's out on the roadsides today. As soon as the snow goes, you see all the accumulation of garbage that has been tossed out of presumably moving cars onto the side of the road.

0940

Many municipalities have quite successful garbage pickup Saturdays and things like that. I always applaud the people who go out and do that as a voluntary activity—certainly I've done it myself—but it's the wrong people who are out there. Where are the people who threw the stuff out of the car? Do they understand about waste diversion? I dare say not, by what I see.

I have a property that is a corner, so I get the pleasure of more garbage because there's more frontage. There is new garbage on the side of the road within a couple of days after you've picked it up. So while the government is engaged in a very complex and potentially successful method, I'm concerned about who is still out there who throws out their paper coffee cups. That's the group that needs to understand.

I have four composters in my garden. I don't have the same problem with refrigerator guilt. I just put it out there and it's going to do more good in the composter.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to return to the government side. The member from Ottawa South to wrap up.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to thank the members from Sarnia and London West, the Minister of Education and the member from York–Simcoe.

I do want to congratulate the member from Sarnia on his private member's bill. I think that was a great private

member's bill. I wish it were mine. I think it's going to do a lot of good and I'm glad that we share that same challenge with fridge and food. Someone passed me a note here. I won't assign it, but it says: "Don't cook so much food." That may be one of the problems.

I don't want to go on about it because I've already gone on about it and I want to say a few more things. I think it's a really serious issue. It does relate to packaging and it does relate to retailers and it does relate to us as individuals.

I thank the member from London West for the words of support. There were 240 amendments. It was a lot of work. There was really a great deal of co-operation. I know the member from York–Simcoe was there as well at—I'm sorry, it was the member from Whitby–Oshawa who was there. It was very co-operative. I think we made the bill better, much better, through that process. Not everybody got everything that they wanted, but I think it's a good bill.

When we work together like that in this Legislature, then we're able to produce something that's truly reflective of what this Legislature means in terms of putting forward legislation that is going to be effective for those goals that we set and for the people that we serve. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Harris: Good morning. It's a pleasure to address Bill 151. I recall wanting to speak to this on second reading, but just as I was about to get up and speak, they called for a vote and it went to committee. Here it's back, so I get a chance to finally speak to it.

This is obviously the Liberals' latest attempt to finally institute waste policy that actually realizes promised higher diversion rates following really what is a trail of successive ministers who have in fact failed to do so. So perhaps congratulations. I see the minister is in the House this morning. Good on him for that.

Of course, it's timely. After 12 years, this government is still chasing the 60% waste diversion rate that Leona Dombrowsky promised back in 2004. Twelve years and five environment ministers later they've failed to make more than a dent, with diversion rates stuck at 25%. That's 35% below their target. From Dombrowsky to Broten, Gerretsen, Wilkinson, Bradley and now our current minister, they did a better job of recycling cabinet than they did recycling waste.

What went wrong? Well, what went wrong was that not one of these ministers nor their governments would admit the clear fault in their plan from the very beginning; that is, the more the government gets in the way with excessive programs and agencies, the less likelihood you have to succeed. So we've been stuck with bad programs built on bad policy, which, we've been telling them for much of the past 12 years, simply wasn't going to work. Of course, we're still right.

It was just a few short years ago that I was standing in this House to denounce what was then the Liberal government's answer to waste reduction, Bill 91, the very

hopefully titled Waste Reduction Act. The problem was, as I told government members in this House during debate, despite the title, Bill 91 did absolutely nothing to address the second-largest source of waste here in the province of Ontario. That's right: Instead of actually taking aim at waste, the Liberal plan was to double down on recycling cartels bent on imposing eco taxes here in the province on consumers—eco tax programs that I warned would unfairly increase costs for Ontarians while failing to make any meaningful change in the province's overall diversion rate. I remind you, Speaker, that we're still stuck at 25%.

That's why I took time in this Legislature to champion our party plan that would actually increase waste diversion. It was a plan that recognized the economic potential of the recycling industry. It was a plan that recognized that with the right regulatory system, businesses would invest in recovering old tires, plastics and metals that could be recycled into new products and marketed to consumers across the country and even the world. It was a plan that would unleash the potential of the recycling industry by taking that first initial step of getting government out of the way.

Speaker, it would be rejected by the Liberal government, this plan that would have eliminated each and every Liberal eco tax program. It would have scrapped the Liberals' recycling cartels. It would have abolished the Liberals' eco tax agency Waste Diversion Ontario and returned the government to its true role as a tough regulator. It represented a first step toward a competitive marketplace that would thrive under the right conditions—conditions including setting a measurable and achievable recycling target for businesses, establishment of environmental standards, and enforcement of the rules. The idea was to have businesses themselves hold the responsibility, with a competitive marketplace to find the most effective, efficient and productive way to increase recycling. Waste Diversion Ontario would no longer be telling industry how to run its operations, and actual waste diversion would finally move forward.

While the Liberals were clearly opposed to our approach in 2013, fast-forward to today—and what a difference three years can make. Today, after progressive committee amendments, we now see a Liberal government proposal that has largely borrowed from the PC vision for an open recycling marketplace. And while, as you heard from our current critic in response to the newfound approach, some concerns do still remain with Bill 151, I'm glad to see this government take a couple of pages from our book, recognizing that there truly are no monopolies on a good idea, and borrowing from the effective proposal and PC vision we brought forward just a few short years ago.

I also want to remind folks listening at home that I'll be splitting my time with my colleague from Thornhill—and for those who are here, of course.

To that end, Speaker, I do want to further commend the work of committee members who took time to address a number of our concerns. Specifically, I want to

commend them for addressing concerns relating to timelines to eliminate all those costly Liberal eco tax programs. You see, Speaker, while the legislation introduced at first reading recognized the need to finally deal with these programs that have left us spinning our wheels on stagnant diversion rates, after all these years of experience with this Liberal government, we felt we needed assurances that this same government would actually act to eliminate the many-armed monster they created, of course, under Dalton McGuinty.

I want to thank the committee members for hearing our call on effective, workable guarantees and report-back mechanisms to ensure government's steps to scrap the used tire program, the waste electrical and electronic equipment program, and the Orange Drop program.

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Thanks to the work of our caucus members at committee, the amended version of Bill 151 now provides specific mechanisms to hold government to the eco wind-down. The authority must include progress updates on the annual report on the phase-out of eco tax programs and the windup of Stewardship Ontario, Ontario Electronic Stewardship and Ontario Tire Stewardship. Second, the minister must report these progress updates to the House every year. Third, clear timelines have been established in law to phase out eco taxes and wind up IFOs once new regulations are in place.

I also want to recognize the government's inclusion of the Competition Act, as I originally called for in my first letter to then-Minister Bradley nearly four years ago. While government failed to recognize my call for the addition of Competition Act reforms in Bill 91 at that time, I'm glad to see that someone was listening and they added it to this current bill, Bill 151.

Thanks to the Liberal reversal, government will no longer be able to create cartels or government-protected monopolies, making each company responsible for recycling adhere to federal competition laws. In the end, we established a fair, free and open recycling market that will work to achieve our goals for higher waste diversion.

Speaker, I would also like to note the committee work to pass amendments allowing for the quick elimination of eco taxes while ensuring a gradual, careful transition of the Blue Box Program.

There is no doubt that the Blue Box Program is the Ontario waste diversion success story, achieving diversion rates of 67% since its introduction by the previous PC government, while recovering paper and packaging so it can be recycled into new products. While the success continues, with 95% of Ontarians able to access curbside recycling, challenges have emerged under the Liberals as disputes over funding and services grow between industry and our municipalities.

Today, after growing calls for answers from all sides, we can support Bill 151's proposed solution to stop cost battle before it escalates to arbitration, an interim solution to settle disputes until the Blue Box Program can be fully transitioned into an industry-led program.

While it has been heartening to see government take the steps we've been calling for on this side of the House,

I'll remind members of some of the steps that remain, steps like ridding this province of the Liberals' eco tax agency, Waste Diversion Ontario, and dropping all the plans to create a force of waste cops to police recycling bins and garbage cans across the province, if you can picture that.

On the first point, Waste Diversion Ontario should be abolished, plain and simple. Instead, have a limited authority to collect data and monitor outcomes. WDO has never achieved its mandate and actually never will. It's unnecessary and, until its elimination, will continue to stand in the way of the waste diversion goals that we all share. To be clear, Bill 151 falls short on this front and continues WDO while giving it massive new powers, including enforcement.

While we're talking enforcement, government has to drop the waste-cop plan entirely. And we're not alone on this one. Even Smokey Thomas, of OPSEU, has issued a press release warning of the government's hiring of private waste cops. Talk about waste. Why would this government have us waste our taxpayer dollars on a force of waste cops to sift through our blue boxes? It's a waste of time, it's a waste of money and effort, and clearly needs to be left at the curb.

So while some concerns remain, I remain hopeful that, as much of the heavy lifting we did a couple of years ago has been reflected in many ways with the new directions we see in Bill 151, we may—Ontario may—now finally be poised to achieve the higher waste diversion targets that successive Liberal governments have paid lip service to and failed to achieve for a dozen years now. After all those years, I think we've waited long enough.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise after my colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga and speak on Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act.

We've had a lot of speakers already on this bill, and everybody is, I would say, on the same page in terms of more can be done and more should be done.

The question obviously comes down to how to go about this. As we've heard, there have been a lot of proposals put forward in the Legislature from all parties in terms of how we can get everybody on board. It does sometimes come down to the carrot and the stick. I'm a firm believer that you do need to carry that stick sometimes, but I prefer to use the carrot and entice people to do what we need them to do, to educate them and raise public awareness.

We heard from the member from—let me see; I have it here. Anyhow, I don't want to say his name. He is from—

Interjection.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Ottawa South—that's correct—and the member from Mississauga—Brampton South said that there were exactly 240 amendments in committee on this Waste-Free Ontario Act. That's quite a few amendments. You can look at it both ways, Madam Speaker. You can look at it that all three parties really took a good

look, put a lot of thought, met with a lot of stakeholders and took a lot of advice. They wanted to make the bill stronger, wanted the bill to pass and do what it's supposed to do.

You can also say that maybe some people who wrote the bill weren't doing their homework and could have ensured that not that many amendments needed to be there in the first place, because that's quite a few. Unfortunately, the carbon-tax credit bill had over 700 amendments. That, I find a little bit troubling, because I almost feel like maybe we had to go back to the drawing board and say, "We didn't get it right the first time." Amendments, in my opinion, are really to make changes, but not to the actual guts of what you're trying to achieve with a bill. It's just to ensure that everything is being taken care of and that nobody is going to be unfairly disadvantaged by the bill.

I did some research—and I've listened to our critic, the member from Huron—Bruce, who spoke yesterday for almost an hour on this bill. What she said that really surprised me, as I mentioned before in the House, was that the Blue Box Program was a PC initiative. We all know how successful that has been. I've been joking over and over about why the colour blue—and I guess that's not a big surprise, why they would choose the colour blue—and how easily it could have been a red box program if it had been this government who had started it. I'm just kidding. We all like the blue boxes; I'm not looking to change the colour.

We can improve the Blue Box Program in many municipalities. I've wondered for decades why there aren't covers for blue boxes or at least some kind of bungee cord that hooks on. We've heard from the member from Simcoe North about littering that goes on—people throwing cups out of car windows. Yes, unfortunately, that does take place, but too often littering on our streets is just from blue boxes that didn't have covers in many municipalities.

Toronto has the big blue boxes with wheels that the trucks pick up. There are pros and cons to that way of managing the program. In Vaughan, where I live, we have blue boxes that are just boxes, and people put papers on top without thinking to put something a little heavy on top to keep it from blowing around.

We are not able to recycle Styrofoam and many other products. I see the difficulty in putting more items in the blue boxes when we're not able to completely recycle everything we're already taking. That's something I really haven't heard addressed so far: the fact that, yes, we're not collecting enough items. We're only hitting 25%, and the government had a target of more than double that for waste diversion. Unfortunately, too often we're hearing, sometimes substantiated in fact, that the items collected for recycling are not being recycled. Many of them are just sitting in warehouses. Some of them are obviously going to landfills somewhere, and that's extremely unfortunate because people take the time to buy into these programs. They wash their jars and containers out, and wrap their papers and cardboard. But

how are we going to convince people to do a good job with waste diversion if they're hearing rumours, sometimes substantiated in fact, that some of the items they're working so hard and spending so much time and effort to put in the appropriate containers aren't being recycled?

Yes, we know there are a lot of public awareness campaigns that come and go about littering and recycling, but I think that, as a government, we have to first address the fact of all the papers we have here that we're using, that we're still not in the digital age in the Legislature, that we walk out in our hallways and—I'm embarrassed actually to say this for the people listening at home—we have radiators giving off heat that you could fry an egg on in the same room as air conditioners sometimes. That does not sound like an environmentally conscious or aware government building.

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Yes, it's expensive to address some of the concerns to ensure that the buildings we live and work in are up to standards in terms of less waste, in terms of recycling, but also less waste in terms of heating, air conditioning, insulation and things like that. We all want to see more being done.

I want to address, in terms of more being done, a woman named Mary Atkinson from Richmond Hill, who sent in a letter to the editor last week in our local paper, the Thornhill Liberal, which is part of Metroland. I'm just going to read it into the House. I don't want to edit it. I didn't get permission to edit it. This is her letter:

"Recycling Adventure Disappointing.

"I live in a condo on Yonge north of 16th Avenue and am president of the board of directors. Our board decided to offer a bulk collection of used compact fluorescent bulbs and lighting tubes in our building, as we thought no one would be willing to drive to the recycling centres with one tube or one light bulb.

"We consulted with our ward councillor, who assured us that we would have no problems in offering this service to our residents.

"On April 2"—so that's not so long ago—"I felt we had collected enough of these hazardous items to make my first trip....

"I drove to the Elgin Mills facility (closest to my condo) where the individuals who met me were very accommodating.

"They took my bin of light bulbs and, after sorting them, explained they only collect the compact fluorescent bulbs (curly ones), no others, leaving me to take back the rest for disposal in landfill/garbage. So far, so good," she says.

"When I mentioned I also had fluorescent tubes, I was told they do not collect these because the disposal process is different; I would have to take them to the Markham or Vaughan regional sites.

"My suggestion: Why doesn't the Elgin Mills facility collect both and when a sufficient number of tubes has been collected, transfer them to the Markham or Vaughan sites?" I'm going to stop there, because it is a long letter.

I just want to say that here's somebody who is taking the time—the president of her condo—to figure out how to encourage people in her building to recycle. She knows that they're not going to bother recycling the bulbs if they have to collect them themselves or bring them themselves. So she develops this little program, and then she's met with roadblocks every step of the way. Eventually, she's told that a condo is a commercial entity and she has to go to the commercial recycling depots, which are even further.

I do want to give credit to the newspaper, because they contacted environmental promotion and protection at the region of York in Newmarket, which responded to her letter and said that they think improvements could be made, but part of the problem, they felt, was some of the staff at the depots weren't aware of the rules and gave her a bit of the runaround.

I want to commend Mary Atkinson for writing in and I want to commend Laura McDowell, the director of the program at York region, for responding.

I also want to commend the Thornhill Liberal newspaper of Metroland for taking the time to send the letter, before they published it, to get a response from the region. Why? Because they want to encourage people. They're worried that if they just publish that letter on its own, people are going to say, "Forget it, I'm not going to those depots. Look, they don't know what they're doing. They're making it too complicated and I don't want to be involved."

Congratulations to all of them for a job well done.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I had the opportunity to weigh in very briefly on this bill when it was at second reading, which seems to be a bit of a theme that we have with the government as of late, when they're using all of their closure motions. Nevertheless, I was able to get in for a couple of minutes.

I was able to talk about some of the great work that our communities are doing to divert items away from their landfills. I specifically talked about the community of Red Lake and their creation of a freecycle shed. I wanted to also build on that and talk about some of the work that all communities are doing with managing recycling. They're doing an excellent job.

In the case of Red Lake, this also comes with a tremendous cost. It comes with a tremendous cost for all municipalities. With Red Lake, they're trucking their materials at least 250 kilometres. That isn't cheap. In fact, cost is an issue that was a main concern to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. As the member for Toronto–Danforth pointed out in his remarks yesterday, these costs are not annoyances. They're not incidental. They are tremendous costs for these communities. New Democrats recognize that municipalities are partners in recycling and they need to be recognized and treated in a way that is respectful of the work that they're doing.

I have to say that I'm proud of the work New Democrats have done to expand the roles of the municipalities

in a formal way. We proposed an amendment to set up a municipal advisory body that would serve as a body comprised of municipal and recycling stakeholders for the government to consult with. But I have to say it's very unfortunate that this amendment was defeated by the government, as there were some changes that would have been very helpful to municipalities.

This bill does still have, I think, a long way to go. I know it is third reading, but I would like to see some of these changes.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Just on the issue of municipalities, the estimates from our experts are about \$117 million less cost for municipalities, so this provides some relief. AMO has been very involved with this. We're working together on the implementation, and our municipalities continue to be a priority here.

I do want to address some of the comments by the member for Kitchener-Conestoga. I think that we should all have a little humility here. This bill is very different from Bill 91. When Premier Wynne became elected as our new Premier not that long ago, she said to me, as the environment and climate change minister, "I want you not to be held hostage by previous legislation and actions, and take a new approach to this."

So I looked at private members' bills. I talked to members in this House. Some of the folks in the official opposition have said that they see some of their fingerprints on this, and they have. We listened to the opposition and others and we built a very different kind of bill, with many ideas from Liberal members, Conservative members and New Democrats.

What I mean by "We should all have a little humility" is that the system we're replacing was not of this government. It was created in the last year of the last Conservative administration. I don't say that in a way—because I think that the old system we're replacing was created with some very good ideas. I'm not criticizing the members of the party opposite.

As they tried to implement it and as we tried to implement it, we recognized that the number of IFOs and the system simply didn't work. We worked with it for many years, as the member said, through many Ministers of the Environment. You don't want to dump on every good new idea.

It didn't work. I don't think that we have to kick each other in the head. I think that we've worked on a better solution. Rather than saying, "The Liberals didn't do it right" or "The Conservatives didn't do it right," we tried something that didn't work together and we're fixing it together. We should be proud of that.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a pleasure to rise again. Waste diversion is a big issue back in my riding. One of the landfill sites at Petrolia is going to be capped and closed by the end of this year. The more we can do to

have waste diversion will certainly have a big impact in my riding and across Ontario, I know, as well.

We talked a little bit in my comments last time about diverting food waste—not waste food, but good food—from landfill sites. That was part of the thinking behind my private member's bill that I introduced because at the time, I think that in Ontario, they were saying that 24 million pounds of food a year were going to landfill. I thought that was atrocious, when I found out how many people—children, adults and seniors—are going without good, wholesome food. That was the genesis behind that bill and the thinking behind it.

Lo and behold, the Environmental Commissioner of the day—I had never even thought of approaching that individual—did a report and supported that private member's bill, saying it would certainly free up landfill space from food needlessly going there, because there was a need for it. There was another use that that food could be put to. There was an obvious need. There was an opportunity to recycle that food.

There was nothing wrong with the food. Take it from the farmers themselves, and we're working with supermarkets now and the big suppliers to do that. I understand that it's being more of a success all the time.

The Minister of Agriculture and I have talked about this. He and I have talked about getting the numbers from the Ontario food banks sometime in early June and then sharing them with others—how well that program is working, things we can do to make it work even better and maybe complement this waste diversion act by diverting even more food from landfill sites.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: This is the second time that I've spoken for a couple of minutes. I've done 20 minutes on the bill.

I think something we should hit on hard is the fact that this bill—and I want to compliment Peter Tabuns: I know I shouldn't say his name, so I won't say it—from Toronto-Danforth—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): You need to remind yourself to address each other by riding.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I already said it, so I remind myself back. I apologize.

I want to say that the key to this was there were 240 amendments to the bill. I want to credit all three parties, including the member from Toronto-Danforth. They worked extremely hard to put a bill together. I've been in a lot of committees. With no disrespect to anybody, a lot of times the NDP may have good ideas, the Conservatives may have good ideas, but we don't get amendments to some of the bills. I think that's a mistake. I think everybody has lots to offer. They have lots of talent.

In this particular case I want to compliment the minister. I know that you worked closely with our member. I'm sure you worked closely with the PCs, but I don't know how closely. But I think the important thing is that we worked together on a bill. Why would you want to work together on a bill? Take a look at our young

pages, because quite frankly, that's what we're faced with. If we don't fix the environment, our young people, our air, our quality of life, our water are all in jeopardy. That's what this is all about. We have to make sure that we leave an environment where they can breathe the air, that they're not having extra diseases like we're seeing with Lyme disease and things that are happening because of climate change. I want to compliment him on those two issues.

I'd also like to say—I've only got 15 seconds left—the importance of making sure we fix this just for my home riding. If you take a look at the VQA wines, if you take a look at the fruit trees, we really need the weather to stay where it is. If we continue down the road we're going down, temperatures are going to go up three and four degrees. It's going to have a devastating effect on my riding.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return back to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Michael Harris: Just building off the member for Niagara Falls's comments on thanking those involved in terms of all three parties coming together to provide amendments and solutions to strengthening the bill, I know the minister chimed in and talked about a legacy or history lesson on where this all started. He's right. The previous PC government did bring forward ways to divert more waste in the province, but it was never intended to do what, in fact, the Liberals did with it: spin it off into a lot of these IFOs. So now we're correcting what was done.

I do want to step in and thank our critic, the member for Huron–Bruce, Lisa Thompson—of course, significant work, time and dedication on this bill. She also had several other bills in committee. On top of that, it was a very technical bill. Consulting with stakeholders—stakeholders also need to be commended. I can think of the Ontario Waste Management Association, which has put a lot of time and effort into this from day one, and the Retail Council of Canada; AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; Food & Consumer Products of Canada.

I will commend the member for Mississauga–Brampton South, who conveyed her cordial relationship with our critic in getting things put together in committee. But we also need to recognize the staff: the staff in the member for Huron–Bruce's office, of course. Shane is a very technical-oriented guy, working weekends to put the amendments together and dealing with legislative counsel, of course. We couldn't have done it without a significant staff effort. Shane, thank you for putting that together. Of course, Jessica, in the member for Huron–Bruce's office, also dedicated significant time. OLIP Alison, I'm sure, chimed in and was able to assist. Congratulations to all. A special thanks to our critic, Lisa Thompson from Huron–Bruce, for bringing forward some critical amendments that were passed to help strengthen this bill.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Seeing it's almost 10:15, I'm going to recess the House until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Jeff Leal: In the members' east gallery today I'd like to introduce Mayor Ron Gerow from Township of Havelock Belmont Methuen; Brian Gratton, who is the deputy clerk and economic development officer for Havelock Belmont Methuen; Stuart Harrison, who is the general manager of the Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce; and Sandra Dueck, who is the chief adviser to the Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce. They're all here today for the sixth annual Peterborough Day, which will occur in rooms 228-230 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., an opportunity to see what the riding of Peterborough has to offer—and Kawartha Dairy.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'm pleased to introduce on behalf of the member from Richmond Hill the family of page captain Alfred Shi: his mother, Jeanne Ye; father, Lionel Shi; grandmother Gui-ying Yan; and grandfather Zi-jin Ye. They will be in the public gallery this morning.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'd like to welcome, in the east gallery, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond and Bonnie McCool from the great riding of Northumberland–Quinte West.

M^{me} France Gélinas: My guests are making their way in. We have Edna Hapin, who is a home care PSW; Chrystal Becker, also a home care PSW; Lorna Abraham, a long-term-care PSW; Lisa Jocko, who is in home care; Michael Spitale from SEIU; Brigid Buckingham from SEIU; and Kristof Barocz from SEIU. A great meeting this morning; welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to welcome, from the fantastic riding of Newmarket–Aurora, Lori Barnes, a constituent, who is also the executive officer of governance and board services at the Toronto District School Board.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have some introductions this morning—bear with me.

On behalf of the member for St. Paul's and page captain Brendan Weeks, I'm pleased to introduce Brendan's mother, Susan Tiam-Fook Weeks, and his grandfather, Henry Tiam-Fook. Ni hao. They are in the public gallery.

On behalf of the member for Mississauga–Erindale, I'm pleased, on behalf of page captain Ayan Siddiqui, to introduce his father, Kamran Siddiqui, who is also in the public gallery this morning. Salam alaikum.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm delighted to introduce my constituents from London North Centre, Richard Lucas and Karen Lucas. They are parents of a great advocate, Brent Lucas, in my riding of London North Centre. Welcome to Queen's Park. We're happy you're here.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'm delighted to welcome members from the OLTCA: Kimberly and Ahmad. Thank you so much for joining us.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I just wanted to introduce Mykola Zakaliuzhny. He is a member of our Ukrainian Canadian community and a journalist, here for the flag-raising at noon on the front lawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In the Speaker's gallery today are three guests of mine: a dear friend of mine, Pat Eyzenga, a friend of the MPP, not the MP;

June Taylor; and Sue Howe. Welcome, and glad you're here with us at Queen's Park.

WEARING OF HISTORICAL COSTUME

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Simcoe–Grey on a point of order.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I believe, Mr. Speaker, you'll find we have unanimous consent that the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington be permitted to wear a period costume to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Perth military settlement. He would like to wear that costume during statements this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've been asked for unanimous consent for the member to wear a period costume for his statement this afternoon. Do we agree? Agreed.

On behalf of all of us, I can't wait.

VISITOR

Hon. Michael Coteau: Joining us today in the west members' gallery is Rachel Ewan, who is a PhD student at Sir Wilfrid Laurier. She recently contacted my office and said she wanted to learn more about politics. She's here today watching us, so let's set a great example, guys.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Acting Premier. On May 12, the Minister of the Environment said that "home heating ... is going to have to come from sources other than natural gas." And this week, the member from Beaches–East York said that this is about getting people off fossil fuels and onto electricity.

Mr. Speaker, this government is forcing the people of Ontario to convert from natural gas to electricity for home heating. That will mean that families will have to pay an additional \$3,000 a year to heat their homes.

To the Acting Premier: Does this government really think that Ontario families can afford 3,000 more dollars a year on their already exorbitant bills?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I want to say thank you to the Leader of the Opposition for asking this question, because it gives us an opportunity to very clearly say that we are not forcing homeowners off natural gas—full stop. The question is based on a twisting—they're twisting and torqueing, trying to rile people up. We are not forcing people off natural gas.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Acting Premier: Obviously, the Acting Premier is going to need to explain their new position on natural gas to the Minister of the Environment and to the member for Beaches–East York.

Back to the government's plan to eliminate natural gas, and what it's going to mean for Ontario's small businesses: Jamey Heaton employs 21 people in North Bay. He owns a company, Bavarian Link Meat Products. His electricity costs are more than \$110,000 a year, the second-largest cost after salaries. To keep costs down, he says, they cook mostly with natural gas. He said that if he could reduce hydro costs by 50%, he could expand his business and create new jobs. But not only are hydro rates going to keep Jamey from expanding his business; the plan to eliminate natural gas will kill jobs and put him out of business.

So, Mr. Speaker, the question to the Acting Premier is, Come clean on your plan. Be—

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

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If you say it again, you'll get a second one.

Deputy Premier.

1040

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, let me try again: We will not be forcing people off natural gas—full stop. In fact, we are expanding access to natural gas. In 2015, we announced \$230 million to expand access to natural gas to rural Ontario. This is great news, and I actually think the Leader of the Opposition—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All of you are not helping me. The member from Leeds–Grenville will come to order. The member from Prince Edward–Hastings will come to order. I've got a good memory.

Mr. Todd Smith: That is a good memory.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've also got keen ears. If you say it again, you'll get a second.

Please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think the Leader of the Opposition needs to support our expansion of natural gas into communities that do not have the benefit of that—

Mr. Steve Clark: I think your Minister of the Environment needs to support your plan.

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

You have one wrap-up sentence.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We will not be forcing people to eliminate natural gas. We will not—

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

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, it's almost comical, seeing the Liberal cabinet twist and turn on this position. Maybe the Acting Premier can inform the Minister

of the Environment that his plan is no longer supported by the government. How else can the Acting Premier explain this Liberal natural gas leak? Because according to the Globe and Mail, this government plans on eliminating natural gas.

Mr. Speaker, is the Acting Premier saying the Globe and Mail article was incorrect?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Oh, they're the bible. Everything in the press is true.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Because it is very clear that this will cost jobs. It is very clear that this would be disastrous for Ontario. So if the Globe and Mail article is incorrect, I expect the Acting Premier to say that very clearly, because the statements by the Minister of the Environment are in direct contradiction to what the Acting Premier is saying.

Please go on the record and say what plan is accurate: yours, or the Minister of the Environment's.

Interjections.

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

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, let me try this one more time, and I will say this slowly and clearly: We are not forcing anyone off natural gas. In fact, we are expanding access to natural gas. The Leader of the Opposition and his caucus should be celebrating this clarity.

I speak for our entire government—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakubuski: Who's the chief pretzel-maker over there?

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

I'm maybe 60 seconds away from going to warnings, and some of you are close enough to get named.

Interjection: Wow.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No "wow" about it. We will have order.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The opposition party can stop their worrying about this. We will not be forcing anyone off natural gas. In fact, we are expanding access to natural gas.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Deputy Premier. This government would have us believe that there's nothing it can do, or could have done, to mitigate skyrocketing hydro costs. But now we know that's simply not true. More gas plant scandal documents related to the Samsung deal now reveal a very different story. They outline that when Samsung missed their deadlines, the government could have walked away from the multi-billion-dollar deal for nothing. The ministry states the savings would have been about \$30 a year on the average residential bill. Instead, the government did what was

best for the Liberal Party and not for the people of Ontario.

Speaker, my question is, why did the government choose their corporate friends over the interests of Ontario ratepayers?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Our government is indeed committed to renewable energy, and we've built a strong track record, with many successes. The successes, of course—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Chatham-Kent-Essex, second time.

Finish.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, because of the programs that we've instituted, we're creating well-paying manufacturing jobs across the province. In fact, the Minister of Energy was in Tillsonburg a few weeks ago, where he announced a new export agreement with Siemens Canada. We're building wind turbine blades that will be exported to the UK. That's 300 well-paying jobs at that facility and 600 other indirect jobs that are supported by that project.

At the same time, as the opposition has pointed out very clearly this morning, our government has also taken action to reduce overall electricity system costs and has renegotiated the green energy investment agreement, saving \$3.7 billion over the life of the contract—

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the deputy: The gas plant scandal documents are clear. It notes that Samsung is "missing multiple milestone deadlines," and this "triggers the province's ability to terminate without penalty, through existing termination clauses."

Speaker, the document further states, "The ministry is now proposing to eliminate much of the existing agreement. The ministry argues that doing so would save the Ontario ratepayers as much as \$5.2 billion."

But instead of taking the ministry's advice and doing right by Ontario's families, they only cancelled, as the minister just said, \$3.7 billion worth. The government left \$1.5 billion on the table. I ask the same question: Why did the government choose their corporate friends over the interests of Ontario's ratepayers?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: In fact, the Ministry of Energy did indeed revise the green energy investment agreement in 2013. The revised agreement includes protecting Samsung's agreement and commitments to jobs and adding a commitment to solar manufacturing jobs in 2016; reducing the agreement's total commitment for renewable projects from 2,500 megawatts to 1,369 megawatts; and requiring Samsung to obtain municipal council support resolutions for renewable energy projects before moving forward.

Samsung has now opened four manufacturing plants across the province, which will create 900 indirect jobs. All of the projects contracted now are online.

The Samsung agreement has resulted in local benefits as well, including Samsung's \$11.5-million program for the benefit of the community of Chatham-Kent, and Samsung has partnered with Canadian Solar to open a London solar plant.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Chatham-Kent-Essex is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, you can't just blurt it out.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The agreement is ongoing, and the ongoing portion of that agreement is more manufacturing plants and more solar panels supplying the projects, which is solely needed in our province.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the deputy: These gas plant scandal documents continue to paint a picture of the inner workings of the Liberal government. They show that the government could have terminated the remainder of the Samsung deal and saved the ratepayers \$5.2 billion and brought relief to hydro bills.

The document went on to say, contrary to what the minister just said, "Ontario has more generation capacity than it requires, and the ministry presents this rationale for not proceeding with future phases."

The bureaucrats knew that walking away was in the best interests of the people of Ontario, but the government only cancelled a part of the deal and left \$1.5 billion on the table. I ask again: Why did this government choose their corporate friends over the interests of Ontario families?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. The deputy House leader, second time.

Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The government is choosing emissions-free technology, emissions-free emissions and more jobs for the people of Ontario. That's what's being created by the ongoing agreement with Samsung. Some 90% emissions-free is now being generated through wind, solar, nuclear, hydroelectricity and bioenergy, and 42,000 more jobs are being created as a result of 30 wind and solar manufacturing operations in our communities.

We are improving overall system costs beyond the renegotiation of the Samsung agreement, which is saving \$3.7 billion over the life of the contract. We mandated annual reviews of feed-in tariff pricing, which will result in ratepayer savings of \$1.9 billion over the life of those contracts. Moving forward on a procurement of future large energy projects, that process is expected to eliminate \$3.3 billion, additional benefits in the system, saving the average Ontario family \$20 annually on their bills, compared to the 2013 long-term projections.

We're benefiting the communities, Mr. Speaker.

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HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre par intérim.

Yesterday, the deputy leader of the NDP asked the Deputy Premier about the fact that mental health beds across Ontario hospitals are chronically overcrowded. The Deputy Premier, shamefully, refused to even acknowledge this fact or that we had a problem. But according to the facts, hospitals in Ontario are being stretched to 110%, 120% and sometimes 130% of their mental health capacity.

I have a simple question that deserves an answer: Will the Acting Premier admit that it is unsafe to let hospital occupancy get anywhere near 100%, let alone higher than that? Yes or no?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: What we absolutely know is that we must continue to expand services in the community outside of hospitals. We must support our hospitals. That's why we increased funding to hospitals in this budget. We are also focusing significant attention and significant funding on building services outside the hospital.

One example that I think resonates with everyone in the House is our commitment to expand palliative care and hospice care in the community. What that means is that people who currently are dying in hospitals can be moved or can be in a hospice, in a community setting where they have a much more dignified experience, as do their families.

That's the kind of health care system we are building: one where people receive the health care that they need, in the best possible place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The Deputy Premier says that health care should be evidence-based; it should be based on facts. Here are some facts that come right from the government itself: In the last quarter alone, the hospital in Burlington was at 118% capacity for its mental health beds; in London, 100%; in Sault Ste. Marie, 100%; in St. Catharines and Ottawa, 100%; in Thunder Bay's hospitals, one was at 103% and the other at 105% capacity.

Will the Deputy Premier look at her own numbers and admit that Ontario's mental health beds are dangerously overcrowded?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I think the difference between the approach that we are taking here and the approach that the third party is taking is that they believe that people are always best served in hospital, whereas we believe—because we recognize challenges—that we need to expand community capacity, and that is exactly what we're doing.

Another way that I'm very proud of the progress that we're making when it comes to people with mental illness is in supportive housing. We know that there are people who are in hospital, in mental health beds, who could be better served outside the hospital, in the com-

munity. That's why we're building capacity outside the community: to take pressure off hospitals and to provide the highest quality of care for those particular people.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, the Liberals cannot deny the facts. New Democrats obtained, through freedom of information, the government's own numbers. They reveal that acute care beds are overcrowded throughout our province. They reveal that mental health beds are overcrowded throughout our province. Cutting more nurses, cutting more services and cutting more beds is only making things worse, not better. It will make things worse for patients in London, Hamilton, North Bay and right across the GTA.

When will this Liberal government admit there is a silent crisis in our hospitals and stop the cuts to front-line care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, the member opposite—actually, I thought her first two questions were pretty thoughtful. When she moves to allegations that we are cutting health care, that is where she is completely wrong. The numbers speak for themselves. In this budget alone, we've added \$1 billion to health care spending. That is an undeniable fact.

Another fact that I think is really important for people to understand is that we are adding nurses. We have added 26,000 nurses to our health care sector over the past 12 years. That is a significant increase in care for patients, and we're getting outcomes. In fact, ICES, the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Studies, has found that our changes in health care have increased the number of patients being treated and reduced the average length of stay—

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

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma deuxième question est également pour la première ministre par intérim.

Yesterday, I joined my leader, Andrea Horwath, at a hospital in Scarborough. The ER we visited was built for 20,000 people per year, but it's handling 65,000 people. For half of last year, Rouge Valley's Scarborough Hospital was running at over 100% capacity. Health care in Scarborough is stretched really thin, Speaker.

Will the Liberal government agree that, at the very minimum, hospital funding should keep up with inflation and the growing population each and every year?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, what's really important to me are the outcomes for patients, because that is what our whole health care system is all about.

The SEIU—I know there are some people from SEIU here today, and welcome to the Legislature—did a study on the Canadian health care system in 2014. The conclusion they came to was this: When it comes to spending our health care dollars wisely and efficiently, Ontario and Quebec are at the front of the pack.

The Fraser Institute's report on wait times revealed that Ontario has the second-shortest overall wait times in Canada. In fact, we've gone from the worst to the best when it comes to hip and knee replacements, cataracts, cardiac care, radiation oncology, MRIs, CT scans and ultrasounds.

What matters to me is that patients are getting the care they need more quickly, with a higher level of quality. As I've said before, the system is in—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, yesterday, we met their cardiologist. He told us that the lack of funding for their cardiac catheterization lab at Centenary hospital means that patients cannot get the preventative cardiac care that they need. Because they don't get the preventative care, they end up needing more invasive, more high-risk surgeries down the road.

Will the Acting Premier stop the cuts to our hospitals, so that patients can get the access they need and the hospital care they need?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It's interesting, I guess, that we'll be talking a lot about Scarborough over the next little while. But I do want to say that our members from Scarborough and west Durham have been very strong advocates for the health care system. Like me, they are committed to a health care system that puts patients first.

We are increasing our investment in health care every single year. We have done that. They are making claims that simply are not true about cuts to our system. The reality is that hospital funding has increased by 53% since 2003. We are increasing funding for every single hospital in the province of Ontario this year as part of our \$1-billion increase to health care spending.

We are increasing funding in Scarborough: \$4.5 million for the Rouge Valley Health System; \$2.9 million in Scarborough; \$2.6 million at Lakeridge. We're making—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Hospitals throughout the GTA are overcrowded. Centenary hospital in Scarborough is only one of so many examples. The ER sees three times more patients than it was built for. More often than not, there are no acute care beds available to admit anybody from the ER. Doctors feel the system is stretched beyond the limit.

This is a health care system in crisis. When will the Deputy Premier admit that there is a crisis in health care and stop the cuts to our hospitals?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Once again, there are facts here that are actually indisputable. There are no cuts to hospitals. There is, in fact, a significant increase to hospital funding this year, and we have increased funding in the past as well.

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We are getting outcomes for patients that are demonstrating that people who work in our health care system are working very, very hard to provide better quality of

care. We're seeing infection rates coming down in our hospitals. We're seeing higher quality of care in our hospitals. The impact of the Excellent Care for All Act is actually visible now as hospitals report improvements in quality of care. That's what patients are looking for. They want access to care in a timely way, and when they get that care, they want it to be of the highest possible quality.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Yesterday's Auditor General's report was quite stunning on the secret union payouts. The auditor said, "Ontario is an outlier with respect to this use of taxpayer funds." We also found out in this report that there is no evidence of the Ontario government—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The deputy House leader—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do you want to go?

The deputy House leader is warned.

Finish, please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: We also found out that there's no evidence the Ontario government has paid any other public sector union for bargaining costs in Ontario. So just a quick recap: An outlier in Canada, no other bargaining costs were covered in any other sector, and it adds up as well as your net zeros do in Treasury Board.

My question is, are the Liberals ashamed that they took the money from the classroom? Because not only is this not done in any other sector in Ontario; it's a one-of-a-kind deal in the rest of Canada.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Despite attempts to be the new PC Party, this is a really solid reminder that the old PC Party still rules. Attacks on teachers is what they do best.

We completely disagree with them. We actually believe that investing in teachers and investing in professional development has a positive impact on kids in the classroom. We're proud of our investments in professional development—

Interjection.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: Withdraw.

Interjection: From his seat.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I know my rules.

To your seat, please, to withdraw.

Mr. Todd Smith: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Look, bring it down a notch.

Carry on.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: My question: Does the member opposite really believe that teachers should not—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Does the member opposite believe that teachers should not be trained in things like bullying prevention, in how to work with kids with special needs, in how to teach mathematics in a way that improves those math scores? Training teachers is an important part of having a strong education system.

The results speak for themselves. When they were in charge, the graduation rate in high school was a shameful 68%. It is now over—

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

Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I can tell you one thing: Bill Davis would never have taken \$80 million out of kids in classrooms. And I can tell you another thing: Bill Davis never would have stood up and said a 50%, one way or the other way, was a net zero. No, Bill Davis never would have done that. In fact, he would have ensured that there were—

Interjections.

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

Please finish.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'll tell you something else Bill Davis never would have done: He would never have threatened kids in demonstration schools for the deaf and the blind. He never would have cut them off of IBI and ABA wait-lists. He wouldn't have ensured that rural schools and urban schools across this province were going to be cut. No, no. The party of Bill Davis would never have done that, but the party of Kathleen Wynne and Dalton McGuinty sure as heck did.

So I ask the Deputy Premier one more time: What could that \$90 million have been spent on? Kids in classrooms or more transfers to unions?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I knew Bill Davis, Lisa. You're no Bill Davis.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Transportation, second time.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now we'll move to warnings. I'll give them out like candy if you want.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, quite frankly, and for the ones who have been warned, the next one is a naming.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I think it's actually time to reflect on how Ontario's teacher unions were originally set up. They were set up as federations that didn't bargain under the Labour Relations Act. They were set up with the capacity to—

Mr. John Yakabuski: We don't need a history lesson; we need to know—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Liz Sandals: They were set up with bargaining departments and with a professional development department. Do you know who set them up that way? Premier Bill Davis set them up that way, so don't tell me that Bill Davis didn't believe in professional development for teachers. We actually—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Minister, when I stand, you sit.

New question.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Acting Premier. Last year, the government changed the Government Advertising Act so that they could run partisan government ads. We see them all the time.

As Ontario's non-partisan Auditor General wrote, "The government could flood the province with self-congratulatory and self-promotional advertising that would be of little practical use to the citizens paying for it." The new electoral rules will limit anyone who wants to criticize them during an election and the six months before, but they will allow the government to spend millions and flood the province with partisan ads during an election and the six months before. Those are the rules.

Are the Liberals so desperate that they'll limit the speech of non-partisan citizen groups in the province of Ontario?

Mr. Mike Colle: How about that \$10,000 fundraiser you're having?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence is warned.

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We're very proud of the legislation that we have when it comes to banning partisan government—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry is warned. I'm just going to do what I said.

Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: One of the first things we did when we were elected in 2003, Speaker, was to bring in legislation to ban partisan ads because we had seen such a blatant misuse of taxpayers' money from the previous government. We're proud of that. We're one of the very few jurisdictions in the whole world—

Mr. Paul Miller: Baloney. You rigged the election.

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

Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We're one of the few jurisdictions in the entire world to have legislation that bans partisan ads and we're proud of that distinction.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: The Liberals' new rules don't just limit third-party ads about political parties or politicians. These new rules clamp down on any issue of public interest. The new rules will silence climate change groups, non-partisan citizen groups, parents concerned with autism, people fighting for pensions or fighting for lower hydro bills, nurses concerned about the cuts in the health care system—all will have their right to free speech limited at the same time as the government can flood the airwaves and bus shelters and newspaper ad pages with partisan government advertising.

Can the Deputy Premier explain why there is one set of rules for seniors fighting for pensions and another set of rules for the Ontario Liberal Party?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It is clearly obvious, now, that the NDP do not want to reform election financing rules in the province of Ontario. From the beginning, they have been trying to slow down and stall the process. Perhaps they want to justify and continue to do their big \$10,000 fundraisers like the one they're going to be doing in Ottawa.

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On this side of the House, we have heard the public. We want to make sure that we have a system that is transparent and accountable. That is why we have tabled this bill and we want to go and listen to Ontarians. I hope that the members opposite on the NDP side will agree to a unanimous consent motion so that we can start that public hearings process now, so we can start listening to Ontarians now and through the summer.

I ask the NDP: Are they going to support the unanimous consent motion or not?

GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Chris Ballard: This question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, Ontario's Financial Accountability Officer released his Economic and Fiscal Outlook for Ontario. The report forecasts solid growth for the Ontario economy and confirmed the province's budget projection that Ontario can achieve its long-standing commitment to balance the provincial budget in 2017-18.

This balanced budget was first forecast at the bottom of the recession in the budget of 2009-10. Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada never to miss a deficit reduction target and to balance according to the schedule set during the recession.

Speaker, would the minister tell the House how the province's stewardship of its finances brought Ontario through the recession and pointed it back into the black?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you to the member from Newmarket–Aurora for that excellent question. I would also like to thank the FAO and take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the work he's done on his report.

Over the past two years, the Ontario economy has posted solid growth, with real GDP rising by 2.7% on average in 2014-15. Our commitment to build Ontario up

ensures stronger growth going forward. In fact, the FAO expects that Ontario's economy will outperform the rest of Canada in 2016 and continue to grow over the next several years, supported by strong gains in international exports and business investment. Equally important is that our progressive fiscal plan is positioned for improving long-term economic sustainability.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Minister. The report from the Financial Accountability Officer has validated the process the province took to getting back to a balanced budget after this fiscal year. Whether bond-rating agencies, economists, banks or others, external reviewers have also noted the credibility of Ontario's 2016 budget and fiscal plan.

Anyone can slash and burn their way back to balance, putting the burden on the backs of those least able to afford it. Ontario grew targeted business sectors and steered a compassionate and responsible path back to balance during the past eight budget cycles.

Would the minister outline the key components of the province's budget that enabled Ontario to balance its budget, emerge stronger after the recession and lead Canada in economic growth?

Hon. Charles Sousa: A very well-informed question. Let me be clear: We're on track and on schedule to balance the budget by 2017-18 and the year after that. We're making strategic investments in infrastructure and in services that matter most to the people of Ontario.

To mention only a few, we're investing \$1 billion more in health care, \$400 million more to the Business Growth Initiative and \$160 billion over the next 12 years to build roads, bridges, transit and needed infrastructure. The government is committed to beating our targets and coming to balance through a fair and balanced approach, as we have been over the last number of years.

Thank you for the question and thank you to the team on this side of the House that fights for Ontario.

Interjections.

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

New question.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, the Financial Accountability Officer confirmed that under this government's economic plan, they're not going to be able to fund the natural inflationary growth of health care spending. This means more nurses will be fired, more surgeries will be cancelled and further cuts will happen to physician services. All these cuts are due to the government's fiscal mismanagement, scandal and waste.

Will the Acting Premier finally admit that due to their incompetence to govern, health care services for Ontarians will continue to be cut over the next four years?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I've said earlier today and the day before and the day before and the day before,

we are actually increasing spending when it comes to health care. It is a billion dollars more this year than last year. I have to say, I don't know anybody who thinks a billion dollars more is a cut.

We are going to continue to invest more in health care. We're going to continue to make sure our kids get the best possible education. We're going to continue our work to make sure that the most vulnerable in this province have the best opportunities to be successful. We're going to move forward on free tuition in colleges and universities for our low- and moderate-income families. We're going to continue with our agenda and we're going to do it in a fiscally responsible way, in a way that gets better value for the dollars that we're spending.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the Acting Premier. Perhaps the Acting Premier could see where they're sending the money, because it's not reaching the front lines in Ontario. Unfortunately, today it was announced that Sunnybrook hospital was cutting 109 surgery days out of their budget. So cuts are happening, Acting Premier.

Last year, this government not only saw cuts to health care; they fired nurses, they cancelled surgeries and they cut physicians' services. Yesterday the FAO report brought to light the degree of underfunding the health care system is receiving under this government for the next few years.

Not only do hospitals have to deal with budget shortfalls, but they also have to deal with the decreased revenues from the Ontario lottery corporation that this government has cut. They have to deal with the high energy rates that are affecting the hospitals. The hospital in Timmins is concerned that the money they received in extras is not even going to cover the cost of their electricity bills.

Will the Acting Premier tell Ontarians how many surgeries will be cancelled and how many nurses will be fired this year due to their underfunding of health care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm sorry to hear that the member opposite has fallen into the trap of not understanding that when we talk about nurses, we need to talk about net new nurses. Collective agreements are written in a way that layoff notices are issued even if those nurses are re-hired in another part of the hospital. So when you talk about net new nurses—26,000 net new nurses in our system now—even last year, thousands of net new nurses were added.

I do find it strange that the member opposite who asked that question is the same person who stood in the way of us cutting the price of generic drugs in half for all Ontarians. That action was one example of how we can get better value for money. That caucus and that member in particular did not want to cut the price of drugs in half.

We're going to continue to do the work we need to do to get best value and best outcomes for patients.

PARENTAL RIGHTS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Acting Premier. Last year's Cy and Ruby's Act for parental equality

passed second reading with all-party support. Since then, the government has stalled on my bill and there are babies being born to LGBTQ parents who are being forced to fight Ontario's discriminatory system.

For a decade now, the courts have told the Ontario government that our parentage legislation is clearly discriminatory. It does not recognize that LGBTQ families even exist. As a result, LGBTQ parents are forced to adopt their very own children.

Can the Acting Premier please explain why this government won't pass Cy and Ruby's Act and is continuing to prevent the children of LGBTQ parents from parental recognition?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Attorney General.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I want to thank the member from Parkdale–High Park for her advocacy.

Mr. Speaker, this government remains committed to supporting all of Ontario's families and protecting the best interests of children. We recognize that modern families come in many diverse forms. We are also aware that use of assisted conception methods, such as IVF and surrogacy, are increasingly common. I spent 14 years in the delivery room, and this was not the reality of the time—I realize that was many years ago.

But before any changes are made to parentage laws, it is important to hear from as many people as possible about their experiences, to ensure that we understand the needs and circumstances of all families.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Back to the Acting Premier: This government's inaction on this issue has forced LGBTQ parents to take the government to court. You're fighting them in court. The government apparently cannot figure out whether it is going to concede that legislation needs to be changed or whether it will continue to fight equality for LGBTQ families.

This isn't complex. The government should not be fighting this case. It's a waste of taxpayers' money and time. Will the Acting Premier commit to ending the discrimination of LGBTQ parents and children and pass Cy and Ruby's Act on parental equality in time for pride month, yes or no?

Interjections.

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

Attorney General?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: We support the principle underlying the member opposite's bill. That's why the Ministry of the Attorney General, in co-operation with other ministries, will be consulting on this important issue over the coming months. Ontario was served with a constitutional challenge to the birth registration and parental recognition provision in the Vital Statistics Act and Children's Law Reform Act. As this case is before the court, I cannot comment on it, but I can tell you that we're serious about consulting because there are different opinions and we wanted to make sure that we hear from as many families as possible.

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: My question is for the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. May 19 marks Personal Support Worker Day, a day for us to celebrate the contributions of the approximately 100,000 personal support workers here in Ontario. I acknowledge those that are with us here today. I've worked closely with many PSWs in my community of Cambridge and the Waterloo region at Cambridge Memorial Hospital, and also in my role as a care coordinator for the community care access centre.

More importantly, there are many families in my community who rely on and value the important services that PSWs provide to them daily. In fact, in the home and community care sector alone, nearly 41 million direct hours of publicly funded personal support services are delivered each year.

Can the associate minister please speak to the role that PSWs play in Ontario and the steps that our government is taking to support them as they serve Ontarians?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I want to begin by thanking the member opposite for the question. I know that, as somebody who has worked in the front lines, she understands the important role that PSWs play. I want to also take the opportunity to recognize some of the PSW workers and SEIU union representatives who are here today.

I want to take this opportunity on this day to recognize, officially, the contributions of personal support workers in Ontario and assure the House that our government is committed to building a high-quality PSW workforce with the capacity to meet Ontario's personal support needs today and for many years to come. We as a government have been a leader in recognizing the growing importance of PSWs in the health system. This includes our PSW workforce stabilization strategy, which will see the base minimum wage for publicly funded personal support services in the home and community care sector raised to \$16.50 an hour.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you to the associate minister for her work on this file. Our government's steps toward supporting our PSWs contribute fundamentally to our plan to put patients first across Ontario. During my time as a care coordinator, I often worked together very closely with PSWs to help manage and improve the health of our shared patients. More than 34,000 of Ontario's 100,000 PSWs deliver care, assistance and support to our seniors and other people with complex care needs in their homes and communities. We estimate that over 9,000 PSWs work in hospitals and 57,000 PSWs work in long-term-care homes.

To continue building up these services, it's essential that we work with our partners in the sector to develop a long-term strategy. Can the associate minister please inform the House what work is under way to strengthen our government's relationships with PSWs?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Thank you to the member from Cambridge for the supplementary question.

Our government has ongoing plans to work with the sector so that our personal support workers can continue to provide better service for Ontarians. That is why we have developed a common PSW educational standard, which was released in September 2014, to improve the consistency of learning outcomes. We have also created the PSW training fund, which provides up to \$10 million annually to support training and education to PSWs working in home and community care.

We are committed to a long-term strategy that will serve our PSWs and will build on our initiatives to strengthen the profession and ensure ongoing alignment with the health system transformation agenda.

Finally, I just want to thank the PSWs across this province because they are the glue that holds our health care system together.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, as you know, in your hometown of Mississauga they recently voted to ban Uber and ride-sharing operations altogether. I want to commend Mayor John Tory and members of council. They brought forward some sensible resolutions that are balanced in protecting consumers while enabling more choice in Toronto.

The reality is that now we have Ontario's largest city next to Ontario's third-largest city—and Brampton may join Mississauga—where you can get into a legal Uber vehicle on one side of the street and then, preposterously, cross the street and be in an illegal Uber vehicle.

Minister, this is not good for consumers. It's not good for drivers. It's certainly not good for business investment. Don't you think it's time that we brought in province-wide rules around ride-sharing for clarity, for consumer protection and to allow good choices for consumers in our province?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you to the member for his question. Thank you also for corresponding with me last week relative to this very issue, recognizing that the sharing economy is upon us. I outlined that very clearly in the fall economic statement as well as in our last budget, that we must embrace the issues around the sharing economy in a way that is fair, provides consumer protection and provides business protection.

That is exactly how we're proceeding. We've established a consulting committee to review the effects and the impacts going forward. We also recognize the importance of the municipalities in engaging in the licensing. Some municipalities have operated differently than others when it comes to the sharing economy, and with ride-sharing specifically.

I recognize the challenges that are before us, and I appreciate the member's commitment to the issues and engagement that we have ongoing as a result.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Minister: I appreciate the fact that he has, as finance minister, helped move for-

ward insurance products for ride-sharing. I commend him and encourage him in that endeavour.

As the minister knows, in Mississauga, there are over 100,000 users of Uber. There are 5,000 people on payroll who depend on that income, and they had a bizarre system where they had an advisory committee that was dominated by interests from the cab sector. Asking Uber to get their permission is a bit like asking Netflix to get permission from Rogers and Bell and Cogeco. It just is not going to happen. It's very much last century.

You may recall that the city of Mississauga sent you a resolution asking for the province to intervene and have province-wide standards. I think that's a cry for help. It's certainly a good change that would benefit consumers across our province.

Minister, will you take the advice from that resolution and bring in standards across our province to help move this decision into the 21st century and out of the last?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Yes, the member opposite did highlight the conditions of that advisory committee that he felt was sort of tilted one way. I understand that issue. We have also established our own sharing economy advisory committee to develop an integrated and a coordinated strategy that will promote a level playing field and tax fairness that fosters innovation and support for new business. We don't want to hamper economic ingenuity and increasing of economic prowess, and we want to protect workers, consumers and communities.

The member opposite cited the fact we have before us a review for insurance protection of all those who would be safe in those respective vehicles. We are doing just that by the redefinition of "fleet" to enable, in this case, Uber and Intact to have an agreement to provide for safety for consumers as well as the drivers. We also have Aviva, which has done another program to support drivers so that they're properly insured.

I have been reviewing what has happened in Alberta, recognizing some—

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

New question.

1130

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Acting Premier. The Fort Erie Race Track will open for its 119th season on May 31, and you're all invited to join me there.

This racetrack remains the only one in the province that must rely on \$250,000 in funding, from the town of Fort Erie. There are 29 gaming zones in the province, including Niagara, but Fort Erie is excluded. The racetrack has a business case to become self-sufficient. It supports a thousand good-paying jobs in my riding—700 direct and 300 indirect jobs. It's an important part of the fabric that makes Fort Erie such a great community.

The town supports the track, visitors support the track and everyone in Niagara supports the track. Will this government support the Fort Erie Race Track by includ-

ing them in the Niagara gaming zone and returning slots and increasing race days at our track?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to just commend the member for Niagara Falls. I know what kind of interest he has in the horse racing industry in the Fort Erie area.

We do know that the Fort Erie Race Track, of course, is the second leg of the very prestigious Canadian Triple Crown, the Prince of Wales Stakes.

During our recent budget, my colleague the Minister of Finance extended the funding for horse racing in the province of Ontario from 2019 to 2021, to provide stability to what is a very important industry, particularly in rural Ontario. We have 940 race dates in the province of Ontario—the fourth in terms of jurisdiction in North America—and we'll continue to look at plans for Fort Erie as we move forward with the integration with the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Back to the Acting Premier: The government claims that their latest horse racing plan will restore confidence to the industry, confidence that was lost after the government's last horse racing plan failed.

We have an incredible amount of development ready to go in Fort Erie, like the Canadian Motor Speedway, and fixing the track is the final piece we need, to make sure all that development goes forward.

Will this government give confidence to the people of Fort Erie, and the horse people across the province, by including Fort Erie in the Niagara gaming zone, returning the slots to Fort Erie, protecting the thousands of jobs there, and ensuring the Fort Erie Race Track can be self-sufficient?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Jeff Leal: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I thank the member for the question, recognizing the importance of the work that has been done recently to pass legislation to establish an Ontario racing coalition that represents the entire industry, to facilitate us with the respective funding of \$100 million that is now committed to the industry.

When it comes to trust, it's all about ensuring trust, to ensure that the monies that are being established go where they need to go, which is to the horses, to the breeders and to the people in the rural communities that will benefit, who have not actually benefited to date.

We are making those changes. We are working very closely with the industry, under the industry's co-operation and collaboration.

I'm very proud of the work done by the Minister of Agriculture to this point. We'll continue to work closely, for the benefit of the horse racing community, on an ongoing basis.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the minister responsible for seniors' affairs. I know first-hand that in my riding of Davenport, I am fortunate to have the number of seniors that I do. My question today is on social integration and the participation of older adults in our society. The participation of seniors in the community is often seen as an indicator of a productive and healthy society, and it is widely accepted that social supports have a strong, proactive effect on health.

However, the opposite is also true: Many seniors may be at risk of being socially isolated or lonely. This may be due to a number of factors, such as living alone, death of family members or friends, retirement or poor health.

We know that seniors want to live longer at home and in the community. Thus, the issue of social isolation takes on a new importance, a significant issue today across the province.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister inform the House of the work being done by his ministry to address social isolation among seniors?

Hon. Mario Sergio: I know that the member from Davenport is a very avid supporter of seniors in her community, and I want to thank her for the question.

Our government, led by our Premier, is dedicated to assisting seniors in living a comfortable, healthy and safe life after retirement. Sustaining healthy lifestyles, providing information, increasing knowledge and providing plans and programs are at the core of our Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors, like the 263 Elderly Persons Centres—to the tune of \$11.5 million in support for centres that are provided in every corner of our province, delivering healthy and active aging and wellness in the community, as well as the seniors' community affairs and the 56 friendly communities, with \$1.5 million in support.

Speaker, the reason this community—

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

Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I would like to thank the minister for his response, and our Premier for the dedication to seniors in Davenport and across Ontario. I'm very pleased to hear of the many initiatives our government is doing and I look forward to seeing many seniors in Davenport and across this province benefit from these many programs.

I'm especially pleased to learn that we have programs in place to encourage seniors to stay active in their retirement years, and I know many of these services are provided by the many wonderful organizations in my riding of Davenport.

Given the potential harmful effects of social isolation and loneliness, especially in seniors, it is important to continue to pursue this issue in order to reduce emotional damage to seniors that may result. Would the minister please inform the House more about the status of the Seniors Community Grant Program?

Hon. Mario Sergio: Again, I want to thank the member for Davenport.

Yes, the Seniors Community Grant Program is the first grant in the province of Ontario dedicated solely for the benefit of seniors. It is intended to give seniors more opportunity to participate in their communities, and encourage greater social inclusion, volunteerism and community engagement for seniors. The grant grows from \$500 to \$8,000 depending on their stream, and it's aimed at supporting not-for-profit organizations.

Under the leadership of our Premier, the Seniors Community Grant Program has already supported some 544 projects and helped about 116,000 seniors in our province. I have to say that the program is now a permanent program and we'll continue to increase the funding as well.

I have to put in a little bit of a plug for the hard-working staff at the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Not right now. New question.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My question is for the environment minister. Speaker, over the last couple of weeks, the minister has flipped and flopped like a fish out of water. Just last week, the minister suggested in question period that he would cut off natural gas to Ontario cities. And then, when he was called out, he backtracked. It's on tape. Then, when the Globe and Mail revealed the Liberals do, in fact, have a blueprint to remove natural gas heating from homes in Ontario, they backtracked.

The ministry is now claiming this isn't the government's plan despite outlining his intentions to cut it off last week. Speaker, is the minister suggesting last week he put his foot in his mouth once again or is he suggesting the document obtained by the Globe contains no plan to phase out the residential use of natural gas by 2030?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I've been very clear: (1) We are not forcing people off natural gas. Let me say it twice: We are not forcing people off natural gas. Let me say it a third time, Mr. Speaker: We are not forcing people off natural gas.

(2) We are working with natural gas companies and many others on extending services on cogen. There is a great deal of enthusiasm for low-carbon solutions for homes. We will enable that and we will support the choices Ontarians make.

The member opposite has a plan that would cost households \$107 a month, Mr. Speaker. That's what it would cost to de-link. That's what the carbon tax—\$107 a month. The Tories want to bankrupt Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader on a—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's never too late—never too late.

The government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the scheduling of Bill 201, the Election Finances Act, at committee for the purpose of public hearings during the summer months.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do have a very important note to make for all of us—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): —for all of us. It's the last day for the pages.

I would like to offer our pages our gratitude for the wonderful work that they've done.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You see? We can be nice together for people, so that you go home happy.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to welcome to the members' gallery Rena Silver, who is president of Hasbara at York University; Willem Hart, who's also involved with Hasbara at York University, but he's here with StandWithUs Canada, and he's an Emerson fellow; Kinsey Schurm, who is chairman of the "Vote No to BDS" referendum campaign at the University of Waterloo and is very involved with the PC Party youth; and Judy Jo and Zehavi Zynoberg, Jewish and pro-Israel student organizers at York University.

I just want to mention that Alan Krolik is supposed to be on his way, as well.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I'll be making a statement on this as well: I want to introduce the Singh Khalsa Sewa Club. These gentlemen and a few of their friends took two full truckloads of supplies to Fort McMurray. They drove straight there for 30 hours.

Applause.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I just wanted to introduce some very special guests who are with us today at the Ontario Legislature. First of all, I'd like to welcome Mustafa Dzhemilev. He is a member of Parliament in the Parliament of Ukraine and the recognized leader of the Crimean Tatar people. Welcome, Mr. Dzhemilev, to Queen's Park.

I'd also like to welcome further guests. We have with us Liudmyla Davydovych, who is the consul general of Ukraine here in Toronto. We have Sviatoslav Kavetskyi, who is also with the Ukrainian consulate. We have Gökhan Toy, who is the vice-consul of the Republic of Turkey. We have Rustem Irsay, who is the president of

the Canadian Association of Crimean Tatars. We have Sergii Usyk, who is Mr. Mustafa Dzhemilev's assistant. We have Anton Sestritys, who is also with the Canadian Association of Crimean Tatars, and Vlad Paslavskiy, who is a leader in our Ukrainian Canadian community. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions? Last call for further introductions.

Therefore, it's time to model our new uniform of MPPs—I'm sorry. Now it's time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PERTH MILITARY SETTLEMENT

Mr. Randy Hillier: Perth, like its Scottish namesake, stands

'Mid spreading fields, and fertile lands,
Upon the river Tay.
Dense forests once, and swamps were seen,
Whose autumn tints and gorgeous green
Combin'd in rich array,
Where now "The Model Town" is found,
With happiness and honour crown'd
Improving every day.

Speaker, it is with great pleasure and fanfare that I beg to inform this House of important news. I have heard reports that a company of Royal Engineers will arrive in Perth on the morrow. This company of royal engineers embarked 200 years ago to build a military establishment in the wilderness of Canada West. Their sons, daughters, ancestors, friends and family are all encouraged to greet them tomorrow as we begin a year-long festive celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Perth Military Settlement.

It was also 200 years ago that this assembly, in its enduring wisdom, recognized that there was a need to create a legislative library whose purpose would be to serve as an archive for the province, which would include the many deeds, adventures and heroism of the colonial families to the Perth Military Settlement.

Speaker, I'm proud to honour the 200th anniversary of the Perth Military Settlement, and I invite all members of this House to come to Perth, Beckwith, Tay Valley and Drummond/North Elmsley township and celebrate this significant, historic milestone with us.

I will be leaving with every haste, and with Godspeed and Providence I will rendezvous with the company at Rideau ferry in the morning and add my paddle to their valiant efforts.

Now, at the close, I wish to say
To all the citizens of Perth,
May you be prosper'd ev'ry day,
And long remain on earth;

Should war arise, or trouble come,
May each and all of us be seen,
Most nobly striving to defend
Our town—our country—and our Queen!

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would entertain unanimous consent to have that as our new uniform if you want.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have to wear one.

SPRING BEAR HUNT

M^{me} France Gélinas: I rise today to share the comments of outfitters in my riding who are furious with the government's unannounced last-minute changes to the bear hunt. After the ministry announced the reopening of the spring bear hunt to out-of-province visitors, outfitters spent their own hard-earned resources and money to rebuild their business.

Linda and Jim Loisselle from Watershed Bear Outfitters near Gogama write, "Why did the MNRFP decide to bring in a quota of non-resident bear hunting permits and wait until three weeks prior to the" bear "hunt opening to announce to outfitters.... ? My non-resident hunters have booked flights and holidays to hunt in my district. This will cause me to lose \$36,000! Appropriate advance notice of changes is only reasonable."

And I agree.

Trevor Spooner of French River Bear Outfitters writes, "Myself, as well as other outfitters, are virtually being put out of business."

Gary Stocking and Kimberly Chappell from Thunderstock Outfitters—again, near Gogama—write, "The MNRFP have proven over and over again they do not understand the management concerns of northern Ontario wildlife...."

Speaker, businesses need stability and predictability to be successful. The government's last-minute changes to out-of-province licences is hurting my constituents and ruining small businesses throughout northern Ontario. There is an interim solution on the table. The government needs to act now to save those businesses.

CRIMEAN TATAR PEOPLE

Mr. Yvan Baker: On May 18, 1944, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin forcibly deported 240,000 Crimean Tatars to Central Asia. Over 100,000 of them died. Today we commemorate the victims of this unspeakable crime.

Among those that survived was the legendary Mustafa Dzhemilev, who is with us here today. He spent decades demanding that his people be allowed to return to their homeland. As a result, he spent 18 years in a Soviet gulag. Mr. Dzhemilev is the recognized leader of the Crimean Tatar National Movement and a member of Parliament of Ukraine. I am honoured that he is here with us today in the Legislature as we commemorate the victims of this deportation.

Remarks in Turkish.

Welcome, Mustafa, to Queen's Park.

Two years ago, Russia once again invaded Ukraine and invaded the Crimea. History is repeating itself. The Russian regime is once again persecuting the Crimean Tatar people. They have closed their mosques, closed their media and closed their Majlis, which is their Legislature. The Crimean Tatar people are now facing persecution, disappearances and execution. Mr. Dzhemilev's own son has been put in jail and Mr. Dzhemilev is now, once again, banned from returning home. History is repeating itself, Speaker.

Just this week, Crimean Tatar singer Jamala represented Ukraine at the Eurovision song contest. She performed a song about the 1944 deportation. Jamala moved and inspired millions. Jamala won the Eurovision song contest.

I am proud that today, Ontario is the first jurisdiction to my knowledge in the world to officially raise the Crimean Tatar flag in front of its Legislature. We fly the flag here today to commemorate the victims of the 1944 deportation. Let us remember and commemorate them, but let us also take this opportunity to learn history's lessons and redouble our efforts to ensure that the Crimean Tatar people can once again live in freedom in Crimea as part of a free, independent Ukraine. Mr. Dzhemilev, the Crimean Tatar people and the hundreds of thousands of victims of the 1944 deportation deserve no less.

Remarks in Ukrainian.

Remarks in Crimean.

109TH BATTALION CEF

Ms. Laurie Scott: This past weekend marked the 100th anniversary of the 109th Battalion CEF leaving for the battlefields of World War I. Lady Eaton presented colours to the men from Victoria and Haliburton counties—the first time a woman presented battalion colours. The 109th Battalion was raised by local MP Sir Sam Hughes as part of the Buddies and Chums recruitment drive. So many recruits came from small areas around our region to serve King and country.

1310

I want to honour the men from all the areas, but the north section, the D company platoons, who came from Haliburton, Minden, Gooderham, Harcourt, Highland Grove, Tory Hill and my hometown of Kinmount, where my grandfather was Private Wallace Scott and proudly served overseas, joined the platoons from the south in Victoria county, small towns like Argyle, Woodville, Omeme and Lindsay.

Too often, we think of these events as only about soldiers, battles and casualties. But World War I was a total war on the home front as well, where everyone was part of the effort. Groups raised funds for soldiers' comforts and benefit. They bought victory bonds, planted victory gardens and wrote letters to keep up morale. Women and children replaced men as workers on farms

and in factories, nurses volunteered, and children did fundraisers. Every group contributed in so many ways.

The Great War is one we will always remember, not just because of the self-sacrifice to defend the values of freedom and justice, but because it brought communities together. I thank the Victoria County Historical Society for re-enacting that wave off.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to rise today on behalf of my constituents of Windsor West. As I have stated in this chamber time and time again, Windsor is a proud automotive town, and the industry has always enjoyed tremendous community support.

This month, the community once again came together to celebrate the successes of our automotive industry and discuss how we can continue to foster growth in this very important sector. In fact, community leaders from labour, industry and academia held a policy conference on the automotive industry last Tuesday. People living throughout Windsor were encouraged by the level of co-operation and collaboration shown by all participants at the conference.

Several common issues were raised throughout the meeting. First, the high cost of energy in Ontario is suffocating businesses and is a major barrier to bringing in new automotive investment. Second, we need to start listening to the front-line workers when discussing automotive policy decisions. Finally, we need the government to identify the automotive sector as a strategic asset.

Unfortunately, the government just isn't listening.

The day after the policy forum, consultations were held in Windsor on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a deal that Unifor president Jerry Dias called "outrageous." Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz called the Trans-Pacific Partnership "the worst trade deal ever." The deal will put 20,000 jobs in the auto industry at risk, not to mention the spin-off jobs in the tool and die, automotive parts and technology industries. Even the provincial Minister of Economic Development admitted that he is concerned about the impact of the TPP on the automotive industry.

It's time for this government to tell their federal counterparts that the TPP is a bad deal and to finally prioritize the automotive and related industries.

STREETSVILLE BREAD AND HONEY FESTIVAL

Mr. Bob Delaney: It officially becomes summer in Mississauga at the start of the annual Streetsville Bread and Honey Festival on the first weekend of June each year. That is the weekend of June 3, 4 and 5 this year.

At the Vic Johnston Community Centre on Church Street, at adjoining Memorial Park and on the main stage, the 44th annual bread and honey festival features rides, local vendors, great entertainment, games, terrific food and, of course, the traditional bread and honey.

Led by our Streetsville Rotarians, many volunteers and groups play host to folks from all across Ontario every year. Our cat Merlin will join me in the annual bread and honey parade down Streetsville's Queen Street on Saturday morning. On Sunday morning is the traditional Streetsville pancake breakfast.

As always, I will be there every minute of both days, much of that time at my booth meeting our local residents and people from all across Ontario to answer questions about Ontario.

It's just \$5 per day to get in and \$2 on Friday evening. People can get more information on the Web at www.breadandhoney.ca, and on Twitter, follow [breadhoneyfest](https://twitter.com/breadhoneyfest). See you all at Bread and Honey to get summer under way in beautiful Streetsville, Ontario.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to mention that the Jewish community of the greater Toronto area has been watching Kathleen Wynne's trip to Israel this week with many members of the Jewish community and business leaders, as well as one Liberal MPP. We're going to work on our side and plan a trip to Israel from this side, hopefully soon, as well.

I think everybody knows that very soon in the House we are going to be debating Bill 202, the Standing Up Against Anti-Semitism in Ontario Act. It's very sad that in the year 2016 we're still talking about anti-Semitism here in the House.

I'm just going to quickly quote Kathleen Wynne: "I entirely oppose the BDS movement," she said, and "implied that it promotes anti-Semitism." That was just this week in Israel that this statement was given.

Mr. Speaker, we have in the House today some students from York University and elsewhere who have experienced some of the most horrific accounts of anti-Semitism on campus. With some of the students, especially from Hasbara at York, I've heard first-hand tales of name calling, intimidation, marginalization and violence. I'd like to encourage the members of this assembly to talk to these students after this session. You can also hear just how terrible the atmosphere is on some of these campuses. Students have been barricaded in their club rooms. The police have even had to be called.

These students need our support. This debate coming up about BDS is not about free speech. This is about hate speech and intimidation of our students on campus, intimidation of our business leaders and our professors, and intimidation of our brethren in Israel, who I'm sure we all care about deeply.

JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I'm truly honoured to rise today in recognition of Jewish Heritage Month in Ontario. Ontario is home to approximately 200,000 Jewish Canadians, a community that, since arriving and making Ontario home, has overcome significant barriers and

made significant contributions to the growth and prosperity of our province.

In 2012, the month of May was proclaimed as Jewish Heritage Month, with all-party support, to honour the significant achievements of Jewish Canadians across Ontario. I also want to acknowledge the member from Eglinton–Lawrence and his hard work on Bill 17.

May is an important month for the Jewish community in Ontario, including both Holocaust Remembrance Day and Israeli Independence Day, both of which were marked here at Queen's Park. In proclaiming Jewish Heritage Month, the province of Ontario and our government demonstrated our commitment to celebrating the role that Jewish Canadians have played and continue to play in communities across Ontario, and demonstrated, as well, our shared commitment to a strong and productive relationship with the state of Israel.

While in Israel this week, our Premier and her delegation are leading an important trade mission, meeting with Israeli leaders and innovators to further strengthen the already robust relationship between Ontario and Israel. Our commitment is to continue to work towards educating future generations about the inspirational role that the Jewish community has played in Ontario and will no doubt continue to play in the future.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Vic Dhillon: We've all heard about the devastation and loss experienced by the residents of Fort McMurray due to the wildfire and the consequent evacuation that occurred. It is a tragic experience, and our hearts go out to all of those affected.

Oftentimes, when tragedy strikes, the silver lining is found in the love and generosity that follows. Especially in Canada, in true Canadian fashion, communities come together to help one another. We share whatever we can, from donations of goods to extra manpower, and do whatever is possible to help ease the pain of our neighbours and help them rebuild.

Since the incident in Fort McMurray, we have heard of people from all over the country coming together to help those affected. Today, I am honoured to share one such story with all of you. This is a story of how ordinary people worked together to help hundreds of Fort McMurray evacuees.

Joining us in the gallery today, from the Singh Khalsa Sewa Club, are members Gurpreet Singh, Harpreet Singh Bal, Gurmeet Singh, Karnjot Singh Cheema and Gurjeet Singh Cheema. The day after the wildfire forced Fort McMurray's evacuation, the members of the Singh Khalsa Sewa Club held an emergency meeting and decided to do something to help. Within two days, each member of the club contributed their personal savings and, with additional donations from the Sikh community in the GTA, purchased essential supplies such as food, medicine and clothing. On Sunday, they loaded about \$50,000 worth of supplies in U-Haul trucks and drove

practically nonstop to the evacuation centre in Lac La Biche.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Singh Khalsa Sewa Club for mobilizing and delivering supplies to those affected by the Fort McMurray wildfires. This club also mobilized to help with food, groceries and blankets for the Knights Table, an organization serving the needs of people dealing with issues of poverty and homelessness in the region of Peel.

1320

This is an inspiring story of grit, determination, teamwork and a big heart. I'm honoured that they could make it here today, and I hope this inspires others to give back to their communities and stand by their countrymen in times of need.

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

To our guests: Thank you for that Canadian act. I appreciate that very much. That's who we are.

MOTIONS

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding House proceedings for Monday, May 30, 2016.

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

Deputy House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 8(a), the House shall meet at 9 a.m. on Monday, May 30, 2015; and

That, following introduction of visitors, the Speaker shall adjourn the House during pleasure for the purpose of remarks by the leaders of each of the recognized parties, up to 10 minutes in duration, on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; and

That six guests from Ontario's indigenous communities be invited to present remarks in reply of up to five minutes in duration each; and

That the six guests are Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day; Margaret Froh, president of the Métis Nation of Ontario; Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; Sheila McMahan, president of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres; Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard, president, Ontario Native Women's Association; and Andrew Wesley, a survivor of the residential school system; and

That all remarks be delivered from the lectern at the head of the Clerk's table; and

That, following these proceedings, the Speaker shall resume the Chair and shall then recess the House until 10:30 a.m. for oral questions or, if it is then past 10:30 a.m., shall immediately call oral questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): For clarification purposes, to ensure that we have this right, the date was Monday, May 30, 2016.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Correct, 2016.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is everyone okay with that? Thank you.

Mr. Bradley has moved that, notwithstanding standing order 8(a), the House shall meet at 9 a.m. on Monday, May 30, 2016—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispense.

Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the travel of certain committees.

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

Deputy House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to attend the annual conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees, and the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to attend the annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Deputy House leader moves that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to attend the annual conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees, and the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to attend the annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

VISITORS

VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Associate Minister of Finance on a point of order.

L'hon. Mitzie Hunter: Monsieur le Président, j'aimerais souhaiter la bienvenue aux étudiants de l'Académie Alexandre-Dumas.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will make a gentle, off-the-cuff statement that basically says we do not read anything from IT materials in the House, but that was not noticed.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, May is Asian Heritage Month in Ontario.

Ontario has been enriched in many ways by the extraordinary contributions of our Asian newcomers. For more than 100 years, Asian immigrants have excelled in the arts, business, science, health care, education and other sectors. They have helped build Ontario into a modern and diverse society that is the envy of the world.

Asia has a rich history, with threads that can be seen in countries around the world. That rich history continues in Canada. Some moments in our history are more painful than others. But May is about remembering it all, as it helped shape the community we see today.

The Asian-Canadian community has seen the Chinese head tax requiring Chinese immigrants to pay a fee upon arriving in Canada. We lived through the Chinese Immigration Act, which suspended all immigration for the Chinese. We lost many lives building the trans-Canada railroad, and saw Asians lose the right to vote, and be barred from many, many professions.

But we have seen tremendous growth and success despite these troublesome moments in our past history. We have seen an Asian Governor General. We have seen Asian Canadians elected to office at various levels of government. We have Asian doctors, lawyers, teachers, chefs, Lieutenant Governors and more. We are all shaped by our shared history. You cannot go far without seeing and experiencing the Asian presence in Ontario today.

Speaker, I myself am an example of the Asian presence in Ontario. I came to Canada from Hong Kong as a young man and decided to call Canada home. I am a proud Canadian, and Ontario provided me with a home, a life and a family. But I am proud of my own Asian heritage, as all immigrants should be proud of their personal history and roots.

Asia is our largest source of immigrants, and has been for years. Two million people in our province are of Asian descent. That is nearly one in six Ontarians. Other than our two official languages, Chinese is the most common language in Canada. Of the three largest visible minority groups in the country, Asian and South Asian are the top two groups.

The Asian presence in Ontario and across the country is undeniable. The diversity we all bring to Ontario is what makes it such a unique place to live. Diversity is Ontario's economic and social strength. It also helps us sell Ontario's goods and services around the world. I often say that every immigrant from Asia is a potential trade bridge to his or her former homeland, the vibrant and emerging Asian economies.

I have just returned from a trade mission to China with the Deputy Premier. We were building on the success of the Premier's two recent business missions to China, which have brought billions in investment and thousands

of jobs to Ontario. Asian Canadians have played a key role in helping us leverage these connections.

But most of all, Asian Canadians are our friends and our neighbours. They are our co-workers and community leaders. They are fellow Ontarians.

Speaker, the world has made Ontario home to many. We are lucky to be the destination of choice for people around the world. Ontario has always opened its doors to people seeking a new home, and we will continue to do so. We will continue to be proud of our diversity.

This month, I encourage all people of Ontario to take the time to celebrate Asian Heritage Month.

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

Hon. Dipika Damerla: It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to honour the great work being done across this province by Ontario's personal support workers. Every year, on May 19, our province marks Personal Support Workers Day to celebrate the contributions of the approximately 100,000 PSWs in our province.

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In the home and community care sector alone, nearly 41 million direct hours of publicly funded personal support services are delivered each year. Our government is committed to building a high-quality PSW workforce with the capacity to meet Ontario's personal support needs now and in the future.

We've been a leader in recognizing the growing importance of PSWs within the health system. Their importance has been highlighted in many of our government's foundational pieces, including the Ontario senior care strategy, our action plan for health care and our Patients First: A Roadmap to Strengthen Home and Community Care.

We understand that the personal support workers delivering home and community care services play a critical role in helping Ontario seniors stay independent and supporting people with complex care needs, reducing the need for more costly care in hospitals and long-term-care homes. That is why our government has taken action, with a number of initiatives to support PSWs. Allow me to talk about a few here.

This includes our PSW workforce stabilization strategy, which will see the base minimum wage for publicly funded personal support services in the home and community care sector raised to \$16.50 an hour. As part of the strategy, we are looking at ways to address the challenges affecting the recruitment and retention of PSWs.

We have also created the PSW Training Fund, which provides up to \$10 million annually to support training and education to PSWs working in home and community care. We developed a common PSW educational standard, which was released in September 2014, to improve the consistency of learning outcomes.

Our government is proud of the investments we have made to attract and retain the best PSWs in the home and community care sector. We are committed to continuing

to build on existing PSW initiatives to further strengthen the profession and ensure ongoing alignment with the health system transformation agenda.

On behalf of our government and the people of Ontario, I want to extend our thanks and appreciation to all of our PSWs for their dedication and commitment to serving Ontarians.

Truly, Mr. Speaker, these front-line workers are the glue that keep our health care system going. The work they do, each and every day, is making a difference in the lives of seniors and their families across this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's now time for responses.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Todd Smith: On behalf of our leader, Patrick Brown, and the PC caucus, I'm pleased to recognize Asian Heritage Month.

This is a time to reflect on and celebrate the many achievements and contributions of Asian Canadians who helped shape our great province, from sports to culture and business to science.

The social fabric of Ontario is rich because of our multicultural identity. Immigrants and their families make our neighbourhoods and communities better places to live, work and play because of their dynamism, work ethic, entrepreneurship and cultural diversity.

Prior to the last election, I served as the community outreach liaison for the PC caucus and attended numerous events, on behalf of my colleagues, in Asian communities across the province.

The leader of our caucus was pleased to host the first-ever Halo-halo party in the PC caucus room at Queen's Park in September, and we look forward to hosting it again this year.

I'm pleased to share that in February, the PC caucus celebrated the Chinese lunar new year with the Chinese community by hosting a dinner, where over 600 were in attendance.

I've had the opportunity to participate in cultural rituals in the Chinese community and celebrate the lunar new year in the Korean community. I've had the chance to hear real stories about how mothers and fathers, grandparents, aunts and uncles brought their hopes and dreams to Ontario.

There's a commonality to our dreams. There's a commonality to our hopes for the future of this province and this country. Asian Canadians contribute every day to making this a stronger, more prosperous Ontario with a brighter future.

We could, as we did yesterday, reflect on some of the darker moments of our history, on moments where our immigration laws were discriminatory and the attitudes of our society were less welcoming. There are those moments, and we have, as Canadians, appropriately recognized the impact they've had on our society. We have reconciled ourselves to a commitment to do better, and we have.

Just a few weeks ago, we also marked the Vietnamese Journey to Freedom Day in the Legislature. My colleague from York-Simcoe, who is here with us this afternoon, received unanimous consent to wear the Vietnamese freedom scarves for the first time ever in the Legislature—truly an historic day.

We have always looked at ways to work together as a people and as a province, and I look forward to continuing to work alongside Ontario's Asian community on issues that are important to them.

As member for Prince Edward-Hastings, I invite all Ontarians to take part in the many events that are taking place this month to celebrate Asian Heritage Month.

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

Mr. Bill Walker: It's my privilege to rise today to speak, on behalf of the Ontario PC Party, as we celebrate personal support workers and recognize the tremendous and indispensable work that they do every day across our communities.

Each day, some 100,000 personal support workers in Ontario—some of whom are here today—play a critical role in the home and community care sector, long-term-care homes and hospitals, assisting patients from children to youth to adults and to the most vulnerable people with disabilities and complex care needs.

As aging becomes one of the biggest issues facing our society, the work that you do in home and community care is becoming even more important. I like to think of your work as not only helping patients stay independent, but also motivating them, being companions who provide emotional support and truly benefiting their overall well-being. In this capacity, you are truly making a difference in the lives of Ontarians and also helping to improve patient outcomes each day.

Yet, let's not forget, our personal support workers remain the largest group of unregulated health care workers in Canada, who are left to perform one of the most important jobs in health care. That's why it was disheartening when the Liberal government secretly cancelled the \$5-million PSW registry that was promised to promote greater accountability and transparency. It sadly is one of the many cuts that this government is making to health care.

Every day, I hear—and I'm very certain that the members in this chamber hear—the same story of people waiting months for care, with some people not even qualifying for the services that they need. Furthermore, I hear stories of people only getting one bath a week and personal support workers unable to complete all of their work in the time they are allocated.

To this end, I respectfully remind the government and the associate minister of their promise to provide better access to care. This means not cutting health care services—such as acute care beds, nursing and direct patient care hours, personal support workers and others—but investing a continuum of care and building long-term-care beds, so that Ontario's most vulnerable patients can access the care they so clearly need.

Speaker, every cut this government makes means more time that the people have to wait to access much-needed health care and more demand on health care workers, including our personal support workers.

Again, on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I offer our personal support workers a heartfelt thank you for the dedicated care and support that you give Ontario patients every day.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's an honour to stand today on behalf of my colleagues in the NDP caucus to recognize Asian Heritage Month.

Asian communities from across that continent have contributed to building Canadian society: from the pioneers, the Chinese railway workers who came to Canada in the 19th century to build a railway and to build a continental nation from sea to sea. We have owed a great deal to those who have come to Canada from Asia.

In the 21st century, Afghans, Tamils, Punjabis, Vietnamese, people from all over South Asia and Southeast Asia—from China, from Korea, from Japan—have made this a far better country than it was.

Unfortunately, as you are well aware, Speaker, there have been dark moments in our history, moments when we didn't treat those Canadians and would-be Canadians with intelligence and foresight, with an openness that we should have had. The apology yesterday for the Komagata Maru, the internment of the Japanese, the Chinese head tax—all blots on our history, and ones that I hope will not be forgotten but will not affect us in the future; ones that have not discouraged Asians from coming to Canada and helping us build this great country.

In my own riding, in Riverdale Park, there's a statue of Sun Yat-sen, one of the great Chinese democratic reformers, someone who needs to be recognized globally. But certainly, in my riding, in the area around Gerrard and Broadview, he's well recognized and revered.

My riding is home to the Madinah Masjid, one of the largest mosques in Toronto—a great hub for commercial activity for a population that is ambitious, energetic and willing to build this community.

Speaker, nations grow and nations learn, and our Canadians of Asian heritage have been a huge part of both that growth and learning over the decades, and will be for decades to come.

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PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: First, I want to wish a happy PSW Day to all 100,000 PSWs who serve us each and every day.

I was there when the then-Minister of Health, Deb Matthews, announced a PSW registry. I spoke against it at the time and, sure enough, millions of dollars were spent that did not help the PSWs one iota—not one bit. But do you want me to tell you what could help our

PSWs? It is quite simple. We fix our home care system by making home care jobs good jobs and by making PSW jobs good jobs.

What does that mean, Speaker? Very simple: First, make sure that they get to join a union; second, give them fair wages; third, give them benefits; fourth, give them a pension plan; and fifth, give them full-time jobs so they don't have to work three different jobs just to make ends meet. That's something that would be worth celebrating.

The government is all about the transformation of our home care system. How about if we really put patients first? Putting patients first means that grandpa won't have to strip naked in front of a different PSW every week because they cannot recruit and retain a stable workforce. It means they will have continuity of care, continuity of caregiver and good-quality care, which we don't have in our home care system right now.

We have some great examples out there. I want to single out Miranda Ferrier and Kathleen Scott, president and vice-president of the Ontario PSW Association. Without one cent from the government, Speaker, they were able to put together an actual registry that does not have dogs and a truck driver registered as PSWs. They actually do a background check, and if you are a member of the Ontario PSW Association, people can trust that this is a real PSW who has studied and has passed and, as a bonus, has an extensive police check. This was all done without a penny from the government. Funny how their million-dollar investment never gave us a PSW registry, and yet those PSWs were able to do that themselves on their own dime.

I also want to thank Edna Hapin, Chrystal Becker, Lorna Abraham and Lisa Jocko, all PSWs represented by SEIU, who came to see me this morning and who want good jobs, pensions, benefits and full-time jobs.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Niagara Falls on a point of order, I believe.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order. I would like to welcome to Queen's Park Our Lady of Victory Catholic school from Fort Erie. They were here this morning for question period.

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

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

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

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

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician

services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

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

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

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

I affix my signature as well to this petition.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: A petition to the Legislature Assembly:

“Better Mental Health Services.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I sign this petition and give it to page Samuel to deliver.

TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: J’aimerais déposer une pétition à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario.

« Attendu qu’il y a un besoin criant en infrastructure de transport routier dans la province de l’Ontario;

« Attendu que d’offrir différentes alternatives ou options dans le choix du mode de transport aux citoyens aide à réduire le nombre de voitures sur les routes;

« Attendu que les transports en commun contribuent à améliorer la qualité de vie des Ontariens ainsi qu’à préserver l’environnement;

« Attendu que les résidents d’Orléans et de l’est d’Ottawa ont besoin d’une plus grande infrastructure de transport;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Soutenir le plan Faire progresser l’Ontario et la construction de la phase II du train léger sur rail (TLR), ce qui contribuera à répondre aux besoins criants en infrastructure de transport à Orléans, à l’est d’Ottawa et à travers la province. »

Il me fait un plaisir d’apposer ma signature et de la remettre à page Julia.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: “Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital is challenged to support the growing needs of the community within its existing space as it was built for a mere 7,000” emergency room “visits” per year “and experiences” now “in excess of 33,000 visits....; and

“Whereas the government-implemented Places to Grow Act forecasts massive population growth in New Tecumseth, which along with the aging population will only intensify the need for the redevelopment of the hospital; and

“Whereas all other hospital emergency facilities are more than 45 minutes away with no public transit available between those communities; and

“Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital deserves equitable servicing comparable to other Ontario hospitals;

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

“That the Kathleen Wynne Liberal government immediately provide the necessary funding to Stevenson Memorial Hospital for the redevelopment of their emergency department, operating rooms, diagnostic imaging and laboratory to ensure that they can continue to provide stable and ongoing service to residents in our area.”

I will sign that, and I certainly agree with it.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Paul Miller: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician

services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

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

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly ... as follows:

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

I agree with this, will put my signature to it, and Faiz will take it up.

CHILD CARE

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the minister.

I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario about an issue that was recently addressed just two days ago by the Ministry of Education in bringing forward the regulations this addresses, but it’s worth saying again here, Speaker.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas many parents and caregivers are being charged non-refundable fees to place their children on wait-lists for daycare centres;

“Whereas non-refundable daycare wait-list fees can range from tens to hundreds of dollars;

“Whereas due to the scarcity of quality daycare spaces, many parents and caregivers are forced to place their children on multiple wait-lists;

“Whereas non-refundable daycare wait-list fees impose a significant financial burden on parents and caregivers for the mere opportunity to access quality child care;

“Whereas daycare wait-lists are often administered in a non-transparent manner which creates the risk that they will be administered in an unfair and/or discriminatory manner;

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“Whereas parents and caregivers in Ontario already face significant barriers accessing daycare due to high costs and limited numbers of daycare spaces;

“Whereas quality child care is a public good and not a commodity and the costs of child care should not operate on a supply-and-demand basis;

“Whereas there are currently no regulations in place to prevent daycares from charging parents and caregivers exploitative fees;

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

“That all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognize that we have a responsibility to take action now”—or two days ago—“and support a require-

ment for transparent administration of daycare wait-lists and a ban on non-refundable daycare wait-list fees.”

I agree with this petition, I’m glad we’ve sorted it out and I’ll leave it with page Isabela.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs. Julia Munro: It’s my pleasure to present to the assembly the following petition:

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

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

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

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

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

I have affixed my signature as I am in agreement and give it to Marthangi.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have petitions that come from all over Ontario. I want to thank madame Manon Parrot from Orléans for bringing those petitions. It goes as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

“—promote full-time, permanent work with adequate hours;

“—ensure part-time, temporary, casual and contract workers receive the same pay and benefits;

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

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

“—prevent employers from downloading their responsibilities for minimum standards onto temp agencies;
 “—extend minimum protections to all workers;
 “—protect workers who stand up for their rights;
 “—offer proactive enforcement of laws, supported by adequate public staffing;
 “—make it easier for workers to join unions; and
 “—ensure all workers are paid at least \$15 an hour.”

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Aadil to bring it to the Clerk.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Perth–Wellington. Is it Perth? Yes, Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Michael Harris: Stormont-Dundas.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Oh, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. Sorry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: It’s eastern Ontario. Thank you, Speaker.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have a petition here to stop the sale of Hydro One. It says:

“Privatizing Hydro One: Another Wrong Choice.

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

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

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

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

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

“To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come.”

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

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Michael Harris: I have a petition here:

“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 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 sign this and I’ll send it with Samuel.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I have a petition entitled “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 enrolment 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 fully support this, will sign it and send it with page Samantha.

ACCIDENT IN HALTON HILLS

Mr. Ted Arnott: A point of order, Madam Speaker: I just wish to inform the House that this morning in Wellington–Halton Hills, tragically, a school bus filled with students en route to Pineview Public School and Stewarttown Public School was rear-ended by a tanker truck. Media reports indicate that seven students have been taken to the hospital, and I know that there’s an investigation under way.

I have spoken to the principals of both of those schools, and I know that I speak for all members of this House when I express that our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the affected students. I just want them to know that we’re thinking of them this afternoon.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

STANDING UP AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM IN ONTARIO ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA LUTTE CONTRE L’ANTISÉMITISME EN ONTARIO

Mr. Hudak moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 202, An Act respecting participation in boycotts and other anti-Semitic actions / Projet de loi 202, Loi concernant la participation au boycottage et à d’autres actes antisémites.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation. I believe this is a co-sponsored bill. Mr.

Hudak will be sharing his 12 minutes with the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

1400

Mr. Tim Hudak: I am pleased to say, as the Speaker rightly noted, that I have worked now for six months with my colleague from across the floor, the respected and veteran member from Eglinton–Lawrence, a man of principle. We share a common principle here: to stand up against intolerance, to fight against discrimination, to fight a new form of insidious anti-Semitism that’s creeping across the globe, including Canada. I’m proud to share my time and co-sponsor this bill with the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, Mike Colle.

Speaker, Ontarians have a history of promoting the right to study or work in safe and inclusive environments. We have a proud history, as Ontarians, of standing against hateful divisions, intolerance, exclusions and hostility based on ethnicity, national origin and religion. I believe all parties have participated in support of those important principles.

We now face a new battle called the BDS movement, or the boycott of, divestment from, and sanctions against Israel, Israeli academics and students, corporations and businesses, and cultural institutions. The BDS movement also targets businesses owned by Jewish men and women, Jewish men and women as individuals, and students like those who stood with Mr. Colle and I during a press conference earlier today.

At its core, the BDS movement’s goal is to delegitimize the state of Israel, and in so doing, foster hatred and animosity against those of the Jewish faith and supporters of Israel.

I do hope we’ll continue the bipartisan effort I made with the member from Eglinton–Lawrence and see support from at least two parties in the Legislature on this bill, Madam Speaker. That’s the way it’s happening, as my colleagues know, in the western world. Across the border, in the United States, there are now 22 states that have similar legislation before them: 16 have passed similar bills, with six in consideration. Many of my colleagues here attended an event that Mike and I hosted for Assemblyman Walter Mosley from Brooklyn, the New York city area, who has brought forward an initiative like this in the New York State Assembly—a Democrat supported by Republicans. In some states, there are Republican initiatives supported by Democrats. What’s amazing and remarkable to see is that it’s a bipartisan approach in the United States, where these bills win by overwhelming majorities, supported by both centre-right and centre-left politicians. It’s the right thing to do.

Nationally, in Parliament, we had a resolution condemning BDS for the hatred that it is, supported by both the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party; I think there may have been a couple of New Democrats in there—again, showing a bipartisan approach based on strong Canadian principles.

I know many colleagues in the Legislature may be fans of President Barack Obama. President Obama recently signed legislation condemning the BDS move-

ment, calling for sanctions against businesses that support the BDS movement. The Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act, 2015, was a bold statement by President Barack Obama and the United States that they will stand against the attempts to delegitimize Israel on an international basis.

Countries that have a similar history of principles in support of liberty and peace have also passed initiatives of this nature—the United Kingdom’s government and France.

Let me tell you where this came from, Madam Speaker. I remember being at the Spirit of Hope dinner that many of my colleagues of all three parties attended last year. It’s an extraordinary event put on by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center—and I encourage everybody to go to the event next Thursday, as well—supporting its efforts to fight intolerance, to remember the devastation of the Holocaust and make sure that happens to no one again. Do you remember the woman who spoke? She was in a Jewish grocery store in Paris on the day of the Charlie Hebdo attacks. Terrorists broke into the grocery store, took hostages, and killed four French citizens. She was actually there. She talked about her experience in France, and it was a reminder that anti-Semitism is not only strong across the world—I worry that with this movement, it is growing.

Her name is Sophie Goldenberg. She was a witness to the murders of four hostages. The sad reality is she is now leaving France with her family for a safer place. She says many French Jews have done just that.

One of her quotes was, “Today, Jewish people are once again being killed, simply because they are Jews.” We cannot just ignore this and let these people deal with what’s happening with the world. We should stand for our values and principles.

That shocked me, because I’ve always known Paris to have a healthy, vibrant, strong Jewish community. But now it’s shrinking. The Jews are leaving Paris, coming to North America, going to Israel, because I think for so long, French politicians looked the other way. They ignored creeping anti-Semitism to the point where families are now leaving, feel intimidated and attacked.

That’s why we need to draw a line now, here, in Ontario. I hope that legislation in Ontario will be the first of its kind in Canada and copied by the other provinces, just like we’re seeing in the United States, to fight back and tell everybody where we stand.

It is frightening, Madam Speaker. British Labour MP Naz Shah recently said that Jews should be transported out of Britain, over to the US. That the level of anti-Semitism has risen to a point when an MP in Parliament, the mother of all Parliaments, would say such a thing: A few years ago, you would have thought that unthinkable.

In many ways, the BDS movement reminds me of the early 1930s in Nazi Germany, which began with boycotts of Jewish businesses.

In 2012, the leading BDS activist, As’ad AbuKhalil, said the real aim of BDS is “to bring down the state of Israel.” Again, I remind you this is a leader of the BDS

movement: The real aim of the BDS is “to bring down the state of Israel. That should be stated as an unambiguous goal. There should not be any equivocation on the subject. Justice and freedom for the Palestinians are incompatible with existence of the state of Israel.”

I know some folks may argue in favour of free speech and saying whatever you want, but don’t forget what this movement is about at its core, and that’s the elimination of the state of Israel. It foments hatred of Jews and those supporting Israel on campuses.

I’ll remind my colleagues, too, who have read through the bill: Nothing in this bill prohibits free speech. Listen, if you want to spill garbage, spill garbage, but if you’re going to be a business that says you refuse to do business with Jews, Jewish-owned businesses or the state of Israel in an effort to promote intolerance and discrimination, my point of view is, well then, you can’t do business with the government of Ontario.

I just think that we have to stand up for something and we should put the weight of government on the side of tolerance, put the weight of government on the side of freedom and an ability to study and to work in peace. That’s what core values are for Canada and that’s what our bill does today.

I hope, just like we’re seeing in 22 states, like we’re seeing from President Obama, like we’re seeing in the United Kingdom and France, like we’re seeing in the Parliament of Canada, that we will have at least bipartisan support for this bill, so Ontario can lead the way in standing up for tolerance and against discrimination and hatred.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today on behalf of my colleagues in the Ontario NDP caucus to join the debate on Bill 202, An Act respecting participation in boycotts and other anti-Semitic actions. This is a bill co-sponsored by the member for Eglinton–Lawrence and the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook.

Before I get into the substance of my remarks, I wanted to comment for a moment on process. For a bill on an issue that is so politically charged, that has such far-reaching implications, it is astonishing that these members have allowed so little time for public scrutiny and analysis. It is astonishing and, frankly, disrespectful of our democratic process. It undermines our ability as MPPs to hear from the people we represent before coming into this debate on issues on their behalf in the Legislature.

Bill 202 received first reading on Tuesday, and here we are, just two days later, in second reading debate.

The short title of this bill is the Standing Up Against Anti-Semitism in Ontario Act. At the outset, Speaker, I want to state strongly and unequivocally that New Democrats—that all MPPs in this House—are united in our commitment to stand up against anti-Semitism. Regardless of where we sit and which party we are from, all MPPs agree that racism and anti-Semitism must be actively opposed and condemned in the strongest possible terms.

1410

Earlier this month, many of us participated in Yom ha-Shoah ceremonies in our communities. In my riding of London West I make it a priority to attend Holocaust Remembrance Day services because I recognize the importance of remembering the six million Jews who were systematically murdered by Hitler, and of honouring the survivors who are with us today. Marking the day each year makes sure that collectively we will never forget, that we will never allow such evil to happen again. Speaker, anti-Semitism is evil. Discrimination or hatred against a people on the basis of race or religion is evil.

We have a duty as MPPs, as Ontarians, as Canadians to protect all our citizens from the ugliness and the injury of racism and anti-Semitism. That is why we have implemented Criminal Code protections against hate speech, which the code defines as speech that promotes genocide on the basis of colour, race, religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. It's why we have put in place human rights codes in Canada and across all Canadian provinces: to protect citizens from discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, religion and many other prohibited grounds.

It's why our Charter of Rights and Freedoms—which for many Canadians defines who we are as a people—begins with a guarantee of freedom of conscience and religion, as one of the four fundamental freedoms guaranteed to every citizen, along with freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of association. Enshrining these charter rights in the Constitution recognizes that balancing protection from discrimination with the exercise of these fundamental freedoms can be difficult. But it is precisely when speech becomes offensive, when it becomes repugnant, that the protections of the charter are most needed. And it is within the context of this legal framework of rights and protections that we are having this debate today on Bill 202.

Although this bill deals with more than post-secondary campuses, I understand that its impetus is in the growth of BDS activism on campuses across Canada and the US. I want to be clear, Speaker, that as NDP critic for training, colleges and universities, one of my highest priorities is to make sure that no student faces intimidation, bullying, bigotry or other forms of discrimination at Ontario post-secondary institutions, that no student feels uncomfortable or targeted or alienated on campus. However, our caucus does not believe that this bill is the appropriate way to address the legitimate concerns that students, particularly Jewish students, have raised.

The purpose of Bill 202 is to prohibit public bodies from contracting with any person or entity that supports or participates in the BDS movement and to prohibit public pension funds and college and university foundations from investing in any entity that supports or participates in BDS. Contracts or investments with BDS participants or supporters are to be terminated. This raises the question of how “contracts” are defined. Contracts could mean a whole variety of things. Is an MOU

for student union fee remission a contract? Is a signed offer of admission a contract? Can university students who support BDS be denied the ability to attend post-secondary?

Bill 202 also prohibits all Ontario colleges and universities from “supporting” or “participating” in the BDS movement, with consequences for contravening this prohibition to be determined by regulation. It is possible that these consequences could include financial penalties, as in Kansas and Pennsylvania, where legislation is currently being debated to defund universities that participate in Israeli boycotts? However you define “support” and “participation,” there is no question that this prohibition and the threat of sanctions constitute an attack on freedom of speech and association at post-secondary campuses across Ontario. Student unions that organize student referendums on BDS, regardless of the outcome of the vote, would be guilty of participating in the BDS movement. Effectively, this bill imposes a duty on colleges and universities to prevent such student referendums from taking place. It will make Ontario post-secondary institutions responsible for policing the political activities of their students and for silencing public debate on campus, lest the institution be found guilty of contravening the act.

I'm not sure that the institution can be held legally accountable for student activities; however, there is no question that knowledge of legal consequences being applied will have a chilling effect on freedom of expression and freedom of association. It will make students feel they no longer have the right to express their political views. It will also have a chilling effect on academic freedom, which is central to the very mission of the university, as faculty consciously or unconsciously begin to self-censor as they avoid undertaking research or engaging students in discussion on the BDS movement.

Speaker, Ontario New Democrats do not believe that it is the role of the state to prescribe what topics are acceptable for public discourse and what topics are not. It is not the role of government to prohibit citizens from expressing their opinions and debating ideas. Whether we strongly oppose the BDS movement or whether we agree with it, it is our role as MPPs to stand up for individual rights and to defend the freedom of association and freedom of expression of all Ontarians. In the famous words of Voltaire, “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”

In explaining its opposition to both BDS as well as anti-BDS laws, the Jewish organization Americans for Peace Now, or APN, says, “We oppose boycott-divestment-sanctions efforts targeting Israel. We believe such efforts are misguided, misdirected and counter-productive. However, APN believes that legislation that seeks to combat BDS by undermining academic freedoms and free speech is equally misguided, likely to be counter-productive and almost certainly unconstitutional.”

Similarly, there is no question that Bill 202, if passed, would face an immediate constitutional challenge and

would almost certainly be found to violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The ability to freely discuss, debate and exchange ideas, even controversial ones, is critical to the functioning of a healthy and robust democracy. Actualizing the values contained in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms means welcoming the broadest possible range of competing political perspectives into the public realm. It means allowing citizens the freedom to choose which policies and which nation-states to support and which to oppose.

We have the legal tools already in place to deal with racism, anti-Semitism and intimidation on our post-secondary campuses. We have the Criminal Code and human rights legislation. Thanks to the advocacy of the NDP, we now have an Anti-Racism Directorate. Let's use these tools to develop positive, constructive solutions to these legitimate problems rather than seeking to punish those who exercise their democratic rights. The way to deal with complex, contentious issues is through debate, discussion and dialogue, not through the stifling of dissent.

Speaker, New Democrats are standing up strongly against anti-Semitism, but we are also standing up to defend our values, our rights and our freedoms. I urge all members to vote against this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Sport.

Hon. Michael Coteau: We're here today to debate the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook's private member's bill, the Standing Up Against Anti-Semitism in Ontario Act.

Please allow me to say from the start that our Premier and the government of Ontario condemn all forms of racism and prejudice, including anti-Semitism.

I also just wanted to recognize the students here from York University and Waterloo. I had an opportunity to talk to them earlier today. I know that the member from Thornhill recognized them earlier today, and I just wanted to recognize my conversation with them and some of the stories they were telling me about some of the disgusting acts that are happening on campuses here in Ontario. They have my commitment to work together to find solutions because I want to make sure that when students go to university, college and post-secondary education—any institutions here in Ontario—they feel safe, welcome and protected. You have my commitment.

As you know, this bill has been co-sponsored by my esteemed colleague the member from Eglinton—Lawrence, who needs to be recognized for being a strong advocate in support of the Jewish community and who, over five years ago, brought forward a bill proclaiming May as Jewish Heritage Month in Ontario.

On behalf of the Premier, I'd like to start by stating that the government of Ontario does not support the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement, the BDS movement, against Israel. We believe that boycotting Israel will not lead to the much-desired peace that people are looking for in the region. We also believe that shunning those who are advocating for the boycott of Israel,

as this bill seeks to accomplish, will not lead to a more secure, stable and democratic region. Our Premier has been very clear on this issue.

1420

Madam Speaker, if you allow me, I'd like to read for the record a section from the Premier's statement that she delivered recently in Israel:

"The BDS position is certainly not mine, nor is it that of our government, and I entirely oppose the movement. In fact, I stand firmly against any position that promotes or encourages anti-Semitism in any way.

"I am not a national politician; I am the Premier of a province, but as a human being who lives in this world, I need to take this position. I take this position as I would take on any position against something that promotes homophobia, that promotes sexism, that promotes Islamophobia. If we are going to have a world that is capable of supporting humanity, then we have to find a way to stand against all of these positions.

"I support the right of all people to freely express their views without fear of discrimination or persecution, whether in Ontario or in the Middle East.

"Freedom of speech is something that all Canadians value and we must vigorously defend. But it's unacceptable for students or parents or children to feel unsafe or discriminated against.

"I oppose movements that are attempting to divide our society and create fear and hate in our communities, whether that is anti-Semitism, homophobia or Islamophobia." That was the end of her quote. I'm going to start speaking again, just so the record is clear.

This proposed bill has drafting flaws with respect to the scope of the issues raised. It aims to enact various prohibitions relating to the support of or participation in the BDS movement by government bodies, public pension funds, college and university foundations, and colleges and universities.

I know that my other colleagues will be speaking and weighing in on this bill today. I believe it's important to highlight that Ontario supports the state of Israel and is a strong ally, friend and an economic partner. Israel deserves respect for its commitment to democracy and the rule of law.

Ontario and Israel have enjoyed a great relationship and trade over many years. Two-way trade between Ontario and Israel was valued at over \$900 million in 2015 alone. Israel is and will continue to be a priority market for Ontario in both trade and research. We have a shared focus on developing strong, competitive business environments in support of innovation and growth.

As you all know, the Premier is currently leading a business delegation in Israel. As you recall, the previous government, under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty, had a trade mission back in 2010 in Israel. The current business delegation is made up of 129 experts from research, technology, business and post-secondary institutions. It is pursuing trade opportunities in Israel, seeking collaboration on research and developing projects, and signing agreements to work together on cutting-edge

technologies. The whole purpose of this business delegation is to further strengthen our relationship with Israel and to further expand our economic ties.

I have more to say, but I just wanted to take the last minute just to say that, as the minister responsible for the Anti-Racism Directorate here in the province of Ontario, we're going to create an awareness campaign. We're going to look for ways to work with large organizations to ensure that they have the tools necessary to identify challenges that they have around racism and anti-Semitism here in the province of Ontario.

I want to work with the member opposite, and I have to thank him for bringing this forward because I do believe it's an important issue. Being someone from the African Canadian community, I know that there are challenges out there for many different people. I know that the Jewish community has always been there to take a stand, to fight for freedom and for what's right. I know that many of the civil rights that I enjoy today here in North America are because of the contribution of the Jewish community.

But we can use the Anti-Racism Directorate to work with our students who are here today and work with large institutions. I'll tell you, we have the tools in place in this province and in this country—the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code—that we can use. When we identify a hate crime that is taking place in this province, we need to make sure that we use those tools effectively to protect our students and protect our people. We will not tolerate any form of hate in this province.

Again, on behalf of the Premier and on behalf of the government of Ontario, I would like to thank all members who are involved in this important debate. I think I can clearly say, without any question, that you have our commitment that we will work toward making sure that when hate crime is happening in this province, it is dealt within the appropriate way; that is, charging and prosecuting people and putting them into the court system.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Harris: As we've heard today from my colleague, the dire social impacts of the BDS movement across the world and right here in Ontario are far-reaching, exceedingly backward and relentless. To begin, I'd like to thank the member for Niagara West—Glanbrook for the opportunity to lend my support to his timely bill calling for a province-wide solution to the growing and disturbing trend of BDS.

We, as legislators, have a duty to ensure that the people of Ontario are free from discrimination. Given the impacts of BDS, it is vital that we live up to that responsibility when it comes to addressing anti-Semitism here in our own backyard and, in particular, its impacts on our bright, young leaders of tomorrow.

Ilia Sucholutsky, an Israeli-Canadian and second-year student at the University of Waterloo, was waiting for the bus one day on his way home from school. He was approached by students asking him to sign a petition.

They asked him, "Do you believe in human rights?" "Of course, I believe in human rights," Ilia thought. But, thankfully, before signing their petition, he probed a little further.

The students with the petition were asking the University of Waterloo to cut ties with Israeli universities, based on the loose notion that the universities were implicit in the murder of Palestinians. They claimed, "This boycott isn't against individuals; it's against institutions."

But, Madam Speaker, how can we say that the BDS movement isn't against individuals? For the Jewish community, the BDS campaign is a reminder of the pre-Holocaust era, when the Nazis first enacted boycotts against Jewish businesses. In Ontario, we hold academic institutions to a much higher standard. So to allow hate to be fostered on publicly funded campuses is simply unacceptable. We, as legislators, have a duty to stop it.

As an Israeli-born Canadian and an academic, Ilia felt this same duty, because he knew that he was not alone in feeling completely uncomfortable on his own campus. In his own words, he said, "Hate is being fostered here." Sadly, enough students signed the petition to call for an automatic referendum, a vote left to the students to decide whether or not they would support BDS at the university.

It was soon found that many of the signatures leading to the referendum were gathered unethically. When an email went to those students who had signed the petition to let them know exactly what their signatures meant—boycott, divestment and sanctions against partner Israeli universities—several hundred students retracted their signatures, stating that they felt bullied and pressured into signing the petition. Speaker, this is not a peaceful protest.

This movement and its referendum absolutely polarized the campus and the community, and did so quickly. It's unfathomable that in an institution like this, Jewish students are made to no longer feel comfortable wearing the Star of David on campus, as some told me.

Marcus Abramovitch called the pro-BDS campaign on campus "aggressive and confrontational." He was scared of how quickly it gained traction. It even got to the point that those students who opposed the BDS movement were called Nazis. It doesn't make sense, Speaker. Israeli and Jewish students were brought to tears, as they felt it was a personal attack on them, on the campus they call home.

1430

The BDS movement is an attack on individuals. Almost every single sequence of anti-Semitism has historically begun with a boycott, separation, dehumanization and divestment of Jewish people. As tough of a battle as it was at the University of Waterloo—and this wasn't years ago; this was this past January 2016. But I am so proud to say that the University of Waterloo, the school in my region, voted no to the referendum. It failed with a vote of 1,803 in favour and 2,329 opposed.

Judy Zelikovitz, VP of U of W and local partner of services at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs,

noted, “This would not have happened were it not for the hard work of students on campus who refused to be silent in the face of this discriminatory movement.”

As you’ve heard today, the BDS movement is growing and gaining traction. However, today we have a chance to use our voices and our votes to do what is right. I am pleased to stand united with my colleague today to voice my support in ending prejudice in this province. I, like the University of Waterloo students in my riding, will vote no to BDS.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Colle: I’d like to thank the member from Beaches–East York for helping to accommodate my ability to speak today.

This bill means a lot to the people that I represent. I represent a riding that has one of the largest Jewish populations in Ontario, second only to Thornhill. I probably have the largest number of Holocaust survivors in my riding. A number of years ago, I helped establish a meeting place called Café Europa, where Holocaust survivors get the support they need to get through the horrible memories they’ve gone through. I remember Marta, a Holocaust survivor, telling me she was one of eight children. All seven of her siblings were murdered in cold blood by the Nazis, including her mother and father.

These are typical, real stories that our young pages probably don’t even realize happened, but they happened to my constituents. When they witness this insidious thing called BDS, which is nothing more than a world-organized campaign of hate against people because of their religion, they are frightened and appalled that this continues to go on. They tell me that they thought this ended with the Nazi regime in Germany. Now they see the same attacks, telling people to not do business with people of the Jewish faith. They tell people that the state of Israel, which is the only safe haven they’ve ever had—because as you know, even Canada wouldn’t allow Jews trying to escape the Holocaust to come to Canada. They had no choice but to go to Israel. Now they see Israel being attacked, demonized and vilified because it is a haven for people who are escaping persecution.

Why is it that the BDS movement only picks on one country, Israel? Why do they not pick on other regimes? You never see them talk about North Korea, Saudi Arabia or Iran. No, it’s always about Israel, which only makes up about 1.5% of the land mass of the Middle East; yet they’re constantly under threat from Hamas, from ISIS, from all these extremist mongers of hate.

BDS, although they try to clothe themselves in an aura of fighting for a just cause—their core belief is a hate for Israel and a hate for everything Jewish. They perpetrate this hate in many, many ways with a lot of resources all over the world, and I just think we have no other position to take but to say no to this insidious, disgusting thing that attacks the Jewish people just because of who they are.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I’m pleased to rise in support of Bill 202 and my colleague from Niagara West–Glanbrook. Clearly, this bill would potentially put the weight of the government behind tolerance and against hatred and intimidation.

As the official opposition critic for training, colleges and universities, I would like to focus on the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaigns that are increasingly evident on some of the campuses. So I’m pleased that the legislation, as it should, would prohibit colleges and university administrators from endorsing, allowing or participating in the BDS movement.

We need to send a powerful message that if any group tries to impede Israeli businesses and Jewish people by promoting intolerance, then it’s simply unacceptable. This is the time to ensure that there can be no creeping anti-Semitism cleverly disguised in a political statement. Just as we criticize today those who refused to speak out in the past, one day the action we take now will also be judged by those who come after us.

This legislation, which is designed to support cultural and religious intolerance, does not infringe upon free speech. The bill will ensure that Ontario will not support any organization whose campaigns fuel intolerance and anti-Semitism.

A university or college has a responsibility to provide a safe environment, an atmosphere free of intimidation for their students and staff, and it is up to those institutions to preserve it. It’s incumbent upon us to send a powerful message that Ontario stands behind tolerance and against hatred and intimidation.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I want to make it also very clear that as a member of the New Democratic Party and as deputy leader of this party, I proudly denounce all forms of anti-Semitism and proudly stand in defence of the human rights of all people. In fact, we stand against Islamophobia and any racism, particularly anti-black racism, and we firmly commit to standing up for the human rights of all people.

At the same time, it’s also very important to recognize how important it is to protect our right to express our thoughts and our freedom of speech. In fact, if we look at our role here as opposition, every day in opposition our job is to criticize the policies of the government. We often denounce the policies of the government, and that is our fundamental right. In fact, it makes our democracy stronger.

In the same light, there are many policies that other countries implement that we are critical of. We have raised many times in this assembly the human rights track record of other countries like China when it comes to their human rights treatment of the citizens who work in factories in China. We look at the treatment of garment workers in Bangladesh, and we criticize that. It is fundamentally a right to criticize the policies of a government, but it is never appropriate to incite hatred, incite violence against any community based on ethnicity, based on

religion, based on gender, based on sexuality, and we firmly oppose that type of speech. Any hate speech that incites violence is inappropriate, and we denounce it firmly.

But at the same time, we must remember that criticism of government policies is what makes our society safer and better. My personal example is that I stood up for the rights of women who are oppressed in India. I stood up for the rights of minority communities that are oppressed in India, like Christians, Muslims and Sikhs. I stood up for the aboriginal communities of India, the Mul Nivasis and the Dalits, who are oppressed people because of a caste system, and because of that I was denied a visa to go to India. That is where we could go if we go down a path of silencing freedom of expression, and that's why I will be voting against this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm going to start by saying that the "Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions" sounds like such a sweet and peaceful way to make a point, and I think that's what a lot of people in this room have been duped into believing: that this is a peaceful protest, that it's just words and what's the big deal?

Well, it is a big deal because what we're seeing on campuses is intimidation of Jewish students. They don't feel comfortable showing that they're Jewish. They don't feel comfortable going to Jewish clubs. It's a very clever way to make people feel unwanted and unwelcome in Canada. I thought this was 2016. I'm ashamed by what I'm hearing today, I have to be honest, because I hear a lot of talk about people who go to Holocaust memorial events, who celebrate Jewish Heritage Month, and that's all well and good. But we also need to remember the people who are living today, and future generations. What are we doing for the people today? That matters more to me.

I believe in my heart that if we could bring back people who were murdered in the Holocaust and ask them, "What would you want the government to do? What would you want your organizations to do?", they would say, "Focus on future generations of happy and healthy Jewish generations," because they died for being Jewish and they wouldn't want to feel that they died in vain.

1440

We have a chance now, if we're talking about a Holocaust memorial—we're talking about Yom ha-Shoah—to do something for those people: not just to remember them, not just to say prayers, but to actually do something.

This bill was looked at very carefully by lawyers who say, yes, it is constitutional. This bill was looked at very carefully by people who said that it wouldn't harm businesses that it shouldn't be harming. All this bill is doing is saying, "If you want to boycott Israel, go ahead." As we say in Yiddish, "Gezunterhait." Go ahead and boycott Israel. You know what? Leave your cellphone; throw it the garbage or donate it to a charity, because

there's Israeli technology in your laptop, in your cellphone, your voicemail, the call centres, the alarms that you use for your home. There's the Israeli technology. So don't just talk boycott; show us and do it. Put away all that stuff.

But if you want to do it, if you really want to boycott Israel, if you want to divest from Israel, then don't do it on the taxpayers' dime. You fund yourself. You can have a private university. You can have a private business. You can do whatever you choose to do, but not on the taxpayers' dime.

I want to ask people here how they would feel if there was a Ku Klux Klan, a KKK club, at their children's campus. Would they just say, "Well, we have police, we have laws," as the member said? "We have hate laws. They could call the police." Well, the students were barricaded at a Jewish club on York campus and they called the police. Nobody was arrested. It's not enough. The police have been called and it isn't enough to stop the BDS movement. It's up to us to ensure it.

The States have managed to pass this in 16 states, as we've heard. We've heard Congress has passed legislation. France is starting to realize—a little too late, because many Jews are now emigrating—that they allowed this slippery slope, and possibly they've lost control. They're begging their Jewish community to stay because they feel that they're great employers, that they're great investors, that they're great innovators.

This BDS movement is really a wolf in sheep's clothing. What it is is that Israel is 1.5% of the land in the Middle East and it's only 68 years old. The neighbouring Arab countries that hate Israel so much are basically insulted by the fact that a 68-year-old country was created by people who showed up in swamps—Holocaust survivors who didn't speak the same language and who didn't know how to farm—and they created a country. They feel insulted by the success of Israel.

I want to just mention, very quickly, that the Labour Party in England, in the UK, has been having some problems. Unfortunately, even though I really enjoy many of the discussions with the NDP, I'm a bit disappointed in some of what I'm hearing today from them, because I feel that maybe there's too much of a connection with what the Labour Party is experiencing with some of their comments. People have had to leave their party for anti-Semitic and anti-Israel statements. I'm really asking everybody here to think as an individual, not to think along your party line, and think how you would feel in 2016 as it is.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm glad to have a minute here on this very emotional debate. The problem with this bill is right there in section 2: "A public body shall not enter into a contract with a person or entity that supports or participates in the BDS movement," because it castigates all participants in BDS as anti-Semitic, as racists.

My own friend Emmad Minawi is a Palestinian. He eschews violence. He doesn't believe in violent solutions.

But he has a legitimate interest in what happens in the Mideast. He is part of the BDS movement. That's what we need to support—not the BDS movement; we're against that entirely—but we support the right for him to have his views, to express his views. Let's be very clear: You do not advance the issues of tolerance by eroding the very fundamental principles upon which they're based. That's, unfortunately, what this bill does.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to return to the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook to wrap up.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I thank all colleagues. In conclusion, look, the first thing is legislative intent. There is no intent whatsoever—and I believe the bill is clear that this does not impact on student enrolment, it does not impact on a professor's contract, and it does not impact on free speech in any way. We carefully drafted this to be about the economic side, so business contracts. To my colleague opposite who just spoke on section 2: That is not the intent. I think he knows better.

Also, you can, in committee, amend the bill as you see fit to meet with legislative intent. Section 5 gives regulation-making ability to the Lieutenant Governor to make sure we define this as businesses making contracts. I worry that others are making excuses so they can have it both ways. They're making excuses so they can vote against the bill and try to play footsie with the BDS movement—instead of standing on the strong Canadian principles that we should stand for here today—in favour of intolerance.

Look, if somebody said they weren't going to buy from a business because the owners were gay, you guys would go crazy. If somebody said they weren't going to buy from a business because they came from Pakistan or they're Sikh, people would go nuts. But somehow, because they're Jewish or from Israel, oh, it's free speech all of a sudden? Come on.

It is time to take a stand. This is a growing, insidious movement. The United States is moving, the United Kingdom is moving, Scotland is moving, France is moving and the Parliament of Canada is moving. We have a duty and responsibility to do what is right here, to stand up against intolerance, to stand up against hatred, to bring forward a bill that will ensure that students can study in peace, free of intimidation, to ensure that we can work in peace, and to say that BDS is anti-Semitism and we need to confront it at its core because we know what happens—like Charlie Hebdo or Germany in the 1930s—when we look the other way.

Ontario's role is to lead, to lean in, to make a difference, and not look away.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will take the vote for this particular motion at the end of private members' public business.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Transportation should take all necessary steps to ensure the completion of the long-

promised expansion and four-lane widening of Highway 17 from the Manitoba border to the city of Kenora by 2020, and that the Minister of Transportation should provide this House with regular updates on the status of this project every six months.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Campbell has moved private member's notice of motion number 74. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: It is an honour and a privilege to stand in this Legislature and raise issues on behalf of the people of Kenora–Rainy River. It is also my great pleasure to be able to introduce this motion today to set some firm timelines on the twinning of Highway 17 from the Manitoba border to Kenora. This twinning project is a necessary step in advancing the social and economic goals of northwestern Ontario, as well as improving the safety of the Trans-Canada Highway.

The motion I am introducing today reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Transportation should take all necessary steps to ensure the completion of the long-promised expansion and four-lane widening of Highway 17 from the Manitoba border to the city of Kenora by 2020, and that the Minister of Transportation should provide this House with regular updates on the status of this project every six months.

Speaker, twinning Highway 17 from the Manitoba border to Kenora is important for so many reasons. I've heard from hundreds of people who talk about the need to twin for safety and congestion reasons. People have written to me saying things like, "When there is an accident, our one and only cow trail is shut down for hours. The frustration of being locked in a lineup of several miles, plus lack of gas stations, lack of communication, lack of washrooms all heighten the rage level. There is no way forward and no way back and no information."

Others write, "This would be amazing! There have been so many terrible accidents on this stretch. I am always nervous driving it. People become very pushy with the lack of opportunities to pass. We have watched countless people make dangerous decisions due to frustration. Once you finally get to a passing lane it's ridiculous! Please push for this, my mother and I almost lost our lives on this stretch of highway...."

Sadly, others have pointed out, "We all know someone [who was] lost to this highway, reason enough to fight for twinning."

1450

The fact that this stretch of road was listed as one the worst roads in Ontario by the Canadian Automobile Association in 2007 certainly supports the concerns shared by so many, but most importantly, this project is as significant to the people of Kenora–Rainy River as it is to the people across Ontario and Canada, because it is our main route that connects eastern Canada to western Canada and all points in between. It is our sole artery and, frankly, it's shameful that our Trans-Canada Highway is a narrow, single-lane trail with twists and turns, barely any shoulders, rock cuts on either side and is seriously in need of realignment for safety purposes. The

fact that there's no consistency of standards for our national highway, even within Ontario, is a disgrace.

For the last four decades, the residents of northwestern Ontario have called for the four-laning of Highway 17 from the Manitoba border to Kenora. So when Dr. Robert Rosehart released his report in February 2008, which recommended that detailed planning commence immediately for the four-laning of Highway 17 between the Manitoba border and Kenora, as well as Highway 17 around Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario, you can well imagine the hope and anticipation felt by northerners.

People were further encouraged in July of that year when the Ontario government announced a \$546-million investment in northern highways for 2008-09, including route planning studies for the future four-laning of several sections of Highway 17. Then on May 16, 2009, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Premier Dalton McGuinty joined a number of ministers and over 200 municipal leaders from across northwestern Ontario to officially announce the investment of \$100 million for phase one of the project, which included the twinning of the first 10 kilometres in 2010.

At that announcement, government officials made all the right remarks. Former Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty said, "Clearly a two-lane highway is no longer sufficient," and "Northwestern Ontario has a tremendous future as a corridor for increased travel and trade between eastern and western Canada," while Northern Development and Mines Minister Michael Gravelle talked about how "Northwestern Ontario is feeling a sense of triumph today" with the improvement of this "critical economic lifeline." The government press release went on to state that this section of the road serves as a "strategic link" in the Trans-Canada Highway system.

It really sounded like the government was finally understanding the importance of this route and that it would finally be investing in some badly needed basic infrastructure in the northwest. But this is unfortunately where the progress on this file came to an end. Since the initial announcement of the twinning, very little has been done by this Liberal government to bring this project to fruition.

Every single northern highways program government report since 2010 has pushed back the planned completion date of this project. The 2012 report indicated a completion date of 2016. The 2013 report indicated a completion date of 2017. The most recent report, issued last year, stated the revised completion date would be the vaguely defined "beyond 2019."

Speaker, it's astonishing to think that a government highway project launched seven years ago, which was initially meant to be completed within a few years of its announcement, will now take at least another four years to complete. Frankly, you can forgive Ontarians for finding it difficult to determine when exactly the government intends to move forward with this project and if it even remains a priority, given the many extended time frames and mixed messages that we've received from government officials.

While the Minister of Northern Development and Mines has continually asserted that this project is still a priority for the government, we've heard differing messages from the Premier and the Ministry of Transportation. In September of last year, this Premier refused to give a timeline on the twinning project, instead only saying that her government hasn't given up on the project yet. Most recently, the Highway 17 twinning project was not included in the Ontario government's 10-year infrastructure plan, ending in 2024, as published in this year's provincial budget. In fact, just last week, the Minister of Transportation's office indicated that it had "no update at this time" as to the completion date for the twinning project.

How can Ontarians trust a government that states, when pressed by media, that this continues to be an important project for them when their own 10-year infrastructure plan fails to even include it as an actionable project before 2025? Ontarians are left scratching their heads as to how a government can so badly bungle a project that will take more than 16 years, from 2009 to at least 2025, to complete—a project, keep in mind, where the construction dollars have already been secured from both the provincial and federal levels of government.

This brings me to another point: This Liberal government talks a lot about the need to have a willing federal partner to accomplish key infrastructure projects across the province, but this is a project where the federal dollars have already been committed to seeing it through. Funding and a willing federal partner are not the issues here. The delay of this project rests solely on the shoulders of this provincial government and, I would argue, the Premier herself.

In fact, many First Nation communities around Kenora, including Shoal Lake 39, Shoal Lake 40, Dalles and Washagamis Bay, have indicated that they have not been properly consulted and have expressions dissatisfaction with the process, which First Nation leadership described as "deeply flawed."

At the time, Shoal Lake 39 Chief Eli Mandamin wrote a letter to the editor of the Kenora Daily Miner and News about being shut out of the process, stating, "We are not opposed to development and growth.... All we have asked for is respect for our way of life, the treaty and our rightful place—"

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Can I ask the government side to please tone down your conversations? Thank you.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I'm going to repeat that, because it's an important quote. The former chief of Shoal Lake 39, Chief Eli Mandamin, actually had to resort to writing a letter to the local newspaper saying, "We are not opposed to development and growth.... All we have asked for is respect for our way of life, the treaty and our rightful place for our full participation in this growth and development."

These communities are expressing concern over things that shouldn't be happening in this day and age in Ontario, and certainly not after this government released a

highly publicized new directive entitled Ontario's New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs in the spring of 2005, a full four years before moving ahead with the twinning project.

Remember the document that the government talked so much about? The one that actually stated: "Ontario is charting a new course for a constructive, co-operative relationship with the aboriginal peoples of Ontario—a relationship that is sustained by mutual respect and that leads to improved opportunities and a better future for aboriginal children and youth.

"Our new approach calls for working with aboriginal peoples to build this relationship and through it, develop productive partnerships, collaborate on key initiatives and achieve real progress on shared goals."

It went on to state that the government is "committed to creating a new and positive era in the province's relationship with aboriginal peoples."

Well, it appears that the directive was just Liberal spin and not worth the paper it was written on, because four years later this same government announced this very important project without prior consultation with area First Nation communities.

When I raised the lack of consultation with area First Nation communities over the highway twinning in estimates committee in 2012, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs as much as admitted that any form of consultation did not start until 2010, the year when the construction was set to begin and a full year after the announcement was made.

At that committee meeting, a representative from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs said, "Minister Wynne, when she was Minister of Transportation, and Minister Bentley from Aboriginal Affairs met with the First Nation back in 2010. Since that time, there has been a number of—I would say progress."

When the consultation did occur, it was a mess. In fact, I was at Shoal Lake 39 when the government official met with the community, and I saw first-hand how disingenuous the government consultations were, where one group of government officials would meet with the community and come to areas of agreement with the community leadership, only to have an entirely new crew show up several months later, informing the community that the previous group didn't have the authority to make such decisions and that they would have start the process all over again.

After a period of time, discussions between the government and Shoal Lake 39 became so broken down that the community refused to even meet with the former Minister of Transportation, turned Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Kathleen Wynne. By 2012, the community had repeatedly told me that it would only deal with the former Premier on the matter.

Speaker, I won't say who the common denominator seems to be in this flawed process. I'll let the people of this House and at home connect those dots. But I will say that our current Premier has a lot of making up to do to fix this mess that has been made and to make this project a reality.

The twinning of Highway 17 is a tremendously important issue, not only for the people of Kenora or my riding of Kenora–Rainy River, but for the whole north-west. This project is important for the reasons I have already mentioned, but its completion is equally important to show that this Liberal government takes seriously the issues facing northerners and that it is capable of engaging in a true relationship of mutual respect with indigenous people and communities. Northerners are calling on all members of this government to step up to the plate and deliver on this long-promised project.

1500

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's always a pleasure to rise in this House and provide comments on the debate, on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge. Speaker, as you know, I'm the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation, and I'm always pleased to be able to add some comments about this, especially in the realm of making historic investments in Ontario—\$15 billion outside the GTHA in terms of roads, bridges and transit investments, historic in this area.

I did want to take a few minutes to address some of the comments that the MPP from Kenora–Rainy River has brought up regarding Highway 17. As we know here on this side of the House, Ontario remains committed to the twinning of Highway 17 from the Ontario-Manitoba border easterly to Kenora, and will continue to move forward with the first 15 kilometres of this project. That span is from Manitoba to Rush Bay Road, stages one and two. As we know, it's often very complex, with a multitude of partners to work with, in terms of bringing these projects forward and to completion. Ontario has several steps to complete the delivery of this project, including obtaining environmental clearances. These environmental assessments are often complex, with a multitude of stakeholders to work with, and take a fair bit of coordination to get them through there. The ministry also works with First Nation communities—and that includes the Métis Nation of Ontario, MNO—property owners and municipalities to not only identify and attempt to mitigate any potential adverse impacts that may arise as a result of the project, but also to make sure that everybody is committed to moving forward with the project and to make sure that all those issues that have been identified are dealt with.

The ministry is also committed to building constructive, co-operative relationships with First Nation and Métis peoples in Ontario and honouring its duty to consult with First Nations and Métis where proposed MTO activities might adversely affect their rights or interests.

Indeed, these are some of the ongoing discussions that we, in this ministry, are having. These discussions continue towards our common goal of seeing the first 15 kilometres of this project constructed.

MTO has provided and will continue to provide reasonable funding assistance to First Nations and Métis

representatives to facilitate their participation in these highway discussions, something that we feel is very important.

The province will continue to invest in highways, creating jobs, and ensuring our roads are safe.

We are continuing with our commitment to invest in our provincial highways, including the north. Recently, I visited Grundy Lake Provincial Park, and I know that the ongoing work on the four-laning of Highway 69 is complex but continues year over year, to be able to complete this project, as well.

We've been investing to keep Ontario highways and bridges in good repair, reduce congestion, improve safety and promote the economy. Since 2003, we've invested more than \$25 billion to design, repair and expand provincial highways and bridges across Ontario, including the north. In 2016-17, we're committing more than \$2.1 billion to repair and expand provincially owned highways and bridges across Ontario. This includes \$541 million in northern highway construction. It's estimated these investments will create or sustain more than 21,000 jobs in Ontario.

So I just really wanted to ensure that the House is aware that our ministry is committed to continuing the ongoing discussions and the work necessary to bring this project on Highway 17, especially the first 15 kilometres of this project, to completion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Harris: Today's motion brought forward by the member from Kenora–Rainy River is a timely response to another prime example of a government that has made a career out of promising first and, of course, asking questions later. It's been seven years now since the government first announced its commitment for expansion and four-lane widening of Highway 17, the Trans-Canada Highway, and yet this vital trade conduit to the west has not only not been expanded in the years since, there hasn't even been a single shovel put in the ground. All the while, the Liberal government fails to deliver on key promises to unlock the potential of our northern communities.

Speaker, Highway 17 is one of the few key economic corridors connecting northern Ontario to the west. There are no alternate routes between Kenora and the Manitoba-Ontario border for Trans-Canada traffic. However, this government's seven-year failure to make this project a priority continues to choke off economic growth.

It was on July 24, 2008, that the provincial government announced a \$546-million investment in northern highways for 2008-09, including route planning studies for future four-laning of several sections of Highway 17.

In March 2009, the government announced a \$648-million investment in northern highways for 2009-10.

On May 15, 2009, the Liberals announced that the governments of Ontario and Canada would jointly upgrade 10 kilometres of the Trans-Canada Highway, starting at the Manitoba border, with the expectation to create over 700 direct and indirect jobs. The 2009

announcement further reported that, "Planning is also under way to four-lane an additional 30 kilometres of Highway 17 between the Manitoba-Ontario border and Kenora..."

It's now 2016, and despite all the announcements, commitments and investment news, the Highway 17 expansion remains stuck in neutral. Instead of vital highway expansion, northerners receive extended time-lines with each subsequent update of the northern highways program.

The 2012 update indicated a project target completion date of 2016. The following year that date was revised to beyond 2017. Then, in 2015, that date was pushed back even further, to beyond 2019. And now the recent 2016 budget didn't even include the project in the Ontario government's 10-year infrastructure plan ending in 2024. It seems the longer we wait, the more this government is prepared to extend that wait. In the meantime, the economic potential remains untapped.

While we are aware of the First Nation negotiations that have gone on over these years, and the related discussions for the Shoal Lake First Nation Freedom Road project, the fact is that there is no one who doesn't know of the need for consultation when planning developments in the north, and yet the Liberals waited an entire year after their initial promise to begin those negotiations. Promise first, ask questions later, Speaker. In the meantime, the people of our northern Ontario communities continue to wait.

People in northern Ontario are not strangers to this government's inability to support their potential. It was just a few months ago that they experienced the impacts of the government's oversight work on the new Nipigon bridge where, 42 days after its opening, a lifting bridge deck jeopardized the daily transport of \$100 million worth of goods.

They have already waited too long. It's time to get on with the job of supporting the north, expanding the highway and moving forward to unlock the still untapped economic potential of northern Ontario.

I commend the member for Kenora–Rainy River for bringing forward this motion that not only means a lot to her constituents but should mean a lot to all of us here and across Ontario. I look forward to supporting this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my pleasure to rise and speak to my colleague's motion today on the widening and expansion of Highway 17. What I want to do is touch on some similarities between some issues they're facing in the north as far as Highway 17, the twinning of Highway 17, and something that we're seeing in the south. You have opposite ends of the province, and the issues that we're having getting this province to complete a project they started years ago and a promise that they made to the widening of Highway 3. The parallel to that is that there were promises made to both northern and southern Ontario to take these roads that are major thoroughfares for businesses as well as civilians who travel them every day to get to work, to get to school, to

get wherever they need to go—they began the work and then they never finished. They made an announcement, they took the credit for the announcement, and then they never finished.

1510

The other parallel is the fact that, on Highway 17, because it has not been widened yet, there are many accidents. You're seeing many people being hurt, many people dying. The same can be said for Highway 3. In fact, recently, we just had a major accident on Highway 3.

I'm just wondering, at what point does the government prioritize the commitments that they've made not only to the north but the commitments they've made to southern Ontario? What we don't need any more are promises being made, announcements, them getting the credit for it and then not actually doing what it is they promised to do, especially when we are seeing people getting injured or people dying while they're waiting for these projects to be done.

I want to commend my colleague the member from Essex because he did bring a motion forward—a year ago this month, actually—to have them finish Highway 3. This was a project, it's important to put out there, that was championed by a former Liberal MPP, Bruce Crozier. He was a member up until his death in 2011. This was something he really wanted to see done, for them to complete Highway 3, because he understood how important that was to Windsor and Essex county; how important it was to not only the businesses but the families who risk their lives travelling Highway 3 to travel from the city, from my area—from Windsor—to get into the county and beyond.

I have to commend the member from Kenora–Rainy River because she's trying to do the same thing for her community. She is trying to avoid any further delays. She is trying to avoid any future risk to businesses, and she is trying to mitigate any other opportunity for anybody to be hurt or critically injured or killed on a roadway that the government knows full well is dangerous and needs to be addressed—had promised to do it years ago and has not followed through.

I'm happy to support my colleague, and I really hope that the members on the government side are listening and will commit to supporting this motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I'm proud to rise today and speak in support of the member from Kenora–Rainy River's private member's bill.

Speaking to this motion gives me a chance to talk about the importance of transportation to all Ontarians. As someone who campaigned in 2014 on extending the Ottawa LRT to Orléans, I'm sensitive to my residents' and Ontarians' transportation needs. In fact, since being elected, I presented to this House, numerous times, a petition in both English and French to address the transportation needs of my residents through the construction of phase 2 of the Ottawa LRT.

I know the Minister of Transportation is working hard to ensure that we are delivering to Ontarians the

transportation infrastructure they need to live, work and play over the next few years.

We have, as a government, committed \$160 billion over 12 years to infrastructure; a significant amount of that money will go towards transportation. The Liberal platform specifically mentioned the expansion of transportation services in a variety of ways in this province, including expanding GO service.

We on this side of the House absolutely know and understand the value of creating and updating our transportation infrastructure. The member opposite knows that we have committed to the twinning of Highway 17 from the Ontario-Manitoba border easterly to Kenora, and will continue to move forward with the first 15-kilometre project. There are still several stages to complete before the delivery of this project, including obtaining the environmental clearances.

We also have to ensure that we work collaboratively with the First Nation communities and Métis people of Ontario, property owners and municipalities to identify and mitigate any potentially adverse effects that may arise from this project.

Our government has made significant investments in our transportation infrastructure. In 2016-17 alone, we have committed \$2.1 billion to the repair and maintenance of highways and bridges. Of that amount, \$541 million will be spent on northern highway construction. We will be embarking on significant highway projects in the next few years. In the north, we currently have four-lane widening of Highway 69 in Sudbury and the four-lane widening of Highway 11/17 from Thunder Bay to Nipigon.

From a highway safety perspective, our government has brought in legislation to make our roads safer. Last year, we passed the Making Ontario's Roads Safer act, 2015. As part of our bill, as of September 1 last year, the fine for distracted driving increased from \$200 to \$490 and three demerit points if convicted of distracted driving.

The "slow down, move over" rule will now apply. When a stopped emergency vehicle and tow truck are on the side of the road, you will have to slow down your vehicle and move into the next lane when and if possible.

We have committed a significant amount of money towards transit infrastructure. We've updated our laws to make our roads safer, and we'll continue to pursue the creation of viable communities, the end of gridlock and build a variety of transit options for the people of Ontario.

I commend the member for moving this private member's bill, and I feel very happy in support.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I know the member from Kenora–Rainy River is going to have lots to comment about in that last speech. Here we are; it's one of these times when us friends from northern Ontario really do shake our collective heads at what we hear from the side of the government. It's just so painfully obvious that members on the government side can rarely pick out northern

Ontario on a map, and we've just seen an example of that here.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Oh, give it a break, Vic.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: You missed what she had to say. You would be insulted if you understood what she had to say and you lived in northern Ontario.

Nonetheless, Speaker, I'm very pleased to speak to the motion brought by the member from Kenora–Rainy River. Highways are the backbone of the transportation infrastructure in the north—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I hope you listen, because you might learn a little bit about northern Ontario for a change. As I've said many times, roads and bridges are to the north as transit is to the south.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. I'm going to ask the government side to please be respectful of the member speaking on this particular bill.

I'm going to return to the member from Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'll repeat that: As I've said many times, roads and bridges are to the north as GO Transit, which she spoke about, is to southern Ontario.

Four-lane highways are critical infrastructure, not only when it comes to economic development in northern Ontario, but they also add a much-needed measure and degree of safety. As you know, winter brings very harsh and quickly changing conditions to the north, and we've seen way too many fatal collisions on two-lane roadways over the years where, indeed, weather is a factor.

I want to make this point clear: Four-laning of key stretches of highways in northern Ontario cannot and should not be a partisan issue. It took the commitment of governments of all stripes, PC, Liberal and NDP, over the years to complete the four-laning of Highway 11 to my riding in North Bay. It also took 40 years to do it. There's no doubt that that four-laning has saved many lives and has provided us with an economic development tool to promote our area as a place to work, live and grow.

Further, this shows that there needs to be a longer-term, non-partisan vision when it comes to highway infrastructure in the province. Announcing highway expansion projects just before or in the middle of election campaigns, as this government recently did, isn't helpful. Nor is the political stalling that the government uses as a convenient excuse to further delays in the Ring of Fire. Last election, they promised \$1 billion dollars. It's not there; it doesn't exist. And between now and June 18, you can bet they'll announce another grandiose Ring of Fire promise in a bid to get elected.

We've seen how hollow these are. I feel badly for the member from Kenora–Rainy River, because we can't even get this government to commit to an east-west road critical to getting Ring of Fire development going, let alone the four-laning of a stretch of highway.

1520

That said, let's look at this particular piece. It's a key east-west route. I'm not sure what the government has

against east-west roads, but this helps connect key centres like Kenora, Dryden and Fort Frances with key economic centres in neighbouring Manitoba communities, such as Winnipeg. It's actually easier to drive to Winnipeg to catch a flight than to Thunder Bay in some instances because of this distance.

Speaker, as stated before, I've seen the many benefits in my own riding after 40 years when Highway 11 from Toronto to North Bay was indeed four-laned, and I look forward to hearing from the member from Kenora–Rainy River.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you, Mr.—Madam Speaker. Sorry about that.

Twinning Highway 17: Thank you again for allowing me to rise and speak on this bill today. I know I only have a few minutes, so I'll try to cover as much as I can.

In the immediate aftermath of the Nipigon bridge collapse, I raised serious concerns about this government's care of roads and highways in the north. We talked about unsafe regulations for trucks, we talked about failure to properly clear highways of the snow and we're here today to talk about the expansion of Highway 17 from Kenora to Manitoba.

Speaker, we know that this highway has been an issue for years. In fact, in 2007, this highway—2007, Speaker; I want everybody to hear that. In 2007, this highway was rated one of the worst highways in the province by the Canadian Automobile Association. Since then, we've seen announcement after announcement of transportation spending, yet the people of northern Ontario are still waiting to see action.

This government itself called the highway a strategic link between eastern Canada and western Canada. Following the Nipigon bridge failure, did this government not learn what happens when you fail to deliver the proper care that northern roads and highways need?

The people of northern Ontario are feeling left behind yet again when it comes to transportation in the province of Ontario. Whether it's roads being cleared of snow, bridges working or reasonable gas prices, this government seems content to do nothing for anyone from the north who gets in their car every morning.

Now, when I read budget 2016, I don't see the twinning or extension of Highway 17 anywhere in there. It was in past budgets, not this one. The people of northern Ontario, as well as the thousands of people who travel this route and the millions of dollars of economic activity it generates, cannot afford to be ignored. This government needs to stop announcing it's going to move forward with a project. It needs to accept this motion and actually put some shovels in the ground to get this project completed in a timely manner.

This government plans to follow the same old Liberal tradition of planning first and consulting later. This is simply not acceptable. The Premier should know this is not acceptable. She has been both Minister of Transportation and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs during discussions on Highway 17.

Consulting with the First Nations of this province on how to use their land is a duty of this Premier and her cabinet. In order to get this project completed, the Premier needs to sit down with the First Nations of northern Ontario and discuss this project in good faith. She needs to ensure that they are full partners in this process and not simply bystanders. She needs to do this not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it is her obligation.

This project has everything it needs to be a good-news story. This Premier can prove that she wants a new relationship with First Nations here in the province of Ontario. She can provide stable and reliable transportation for those crossing Canada. She can show the people of northern Ontario that Queen's Park does care about their roads and their highways. This government can do this by committing to this project and supporting this motion.

Highway 3 and Highway 17 are two projects that have to get done in the province of Ontario. Nobody—nobody—should be injured or killed on our highways in the province of Ontario because we're not doing our job.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker—Madam Speaker. My apologies.

I was surprised by the comments of the member from Nipissing that—he must know this—none of us over here know this highway. Well, I would suggest that other than maybe the member for Kenora–Rainy River, I've probably driven this highway more than most folks.

As a matter of fact, I remember—because they love to call me the member from Winnipeg, except when it's kind of annoying to them, and it's a little annoying to them today. I remember when Gary Doer, and Gary Filmon before him, and I were getting federal money for funding and twinning, we could not get his government's attention or help, so the twinning stops at the Manitoba–Ontario border. While I and Mayor Canfield in Kenora and Mayor Brown and the mayors in Thunder Bay were working our butts off to get funding for this critical twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway, we got no support from the mayor of the day in North Bay, who sat on his hands and who was quite happy to support a government and run for a party, which I assumed he voted for, that was spending \$1 billion or \$2 billion on highway infrastructure.

We spend that much in northern Ontario alone on highways now. We are doing more twinning in the last 10 years than has happened in the last 40, and we did it in the last 10 years without five cents from the federal government, which would show up and give \$100,000 or \$500,000 for an off-ramp.

He had no problem campaigning for the federal Conservatives when they gave zero for northern twinning—no problem. When he was the mayor, he was absolutely deathly silent on northwestern Ontario. We are putting more money into twinning highways than any other government has. We are spending more money on

highway infrastructure than the party opposite has spent province-wide.

I am very pleased that the member for Kenora–Rainy River raised this issue, and I commit to work with her. I remember when we had an agreement, when Allan Rock was the federal minister, for the bridge for Highway 39 and Highway 40. We had all these agreements in place, and I remember—because our water supply for Winnipeg was there—we signed off on infrastructure agreements with the federal government and with the new Liberal government here in Ontario. When the Conservatives came in, the bridge got cancelled. Now, the Manitoba government, the government of Greg Selinger, built the bridge.

I am happy to be on your side, so let's not make each other the enemy here. I appreciate you bringing this forward, but we have no lessons to learn from the Conservative—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to rise in support of the resolution standing in the name of the member from Kenora–Rainy River.

You know, Speaker, there are a lot of things I miss in the old job of being leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Wayne Gates: You're still the leader, Tim.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thanks, member from Niagara Falls.

By way of example, I used to have a better view, but you get used to things.

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you, member from St. Catharines. I appreciate that vote of support.

But one of the things, I'll say to my colleague from Kenora, I miss is going to Kenora. When you're leader, you get to travel across the province. It's a great, beautiful province—all the places to see. I loved going to Kenora. I know my colleagues have been there. It's a gorgeous place to visit—it's a bit far from Niagara; it ain't an easy drive—when I had the chance to be there, particularly in the summer and the fall.

1530

I can understand the member pushing for this resolution to expand Highway 17 to the Manitoba border. I've made that trip myself, not as many times as the member for Toronto Centre or the member herself, and you can understand why this would be important to the economy and to the safety of drivers. There are about 15,000 people in Kenora—roughly in that neighbourhood—and it would more than double in the summertime, a lot of those folks coming from Winnipeg to their beautiful cottages in Lake of the Woods. God bless them for having those cottages. I think there are 14,000 different islands in Lake of the Woods.

I went to a place called Crow Rock Lodge; it's one of my favourite places. I stayed at Crow Rock. I don't know if Ms. Campbell has stayed at Crow Rock Lodge or if she knows it. They took us into one of the remote lakes in the area. Honest to goodness, Speaker, it was like the fish

were actually jumping into the boat to escape the overcrowding in the lake. I'm not a skilful fisherman, but we were pulling them in like crazy. John Baird was with me on that particular trip—a fond memory.

Hon. James J. Bradley: He went on a lot of fishing trips.

Mr. Tim Hudak: It actually worked out pretty well for him at the end of the day.

I can understand the economic benefits, the tourism benefits of this. I suggest there's been a change. Some of us have been around long enough, like the member for St. Catharines and I. We had the big battle between Frank Michalski and Howard Hampton years ago in this riding, a Liberal-NDP battle. If you see election results now, it tends to be an NDP race, and the PCs have been the second-place party in the northwest for the last couple of elections, with the exception of St. Catharines, much like we're seeing. The member for Niagara Falls knows that used to be a Liberal area; now it's an NDP-PC race. Welland tends to have the PCs in second place there. The PCs managed to squeak out a win in Niagara West—Glanbrook despite the local candidate in the last election.

What I worry about is that the election results are determining some of the highway investments. My colleague from Niagara Falls talked about expanding Highway 3. I've been a big supporter of the mid-peninsula corridor south of the escarpment, which would bring benefits to Fort Erie and through my riding, in west Niagara and Wainfleet. But those projects seem to fade when the governing party is down in third in the area, and I worry that might be the case here in Kenora. As the member said and my colleague said, promises were made as far back as 2008 to fund this project and there has not been much progress as a result.

My last comment is that the place I never really got to see was Minaki Lodge. I visited Minaki Lodge and it was like visiting the set of *The Great Gatsby*. Although Minaki, by the time I got there, was closed, I know there's a project now to revitalize that as condos. Certainly opening up that highway capacity to bring folks from Manitoba or even from the northern midwestern states I think would help—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: You may be concerned or wondering why a member from Bramalea—Gore—Malton would stand up in support of this motion. First of all, this motion, I want to make it very clear, is something I absolutely support, and I really commend our member from Kenora—Rainy River. The reason is because in my riding, there is a large population of individuals who work in the transportation industry.

Those truck drivers have told me horror stories of driving along Highway 17, the Trans-Canada Highway. They've shown me videos of when they tried to stop their truck because they had to do some maintenance or they had to deal with it. They showed me how narrow and treacherous the road is and how much of a safety concern it is. But they also pointed out something that I think is

very important to highlight: Not only is this a safety concern, but it's also an economic concern. I know the member talked about this, but I want to highlight this.

If we want to support the free flow of goods between our province and the neighbouring province and if we want to ensure that we have a robust economy, we need to be able to transport goods back and forth. The fact that we only have one route that's in our country and that route is so narrow and so treacherous and so dangerous is absolutely unacceptable. The fact that this government has done nothing to ensure that this stretch of highway is twinned or doubled or widened is also unacceptable.

So I stand very proudly in support of our member and I stand strongly in support of the transportation industry, which is very vibrant in my riding. I stand with the truck drivers in my riding who have called for this for economic reasons and for safety reasons, and I stand with them in ensuring this is something we need to see passed. We want to push the government to make this happen. The passing of this motion is one step forward, but we need a commitment from this government that they will actually move forward and twin this highway, widen this highway, make it safer, ensure that we have the economic development we need, ensure that we have roads so we can transport goods back and forth in a safe manner.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It is an honour to be able to stand here and support my colleague from Kenora—Rainy River regarding this issue about four-laning highways. Every community in northern Ontario pushes for this issue. I know that my own communities are setting up committees to start four-laning and to push the government to four-lane.

You can imagine how cruel it is for these people if you have the Prime Minister and the Premier, and they invite 200 municipal officials—if this happened in my riding, everyone would think, “Oh, my God. It's finally happening. The Prime Minister, the Premier. It's finally happening.”

And do you know what happened? Nothing. That is the cruelest part, because if that happened in my riding, after years of working—because I'm sure that the people in that area have worked and worked and worked for years to try to get people's attention. Then, it turns out that it's maybe nothing more than an electoral ploy.

Maybe it wasn't, but how cruel is it? I know that, if that announcement was made in Temiskaming Shores, and the Premier and the Prime Minister said, “We're going to four-lane this highway,” it would be a big sigh of relief and there would be a big party that night. Then, nothing changes.

That is why I commend the member to keep this up and keep everyone's feet to the fire, because that part of the highway deserves to be twinned and the whole Trans-Canada needs to be twinned. But they got the promise, and that promise should be kept.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I will return back to the member from Kenora—Rainy River to wrap up.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I want to start off by thanking all members of this House from all three parties who stood up and spoke in support of this particular motion.

I do want to spend just a couple of minutes reframing this debate, though. I appreciate that not everybody knows the geography and the reality of northwestern Ontario, but we don't have the luxury of having transit options. Talking about GO Transit—

Interjection.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I know. There are parts of this province that are very blessed. That's one of the things that I'm talking about. We're not talking about the expansion and widening, which is a very important project that's happening in Sudbury 1,500 kilometres away. These are important projects, but we're talking about what's happening at the Manitoba border.

What we have is we have a two-lane highway. That means one lane in each direction. There's no divider. People are travelling and people speed, right? We're talking about narrow, winding roads. We're talking rock cuts on both sides. Really, no disrespect meant at all to the member from Nipissing: We don't have the luxury of texting zones. We're talking very basic infrastructure.

We need this investment. It's something that, as the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane said, was promised to us. After a 40-year fight, we finally got it. We thought that we were getting it, and we need the government to deliver on that.

What I'm asking for today is for very clear targets, because we've seen this date bounce all over the place. I know that there are a number of issues that are causing that to happen, but we need the government to sit down in earnest and make this project a reality. We also need updates every six months, so that we know that this project is on track.

These are the things that we're asking for, and I really hope that we'll get the support of all members in this House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will vote on the motion at the end of private members' public business.

SAFE TEXTING ZONES ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DE HALTES TEXTO SÉCURITAIRES

Mr. Fedeli moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 190, An Act governing the designation and use of texting zones / Projet de loi 190, Loi régissant la désignation et l'utilisation des haltes texto.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Fedeli has moved second reading of Bill 190, An Act governing the designation and use of texting zones.

Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's a pleasure to speak to this private member's bill. This bill has the potential to save many lives. It's called Bill 190, Safe Texting Zones Act.

It's fitting to speak to this bill during the RCMP's Canada Road Safety Week and right before the May long weekend, when many Ontarians will be travelling.

1540

Anybody who drives here in Ontario has encountered other drivers who are staring down at the dimly lit screens of their cellphones, as opposed to paying attention on the road. We know that distracted driving, such as texting while driving, leads to bad driving and dangerous situations. Research and statistics on this are clear: Texting while driving poses a major risk for drivers and those they share the road with. In fact, distracted driving deaths in Ontario have surpassed those of impaired driving for the seventh consecutive year.

According to the Ministry of Transportation, research shows that drivers who use cellphones are four times more likely to be in a collision than drivers who focus on the road. When drivers take their eyes off the road for more than two seconds, the crash risk doubles. The Ontario Provincial Police cite distracted driving as a causal factor in 30% to 50% of traffic collisions in Ontario. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 80% of collisions and 65% of near crashes have some form of driver inattention as a contributing factor.

Perhaps the message is starting to cut through. You have likely seen or heard about the billboard that went up along the Gardiner Expressway. In fact, it was a front-page colour photograph in the Toronto Star about a week or so ago. In bold, black letters against a plain white background, the billboard encourages drivers with three words: "Text and drive." It's brought to you by Wathan Funeral Home. You can see, of course, the fact that it's a shocking billboard, a little bit tongue-in-cheek. But let's face facts: Drivers who text messages are 23 times more likely to be involved in a crash.

This also has significant economic impacts. According to the government of Canada, economic losses caused by traffic-collision-related health care costs and lost productivity are at least \$10 billion annually. That's about 1% of our GDP.

What is Bill 190 all about? People are asking, "What is a safe texting zone?" A texting zone is simply an area where a driver is able to park or stop safely to use their wireless device. Bill 190 proposes to amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with the aim of combatting distracted driving. Specifically, it authorizes the Minister of Transportation to create designated highway texting zones where a driver is able to stop safely to use their device. This includes existing commuter parking lots, transit stations or service stations, and does not require any new infrastructure.

The real impetus of this bill would require that signage be displayed approaching these texting zones. These would remind drivers that there is a nearby opportunity for them to legally and safely use their cellphone. Of course, people can still use their hand-held devices if a vehicle is pulled off a roadway or lawfully parked. This

bill would designate specific areas to do exactly that, to assist drivers in obeying the law. Designating specific texting zones would be especially helpful in reducing distracted driving on highways in rural and northern areas, where frequent picnic stops and rest stops along the highway would offer an opportunity for travellers to safely use their cellphones.

I am pleased that Bill 190 has received support from so many stakeholders, including the insurance industry and safety advocates. In a recent letter of support, the Insurance Bureau of Canada indicated, "This initiative shines a light on a growing road safety issue; namely, the need to combat distracted driving on Ontario highways. Statistics show that drivers are 23 times more likely to be involved in a collision if they text while driving. Unfortunately, statistics such as this do not deter enough people, as nearly three out of four Canadian drivers admit to driving while distracted. Establishing 'texting zones' on Ontario highways would be an important step in curbing the dangers associated with this activity."

There is a precedent for this, Speaker. Patty and I drove through Pennsylvania and saw this, which was part of the inspiration for this. In 2013, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo established texting zones across through-way and state highways in his state of New York. Existing park-and-ride facilities, rest stops and parking areas along the roads were to be equipped with texting zone signage, each serving double duty as one of the 91 locations across the state.

When introducing the initiative, Governor Cuomo said, "With this new effort, we are sending a clear message to drivers that there is no excuse to take your hands off the wheel and eyes off the road, because your texts can wait until the next texting zone." I think that's something we can all agree on.

Not only will the Safe Texting Zones Act save lives, it also serves as an important educational initiative. Impaired driving has rightly been heavily stigmatized and is not accepted in our society, but the fact is, distracted driving deaths in Ontario have surpassed those of impaired driving for the seventh consecutive year. This may be particularly true when it comes to our youth drivers. In some cases, they have grown up with these devices and may not be aware of the link between distracted driving and collisions.

This legislation will provide more awareness and make it crystal clear to new drivers that texting while driving is unacceptable. Bill 190 will ensure there is a consistent and standardized signage approach on Ontario's highways that serve to regularly remind drivers of the dangers of texting and driving.

Desjardins Insurance Group echoed this in their letter of support: "This bill brings much-needed attention to distracted driving, an increasingly prevalent road safety issue ... we are committed to raising awareness of these dangerous habits and encouraging Ontarians to drive responsibly on the road. The establishment of 'texting zones' on Ontario highways would move us toward our shared goal of making Ontario roads safer."

As you know, Speaker, it is currently illegal for drivers to talk, text, type, dial or email using hand-held cellphones and other such devices. We must continue to deter this dangerous behaviour, and motorists who text and drive must be penalized. However, smart phone users in Canada topped nearly 70% of the population in 2015, and these devices have become a ubiquitous part of our lives. The creation of safe texting zones recognizes the fact that drivers may require the ability to stop and safely text while travelling.

In a letter of support, the CAA agreed with this sentiment: "Efforts like safe texting zones would provide motorists with safe, off-road options to use their devices before resuming their travels. This could help reduce the attraction of using a hand-held device while operating a vehicle."

The Ontario Safety League, an important safety advocate in the province, has also voiced their support for Bill 190. Their letter states, "Distracted driving is everywhere. It doesn't matter how many years of experience you have behind the wheel; we are all affected by distracted driving behaviour. The Safe Texting Zones Act is a chance for Ontario to lead the way with legislation to bring awareness to this issue and work towards safer roads in Ontario."

Combating distracted driving is a non-partisan issue. That is why the official opposition supported the government's Bill 31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer act. However, increased fines are not enough to curb distracted driving habits. The implementation of texting zones provides a practical solution that works in tandem with past initiatives.

In a letter of support from Aviva insurance, this illustrates how Bill 190 builds upon the distracted driving measures of the previous bill: "In 2015, Aviva supported the Ontario government's passing of the Making Ontario Roads Safer Act, which consists of increased fines and assigning demerit points to anyone convicted of distracted driving ... MPP Vic Fedeli's PMB will contribute to the government's efforts to reduce the number of accidents caused by distracted driving and make roads safer for all Ontarians."

1550

To reiterate, Bill 190 aims to combat distracted driving through the creation of designated highway texting zones, where a driver is able to stop safely to use a cell-phone. Primarily, it would require signage be displayed along the highways to remind drivers that there is nearby opportunity for them to legally use their cellphone.

Passage of this legislation would continue the bipartisan action to address our growing problem of distracted driving. The Safe Texting Zones Act sends a clear message to distracted drivers that there is no longer any excuse to endanger themselves and those they share the road with. Their text can wait until the next texting zone. In doing so, they will be taking a concrete and positive step towards distracted driving.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you for allowing me to rise and speak on Bill 190 today, called the Safe Texting Zones Act—that's a mouthful, really. This bill calls for spaces along our highways to be set aside to allow people to pull over and safely send text messages. It would also enable the province to put up the appropriate signs to tell people when these zones were coming up with lots of notice. The ideal here is to ensure that people don't check their phones while they're driving, but instead pull off the road and check their phone, and then continue driving safely.

This is another piece of legislation that we're debating in this House because of a newer problem that is incredibly dangerous, the problem of distracted driving. When I was discussing this bill with stakeholders, a number of stats kept coming up over and over again in the discussion. I think they're very important, so I'd like to read them into the record so that anyone watching at home or reading this later can understand why this is an important topic.

The RCMP notes that in 80% of collisions, the driver has taken their eyes off the road for three seconds before the collision. When you text and you drive, you are 23 times more likely to crash your vehicle. Even though a person might think they're just going to read a text or maybe they'll type a little bit and then look at the road and then go back to typing, it doesn't make a difference. We know that people come up with all sorts of plans that they use to convince themselves they're just sending one more text, until it goes wrong. It just happens too fast to be able to react.

Speaker, we know that distracted driving is the number one reason—the number one reason; we all thought it was drunk driving, quite frankly—for fatalities on our roads today. As a father and a grandfather, these numbers send chills down my spine. Texting and driving isn't something that affects just one part of our population. This is interesting, too: Older people, seniors are doing it, and young people are doing it, and it's putting people at risk.

I agree with groups like the CAA and the insurance industry and road safety groups who have stood up and said this needs to be ended right away. I also know that the police have made a few comments about this bill. Essentially, they're saying they support anything that makes our communities safer. They're also saying that this is a good start, but it's only one piece of a larger puzzle. It's only one part of what we have to do to eliminate distracted driving.

I know the police in my riding of Niagara Falls are absolutely dedicated to protecting the communities in Niagara. I believe the Niagara region police do an excellent job of putting public safety first, and when they make recommendations, we all shouldn't take it lightly. When our police force makes recommendations, we shouldn't take them lightly in this House, either.

I can say that the member from Nipissing, who put this bill forward, has the same aims as we do: to try and stop people from texting and driving. For that reason,

we'll be recommending that this bill move to committee. In committee, we want to hear from stakeholders like the CAA and automobile safety groups. We want to hear from other groups. Most important of all, we want to hear from ordinary people from around the province. We want them to weigh in on their experience fighting texting and driving. We want to hear if this is the sort of legislation that they feel will help, or if they feel there are better ways we can be fighting back against distracted driving. We want to hear from those who are affected by distracted driving. In this House, we're working to stop distracted driving, and we want to see if the experts and the residents feel this bill will accomplish that goal.

I've spoken many times before on this issue. I still believe there are major concerns around the lack of education that exists when it comes to distracted driving. I know the member from Nipissing met with these same stakeholders when putting this bill together, and it's really terrifying to hear how dangerous texting and driving has become on our roads. I'm sure he's just as terrified about the stats as I am.

I'm sharing my time with one of the other members, so I'll stop right there. Thank you very much for giving me six minutes of your time.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon and add some comments on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge on a very important discussion this afternoon.

I always like to remind people in the House that Ontario's roads rank first or second year over year in North America for road safety, and road safety continues to be our top priority.

Any discussion we have on bills by members that seek to improve road safety, especially when it comes to distracted driving, is very welcome. I want to commend the member from Nipissing for bringing this bill forward to help strengthen the fight against distracted driving on our roads. It's a very interesting discussion this afternoon in the House.

I know that if current collision trends on Ontario highways continue, fatalities from distracted driving may exceed those from drinking and driving in the very near future. Indeed, in some municipalities that has already occurred.

I was just at the launch of the Arrive Alive Drive Sober summer campaign talking about the danger of drug and alcohol impairment when operating a vehicle, but I know there's a large focus on distracted driving as well because of the scourge on our roads. Story after heart-breaking story arrives in our emergency departments on preventable deaths and injuries from this terrible thing.

I know that the member from Nipissing has already outlined the statistics. A driver who uses a cellphone is four times more likely to be involved in an accident than drivers who continue to keep their focus on the road.

I went to speak to a couple of insurance groups when Bill 31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer act, was

coming through the House. The two things the insurance companies wanted to talk about was distracted driving measures, the strengthening of that law in this proposed bill, and they also wanted to talk about self-driving vehicles, which we won't talk about today. But they were very supportive of seeing Bill 31 passed.

1600

It's also why our government continues to lead the charge against distracted driving. In February 2010, police began issuing tickets for this completely preventable offence, but with the passing of Bill 31 last June, drivers now face stiffer fines and penalties upon conviction, increasing the fine range from \$300 to \$1,000, making Ontario amongst the highest fine ranges in Canadian jurisdictions. Our government also made regulatory changes that apply three demerit points upon conviction for distracted driving.

But in saying that, people still don't have the message. I had to go to Boston to see my new granddaughter. She was a few hours old. She was born in Boston on April 29. Along that long drive from Boston—which was a pretty exciting drive, to go and meet this new baby—I did note, much like the member from Nipissing noted, the “text stop” signs along the major highways. I agree with the member from Nipissing: It was a good reminder, when you were in the car for that long, that “Whoa, yes, I have been out of touch, but okay, five kilometres down the road, there's a text stop.” So it was a good reminder that you'd get there soon.

There's no easy solution to changing inappropriate driving behaviour, and I think that this is a good reminder. We continue to monitor some of the progress we're making with the new stiffer fines and penalties, but I still wonder whether more needs to be done. I know that we've got a signage pilot at just four ONroute sites, one near me in Cambridge north, but the other three sites are in Port Hope, King City and Woodstock right now as a pilot project. This is after the OPP approached MTO regarding the introduction of “text stop” safety signage near these select service centres.

We know there are approximately 185 provincial roadside rest stops, including 23 at provincial highway service centres, picnic areas, scenic lookouts, parks and historical sites across Ontario, that provide drivers with that opportunity to pull off the highway and check their map or be able to check their texts.

I know the ministry right now is reviewing options to improve rest areas throughout Ontario to provide better and more frequent rest stop opportunities with adequate washroom facilities. I know it's a perfect time to be looking at increasing “text stop” signs across Ontario.

I agree with the motion and I will certainly be supporting this important bill to get it into committee to have further discussion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: It's my pleasure to be able to speak to Bill 190, safe texting zones, today and support it.

We all know that distracted driving poses a major risk for pedestrians and drivers alike. I want to stop there with pedestrians because they, too, expose themselves. I walk around the downtown core area and I'm astounded at the number of people who are not looking where they're going, as if somehow it's different when you're walking than when you're in a car. But for the seventh year in a row, distracted driving deaths have surpassed impaired driving deaths, and I think that's another point at which we should be confronting the seriousness of this issue. While there are many ways that a driver can be distracted, texting is the growing issue.

The Safe Texting Zones Act claims to combat distracted driving through the creation of designated highway texting zones. Essentially, a texting zone is an area off to the side of the highway where a driver can safely pull over to use their phone legally. Appropriate signage, obviously, would be required.

Drivers who text while driving must be penalized. There is no question about that. However, we must also recognize that texting is an important part of communication in today's day and age. From providing friends and family with an estimated time of arrival, to reminding a spouse to pick up some groceries, to just checking in to make sure the driver is safe, texting is a quick and easy way to share information with the people we love and care about. By creating safety zones, we can give drivers the opportunity to safely and legally text without putting the safety of other drivers and those who use the road at risk. If passed, the Safe Texting Zones Act would send a clear message to distracted drivers that there is no longer any excuse to take that risk.

According to the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, research shows that drivers who use cellphones are four times more likely to be in a collision than drivers who are fully focused on the road. When a driver takes his eyes off the road for more than two seconds, his crash risk doubles.

When I consider this bill, I can't help but think of Highway 400, which many of my residents rely on. While, yes, there are places to pull off for a quick stop, such as the Cookstown outlet mall, a sign for a safe texting zone also serves as a reminder to the other drivers that they need to be focused on the road.

Recognizing that there are areas with little or no cellphone service, texting zones would be a great benefit in areas with poor cellphone service, such as in rural and northern Ontario. Never mind that far away, in my own riding, people may be driving and checking to see if their phones have service. A texting zone would, of course, be in an area where, in fact, there is service, and this would give the drivers the confidence that they will be able to communicate while staying safe off the road.

In my riding, of course, we have the usual Monday-to-Friday rush hours, but we also have our own special version of rush hour, and that's Friday and Sunday nights as people drive up and down the 400 to and from their cottages. Drivers need to know that all passengers should always be wearing a working seat belt, that drinking and

driving is never acceptable, nor is any form of distracted driving, and finally, that no matter how much of a rush you are in, dangerous cutting and weaving through traffic puts you and others at risk.

I'm pleased to stand today and voice my support for this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to be able to speak today to Bill 190, regarding safe texting zones, and I want to thank the member from Nipissing for bringing this bill forward.

We live in an age where immediate communication is seen as essential. Not that long ago, it was normal to receive a message a few hours after the caller had left it for us, and it might take a while for us to follow up. But we live in a different time now. Since the dawn of cellphones, there has been an ever-increasing desire and expectation that we act on things immediately.

There are certainly some benefits to this easy access to immediate communication. For example, in case of emergency, lives can be saved quickly by quick action. But there's most definitely a downside. Very few of us can honestly say that we have never used our cellphone at an inappropriate time: during conversation, in a meeting, speaking loudly in a public place.

Hon. James J. Bradley: In the House during debates.

Miss Monique Taylor: During the House, during debates—that's right.

In the past, this would have been considered exceptionally rude, and while it may be frowned upon now, the acceptance of these practices is growing every year. I think it's unfortunate but it is the reality that we live in. A whole generation is growing up without knowing anything different.

I think it's important that we remember that there are two elements at play. First is our desire to jump on things immediately, to know things as soon as they happen, and that we need to respond quickly and sometimes without thinking. But there is also an exception from others—an expectation, rather, not an exception—an expectation that we respond immediately. I know many bosses are guilty of demanding an employee's immediate attention. They claim that a paid BlackBerry is a perk of the job when, in fact, it's a leash that prevents the workers from straying too far from their masters. I think we all need to take a responsibility not to put unrealistic or unsafe expectations on others.

Sending or receiving a text message takes about five seconds. That's five seconds when your eyes are not on the road. It doesn't sound like a lot of time, but if you're travelling at 90 kilometres per hour, that's enough time to take you from one end of a football field to the other. A lot can happen in that time. And if your eyes are effectively closed, it can have a devastating effect.

1610

For the past seven years, more people have died as a result of distracted driving than of impaired driving. In 2014, the OPP reported 73 deaths caused in distracted-driving-related collisions.

Last year, this Legislature passed the Making Ontario's Roads Safer act. This act brought in some important and helpful amendments to the Highway Traffic Act to discourage drivers' use of hand held devices. It is hoped that increased penalties and raising awareness will have an impact on distracted driving. It may be too early to tell just how effective that new law has been, but I do know, just from my own observation, that texting while driving is still a bad habit that many find hard to quit. We still have a lot of work to do, and I think this bill helps us along that road.

A similar law was put into place, as we heard earlier, in New York state a few years ago to combat texting while driving in a way that was understood and that tried to accommodate this growing need for instant communication. As this bill proposes, New York set up safe texting zones, with signage to identify where they were. They also posted signs along the highway saying, for example, "It can wait: Text stop five miles."

I think that's clever language. It gives you information about when you can check your messages, and it drives home the point that things aren't that important, that things can wait just a few minutes.

I'm pleased that the member has brought this bill forward and I intend to support it, but I do have a couple of comments that I would like to see addressed.

The first is to make sure that these areas are truly safe areas. If a person pulls over to text, it is highly likely that they are alone in their car. Being in a designated area means that they could be easily targeted by someone who is lurking in the vicinity. I would suggest that safe texting areas be adequately lit so they are fully visible and will deter anyone from taking advantage of a vulnerable person.

The bill states, "The minister may by regulation designate any part of the King's Highway where the shoulder of the highway may be used as a texting zone." Further, it says, "No person shall drive, park, stand or stop a vehicle in any part of a texting zone except in accordance with this section and a regulation made under it."

Now, on a 400-series highway, drivers are not permitted to park on the shoulder, other than in the case of an emergency. Given this, Speaker, what the bill seems to say is that drivers who have an emergency on a 400-series highway are not allowed to use the designated safe texting area. In effect, those wishing to text are given priority over those with an emergency. I'm sure that's not the intent of the member for Nipissing with this bill, but it is something that I would like to see clarified as we amend it through the committee stage.

I appreciate the opportunity to have a few moments and to give my support to this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the member from Nipissing for introducing this bill. I am pleased to speak to Bill 190, the Safe Texting Zones Act. Our government is very concerned

about the issue of distracted driving. With the passage of Bill 31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer act, this past June, drivers now face stiffer fines and penalties upon conviction.

I agree with the member from Nipissing that that's simply not enough and we have to do more to deter drivers from texting while driving. It's a very serious thing that afflicts our society.

Our government is leading the charge against distracted driving, and we need to continue to work towards reducing texting and driving among our citizens.

Demands of daily life may mean we need to multi-task, but safety is always of paramount importance, Madam Speaker. This bill sends a clear message to drivers that it is not acceptable to pose a danger to their own life or the lives of others.

There are universities and colleges adjacent to my riding of Durham, and many of my young constituents in Durham attend these institutions. I think it is vital for them to learn that texting and driving should not be normalized or tolerated and that there are safer options.

Using this piece of legislation, we can break the habit before it even begins. This is an innovative way to change the view that texting while driving can be done if you're careful enough.

Texting while driving cannot be done under any circumstances. The reality is, the chance of an accident dramatically increases the second you take your eyes off the road, and it's just not worth the risk. Research indicates that drivers who use cellphones while driving are four times more likely to be in a collision than drivers who purely focus on the road, and that risk doubles for drivers who take their eyes off the road for more than two seconds.

Not only has our government already made regulatory changes that subject drivers to the loss of three demerit points should they be convicted of distracted driving, but this would now present a proactive solution. I do hope that other provinces will see the steps we are taking to prevent distracted driving right here in Ontario.

I am pleased to support this piece of legislation. Thank you to the member from Nipissing for the introduction of this very important piece of legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm proud to rise in support of Bill 190, brought forward by my colleague from Nipissing. To echo the other members who have spoken before me, texting while driving poses a major risk for drivers and those who share the road with them. In fact, distracted driving deaths in Ontario have surpassed those of impaired driving for the seventh consecutive year. The bill aims to combat this growing issue and would create designated texting zones where a driver is able to stop safely and use a cellphone. It would also require that signs be displayed approaching the texting zone to remind drivers that there's a nearby opportunity for them to legally and safely use their cellphone.

Speaker, we recognize that most people have a smart phone today. New devices hit the market each year with

the ability to keep us more connected to the world around us than ever before. Texting, email, pictures and video—all those aspects are available at the touch of a button. This would have been unthinkable even two decades ago. Now these connected lifestyles are the norm. The Safe Texting Zones Act would create areas where drivers can stop and text, can stop and stay connected, and do so safely.

This bill would continue to build upon the message that texting while driving is not excusable—that one text can wait until the next texting zone—and reading or responding while driving is not worth the danger you create for yourself and those around you.

Speaker, we must be smarter about using the options that are available to us today. We're constantly wired into a host of communications devices, and whether we admit it or not, we sometimes have to be reminded to do the right thing.

This bill, when passed, will provide reminders to every driver that trying to be linked to their mobile devices when driving is extremely dangerous.

Speaker, I'm pleased to stand in support of the member for Nipissing's bill, and I encourage all members in the House to please support his important work towards improving and strengthening safety and, more importantly, saving lives.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It's always a pleasure to stand in the House on behalf of my constituents in Burlington, but particularly today, to speak to the member opposite's legislation, Bill 190, the Safe Texting Zones Act. I want to thank the member from Nipissing for bringing forward this legislation.

As an advocate for safety on Ontario's roads and as someone whose late spouse was an OPP officer who dedicated his life and his career to road safety and who attended many fatalities in the course of his career—I was listening to the member from Whitby-Oshawa. My late husband was an OPP officer in Whitby, at that detachment, and unfortunately he had to attend a number of fatalities on the 401, first on scene. As his spouse, I know how deeply these kinds of collisions—most of them preventable—affect officers and, of course, families.

What I find great about today's conversation—and I want to thank again the member for Nipissing for tabling this legislation and enabling this conversation today—is that it's a very non-partisan approach. I think Ontarians really appreciate when we find common cause, when we work together on safety, and in particular road safety issues like this. It really resonates with all of us, I think. I'm pleased to speak on this initiative and lend my support to it.

1620

As has been mentioned, this bill would create areas along Ontario's roadways where it's safe and reasonable to pull over and have a conversation on your phone or use your hand-held device—cellphones in particular, this has been mentioned—in order to carry out an activity that would otherwise be distracting.

According to the most recent Ontario collision data, in 2013 there were 71 fatal collisions in which at least one driver was coded by the police officer as “inattentive.” These collisions resulted in 81 fatalities. In fact, distracted driving caused more fatalities than impaired driving and speed-related fatalities in that same year, which, again, shows the burgeoning nature of distraction.

To quote OPP Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair, “Everyone, from the victims’ families and friends to the police officers who attend these horrific collision scenes and have to notify next of kin ... know how badly this ... needs to stop.” That’s why I’m proud to say that our government is making progress in this regard. In fact, they initiated a pilot program that will help address the issues we’re discussing here today, so the member’s intervention is a timely one.

In the summer of 2014, the OPP approached MTO regarding the introduction of “text stop” safety signing near select highway service centres as part of their safety campaign to deal with an increasing number of distracted driving incidents. The signs were installed at sites along the 401 and at four ONroute locations: Port Hope, King City, Cambridge north and Woodstock.

As today’s discussion underscores, there’s no easy solution to changing inappropriate driver behaviour. Changing this behaviour requires a broad approach. Creating spaces where drivers have a safe spot in order to undertake the kinds of activity the member opposite has brought forward, giving them that safe space so they can text or use their mobile device, is something I would encourage all members of this House to support. It’s a life-saving measure. I look forward to ongoing discussion and debate. I look forward to participating, hopefully, in committee. I thank again the member opposite for tabling this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Harris: We’ve had a chance to chat a lot today, haven’t we, Speaker? I think we’re very lucky in this House to have such important ideas brought forward by members for private members’ business every Thursday. I enjoy being here on Thursdays.

Mr. Tim Hudak: We enjoy you too.

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes, thank you. I think we’ve seen a full slate of them today, capped off by this forward-thinking idea from my colleague from Nipissing. The member’s proposal for the creation of safe texting zones adjoining our highways, I feel, is a key additional step to build on the provincial response addressing the dangers of distracted driving represented by our hand-held texting devices.

It was just last year that we were working in this House and at committee to put some teeth into that response, to up the penalties and awareness in an effort to prevent the preventable accidents and fatalities that impact the lives of motorists and pedestrians across Ontario. All of us in this House know, and many have first-hand experience with, the wide array of distractions

faced by the modern driver. We’ve heard the stories of the impacts distracted driving can cause.

That’s why it’s our job and our responsibility as legislators to ensure our laws reflect the startling realities we see on our roads, because the reality is that as we all stand here today, driver distraction is a factor in about four million motor vehicle crashes in North America each year. Texting drivers are 23 times more likely to be involved in a crash or a near-crash event compared with non-distracted drivers.

In Ontario specifically, the OPP have upped that number, indicating that distracted driving is a causal factor in 30% to 50% of traffic collisions in our province. That’s why we all worked so hard last year to unanimously support the Making Ontario’s Roads Safer act in its imposition of tougher penalties, higher fines of up to \$1,000 and demerit points on your licence. Those are the types of penalties we hoped would give a driver pause for thought before reaching to pick up their smart phone.

While heavier penalties are a vital part of the plan to eliminate the impacts of texting and driving on our roadways, the other disturbing reality is, as the CAA has noted, “Despite all efforts, distracted driving has become more prevalent on Ontario’s roads, putting motorists, passengers, cyclists and pedestrians at risk.” So we must do more.

One way to do that is building on the penalties we have put in place with policies that recognize the fact that, in 2016, drivers in Ontario, and indeed across North America, may at times require the ability to safely text while travelling; not while driving, Speaker, but while travelling. Today’s proposal from my colleague from Nipissing for designation and signage announcing safe roadside texting zones—parking lots, carpool areas, rest areas—recognizes that reality and gives the potential texter options to travel and text safely, as long as they’re not doing them at the same time.

Look, I truly believe that most of us in Ontario want to do the right thing. We understand the impacts of distracted driving and want to avoid the phone when at the wheel. But I also know that while we want to do the right thing, some still find themselves with phone in hand at a stoplight or even further down the road. It continues to be one of the worst safety hazards on our roadways. While texting is here to stay, it’s important that we address that reality with options to allow those who feel the urgent need to check their phone or send a message to pull over and do so safely.

The fact is that it wouldn’t take much to get this done. In fact, it already is being done. This past Labour Day saw the OPP and the Ministry of Transportation team up to offer designated text stops at four ONroute highway service centres. ONroutes in King City, Cambridge north—near my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga—Woodstock and Port Hope feature signage encouraging motorists to pull in, stop and text. We’re not reinventing the wheel here. We’re building on the success of this handful of pilots and picking up on the program unveiled by the New York governor in 2013 establishing texting

zones in 91 locations across the throughway and on state highways in the state, utilizing existing park-and-ride facilities, rest stops and parking areas.

I would hope that members on all sides of this House can get together today to build on those initiatives, build on the penalties we introduced last year and work toward a full-spectrum approach to the realities and impacts of texting by taking this small step toward safe texting zones.

I want to thank my colleague from Nipissing, and I appreciate the time.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member for Nipissing to wrap up.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I do want to thank the long list from all parties who supported this, from Niagara, Cambridge, York–Simcoe, Hamilton Mountain, Durham, Whitby–Oshawa, Burlington and Kitchener–Conestoga.

To reiterate, and in closing, Bill 190 aims to combat distracted driving through the creation of designated highway texting zones, where a driver is able to stop safely to use a cellphone. It would also require that signs be displayed along our highways to remind drivers that there is a nearby opportunity for them to legally use their handheld device.

Driving in the province of Ontario is a privilege; it's not a right. Passage of this legislation would continue our bipartisan action to address the growing problem of distracted driving. The Safe Texting Zones Act sends a clear message to distracted drivers that there is no longer any excuse to endanger themselves and those they share the road with. Their text can wait until the next texting zone.

I'm very pleased that so many stakeholders see the merit of Bill 190 and, as I read earlier, have offered up their support. I urge my fellow colleagues in the Legislature today to join and vote in favour of this bill and allow it to proceed to committee. In doing so, they will be taking a concrete and positive step to combat distracted driving.

Again, I thank all eight members who spoke. I thank very strongly all the stakeholders who took the time to write in. I want to thank my staff for all their work and the legislative staff for putting this bill together.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

STANDING UP AGAINST
ANTI-SEMITISM IN ONTARIO ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA LUTTE
CONTRE L'ANTISÉMITISME
EN ONTARIO

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will deal first with ballot number 42, standing in the name of Mr. Hudak.

Mr. Hudak has moved second reading of Bill 202, An Act respecting participation in boycotts and other anti-

Semitic actions. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear a "no."

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

I hear a "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will deal with the vote at the end of the other orders of business.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Campbell has moved private member's notice of motion number 74. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. Congratulations.

Motion agreed to.

SAFE TEXTING ZONES ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT
DE HALTES TEXTO SÉCURITAIRES

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Fedeli has moved second reading of Bill 190, An Act governing the designation and use of texting zones. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98(j) the bill is now referred to—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: —the Standing Committee on Finance.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Is it the pleasure of the House that the bill go to the Standing Committee on Finance? Agreed. Congratulations.

STANDING UP AGAINST
ANTI-SEMITISM IN ONTARIO ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA LUTTE
CONTRE L'ANTISÉMITISME
EN ONTARIO

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1631 to 1636.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Members, please take your seats.

Mr. Hudak has moved second reading of Bill 202, An Act respecting participation in boycotts and other anti-Semitic actions.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Hudak, Tim	Smith, Todd
Coe, Lorne	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Colle, Mike	McDonnell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Yakubuski, John

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Hoggarth, Ann	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Anderson, Granville	Hunter, Mitzie	Oraziotti, David
Baker, Yvan	Kiwala, Sophie	Potts, Arthur
Ballard, Chris	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	MacCharles, Tracy	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Malhi, Harinder	Sattler, Peggy
Coteau, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	Martins, Cristina	Singh, Jagmeet
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Sousa, Charles
Dickson, Joe	McGarry, Kathryn	Tabuns, Peter
Dong, Han	McMahon, Eleanor	Taylor, Monique
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milczyn, Peter Z.	Thibeault, Glenn
Hatfield, Percy	Murray, Glen R.	Vernile, Daiene

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 18; the nays are 39.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Orders of the day?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The Chair of Cabinet has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The House will be adjourned until Monday, May 30, at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1639.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Scarborough–Rouge River	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Arthur Potts
Todd Smith, Monique Taylor
Glenn Thibeault
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yvan Baker
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Toby Barrett, Han Dong
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Ann Hoggarth, Peter Z. Milczyn
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Lisa Gretzky, Ann Hoggarth
Harinder Malhi, Jim McDonell
Eleanor McMahan, Lou Rinaldi
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
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Monte Kwinter, Marie-France Lalonde
Amrit Mangat, Cristina Martins
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Laurie Scott
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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Steve Clark
Granville Anderson, Robert Bailey
Steve Clark, Vic Dhillon
Sophie Kiwala, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahan, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Chris Ballard, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Peter Z. Milczyn, Julia Munro
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Joe Dickson, Jennifer K. French
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Bill Walker
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Marie-France Lalonde, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Jagmeet Singh
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