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Monday 6 June 2016

Lundi 6 juin 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
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Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 6 June 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 6 juin 2016

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. This week, the House will be paying tribute to a deceased former member, Clifford Pilkey. I ask that members have him in their memory, in their minds, during prayers today.

Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In the members' gallery today is the former member from Kitchener Centre in the 38th, 39th and 40th Parliament: Mr. John Milloy. Welcome, John.

Mr. Bill Walker: In the members' gallery, former member Johnny O'Toole, and his son, Erin O'Toole, will be joining us later today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I missed that one. The member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: On behalf of the member for Welland, I'd like to welcome page captain Mélina Dubé; her mother, Michelle Gagné-Dubé; father, Francis Dubé; sister, Alia Dubé; grandmother, Marielle Dubé; and grandparents Lisa and Ray Gagné. Welcome.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to introduce two friends and former colleagues: Gerri Gershon, who is a school board trustee with the Toronto District School Board, and Judi Codd, with whom I served as a school board trustee. But most importantly, Gerri Gershon is the grandmother of page Nava, which is why they are here this morning.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I'd like to introduce three guests: two staff people from our constituency office, Michael Bailey and Billy Morrison, and also staff here in our office at Queen's Park, Ashley McIntosh.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to welcome a number of people who are users of eSight who have come to see the proceedings at Queen's Park. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: There are two people here I would love to introduce. The first is Jeff Regan, from London. The brother-in-law of my executive assistant, Jeff Regan is one of the eSight people who are here. Welcome. I'd also like to welcome Landon Tresise. Landon has been a long-suffering and long-serving staff member of mine. Welcome to question period, Landon.

Mr. Patrick Brown: We are joined here today by D-Day veterans, including Honorary Lieutenant General

Richard Rohmer, Allan Dick, Scott Brown and Andy Irwin. We also have veterans of the Second World War John Leitch, Joe Duffy, Fraser McKee, Gordon Casey, Jerry Rosenberg, Sheila Kingsley, June Rudd, Arthur Burford and other veterans and current members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

The leader of the—oh, sorry.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, if I could also introduce, we have, from the Oro Chamber of Commerce, Greg Groen and Nadia Fitzgerald, and, from the Barrie Chamber of Commerce, my good friend Rod Jackson, Gaggan Gill and Victoria Stevenson.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce and welcome Sarah Lowe and Kevin Simms, who are staff at my constituency office in Hamilton and doing great work for the people of my riding.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: St. Mary's Catholic Secondary School will be visiting this afternoon from Pickering. I'm looking forward to meeting with them, and I want to welcome them to Queen's Park.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'd like to introduce Kristen Ellison, Candace Ellison, Alan Legault, Rachele Mackay Parker, Jennifer Taylor, Venette Gerden Purcell, Brooke Froese, Sharon Gabison, Rhonda Dobson, Erin Lippens Syers, Tina Mack and Mieszko Filipowicz, here for the rally for autism.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to introduce Stela Trudeau, who is here from my riding with eSight eyewear today to show us this incredible technology. Welcome.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I'm pleased to welcome today our page captain today, Colleen Gauvreau from the great riding of Sudbury. With every captain comes a great team: Mother, Mary Sabo, is here today; father, Sam Gauvreau, who I believe was a page back in 1982; sister, Megan Gauvreau, who was also a page a few years back; grandmother, Antoinetta Sabo; and Anne-Louise Sabo. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm pleased to welcome some university students who are gung-ho to learn about politics. Sitting with former MPPs John O'Toole and Rod Jackson are Matthew Cressatti, Arian Moshimi, Alex Simakov and Julian Sconza. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm honoured to welcome parents of children with autism back to Queen's Park. Some of them are already said, but the list is long: Venette Gerden, Brooke Froese, Rebecca Haight, Sara

Haight, Gwen Seymour, Jennifer Taylor, Kristen Ellison, Candace Ellison, Jennifer Lalonde and Rachelle Parker. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Me?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you. Sorry about that—a bit of miscommunication there.

I'm pleased to introduce two constituents, Cathy Beitz and Hugh Montgomery, who are both legally blind and are here with eSight today.

Mr. Todd Smith: Good morning. I'd like to welcome, from the beautiful village of Stirling, Vickie Bateman and her mother, Clara Bateman, who are here for the tribute to the Battle of Normandy.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to welcome Jeff Regan, who is an electrical engineer from London West and here today as part of the eSight delegation. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Bob Delaney: On behalf of the member for Brampton West and page captain Sahil Bhagat, I'd like to welcome his mother, Sonal Shah; his father, Akhil Shah; and his aunt, Kalpana Pariek. They'll be in the members' gallery this morning.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to introduce Amy and Kenner Fee, Donna Baldwin and Jim McLean from the region of Waterloo. Also joining them are their service dogs Ivy, Jensen and Elvis. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm very happy to introduce a very good friend of mine, Jenn Phillips, who is visiting Queen's Park today. Most importantly, with Jenn and her husband, Lucas, who works with me here at Queen's Park, is their son Bruce Malinowski, visiting Queen's Park for the very first time. He's all of five months old, and we welcome him to Queen's Park.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I would like to introduce the vice-president of Campaign Life, Jeff Gunnarson; and, in the interest of time, nine summer interns.

Mr. Han Dong: I would like to introduce two young gentlemen that are doing a great job in my office: Mr. Robert Zhu and Mr. Roy Zhang.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to introduce to members of the Legislative Assembly constituents of my riding from Leeds–Grenville who are here supporting the Ontario Autism Coalition: Sean Timmons and Carol-Anne and Tom Brandow. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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Hon. Reza Moridi: Please join me in welcoming Brian Mech, CEO of eSight, who is here with us with the staff as well as users of eSight.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'm pleased to welcome to the Legislature today General Richard Rohmer, distinguished veteran in the Second World War, from my riding of Simcoe–Grey.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It truly is remarkable today to welcome Mariette Ackermann, who is here to

watch us at Queen's Park today with the eSight folks who have joined us.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'd like to introduce Catherine Bruner to the Legislature. Welcome, Catherine.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: You mentioned former MPP from Kitchener Centre John Milloy. He is here with a class from Wilfrid Laurier University: Professor Debora Van Nijnatten and students—just the first names—Berivan, Kanwar, Jozsef, Karyn, Abdi, Lucy, Jamieson, Brendan, Adriana, Chris and Emma-Lee. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Good morning. It's my pleasure to introduce in the assembly today Shawn Brown. He's a constituent of mine in Nepean–Carleton. Shawn has ocular albinism, and it results in very little vision for him. However, he's here with eSight today to meet with various MPPs to discuss new technologies.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to introduce Yvonne Felix from eSight Hamilton.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: It gives me great pleasure to introduce four individuals from the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee: Rachel Chertkoff, Jaime Reich, Piper Riley Thompson and Molly Harris. I look forward to meeting them after question period.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Please join me in welcoming Diana Rojas, Alfredo Marrello, Simone Burgher and Christina Charalambous. They're here for the rally and autism.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I'm very pleased, if not a bit excited, that two of my sisters are visiting Queen's Park, and my brother-in-law: my sister Susan Houghton, who's been here many times before—Susan, please wave—and my sister Sarah Gravelle MacKenzie from Winnipeg is visiting. Glen Murray, remember that. She loved—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ahem.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: —and my brother-in-law Howard MacKenzie. Susan, Sarah and Howard, welcome.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's a pleasure to introduce a constituent, Meagan Gilmore, who is also a technology pioneer using eSight to help her navigate.

I have two other constituents: Anette Chawla and her daughter, Ellen, who are here to have lunch with me today. I'm looking forward to that.

Let me also remind the members that we have Ontario Racing in the legislative dining room for a reception from 5 p.m. on.

Hon. David Zimmer: I would like to introduce and recognize Judi Codd, who is the president of the Willowdale Provincial Liberal Association.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I'd like to introduce somebody who is well known to you, in the members' east gallery: Chris Yaccato is here on behalf of the Ontario Lung Association. Welcome, Chris.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As is the tradition of this Speaker, I apologize for earlier missing these gentlemen: From the 36th to the 40th Parliaments, the former member from Durham, John O'Toole, is with us today. Thank you, John. John, I'm going to blame the pillar, because I can't see you.

Also from the 40th Parliament, representing Barrie, former member Rod Jackson. Rod, thank you.

D-DAY ANNIVERSARY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order, the member from Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, on this anniversary of D-Day, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to our veterans and the brave Canadians who fought and died in this campaign, with a representative of each caucus speaking for up to five minutes, followed by a moment of silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe–Grey is seeking unanimous consent to pay tribute and provide a moment of silence. Do we agree? Agreed.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Today, we honour the brave Canadians who fought and died on D-Day and during the Battle of Normandy in the Second World War. We do this to reflect on how much we owe our war veterans, the greatest generation, and to teach future generations about the importance of this act of remembrance.

I remember, growing up, hearing stories from my grandfather, who was in the United Kingdom during the Second World War. My grandmother, who I introduced last week, the one who had just turned 102, gave birth to my father during a bomb raid during the Second World War. I think every family has stories they hear from loved ones, these stories about heroism, the struggle that they shared, and how it resonates with all of us. I strongly believe that it is our responsibility to share these stories with fellow Canadians so that they too know the cost that was paid for our freedom.

So it is my privilege to stand here to express my sincerest gratitude to the veterans who are among us, and to those who have since passed away, for the sacrifices that they made for the cause of justice and liberty. We know that without this sense of duty and responsibility, our world would be a much darker place today.

There can be no doubt that the D-Day landings, which took place exactly 72 years ago, stand as one of the most important historical turning points of the 20th century. Not only were the D-Day landings among the most complex and challenging military engagements in history; they were also a defining moment for our country and the beginning of the end of a brutal and horrific war.

We now know that the success of Operation Overlord, by no means certain at the time, would seal the fate of Nazi Germany. We also know the special responsibility that was placed on Canadian shoulders during the operation. Our allies tasked Canada with taking Juno Beach. It was a task that our air, sea and land forces took with valour and determination.

The Royal Canadian Air Force bombers participated in the extensive bombing campaign in the hours leading up to the invasion. The Royal Canadian Navy deployed over 100 warships, manned by 10,000 Canadian sailors, to support the efforts on D-Day. This included mine-

sweepers that cleared the paths to allow landing craft to reach Juno Beach, all while under constant attack from German shore guns.

The 3rd Canadian Infantry Division and the 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade then landed at Juno Beach, where they faced a formidable enemy with superior tanks and weapons. But they broke through the Nazi defences, establishing a beachhead. They pushed further inland than any other Allied army that attempted to land during D-Day.

As American historian Stephen Ambrose noted, “Insofar as the opposition the Canadians faced was stronger than at any other beach save Omaha, that was an accomplishment in which the whole nation could take considerable pride.”

Ultimately, our forces suffered 5,500 casualties during the Normandy campaign. By the end of the first day, 359 Canadians had lost their lives on Juno Beach, 574 were wounded and 47 were taken prisoner. We honour their sacrifice.

Canadian soldiers would go on to fight throughout western Europe, helping liberate the Netherlands and Italy. Indeed, Canadians went on to fight alongside our allies until the final victory was achieved, and returned home having secured Canada’s reputation as a courageous country and a reliable friend.

Many of our veterans returned home to Ontario and laid the foundations for the growth and development that our province would experience over the next several decades. Today, the Legions they helped establish continue to be important gathering places for veterans and the community.

Without the dedication of our veterans, it is clear that Ontario would not be the same great place that it is today. Please know that your sacrifice will never be forgotten.

Once again, I extend my sincerest thank you to the veterans who are here with us today and who took the time to travel to Queen’s Park. Thank you for your sacrifice, your courage and your bravery. Your service has made our province and the world a better place. We shall not forget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It’s my tremendous honour to share my thoughts on this very important day on behalf of our leader, Andrea Horwath, and all New Democrats.

June 6, 1944: Today is the 72nd anniversary of this very pivotal moment in this very important part of our history. The event is also known as D-Day. It marks one of the largest seaborne invasions in the history of the world, and as has already been said, it was the turning point in this battle.

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It is important to note that Canada had a tremendous participation in this action: 14,000 Canadians went ashore on Juno Beach. Put in perspective, a country of only 11 million had contributed one million soldiers—men and women—in uniform. It’s a mark of our spirit as Canadians. It’s a mark of our ability to punch well above our weight.

Canadians suffered great loss; there was terrible suffering. We must remember this great loss and this terrible suffering, but we have to remember the legacy that Canadians left. Canadians are known around the world for their tremendous fighting spirit—their indomitable spirit—and it's something I am truly honoured to be here to share with you. I have to share with you, as well, that we are tremendously honoured that our veterans are here today, and we acknowledge them and thank them so very deeply for their sacrifice.

It's important to keep in mind that Canadian soldiers, and all Allied soldiers, weren't fighting a war of conquest. They weren't fighting a war to expand territory. They weren't expanding their domain. In fact, this was a war based on three very powerful principles: Those who gave their lives gave their lives for the protection of democracy, of freedom and of justice. That is the legacy our Canadian soldiers and all soldiers left behind, a legacy of making their contribution to defending those principles in the face of fascism; in the face of the horrible actions of Nazi Germany. This was our stance in defence of these very powerful principles, which are Canadian principles.

The veterans and soldiers who gave their lives fulfilled their duty to support these very powerful and important values. Our duty is to remember their sacrifice, their great loss, their indomitable spirit, and the cost and value of our important beliefs. We have a duty to remember. That is our duty that we must fulfill.

Moving forward, it is even more important that, like those who can tell their real-life stories of what they faced, what they suffered and their great victories, we have an even more important responsibility to keep their memories alive. Personally, my great-grandfather fought in both World Wars as part of the Sikh regiment in the British army. My father tells me stories about his sacrifice and the great commitment of people around the world to fight for justice, freedom and democracy.

The actions that were contributed by Canadians reverberate to our current day. Those who gave their lives made our society stronger, more vibrant, more free. They fought in the face of hopeless odds, and that is one of the elements that makes the Canadian story so powerful: The losses suffered by Canadian regiments are among the most in the entire British component of the forces that attacked. They show that spirit, that dedication to the important principles we all hold so dearly, and they gave their lives to defend those values.

So, at the minimum, we must come together every year to remember their sacrifices, to remember their commitment, to remember their dedication. It is truly an honour for all of us in this House to share our thoughts on this important day to commemorate their sacrifice and to commemorate those lives. I'm truly honoured to be able to share my thoughts today on behalf of our leader and all New Democrats. Lest we forget; we must always remember.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further response?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: The Tragically Hip is not the only great band to come out of Kingston. One of my

favourite songs, growing up, was sung by the Kingston Trio. You may remember it:

Where have all the flowers gone?
 Long time passing.
 Where have all the flowers gone
 Long time ago
 Where have all the flowers gone
 Young girls that picked them, every one
 When will they ever learn?
 When will they ever learn?

I rise today, both humble and grateful, to pay tribute to an important moment in time, June 6, 1944: D-Day and the pivotal invasion of Normandy.

It was a day of extreme bravery and tremendous loss. It was a day that would ultimately lead to the end of a terrible war and the destruction of a tyrannical empire that threatened the peace and stability of the entire globe. Fourteen thousand men of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division hit Juno Beach as part of the largest seaborne invasion in history. Many were seeing their first combat action of the Second World War. They represented all regions of Canada, the east and the west.

On the eve of D-Day, General Henry Duncan Graham Crerar, commander of the Canadian army, conveyed this message to assault forces preparing for battle: "I have complete confidence in our ability to meet the tests which lie ahead. We are excellently trained and equipped. The quality of both senior and junior leadership is of the highest. As Canadians, we inherit military characteristics which were feared by the enemy in the last Great War. They will be" even "more feared before this war terminates."

General Crerar, who was born and raised in my beloved Hamilton, was right. No one who considers the events of the first hours of D-Day can fail to be impressed by the accomplishments of the Canadian assault battalions. Due to overcast skies that morning, most of the elaborate support fire failed, leaving infantry combat engineers and armoured troopers to overcome the enemy by direct fire. It took incredible courage just to keep going. Words cannot do justice to the individuals who rose to the challenge and led assaults on deadly enemy positions.

Despite landing last and facing heavy resistance, Canadian forces reached further inland that day than any other nation participating in the D-Day assault. But let us pause for a moment and imagine those solemn minutes right before the landing craft gates opened on the beach sectors dubbed Mike and Nan. With the sounds of bombs exploding and bullets deflecting off armour, imagine that moment when a man must reach deep inside his soul, come to terms with fate and make the decision to run into a hail of enemy fire, ready to lay down his life for the betterment of future generations. Three hundred and forty Canadians died that day, June 6, 1944, with the Queen's Own Rifles from Toronto suffering the most casualties.

In the days and months that followed, at Caen and onward to Falaise, 5,000 more Canadian men would make

the ultimate sacrifice. The men who died were more than just uniforms with names; they had stories, loved and were loved, and had plans for their lives after the war.

We stand here today a free nation, these privileges earned by the soldier and donated to all of us. They traded their tomorrows for our todays. It's impossible for us to comprehend the sacrifices made, not just by those who perished on foreign battlefields, but by those who survived and came home. Thank you.

As the sands in the hourglass leave us standing here today with fewer and fewer of our brave heroes left to honour and thank, what can we do? What must we do? What I believe it is our duty to do is to never, never forget, and to learn. The comfort we grant our veterans is the assurance that we recognize the sacrifices made and our vow to let no generation of Canadians ever forget, for it is only by accepting the advice of our veterans that there is no glory in war, only sacrifice and suffering, that we can avoid another generation paying the same price.

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I'll leave you with another quote from General Crerar, who said, "War is so very truly hell, and this yard-by-yard fighting finds it at its worst. The gains are so small when it comes to distance—it just resolves itself into a case of counting corpses; if we have fewer than they, it's a 'victory.'"

That's one hell of a measuring stick, isn't it?

To those D-Day veterans joining us today, thank you.

Back to flowers: May the flowers of remembrance and appreciation for all who served in the name of freedom continue to bloom in our hearts, for that would be truly the most important victory of all.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their heartfelt comments. I would ask us to rise for a moment of silence in order to honour those that perished, those that survived, and all family members in celebration of the anniversary of the Battle of Normandy.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Not much this government does surprises me anymore, but when I learned that reporter Brian Lilley had an FOI that showed the Premier handed out two contracts worth nearly \$1 million to David Herle and his company, the Gandalf Group, I was shocked.

Let's not be mistaken. This is the same David Herle who co-chaired the Premier's election campaign, and that is the same Gandalf Group that is the Liberals' personal and preferred polling company. David Herle is being rewarded for his political work with nearly \$1 million of taxpayers' money.

Does the Premier have an ounce of ethics left? Does the Premier think it is acceptable to hand out \$1 million worth of contracts to her Liberal pals and cronies? Does the Premier think that's acceptable?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite will know that market research and polling companies have been used by governments traditionally. In fact, there are at least six other companies that have contracts. Forum Research, Ipsos Reid, Strategic Counsel, Ekos Research, Environics and Harris/Decima all have contracts with government.

All of that market research and public opinion research conducted by the government is procured through a fair, transparent and competitive process. Every company has to be qualified, has to be a vendor of record and has to compete for a project with no fewer than five competitors. The final decision about which vendor is best suited for a project is made by a committee of at least three non-partisan public servants. That's the process that all companies undergo.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The Liberals and this Premier will do absolutely anything to hold onto power. The only thing the Liberals care about is their own political survival.

The FOI showed that there was one contract—one contract—that towered above all others. That was the contract to David Herle and the Gandalf Group. This wasn't a normal government tender. The money came directly from the Cabinet Office, essentially the Premier's personal slush fund. This information was only revealed because of an FOI.

I shouldn't have to ask, but I will: How many other of these contracts are there? How many more contracts is the Premier hiding? Can the Premier tell this Legislature how many contracts her government and all the ministries have given to David Herle?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said, there is a process whereby any polling or marketing research is procured. All governments, including former NDP and PC governments, have conducted market research. It's market research that allows us, for example, to understand the impact of a campaign like the Who Will You Help? campaign, the ad campaign that is demonstrably changing attitudes about sexual assault and violence.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I may have to move quickly if I'm not going to get a response when I ask for generic order. I might move to individuals very quickly.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Just on that campaign, we know that before the campaign, 37% of Ontarians felt they had an obligation to intervene when witnessing—

Interjection.

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

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thirty-seven per cent felt they had an obligation to intervene when witnessing sexual harassment, but Ipsos Reid did a survey and now we know that that number has increased to 58%. So we understand that there actually has been an impact. That's the kind of market research that has been done.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: There's about a million reasons why no one in Ontario is going to believe this spin. Mr. Speaker, the Premier has no cabinet minister to blame for this. The Cabinet Office is under her direction. David Herle is her precious friend. This was her decision to make.

The Cabinet Office shouldn't be the personal piggy bank for the Premier's cronies, even if you call it a process. The Premier can't hide behind—this was not an open and transparent process. According to Brian Lilley, senior Liberals who know how the Cabinet Office works disputed the idea that this process was completely non-partisan and not subject to political direction directly from the Premier. So that means the Premier directed nearly a million dollars to her friend. Look up at the parents today, Madam Premier. That money could have gone a long way to help the children with autism.

This might just be the tip of the iceberg. I repeat: How many other contracts like this are there? It is—

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

Interjections.

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

Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Governments do market research. Governments do market research to discover and find indications of the impact of their policies.

Forum Research has contracts across government of more than \$2 million; Ipsos Reid, nearly \$2 million; Strategic Counsel, \$373,000; Ekos Research, \$172,000; Environics, \$164,000; Harris/Decima, \$122,000.

The fact is, governments of all stripes do market research. It's responsible to do so. Those decisions are made in terms of a process that is competitive. There have to be five vendors. A choice is made by public servants. It's not a partisan process, and, as I say, governments across all political stripes do market research.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The government can heckle all they want, but I was disgusted when I heard the member from Mississauga–Streetsville heckle last week and say that Melanie Palaypayon should have answered the phone. To blame his slow-motion

apology on Melanie Palaypayon not being able to answer the phone is absurd. Did the member consider for even a second that Melanie was with her son, who has autism, instead of waiting by the phone for this slow-motion apology? Did he consider that Melanie might have had to take care of her son, Xavier, with therapy, or that she simply needed to be with him?

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None of this—none of this—is Melanie's fault. In the end, responsibility rests with two people: the member and the Premier. Mr. Speaker, one of those two people has belatedly apologized. Will the Premier apologize to Melanie Palaypayon?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I've been very clear that our job, as members of this Legislature, as representatives of community, is to work with our constituents, to talk with our constituents. I apologize to constituents who feel that they have not been able to access a member.

But we have, on this side of the House, been talking to parents consistently. The member has apologized for this particular incident. My understanding is that he is working to set up a meeting with the family.

The changes that we are making, the additional \$333 million that we are putting into the autism program, is to help children who have been sitting on waiting lists, who have not been getting service, to go through a transition. We want every child in the province who has autism to have the service that they need, to have the intensity of service that they need, and to have that in a seamless transition.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: I want the Premier to think about Dallas from Barrie. She is the mother of Mitchel, who has autism. Dallas's life is consumed by taking care of Mitchel and her other kids. There is nothing she loves more. But her dedication means that Dallas can't work and therefore hers is a one-income family trying, struggling, to get by. They do their best to help Mitchel and her other children, but it has led to some tough decisions. For the last month, they've had to shut off the gas at their house. That means no hot water, no warm showers.

Mr. Speaker, I still don't understand how the Liberal government can turn their backs on these families. How can Liberals do this to Dallas and families like hers?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the entire reason that we are investing more than \$330 million—additional dollars—into the program is to make sure that kids who are sitting on a list not getting service will get service. So all of the Dallases and the Mitchels in Ontario are exactly the people that we are working with to try to make sure that they get the service they need.

Interjection.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: So far, 545 of 900 families have had a meeting with their service providers to work through the transition, to make sure that they are

moving into service that previously they would not have been able to access.

That is the point of the transition. I understand it's a change. I understand that it's a challenge. That's why every family is going to be working to make sure that they're getting the service that they need and they go through a transition, so that their children aren't sitting on a waiting list not getting service.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: The new money is a shell game. This is a cut: 2,200 kids are kicked off the list. And there may be new money two years down the road?

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Etobicoke North.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, this new money hypothetically might kick in two years from now. The families are out of luck today.

But it's not too late. Look at the parents of these children here today. Some 93% of the children currently getting IBI treatments are older than five years old. Now they'll have their treatments taken away. Many of those children and their parents will be outside, protesting those cuts.

The Premier knows autism doesn't end at five; neither should the IBI treatment. Mr. Speaker, today the Premier can make a difference to thousands of families. She can do the right thing. A very clear question: Will the Premier announce today that she will reverse the cuts and honour these families, do the right thing and fund IBI?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. I'm now ready to move on to warnings, if that's what you want. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: These are some of the most vulnerable kids in the province, and we know that. That's exactly why it is so important that all of these kids get the service and the treatment that they need. It is so important for these families. That's why the meetings with the families and the work on the transition are happening right now.

I need to make sure that the Leader of the Opposition understands that this is a new \$330 million-plus. This is money on top of \$190 million that is already in place. This kind of investment is the kind of investment that his party consistently votes against.

But we know that it's very important that we make these investments now, because there are children who have been sitting on waiting lists while the biological

window closes for intensive treatment when it's most effective. We need to get that money to the kids to get the service now and help the families through the transition, so that those kids can flourish. That's what this is about.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: To the Premier: IBI therapy can change a child's life. It can mean the difference between a child with autism being able to communicate with the world around them or not. Autism doesn't end at five, and neither should IBI therapy.

Parents are making their fourth trip in four months to call on the Premier to stop her cuts to autism therapy. Will this Premier listen to those parents this time?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Investing a new \$330 million-plus is not a cut. That is additional funding. It's a huge investment. We know that autism doesn't end at five. We know that it is extremely important that children get tailor-made programs that meet their needs.

I look up into the galleries and I see families who are dealing with kids with autism, who love those kids and want to make sure that they get service. That's exactly why we're putting this new money into the system.

I also see providers in the gallery who understand how important it is that you have a tailor-made program for children. That's what this is about. That's what this transition is about. That's why more than \$330 million is being invested, so all of those kids can get the service they need.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm sure that most of the parents here at Queen's Park would rather be at work, would rather be with their kids or engaged in their normal day-to-day activities. But instead, they've travelled to Queen's Park from all across Ontario for the fourth time in four months to fight for their kids and their kids' futures.

For showing dedication to their children, they have had the police called on them by the member for Mississauga–Streetsville and, again, this weekend, by the Liberal Party of Ontario at their nomination meeting in Scarborough.

The Premier forced her MPP for Mississauga–Streetsville to apologize to these parents. Will she now do the right thing, as the leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, and issue an apology to the parents of children with autism who had the police called on them yesterday by her party?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's very important to me that people who have something to say publicly have the opportunity to say it. I asked the question this morning, whether the Liberal Party had called the police during the nomination meeting. That was not the case. It was just not true.

There was a traffic control and crowd control issue. When there are large gatherings, it often happens that police need to be involved. The point is that the parents who felt that they needed to express themselves had the opportunity to do so as people went into the nomination meeting.

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In terms of listening to parents, it is extremely important to me that the parents in the audience understand that we have been doing that, and I'll give a perfect example. The whole issue around direct funding, which has come up in all of the meetings that I have had with parents—and that the minister has had, and that I know many of my members had—we are looking at direct funding as an option, as something that we need to do more of. I'll say more about that in the supplementary.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Children across Ontario should be getting the supports they need so that they can succeed, so they can express themselves and be fully engaged in their families and in school, and be able to grow up and achieve their goals. As one mother said when she visited Queen's Park, without this therapy that her son needs, "I will never know what his true potential was or what it could have been."

Autism does not end at five, and the need for IBI therapy for some children does not end at five either, regardless of what the Liberals are trying to tell parents of children with autism today and have been telling them since they brought the new program forward. IBI therapy simply should not be arbitrarily ended at five by this government or any other government, Speaker.

Will this Premier do the right thing, stop calling the police and, instead, ensure that children with autism have the therapy that they need to reach their full potential?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That's exactly—

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That's exactly why we're making this investment, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly why children need to go through an assessment.

As I said in my previous answer, as we talk with parents, as we talk to the coalition and the alliance, it's clear to me, as we look at the options, that we need to look more carefully at the direct funding option, the \$8,000 that is going to many parents to go through this transition. That is a form of direct funding, and we need to look at continuing that as one of the options.

Of course the need for intense treatment like IBI doesn't end for some children, but that's why we need to have an assessment. As Dr. Peter Szatmari said, who is the chief of the Child and Youth Mental Health Collaborative between CAMH, SickKids and U of T, it is so important to personalize intervention services for children with ASD. That is the point: personalizing it and putting

more money in, so that more children can have the service that they need.

ELECTION FINANCES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. It took several weeks of pressure by opposition parties, editorial writers and experts, but the Prime Minister of Canada has listened and agreed not to ram through changes to Canada's election laws using his parliamentary majority.

Will the Premier of Ontario follow the Prime Minister's lead and agree not to use a parliamentary majority to ram through changes to how Ontario's democracy is funded, and agree to a committee structure similar to the one approved in Ottawa?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the leader of the third party knows that there is a difference between these issues. On the one hand, you're dealing with an issue in terms of electoral reform where there is no consensus, where it's highly contentious. There are no models that there's a consensus on across the country. When we talk about fundraising reform, there are models. There's a large degree of consensus. We can look at the federal model, we can look to other provinces and we know where that consensus is.

Now we want to go out and consult on the draft legislation and make sure that we get input. We hope that the third party will take part in that process in a full and collaborative way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In Ottawa and here in Ontario, Liberal governments are changing how our democracies work. In Ottawa, the Liberals agreed that the committee changing the rules would have to work collaboratively and that no party could make any unilateral changes. Apparently, the Prime Minister of Canada understands the fundamental making of a democracy and how important it is for all parties to be engaged.

Will the Liberal government here at Queen's Park follow the lead of the federal Liberal government, put aside the interests of the Liberal Party of Ontario, and agree that one party shouldn't be able to make unilateral changes to the basics of our democracy?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The leader of the third party will remember that when we went through the electoral reform process here in Ontario, there was a select committee, there were citizens' assemblies held across the province and there was a referendum in which the entire population of Ontario took part, because on that issue there was not consensus. There was a high degree of contention around different models. We determined that that was the process that needed to be undertaken, and it was.

There is a broad consensus across party lines and across jurisdictions on fundraising rules. We are now working to reform the fundraising rules—to catch up, in fact, to other jurisdictions. We look forward to all of the input that we'll get in the consultation around the prov-

ince. And as I say, unlike to this point, we hope that the third party will take part and will do so in a collaborative manner.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier and the government seem intent on a reform process that will serve the best interests of the Ontario Liberal Party rather than the people of Ontario, a process that will have little credibility outside the Liberal caucus room. We can actually change that, Speaker. It is never too late to do the right thing.

New Democrats are putting a motion forward this afternoon offering a constructive solution: a committee made up of four Liberals, three Conservatives, two New Democrats and one Green Party member. That structure actually reflects the popular vote in 2014 and would ensure that any amendments at committee would have to have the support of at least two parties in order to pass.

Will the Premier of this province keep the deck stacked in favour of the Liberal Party or will she actually do the right thing and agree today to making our democracy more democratic?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: This is nothing but deflection on the part of the NDP, because one thing has become very clear out of this entire process: There is one party that is definitely entrenched in protecting the status quo, and that is the New Democratic Party of Ontario. At every stage of the process, they have thrown more hurdles, more objections, than anybody else. They refuse to engage. They refuse—

Hon. James J. Bradley: And she's running more fundraisers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The deputy House leader will stop taking advantage of a turned-on microphone, second time.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I can't believe that you're talking while I'm standing.

Carry on.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, the NDP refuse to engage in a democratic process by which we have an opportunity to consult with Ontarians. They voted against a motion that would allow members of this Legislature to work all through the summer and to visit as many towns and cities in this great province to hear from Ontarians as to what kind of electoral financing reforms we need to do.

The NDP needs to leave the status quo behind, stop doing private fundraisers and engage in the consultative process so that we can reform—

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

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Premier. As of last month, Kelly McDowell's daughter has been kicked out of IBI therapy and is now on a waiting list for

ABA. Let me repeat: Kelly's daughter has been kicked off of IBI and is now on a waiting list.

Kelly's daughter and thousands like her will have to wait for the minister's new program, using a service that is known to be not as effective as IBI. After almost 40 questions, four rallies and numerous debates, will the minister reverse her decision and allow children over the age of five to access IBI therapy?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank my critic for the question. I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the parents who are here and folks from the alliance and the coalition. It has been very valuable and important to hear their voices as we move forward, as the Premier and I have indicated. There is room for input and ideas in moving the new program forward.

We are taking action on a number of fronts, including establishing the autism implementation committee. That is a very important advisory committee, where the voices of parents, clinicians and advocates—and I want the voices of youth there, either directly or indirectly, working with our child advocate to make sure that we get this right.

When it comes to children who have been in IBI therapy, we know that it is the decision of a clinician to determine the plan going forward. We will make sure—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton Mountain, second time.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: —that families have the right support, whatever that clinical assessment is.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Your idea of support is putting children back on wait-lists. It's not working. The experts don't believe you. The parents don't believe you. The children don't believe you. The child and youth advocate doesn't believe you. Do the right thing, Minister.

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One concerned parent wrote to the minister and the Premier. She said, "You say you have a new program that will be up and running in 2018, so why is it our children can't remain where they are until that program is up and running? You say your MPPs and the agencies are giving parents all the information that will make this transition as smooth as possible.... If you honestly think we are getting the information then you truly do live in a world of fantasy."

Parents want to see a real plan, not one that leaves them stranded until 2018. I ask the minister again: Please, reverse your decision and allow children over the age of five access to IBI. Just do it.

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, it's important to mention that every single family affected by this transition is receiving communication from their service pro-

viders. The Premier already mentioned that over 545 affected families have had those meetings. The things they are talking about include the go-forward treatment plan, what services to use and how to use their direct funding, if they're eligible for that.

It's also important to know that families can continue to access a range of programs that have already been in place, whether that is rehab services, respite services, March and summer break camps or other programs offered through Autism Ontario.

Once families whose child has come off the IBI list have exhausted the direct payment of \$8,000, we are going to work very hard to make sure they move quickly into directly funded—

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

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. Parents of children with autism have come to Queen's Park yet again, begging this government to listen to their concerns. The government continues to say that no child is being removed from service and therapy and that every child will move into immediate service. I just want to be clear: Just because you say something over and over and over again, it doesn't make it true.

Speaker, we have seen the discharge letters—

Interjections.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: We have seen the discharge letters. On this side of the House, we know that every child matters and that all children, regardless of age, should have access to services that we know they need to thrive.

Will the Premier listen to a coalition of voices coming out against her plan to remove children over the age of five from IBI therapy and the waiting list?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, our plan is to move children into the service that they need. Our plan is to help kids who are not getting service to get service. Our plan is to have 16,000 children who are not getting service, get service.

I understand that we are in the midst of a transition right now. I understand that children and families are being asked to go from one process to another. But our plan is to help kids who are not getting service to get the service they need, and our plan is to make sure the children who are getting service continue to get the intensity of service they need.

That's our plan. That's why \$330 million-plus is being put into the system: to make sure that children across province get the service they need.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: She can call it whatever she likes, but her government made a mess of this plan, and parents are here to tell it to you again.

Speaker, this is about priorities. Internal documents reveal that almost 80% of the Liberals' so-called historic investment won't happen until after the next election. The sham of this government's new autism program is that it promises more money, but it actually delays the investment while forcing thousands of families to sacrifice their children's future. This government is actually taking away service from children over the age of five while having no plan to make substantial investments until after 2018.

It's not just the opposition that is begging you to listen; it's a broad coalition of voices. Please, Premier, please do the right thing. Please make the decision to grandfather these kids. Give them the service they so desperately need.

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: To me, the current wait times are unacceptable. The long spaces, the wait times for therapy: that's unacceptable, Speaker. We are taking children off wait-lists, that are going to grow to about five years by 2018, and getting them some immediate therapy support.

We are looking at our options going forward, whether that's direct funding or other services, and we are very appreciative of those voices that have come forward. They are actually helping us and offering to be part of the autism advisory implementation committee. That's going to happen very soon.

Meanwhile, my commitment is to all the families with children with autism who are affected to make sure they get the information they need from their service provider and from this government so that those children feel well supported as they move through this transition.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, I know that you're hard at work on the transformation of corrections in Ontario. Adding X-ray body scanners to every institution over the next two years, hiring more staff and developing new mental health training for correctional officers are all important steps that will improve conditions for staff and inmates.

Last year you announced the construction of a regional intermittent centre at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre designed to house intermittent offenders, which, when operational, will add new capacity to the correctional system.

After the success of the Toronto intermittent centre in my riding of Etobicoke-Lakeshore in reducing contra-

band and improving security at the Toronto South Detention Centre, I'm pleased to see that the government is moving ahead with the building of this intermittent centre in Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Speaker, through you, can the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services please provide an update on the work that's taking place at the Elgin–Middlesex Detention Centre?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. Speaker, my most important priority as minister is the safety and security of our staff and inmates. That is why, as part of our transformation of corrections, we have been constructing a 112-bed regional intermittent centre on the grounds of the Elgin–Middlesex Detention Centre in London, Ontario. This new centre builds on the success of the Toronto intermittent centre and is the next step in our strategy for intermittent offenders who are serving 90-day sentences, typically on weekends.

Housing intermittent offenders in their own facility will help to continue to improve conditions at EMDC. For example, it's an efficient and dedicated way to address capacity pressure by increasing the number of available beds, cutting down on overcrowding and improving staff and inmate safety.

Also, a separate facility will help prevent contraband from being introduced into the main facility by intermittent offenders who return to their communities during the week.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thank you to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for the answer.

I know that all Ontarians, specifically those in southern Ontario, will be happy to learn about this new facility being built at the Elgin–Middlesex Detention Centre and that it will be soon operational. This will be an important step in continuing to improve conditions in our institutions related to capacity and also, along with the addition of an X-ray body scanner, will help reduce contraband.

But, Minister, I've heard you say in the past that the transformation of corrections can't be about building more jails, that it needs to be about finally breaking the cycle of reoffending. Members of my community and Ontarians across the province know that that is what will make our communities safer places.

Mr. Speaker, through you, can the minister please provide an update on what he is doing to transform corrections in Ontario?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore is absolutely right: Building safer communities across Ontario can't be about building more jails. It needs to be about actually reducing the demand for our jails. That means we need to work closely together with all of our corrections partners to look at evidence-based solutions to the improvements that need to be made.

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Putting “correctional” back into the correctional system means working to break the cycle of reoffending.

That is why we are focused on increasing rehabilitation programming in our correctional facilities. We are also working closely with our community and correctional partners to deliver this important programming. That is also why we are conducting a thorough review of our segregation policy to ensure that segregation is truly used as a last resort.

These are transformational changes, and they will not happen overnight, but I can say that we are working closely with all of our corrections partners to improve our system and build safer communities for all.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Premier. Week after week, there are human trafficking instances reported across the province. In 2011, this government touted a paltry investment of \$1.95 million over three years, but an FOI revealed that, of the \$1.95 million, the Ministry of the Attorney General only invested \$190,000 in community agencies between 2011 and 2013 specifically for victims of human trafficking. In 2011, Manitoba invested \$8 million in its anti-trafficking programs. It is shameful that this government barely invested \$200,000, which is less than what a trafficker can profit from just one victim in a year.

Will the Premier now admit that the insulting amount that was promised was actually never even spent?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister responsible for women's issues.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I know one of my colleagues will want to share the supplementary with me. But I do appreciate the question because, as the member opposite knows, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and I are bringing forward a human trafficking strategy this month. It is very important we do that because of the serious nature of this issue and the complexity of it. We have held a number of consultations on human trafficking across the province.

We've looked at what we're investing already in terms of human trafficking. We do that at the community level. We do that at the provincial level. I know the Minister of Community and Social Services and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services have a number of programs that they already invest in, as does the Attorney General, in terms of supporting victims of human trafficking. I'm very pleased that we're going to bring this forward. It's going to be very survivor-focused, and we are going—

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: A trafficker preys, manipulates, drugs and assaults their victims, who are on average 14 years old. That's the reality. They are our children. It's the largest-growing crime. It's more profitable than guns or drugs. The girls next door are reusable commodities, and make no mistake, they are brutalized over and over.

If past history predicts future behaviour, it's clear that the government strategy will not have any meaningful in-

vestment. The 2016 budget confirms that there is no new money. It is not building Ontario up; it's tearing the lives of our children apart.

How much longer will our girls continue to be abandoned by this government?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: To the Attorney General.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Human trafficking is a tragedy. My ministry takes it very seriously, so we have invested. In 2011, my ministry committed \$1.75 million over three years as part of an initiative to combat human trafficking. Funding went towards programs that support victims of human trafficking and to the development of a province-wide online training program for front-line service providers working with victims of human trafficking. The remainder of the funds were used for existing victim support programs and services and to ensure that these services are available to victims of human trafficking.

This government is investing and will continue to invest, contrary to what they had done when they were in power.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. Public dollars are being used for partisan advertising in this province. The Auditor General saw a recent ad and said that she had concluded "that the primary objective of this ad is to foster a positive impression of the government. This ad would not have passed" her "review prior to the act's amendment on June 6, 2015."

This Premier is planning to restrict political advertising on just about every issue in the six months prior to the election campaigns going forward. Why is partisan government advertising the exception?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, I will remind the member opposite, actually, that we're the government that brought in legislation around partisan advertising, and we brought it in because of the practices of the previous government, where the Premier of the day was front and centre—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —where the Premier of the day was front and centre in ads.

We are, it is true, giving people information about what this government is doing. The climate change ad is an extremely important piece of public information. I think it would be hard to argue that action on climate change is a partisan issue. If the NDP wants to argue that taking action on climate change is a Liberal initiative, so be it. It's the greatest threat that's facing mankind.

Interjections.

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

Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm glad the Premier mentioned climate change, because if a group of concerned citizens

wanted to run an advertisement six months before an election saying that all parties need to do more about climate change, they would face significant restrictions by her government. If a group of parents wanted to run advertisements months before an election saying that children with autism need better supports, they would face significant restrictions. But if the government runs ads that the Auditor General says are essentially self-promotion, they can spend as much as they want, completely drowning anyone else out.

This seems like it is more about shutting down anyone criticizing the Liberals than it is about election fairness. Why does this Premier plan to clamp down on non-partisan advertising by advocacy groups and citizens of this province while she will continue to allow the government to spend as much as it wants on partisan advertising?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting how the NDP is choosing to debate the draft legislation that is before the committee for public hearing here in the Legislature while they have refused at every stage of the process to engage and participate and give their feedback when that draft legislation was written.

That is why we have taken the unprecedented step of taking the draft legislation and have referred that legislation to the committee after first reading—it has not yet even been debated in the House, Speaker: so that we can hear from Ontarians across the province and be able to improve upon the legislation, the draft bill.

I urge the member that I hope she stops worrying about her vacation planning, which she has been talking about in the committee, and actually take the time and travel the province, listen to experts, listen to Ontarians so that we can amend that bill, we can make it stronger and bring it back here in September for second reading debate.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Mr. Han Dong: Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation. Last year today, our government announced the Union Pearson Express, the first of its kind in Ontario. The UP Express has been providing reliable and efficient service for those looking to travel between Union Station and the Pearson International Airport.

Since its launch date, however, we have received some criticism from media and the opposition members about the services. Some have been concerned about the price of fares, some have been concerned about the low ridership, and still others have been concerned about the use of the service more generally.

Mr. Speaker, with today marking the first-year anniversary of launching the Union Pearson Express, can the minister please provide members of this House with a ridership update?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by thanking the member from Trinity-Spadina for that wonderful question.

Today does mark the one-year anniversary of the launch of the Union Pearson Express, a service that our government is rightly very proud of. This is a service, to remind the House, that was delivered both on time and on budget. Since the Union Pearson Express launched in 2015, it continues to offer passengers predictable and reliable service to and from the airport, with stops along the way.

Speaker, members of this House will recall that we announced a new fare structure earlier this year, and we are already seeing positive results with this change. The ridership doubled in the first few weeks following the announcement of the new fare structure, tripled within six weeks, and now, more than three months later, we are seeing averages of 8,200 riders per weekday on the Union Pearson Express.

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Ridership continues to increase week over week, thanks to the action that we've taken and thanks to the advocacy of a number of members on this side of the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Han Dong: I want to thank the minister for his response. Those living in my community of Trinity–Spadina will be very happy to hear that 8,200 people a day are choosing to use the UP Express.

I know that the UP Express was originally launched to provide air travellers with efficient service to the Pearson airport. However, last week, due to some TTC service issues, many in my community chose to take UP Express to get to work on time.

Now that the fares for stops between Pearson and Union are better aligned with existing GO fares, I believe that more and more commuters are using the service.

Can the minister please tell the members of this House, especially the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, more about the commuters using the UP Express?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member from Trinity–Spadina for the follow-up question. I also want to thank the opposition members, Speaker. You hear the excitement and the energy and the support that's coming from those on the other side of the Legislature for the Union Pearson Express.

The member from Trinity–Spadina is 100% right: Following some technical issues on the TTC just last week, we saw many riders jump onto the Union Pearson Express to get to their destinations on time. Because the UP Express is faster, more reliable and less expensive than other direct airport-to-downtown modes of transportation, we are actually seeing commuters using the UP Express on a more regular basis. In fact, just over 20% of the UP's ridership base is commuter-driven.

We are pleased to see both commuters and air travellers taking advantage of the service, but we know that our work is not yet done. We'll continue to work with Metrolinx to build ridership by improving wayfinding and building awareness.

But over the last year, it's clear to us that people who use the Union Pearson Express fall in love with it. I would encourage every member on all sides of this House to—

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

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Premier. Waterloo region has been long blessed with some of the best health care this province has to offer. Yet government foot-dragging on a four-year-old funding promise to St. Mary's hospital is forcing cardiac care patients to make alternative arrangements. The quality of care at St. Mary's has long drawn patients to Kitchener, but without promised funding improvements, they're at a crossroads.

Back in 2012—yes, 2012—this government promised funding to build an electrophysiology suite, and yet St. Mary's continues to wait. It has been four years. As government spends millions on TV ads to boast about health care investments, demand for cardiovascular services at St. Mary's has soared by 25%.

Will the Premier tell us if she will continue to neglect the people of Waterloo region and St. Mary's hospital in denying them their long-promised EP suite?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. It's information that I had received, and I had a good discussion with the member from Kitchener Centre, who has expressed the same interest in moving forward with this important cardiac development.

I have to indicate that my ministry is looking closely at this issue, working with the hospital, working with the local LHIN. It's great to see a strong advocate as well in the gallery, John Milloy, who has advocated for quite some time for these increases in services.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to follow up with the ministry. I'll follow up with the members who have engaged me, including in question period this morning, with regard to future developments for this important service.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes, and as the minister mentioned, the former member for Kitchener Centre had actually made that announcement—he'll remember—but it was four years ago—four years ago—he did so.

While they've waited to deliver their promised funding, St. Mary's cardiac care wait times have become the highest in the province for some procedures—almost double that of other facilities. Patients are being forced to head elsewhere for treatment. Cardiac care physicians recruited by St. Mary's for this specific program are tired of waiting, and they're heading for the exits. Government delays are having a direct impact on the health care treatment in Waterloo region, and government doesn't seem to care.

Speaker, our patience has run out. Government has had four years. Will the Premier commit today to end the

waiting game and deliver the cardiac care funding that was promised four years ago?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I have to say that I'm surprised, because with this question I would have expected at least the member opposite, if not his party, to have supported us in the budget. The budget contained elements that precisely respond to these sorts of questions and these sorts of requirements, not just on the immediate maintenance and renovations, which we've spoken about over the last couple of weeks and which we've increased to \$175 million annually, but the \$12 billion in capital investments over the next 10 years to allow us to make these sort of investments, which I know are important for St. Mary's. And there are other hospitals in the area that we've been working with as a ministry, through the LHINs, looking at their cardiac programs as well.

Again, this is an issue that has been discussed between myself and the member from Kitchener Centre. I know that it's an important issue for her. I'm glad that the member opposite has also had the opportunity to raise it—not with me directly, but here in question period—and I'm happy to follow up with him.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. On Saturday, I met with front-line health care workers and patients in North Bay. Liberal cuts have forced the North Bay Regional Health Centre to lay off over 350 nurses and hospital workers in recent years, to close beds and to cut services. It means patients leave hospital quicker and go home sicker. The hospital is understaffed, and nurses and hospital workers are stressed and overworked. The people of North Bay are paying the price for four straight years of Liberal hospital funding freezes.

How can this Premier defend her record of cutting 350 workers from the North Bay hospital?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: First off, I want to address the opposition claims that they're having 350 nurses and health care workers being cut. This number actually reflects staffing changes dating all the way back to, and including, the amalgamation in 2011 that resulted in a brand new hospital. So the figures that she's representing actually reflect a period of almost six years. Many of the staffing changes, as a result of amalgamation, were a result of positions no longer required, including many administrative roles.

In fact, since 2011, the number of layoffs that have occurred at the North Bay Regional Health Centre amount to 21.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This is a brand new hospital that was built with fewer beds than existed before it was built. That's why there are fewer staff. Over three years, this government has been cutting 350 people out of the

health care needs of the people of North Bay. It is the silent—

Interjections.

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

The Minister of Government and Consumer Services, come to order. The Minister of Education, come to order.

Carry on.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Health care is the silent crisis of this Liberal government. The Liberals are forcing hospitals across Ontario to cut patient care, to close beds, to lay off front-line workers, all because the Liberals refuse to fund our hospitals properly.

North Bay knows what that looks like. The CEO of the hospital says that he's been forced to cut \$35 million in just over three years and that the hospital will face even more challenges this year because funding is not keeping up with inflation, population or growing costs.

Patients and families are paying the price for the Premier's cuts to health care. When will this Premier start listening to the people in North Bay and across Ontario and stop the deep Liberal cuts to hospitals and our health care?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I can think of few things worse and not demonstrative of leadership than unnecessarily and incorrectly creating anxiety among patients in North Bay. If she cared so much about—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: You should talk to those people, Eric. It is a disgrace.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. The leader of the third party will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will come to order.

Finish, please.

1200

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Last week, it was the member from Nipissing who erroneously spread a rumour, claiming that the cancer care centre at that hospital was going to close and the hospital is in crisis mode. If the third party cared so much about the hospital in North Bay—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds-Grenville is warned and the member from Nipissing, second time.

You have a wrap-up, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: If she cared so much about the hospital, why didn't she even bother to call or visit the hospital when she went to North Bay?

That hospital has an emergency department with wait times of less than half the national average, a lower medical readmission rate than the provincial and national averages, an 86% occupancy rate, over 3% of patients—

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

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Start the clock. Order. Minister of Health, come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton Mountain is warned. The leader of the third party, second time.

New question.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the Minister of Education. Our government recognizes that schools are the hubs of our communities across Ontario. They are places where children gather to learn and play.

Since 2003, our government has invested about \$13.5 billion in school infrastructure, including 758 new schools and more than 735 additions and renovations. In addition, last April our government announced \$120 million in new funding, dedicated to building safe, high-quality licensed child care spaces in schools across the province. I understand that so far, \$90 million has been allocated, resulting in almost 3,200 new licensed child care spaces coming soon to communities across Ontario.

Minister, I was pleased to join you during Education Week to make an important announcement at the Waterfront School, a vibrant community hub here in Toronto. Speaker, through you to the minister—

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

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Please tell this House how our government—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I stand; you sit. Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I want to thank the member for her important advocacy for community hubs, including the Bloor-Dufferin site in her riding.

Our government is committed to supporting the use of schools as community hubs, which integrate a range of needed services under one roof to better serve the communities. This year, Ontario is investing nearly \$90 million to expand child care and child and family support services in schools and to create spaces in schools for community use.

As part of this investment, our government will provide \$20 million to create spaces for new child care and family support programs in schools; \$18 million to retrofit existing space within schools to open up more child care; and \$50 million to renovate our surplus school space to make it available for new community hubs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Minister, it is great to hear that our government continues to improve community access and increase services offered in schools.

Ontario's nearly 5,000 schools offer the ideal location for community hubs as many of them are the heart of their community. As the minister referred to and mentioned, the Bloor-Dufferin site in my riding of Davenport is a great example of a great location for a vibrant com-

munity hub—and the one that we visited during Education Week, the Waterfront School, a vibrant community hub that also includes a neighbourhood centre, school and child centre all in one location.

All these investments are part of our government's economic plan to build Ontario up and deliver on its number one priority: growing the economy and creating jobs. Minister, can you tell us, including my constituents in Davenport, how our government is making it easier for community partners to create community hubs in schools?

Hon. Liz Sandals: One of the things we're doing is, we're expanding eligibility for school capital funding to include building replacement space for community partners in new schools or additions if the original school where their community hub was located is closed.

Some of other things we're doing, Speaker, is making it easier for community partners to create community hubs by giving them additional warning if they could have a future opportunity to purchase or lease surplus school space. We've added to the list of people who will be notified. The list now includes local health integration networks, children's mental health agencies, First Nation and Métis organizations, and in northern Ontario, district social service administration boards. They told us that only municipalities were notified, and we've added the DSSABs at their request.

We're also making sure that they have longer to respond. All these organizations will have an additional 90 days so that they have longer to try and work out arrangements with the school board.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Kitchener-Conestoga has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care concerning St. Mary's hospital. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Speaker. I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice with respect to private members' public bills.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated Monday, May 30, 2016, the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, June 6, 2016, from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 149, An Act to establish an advisory committee to make recommendations on the jury recommendations made in the inquest into the death of Rowan Stringer; Bill 180,

An Act to proclaim a Workers Day of Mourning; and Bill 182, An Act to proclaim Ontario Down Syndrome Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that, notwithstanding the order—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Dispense.

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

Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

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

The House recessed from 1207 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to welcome Carly Pettinger to Queen's Park. She's from Conestoga College. Welcome, Carly.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NURSES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: With not even a moment's notice, any of us could suffer a stroke. When that happens, our life literally depends entirely on a team of professionals who can respond quickly and capably.

On May 24, I participated in Take Your MPP to Work day, an initiative of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. It was a valuable opportunity. We followed the path of a typical stroke patient from the time they enter the emergency room door to the time they're in rehab and every stage in between. Speaker, at every stage, we depend on RNs, the people with the right skills, to be there for us at the right time. And time is of the essence; as the nurses often say, "Time is brain."

I want to thank Catherine Walsh, Tasha Vandervliet, Anita Gras and all the nurses at the Stratford General Hospital whose work is making a difference in the lives of patients. I also want to recognize the nurses at all our hospitals in Perth-Wellington. We are so fortunate to have their care and expertise in every corner of our riding.

To the government, I say: Let's listen to them. Let's work to address their concerns. Let's hold on to the RNs we have and hire the new ones we need. The future of health care depends on it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Catherine Fife: Last week, my office learned that St. Mary's hospital, which has a record of nearly 100 years serving the people of Kitchener-Waterloo with excellent care, has been trying to secure capital funding for its hybrid EP cath lab for surgery and diagnosis. This concept was approved four years ago both by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Finance, but despite this, the funding has not materialized. The room for this lab has been sitting empty.

There are 11 full-service regional community hospitals in Ontario. St. Mary's is the only one of those 11 that is left waiting for this critical lab. In less than two years, Barrie was able to apply for, be approved for and receive funding for their cath lab. At St. Mary's, the diagnostic catheterization wait-list is between six to eight weeks, while other communities have same-day service. The people of Kitchener-Waterloo shouldn't have to suffer because of this kind of service disparity.

I know the member from Kitchener Centre has been fighting hard to get some commitment from the ministry. I know the member from Kitchener-Conestoga is supportive of this important regional service.

We are simply asking for what every other cardiac regional program in Ontario already has. Volume has consistently increased by 10% to 20% each year, and we need to catch up with the rest of the province.

I worry that this hospital is currently stretching human capital resources. Physicians in the area have expressed concerns that, if this continues, patient care will be compromised.

I'm asking today, on behalf of St. Mary's, that the ministry release the funding that was committed four years ago. Let's get this done. Our community cannot afford to wait any longer.

MUHAMMAD ALI

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: As I'm sure we're all aware by now, the world lost a giant this past weekend. Muhammad Ali, considered by many, if not most, to be the greatest boxer of all time, passed away at the age of 74. It's nearly impossible to overstate the global impact that Ali had. He meant so much to so many people.

He was a beautiful boxer, where he cemented his legacy with memorable bouts like the "Fight of the Century," the "Rumble in the Jungle" and the "Thrilla in Manila." I even recall doing a class presentation in third grade on Ali's first fight with Smokin' Joe Frazier. Even though I was really too young at the time to understand it's importance, I vividly remember everyone making a huge deal about it.

But, really, it's what he did outside the ring that will leave an impact on the world. He was a civil rights campaigner, a poet and a fierce advocate for world peace; a truly iconic figure who transcended the boundaries of sport, race and country; and an inspiration who stood up for what he truly believed, even when it meant sacrificing nearly everything he'd worked for in his life to achieve.

His combination of talent, charm, intensity, competitiveness and compassion captivated the world in a way that won't ever be seen again. He was and always will be the greatest.

EARL SHUMAN

Mr. Jim McDonell: I rise today to pay homage to a staunch advocate for transparency and consumer rights who passed away on Friday, May 6. Dr. Earl Shuman, as did many Ontarians, invested in the purchase of a new

home. His investment, however, gave rise to claims with Tarion Warranty Corp, the monopoly provider for new home warranties in Ontario.

Throughout the years, Dr. Shuman advocated for things many Ontarians take for granted. He demanded that the laws related to building new homes be respected. He sought to have those laws enforced. He fought to ensure consumers could be confident that their family's largest purchase was secure and would serve them well throughout the years.

Dr. Shuman's efforts also highlight the spirit that makes our province a great place to live and settle. He used his experience with Tarion and the Licence Appeal Tribunal to help other homeowners facing the same struggle.

I am confident this House will agree, Speaker, that the spirit of diligence, perseverance and aiding others is an inspiration to Ontarians from all walks of life. Dr. Shuman's tireless advocacy for transparency, dependability, accountability and consumer protection should inspire us all to do better by consumers in Ontario and to always keep their interest at heart.

Dr. Earl Shuman, thank you, and may you rest in peace.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Brampton is the ninth-largest city in Canada and desperately needs a university. Universities have been proven to have an amazing social impact on cities. They are innovators for developing greater culture and arts. They're able to have a very powerful economic impact. They also encourage innovation and investment.

Now, universities are well proven as city builders. They encourage the growth and revitalization of a city. As the ninth-largest city in the country, Brampton certainly needs a university. Sheridan College is on its path, it's on its way to becoming a university and we encourage that development. But Brampton needs a stand-alone university as well.

My personal story is that I wouldn't be here today as a deputy leader of a political party in Ontario but for my education. But it wasn't just the degree that I received; it was all the academic activities around my studies, the clubs that I was a part of and the activities that I participated in. I don't want other students to have a barrier to accessing education. In Brampton, sometimes it can take up to two hours to commute to the nearest university. There are costs associated with living in residence.

We need to ensure that students don't see a barrier to accessing education. It's such a large and vibrant city. We need to ensure that our students have access to education not only for the students but for the growth of the city. I encourage this government to work towards building a university in Brampton.

SENIORS' MONTH

Ms. Soo Wong: June marks the 32nd anniversary of Seniors' Month in Ontario. This year's theme is "Seniors

Make a Difference." I'd like to recognize seniors who make a difference every day across this province. Seniors are valuable members of our communities through their knowledge, experience, skills and energy. They volunteer extensively in organizations like Scarborough Hospital, St. Paul's L'Amoreaux Centre, the Centre for Immigrant and Community Services, the Agincourt Community Services Association and the Agincourt Rotary Club.

They also give generously. Research shows they make more charitable donations than any other age group. In my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt, there are many great agencies like the North American Muslim Foundation, Villa Elegance, Senior Guyanese Friendship Association, Carefirst and the Toronto Jinqiu Seniors' Association that provide quality care and services that keep seniors healthy, active, safe and independent.

June is one month when we can all recognize seniors province-wide. They make a difference in our community by being leaders, mentors, volunteers and engaged citizens. As we celebrate our seniors, we need to recognize and appreciate the contributions they make and continue to make in our families, workplaces and communities. Let us all take the time to celebrate and honour seniors for everything they do in making a difference in this province.

1310

RAMADAN

Mr. Rick Nicholls: The Muslim community plays an important role in the shaping and building of the free, peaceful and pluralistic province we all have the privilege to live in. Inshallah, the Muslim community does amazing work to enrich our beautiful province and I commend their continued efforts to promote cultural understanding and harmony.

Today we are entering the month of Ramadan, when Muslims all over the world are celebrating this blessed time with family, friends and the community. Ramadan is a blessed month of fasting, charity and doing good deeds for Muslims across the globe, and it's a beautiful glimpse into the lives of many Canadian Muslims.

It's inspiring to see everyone come together with the unity that this month brings along with it. This is a wonderful opportunity for Ontario, as well as many other Canadians across the globe, to learn and join in this holy month of purification and celebration.

May this month be filled with love and happiness and good health for all of those partaking in Ramadan.

On behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus and my colleagues here in the Ontario Legislature, I wish all of you a happy and blessed Ramadan. Ramadan Mubarak. Shukran. Thank you.

COMMEMORATION OF EVENTS

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It is my pleasure to rise in the House today and share several important occasions we are marking today.

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who fought for our freedom 72 years ago today at the Battle of Normandy. What has now gone down in history books as D-Day, June 6, marks an important turning point for Allied forces in ending World War II. This day is especially significant as my father fought for the Polish navy on a British battleship and was present during that historic battle. While he was very lucky to come home safely, so many perished in the line of fire, sacrificing their lives for freedom.

Today is also the anniversary of the death of Sir John A. Macdonald, who passed away 125 years ago, on June 6, 1891. His passing is being commemorated today in my riding of Kingston and the Islands at the national historic gravesite at Catarqui Cemetery.

Finally, I would also like to mention the wonderful celebration of the 47th annual Lviv Ukraine Folklore Festival. This event always offers the residents of Kingston and the Islands an unparalleled insight into the enchanting Ukrainian culture. Every year they ignite our senses with delicious cuisine, beautiful artwork and lively music. As a child, I remember watching the beautiful Maky dancers with wide-eyed wonder. A special thank you goes out to Nadia Luciuk, the chair of the Ukrainian pavilion, and her brother Lubomyr. Without them and their outstanding energy, this event would simply not have been possible to keep going for all of those years. Kingston and I are indebted to them for their passion in preserving Ukrainian culture and traditions.

Diakuju. Merci. Meegwetch. Thank you.

MEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further members' statements? The member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Speaker. Ramadan Mubarak to you and to the House.

I'm here to rise in support of men's health awareness week. As you'll remember, this is the subject of my most recent private member's bill, where we want to celebrate the week immediately preceding the third Sunday of June as men's health awareness week. June 19, which is the third Sunday, is of course Father's Day, so I'd like to take an opportunity to say happy Father's Day to all the fathers out there. I'll be thinking of my own father on that day when the time comes.

I had hoped that the House leaders would be able to get together and adopt men's health awareness week in this session before we recess this week. That hasn't happened. But, like any MPP here who could be disappointed with a private member's bill, I will persevere and maybe next year we can celebrate it.

For now, Speaker, I want to say that next week, which would be men's health awareness week, will be celebrated across the province. Brendan Shanahan, the president of the Toronto Maple Leafs club, has sent a letter in support of men's health awareness week to the Premier of Ontario, also noting that in the federal government they've given \$4 million over four years to

help promote it. The BC government has given \$5 million over five years to help promote men's health awareness week. And Justin Trudeau is releasing a video today where he talks about the few small things that men can do in their lives to make positive change, like using the Canadian Men's Health Foundation's YouCheck tool. Answer a bunch of questions about what's going on in your life, and it will make very positive recommendations about how you could change your life for the better.

Speaker, I will be celebrating men's health awareness next week because it's important, as we raise families and look after our businesses and friends, that every now and then we take a moment to think about ourselves, because quite frankly, we're worth it.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

Point of order, the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice in order to create a non-partisan select committee on the changes to the Election Finances Act.

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

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Liz Sandals: Pursuant to standing order 8(e), I rise to indicate that no business is to be called during orders of the day tomorrow morning.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister's announcement indicates that we will not be meeting until 10:30 tomorrow morning.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

DEAFBLIND AWARENESS MONTH

MOIS DE SENSIBILISATION À LA SURDI-CÉCITÉ

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I rise in the House today to recognize June as Deafblind Awareness Month. Je prends la parole aujourd'hui à l'Assemblée pour souligner que le mois de juin est le Mois de sensibilisation à la surdi-cécité.

In the year 2000, June was proclaimed Deafblind Awareness Month across Ontario, so I was pleased that last year the federal government extended Deafblind Awareness Month to the whole of Canada. In fact, on June 2, the CN Tower was lit up red and white in honour of Deafblind Awareness Month. The month of June is chosen in part because it is the birth month of Helen Keller, who was a champion to people who are deaf-blind around the world. Her courage and determination were an enduring example of how, despite enormous challenges, all individuals can achieve great things.

Closer to home, we have our own pioneers in the deaf-blind community. In 1972, Mae Brown became Canada's first deaf-blind university graduate from the University of Toronto, and she accomplished that with the support of a remarkable woman, Joan Mactavish, who taught herself how to be an intervenor. Together, they accomplished great things.

Over the last year, I've had the opportunity to visit a number of agencies that provide services and supports to people who are deaf-blind, such as the Lions McInnes House in Brantford and the Bob Rumball Associations for the Deaf in Milton. I've met with staff and I've seen first-hand the care and personal attention individuals working in the sector provide to clients each and every day. The services and supports being provided to people who are deaf-blind are critical to their well-being, their daily activities and their future goals. Les services et les soutiens offerts aux personnes sourdes et aveugles sont essentiels à leur bien-être, à leurs activités quotidiennes et à la réalisation de leurs objectifs d'avenir.

At my ministry, we have made progress in the past few years to improve the intervenor services program. Intervenor services enhance communication between individuals who are deaf-blind and their community, using their preferred method of communication to assist them to live as independently as possible in their daily living activities. Since 2004, we have tripled funding for the program, and we have worked with the sector to establish a policy framework to define strong program principles, objectives, eligibility criteria and the scope of intervenor services. We are now focused on working with the intervenor services sector to develop a more consistent, fair and accountable approach to funding.

We have also forged a strong partnership with the sector through our Intervenor Services Human Resource Strategy, launched in 2014. Two weeks ago, I attended the second Intervenor Services Human Resource Strategy annual conference. The strategy is a broad, sector-led human resources project designed to increase recruitment and help develop the talent and the skills of intervenors and agency management staff.

For someone who is deaf-blind, communication barriers can seriously limit access to activities most of us take for granted, such as going to the bank or visiting the doctor. By breaking down these barriers, we're helping build a more inclusive Ontario, one in which all Ontarians have better access to their community. En éliminant ces obstacles, nous contribuons à bâtir un Ontario plus inclusif qui favorise l'accessibilité pour toutes les Ontariennes et tous les Ontariens au sein de leur collectivité.

In closing, I encourage all honourable members to participate in the activities of Deafblind Awareness Month, and to join our government in building a province where people of all abilities can participate to their fullest potential.

1320

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further ministers' statements? Statements by ministries? The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I almost missed that, Speaker. Sorry. I was waiting for the opposition to respond to my ministerial colleague, but I know now it doesn't work that way.

I rise today to speak about the proposed Promoting Affordable Housing Act, which would amend the Housing Services Act, the Residential Tenancies Act, the Planning Act and the Development Charges Act.

Our proposed package of reforms would, if passed, help us to realize our vision of an Ontario where every person has access to an affordable, suitable and adequate home.

Housing and homelessness in this province is more than just about the bottom line. Decent housing is more than shelter. It provides stability, security and dignity. Housing isn't the problem; it's the solution.

Last week, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association released its annual report. I want to take this opportunity to thank the ONPHA for their work and their advocacy for our most vulnerable. They, along with housing and poverty advocates across the province, have been telling us very clearly that the status quo is not working. Speaker, I want every member in this House to know that it is unacceptable if even one person has to wait for housing in this province. I believe that.

We know that there is a need for more housing. That's why we introduced the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy in 2010. It transformed the existing system to achieve better outcomes for those in need of housing.

This past March, I was honoured to announce our updated Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy. The update is bold and transformative and invests 178 million in new dollars over three years. It focuses on increasing the supply of affordable housing, supporting people, and ending chronic homelessness. It relies on partnership with the private sector, our municipal partners and the federal government.

Since I became minister, I have made it a priority to build strong relationships because I believe that we will achieve much more working together than we would apart. I believe the private sector can and must play a much larger role in providing affordable housing. We don't have a wing at the end of my office with electricians and bricklayers who answer the phone and say, "Three hundred units? Great, we're on our way." It's the private sector that delivers. We can leverage things, we can set up a climate that's positive for this, we can even find some ways, occasionally, to incent these things to happen, but government doesn't do it themselves. They rely on others.

During our consultation, we heard about the need to foster diverse, inclusive communities. To help reach this goal, we provided a range of planning and financial tools to help municipalities create more affordable housing. Today we are proposing changes to the Planning Act that would enable municipalities to use a new tool called inclusionary zoning. Inclusionary zoning could be used

to require developers to set aside a number of units as affordable housing.

I want to thank a couple of members: the member from High Park—

Interjection: Parkdale–High Park.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Parkdale–High Park—who has been an advocate. Also, I know the member by name very well, but the riding is Etobicoke–Lakeshore—Peter Milczyn, who has been so supportive of this. Peter, thank you. I'd thank you too, Cheri, if you were here, but you're not.

According to the city of Toronto's chief planner, Toronto could have built 12,000 affordable housing units in the last five years had inclusionary zoning been in place. They also could have used section 37 if they had wanted, but that's a little trickier. They chose not to do that.

We want to help municipalities ensure that they have a range of housing that will give their citizens better affordable housing choices.

Inclusionary zoning is just one of the many tools that the province is moving ahead with to increase the supply of affordable housing. Now, we know that different sectors have different perspectives about how inclusionary zoning should be tailored in Ontario. So, in the coming months, we will continue to consult with our stakeholders on the framework to support inclusionary zoning. That includes the development sector, municipalities, the federal government and other key ministry stakeholders as well.

We're also proposing changes to the Development Charges Act to exempt secondary suites in new homes from development charges at all. That'll make it possible for a young couple, maybe each earning \$40,000, who can't afford a \$600,000 or a \$650,000 house to acquire that home, sufficient in the knowledge that they have a projected revenue stream of \$17,000 to \$20,000. They could become homeowners. There would, as a result, potentially be a ripple-up effect. Secondary suites are a source of affordable rental units for many low- to moderate-income renters. These proposed changes would help to increase the supply and range of affordable housing options in Ontario communities.

Our proposed reforms to the Residential Tenancies Act and the Housing Services Act would, if passed, also help to modernize social housing. They would support vibrant, mixed-use communities and encourage a more healthy mix of rent-geared-to-income and market rent tenants.

By recognizing new and innovative forms of municipal housing assistance and increasing local flexibility to manage housing assets, we would empower our dedicated service managers who have all done 10-year housing plans, which is helpful, to provide assistance in a way that best meets their diverse needs.

Our proposed changes would also help to make rent-geared-to-income rules simpler and fairer. For example, tenants could not be evicted when they cease to be eligible for rent-geared-to-income assistance after paying market rent for 12 months or more. Currently, Ontarians

in need of rental assistance rely on various programs across the province, many of which are tied to specific units. So if you get a job somewhere else, you're almost in a prison; you can't leave because if you go somewhere else, you fall to the bottom of the list. This way, we're hoping to build a credit that is portable to people directly. Currently, that's the situation.

Over the coming months, we'll also be working with our municipal partners to develop a framework for a portable housing benefit that would allow people to have more freedom to choose where they live—closer to family, social support networks, schools and employment opportunities—because housing benefits should be paid directly to the tenant, with subsidies tied to the person and not to the unit. We believe this is the way to go.

These are just some of the reforms we are proposing to improve access to stable housing for our citizens. For the first time in a long time, I think all three levels of government have a shared sense of purpose. The stars are lining up, but there are still a few clouds in the sky that we've got to clear away. We do that by working together, talking together and scheming together, and giving expression to that shared sense of purpose together, so that we can serve the people who, on a good day, are really what it's all about for us.

We're going to work together. We're going to take meaningful actions to transform Ontario's housing system and end chronic homelessness in 10 years—now nine years, because it has been a year that we've been working on it, right?

Mr. Speaker, this panel of reforms will indeed help to achieve these goals. It's not the whole answer; we're still working on the whole answer. That takes a whole-of-government approach, and we're taking that approach to get this situation sorted out to the betterment of Ontario.

I urge all members, please, to support this bill. Thank you very much.

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

1330

DEAFBLIND AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm pleased to rise today to mark Deafblind Awareness Month. For 16 years, we have recognized Deafblind Awareness Month in Ontario to raise awareness about deaf-blindness. June is especially significant: It is the birth month of Helen Keller, one of the most famous deaf-blind individuals and a true inspiration.

I've been a member of the Lions organization for 30 years, and I well know the story of Helen Keller, who asked the Lions to become "knights of the blind" back in 1925.

Deaf-blindness combines varying degrees of both hearing and visual impairment. Individuals who are deaf-blind can experience challenges with communication and mobility. Many individuals are paired with intervenors, who are specially trained to act as a person's eyes and ears. Intervenors are such an important resource and help

individuals with deaf-blindness understand and navigate their environments. I would like to recognize the many organizations committed to improving the lives of individuals who are deaf-blind. Your work is appreciated.

Last week we recognized National Access Awareness Week. Again, I must stress the importance of accessibility. Deaf-blindness is a disability that is unique to each individual in terms of their abilities. We owe it to those who face both hearing and visual impairments to make our communities as accessible as possible.

As we mark Deafblind Awareness Month, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the thousands of deaf-blind Ontarians. Their determination and contributions to our community are admirable.

This week, I urge everyone to learn more about the abilities and struggles of deaf-blind individuals. Let's commit to ensuring our communities are accessible for those with hearing and vision impairments.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Ontario is facing a housing crisis. I do want to commend the minister for at least recognizing that point, but thus far, his approach hasn't worked.

Every year the wait-list for social housing hits a record high. There are now 171,000 Ontarian families waiting for affordable housing. Since the government released the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy in 2010, the list has grown by approximately 20,000 families. There are units boarded up because they need so many repairs they are unlivable, and housing money has been diverted to pay for trips all over the world. Clearly, the plan isn't working.

The government continues to create policies that increase the cost of living in Ontario, including the cost of housing. Families that were barely able to get by now can't make ends meet without assistance, seniors are being forced out of their homes, and now the government has introduced a bill which proposes to put the cost of affordable housing on renters and new homeowners.

In other jurisdictions, inclusionary zoning has included government incentive programs to ensure that the increased cost isn't just piled on to the neighbours, but this government still doesn't know if there will be programs here or what they will look like. The government doesn't know who will be eligible for the units or how the price will be determined.

This bill says inclusionary zoning will be mandatory for prescribed municipalities, but the government doesn't think they will use that section and they can't say who would be prescribed and who wouldn't. They don't know what the standards for these units will be or even whether they will be up to the municipalities or the province. In fact, the government started consulting on these major issues after they introduced the bill.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, Ontario is already facing an affordable housing crisis. We can't afford to get this wrong. The 171,000 families waiting for social housing

can't afford it, and neither can those Ontario families who are barely making ends meet. Housing affordability is a complex problem, but we need to take the time to consult and get it right.

DEAFBLIND AWARENESS MONTH

Miss Monique Taylor: It's my privilege and honour to rise today on behalf of the NDP caucus to speak on Deafblind Awareness Month.

We are social beings. Our communication with others and the world around us helps us grow as individuals. We participate in our communities and we forge a life for ourselves that makes us what we are. Throughout it all, we rely very heavily on what we see and what we hear, and in truth, we take much of that for granted.

That is why it is important that we recognize June every year as Deafblind Awareness Month—June being chosen, of course, as we've heard previously from other members, to coincide with the remarkable life of a deaf-blind woman, Helen Keller.

Deaf-blindness is a unique condition. The Canadian Deafblind Association and the Canadian National Society of the Deaf-Blind estimate that it occurs in one in every 10,000 Canadians. According to DeafBlind Ontario Services, 7,000 Ontarians are deaf-blind. We should reflect on that, Speaker. Imagine for a moment the impact the loss of both sight and hearing would have on each and every one of us; 95% of what we learn comes through our eyes and our ears. That is the world that 7,000 Ontarians live in.

But thanks to the work that was started about 25 years ago by a group of parents of deaf-blind children, there is a network of supports that strives to ensure that all people who are deaf-blind live rich and meaningful lives. Key to this is the work of the intervenors, professionally trained individuals who mediate between the deaf-blind person and his or her environment to enable him or her to communicate effectively with and receive non-distorted information from the world around them.

Each deaf-blind person will have their own degree of deafness or blindness. As such, the work of the intervenor varies from person to person. Naturally, other senses, such as smell and especially touch, become much more important and facilitate effective, meaningful interaction. With ever-improving technologies, such as tablets and smart phones, intervenors are able to open up many more opportunities.

I want to recognize the excellent work done on behalf of deaf-blind individuals, particularly the families and the organizations that provide advocacy and the support of over 200 trained intervenors.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Good afternoon. I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the Ontario NDP caucus to respond to the statement from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on the update to the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy.

I don't think it comes as a surprise to anyone in this chamber that we have an affordable housing crisis in this province. We're long overdue to be doing something about it. In the six and a half years since the first strategy was initiated, the number of families in this province waiting for safe and affordable housing has grown to more than 170,000.

Look, I get it. Developers don't see the need or the profit in building affordable housing units. They can make more money constructing condos or townhomes or mini-mansions. They need a willing partner at Queen's Park to make incentives available.

There's nothing new about inclusionary zoning. We've been talking about it for years. The member for Parkdale-High Park has brought it forward five times.

I think it's appropriate at this point to read a poem called Homeless Eddie, written by Bill Mahoney from Steelworkers Local 1005 in Hamilton:

Your brother's sleeping on a grate
You rush on by, can't hesitate;
You say you'll never be that way
And that the poor are here to stay.

I'm telling you, you better pray,
Because poverty's one job away.

You've never been down and out
Been so poor you want to shout;
I just can't take it anymore
As they throw you out the door.

Eddie came from the east coast,
Was doing well he used to boast;
Till Stelco took his job away,
He's hoping to go home someday.

Jack was working on a farm
Till he slipped and lost an arm;
Now he's in a private hell
Sleeping in a damn stairwell.

Bob can't read or write
For every scrap he's had to fight;
He sleeps in the park at night.
Shouldn't housing be a right?

Mary's trying to ease the pain
Of the demons she can't name;
She hears echoes in her mind
Of things better left behind.

The working class must not retreat
Or we'll all be living in the street;
And each would have a tale to tell
Of what it's like to live in hell.

Speaker, that was written by Bill Mahoney, Steelworkers Local 1005, poet laureate from the city of Hamilton.

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

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

"Whereas the price of electricity has skyrocketed under the Ontario Liberal government;

"Whereas ever-higher hydro bills are a huge concern for everyone in the province, especially seniors and others on fixed incomes, who can't afford to pay more;

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"Whereas Ontario's businesses say high electricity costs are making them uncompetitive, and have contributed to the loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs;

"Whereas the recent Auditor General's report found Ontarians overpaid for electricity by \$37 billion over the past eight years and estimates that we will overpay by an additional \$133 billion over the next 18 years if nothing changes;

"Whereas the cancellation of the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants costing \$1.1 billion, feed-in tariff (FIT) contracts with wind and solar companies, the sale of surplus energy to neighbouring jurisdictions at a loss, the debt retirement charge, the global adjustment and smart meters that haven't met their conservation targets have all put upward pressure on hydro bills;

"Whereas the sale of 60% of Hydro One is opposed by a majority of Ontarians and will likely only lead to even higher hydro bills;

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

"To listen to Ontarians, reverse course on the Liberal government's current hydro policies and take immediate steps to stabilize hydro bills."

I've affixed my signature as well.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: I am pleased to stand once again to read in the thousands of petitions that constantly come into Queen's Park. They read as follows:

"Don't Balance the Budget on the Backs of Children with ASD.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I couldn't agree with this more. I'm going to give it to page Mélina to bring to the Clerks' table.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I have a petition here with hundreds of signatures. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas for six years the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) listened to thousands of former students of residential schools and their families testify to the devastating legacy of this national policy of assimilation;

“Whereas the TRC calls upon ‘the federal, provincial and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with survivors, aboriginal peoples and educators, to make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, treaties and aboriginal peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for kindergarten to grade 12 students’ (CA 62.1); and

“Whereas on July 15, 2015, Canada’s Premiers indicated their support for all 94 Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action and said they would act on them in their own provinces and territories;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario urge the government of Ontario to fully implement such a curriculum for kindergarten through grade 12.”

I agree with this, will put my signature and will give it to page Huzaifah.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is my pleasure to introduce this on behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and to the Minister of Education, who is actually right in the chamber at this moment.

“Whereas the population of Stittsville is currently 31,000 residents and expected to grow to over 50,000 by 2021, and over 71,000 by 2025;

“Whereas Stittsville is the only community of its size in Ontario not to have a public high school;

“Whereas the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board ... loses over \$11,000 in per-student funding for every student who transfers to the Catholic English and French high schools in Stittsville;

“Whereas the projected number of school-age children (grades 7 to 12) in Stittsville (not including the new Fernbank developments) is projected at 2,435 for 2017, with steady increases in subsequent years;

“Whereas a public high school for Stittsville is the number one capital priority for the” Ottawa-Carleton District School Board; “and

“Whereas a public high school is required in Stittsville to meet the needs of the students now;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to immediately provide the capital priorities funding required to build a public high school in Stittsville.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this, affix my signature and hand it over to page Emily.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition, and they keep coming by the thousands. I want to thank Mr. Ross Asaro, who is from Gogama. It reads as follows:

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas ... regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario” to:

“Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

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

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly entitled “Update Ontario Fluoridation Legislation.” I especially want to thank Dr. Sanjukta Mohanta of Meadowvale, and Dr. Lisa Bentley, whose practice is in central Mississauga. It reads as follows:

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

“Whereas recent experience in Canadian cities that have removed fluoride from drinking water has led ... to a dramatic increase in tooth decay; and

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care urges support for amending the Fluoridation Act to ensure community water fluoridation is mandatory; and

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing urges support for the removal of provisions allowing Ontario municipalities to cease drinking water fluoridation, or fail to start drinking water fluoridation, from the Ontario Municipal Act;

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

“That the Premier of Ontario direct the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Health and Long-Term Care to amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario before the end of the first session of the current Ontario Parliament.”

I’m pleased to sign and to support this petition and to send it down with page Sahil.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I am aware that there are a number of members who want to get petitions in. There are six minutes left. You can abbreviate the petition if you’d like to allow more of your colleagues to participate.

HIGHWAY RAMPS

Mrs. Julia Munro: “Whereas the town of Bradford West Gwillimbury will continue to have robust growth of population and commercial activity in proximity to the Holland Marsh ... lands designated in the ... Greenbelt Plan and is situated along the municipal boundary between King township and the town of Bradford...;

“Whereas the Canal Road ramps at Highway 400 provide critical access for farm operations ..., delivery of materials and equipment...; and

“Whereas the loss of that critical access to Highway 400 may threaten the significant financial benefits...;

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

“That the council of the corporation of ... Bradford West Gwillimbury hereby advises the Honourable Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation, that the town does not support the elimination of the Canal Road ramps at Highway 400, and further, that the town requests that the duration of the temporary closure ... between Wist Road and Davis Road be minimized to the greatest extent possible during the Highway 400/North Canal bridge replacement project.”

As I am in agreement, I have affixed my signature.

CAREGIVERS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by many residents of

London West. It was brought to me by my constituent, Rachel Buttgeig.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my name to this, fully support it and will give it to page Colleen to take to the table.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas for six years the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada ... listened to thousands of former students of residential schools and their families testify to the devastating legacy of this national policy of assimilation;

“Whereas the TRC calls upon ‘the federal, provincial and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with survivors, aboriginal peoples and educators, to make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, treaties and aboriginal peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for kindergarten to grade 12 students’ ... and

“Whereas on July 15, 2015, Canada’s Premiers indicated their support for all 94 Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action and said they would act on them in their own provinces and territories;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario urge the government of Ontario to fully implement such a curriculum for kindergarten through grade 12.”

I agree with this petition, and I affix my name and give it to page Julia.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the current funding of long-term health care ... is not enough to cover the costs of resident care; and ...

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

“Immediately increase funding to” long-term health care “for the purpose of increasing staff levels; and

“Begin a comprehensive review of the” long-term health care “regulatory standards ensuring current and future demographic needs will be met; and

“Develop a minimum level of per resident care, recognizing the increasing complex care needs of the aging demographic.”

I agree with this and send it down with Thomas to the table.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition here.

“Supporting the Inclusion of Probation and Probation and Parole Officers in Presumptive PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) Legislation under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bill 163 provides for WSIB benefits for a select few first responders diagnosed with PTSD; and

“Whereas MCSCS probation and parole officers and MCYS probation officers have been specifically excluded from Bill 163, despite overwhelming evidence that these front-line officers are exposed to primary trauma, secondary trauma and vicarious trauma often resulting in PTSD diagnoses; and

“Whereas the rates of assaults, threats and intimidation of corrections staff have increased by 2,750% in the period from 2009 to 2014; and

“Whereas Manitoba’s Bill 35 ‘Workers Compensation Amendment Act’ includes probation and probation and parole officers; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services has neither programs for the prevention of PTSD nor employee assistance programs ... nor wellness programs that specifically support and treat those workers diagnosed with PTSD or like symptoms;

“We, the undersigned probation officers and probation and parole officers, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario shall include probation officers and probation and parole officers in presumptive PTSD legislation under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act and that the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services creates programs aimed at PTSD prevention, along with employee assistance programs and wellness programs that address the mental health needs and occupational stressors related to trauma exposure.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition and I’ll send it with page Waleed.

ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by thousands of residents across Ontario.

“Whereas Bill 45, schedule 3, Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2015 needs significant amendment to allow the existing industry the fair ability to function and serve those who choose vaping as a harm reduction option ...

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

“To repeal item 3(1) ‘No person shall, in any place where electronic cigarettes are sold or offered for sale, display or permit the display of electronic cigarettes in any manner that would permit a consumer to view or handle an electronic cigarette before purchasing it ...

“And to repeal item 3(2) ‘No person shall promote electronic cigarettes,

“(a) in any place where electronic cigarettes or tobacco products are sold or offered for sale;’”

I agree with this petition, and I leave it with page Daniel.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Unfortunately, the time for petitions has now expired. I would again remind members: There were a number of members who wanted to have petitions presented today, I gather, and were unable to do so. But when we run out of time, we run out of time.

I would also remind members that you can abbreviate your petition. You don’t have to read the whole thing. That would allow everybody to get petitions on. If you think of some of your colleagues who didn’t get a chance today—I would ask people to consider doing that tomorrow, perhaps.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS MODERNIZATION ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES ÉLECTIONS MUNICIPALES

Mr. McMeekin moved third reading of the following bill:

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I assume the minister wishes to lead off the debate? I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I’ll be sharing my time with the member from Northumberland–Quinte West, my parliamentary assistant. I’m sure he’s going to be returning soon—I hope, or I won’t be sharing my remarks with him. I used to be an incurable optimist, but maybe I’m cured.

I rise in the House today to begin third reading debate on the proposed Municipal Elections Modernization Act, known affectionately around the world as Bill 181.

Interjection: Around the world?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Around the world.

I'll be sharing my time today with Lou Rinaldi, my parliamentary assistant and the member for Northumberland–Quinte West. Over the past year, I've had the pleasure of working alongside PA Rinaldi on the review of the act. He's an incredible man, I've got to tell you. There's no limit to his energy and to his ability to listen and to effectively respond to those he's meeting with. I think the world of him, as you've probably gathered.

Mr. Bill Walker: There he is.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: He's a wonderful man, and I'd like to thank him for his support and leadership as we held consultations reviewing the Municipal Elections Act, to see how we could make it work better for Ontarians. Lou, thank you.

But before I turn the floor over to my parliamentary assistant, I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss—in a little bit more detail than we usually discuss things here, at least from my perspective—the Municipal Elections Modernization Act, known as Bill 181.

Hon. Liz Sandals: All over the world.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: All over the world, as my colleague says.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of Bill 181. I am proud of it. As a former small-town mayor, I know first-hand that municipalities really are the governments closest to the people. They provide front-line services like public transportation and recreation facilities. They deal with local issues like fixing roads and, yes, collecting property taxes—it doesn't get much more local than that.

Our communities need to be strong and vibrant places where people can live, work, raise a family and age with dignity—I just added that; it occurs to me at 68 that I should be adding things like that, right? For this reason, we want to help make sure that the rules governing municipal elections are clear, simple, and reflect the real and evolving needs of our communities.

The reforms we're proposing reflect the significant input we received from municipalities, community groups and the public at large. In fact, over the past year, we've had a number of conversations with Ontarians about municipal elections. The Municipal Elections Act is reviewed, as you probably know, following each municipal election to ensure it meets the needs of communities. This time, we've done a deeper dig on it and there's a little bit more change here than perhaps has been reflected coming out of other reviews.

1400

As you know, Mr. Speaker, last spring we launched a review to ask how we could make local elections work better while ensuring that they're still fair. The review of the Municipal Elections Act sparked a lot of public interest, I've got to tell you. We've had people like Dave Meslin on the ranked ballot, and Claire Malcolmson, who did a lot of really good work with the Democracy Watch group—really important input.

I'm also pleased to tell you that we received—hard to believe; wait for it—over 3,400 written submissions. I don't even get that much mail in my constituency office.

As part of the consultation, my ministry held a number of meetings with our partners, including the city of Toronto; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, affectionately known as AMO; and municipal clerks across the province. Two working groups were created to provide advice on technical issues because we wanted to be really on top of this: a ranked ballot working group involving municipal clerks, ranked ballot experts and advocates as well, of course, as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; and a municipal voters list working group involving the Municipal Property Assessment Corp., the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario, current government ministries and Elections Ontario—a lot of people.

We heard many perspectives, including those on the subject of ranked ballots. I should point out that Oakville was the first council to adopt—unanimously, by the way—ranked ballots, and I suspect London may follow soon. That's what I hear, so we're just waiting to see. But of course, that will be something municipalities will have to address.

Many submissions stressed the importance of including a public consultation component in the ranked ballot framework. In fact, the legislation requires that, so we're being proactive there.

With respect to campaign finance, many submissions cited the need for greater clarity of campaign finance provisions and suggested simpler, clearer rules and prescribed forms—red tape stuff, clean that up.

On third-party advertising, the input varied. Some submissions asked for third-party advertising to be completely banned and some supported the development of a framework to regulate it.

On the topic of accessibility in municipal elections, we heard that we need to continue to enable municipalities to eliminate barriers that prevent voters from casting their ballots. We also heard of the success of alternate voting methods in some municipalities, such as telephone and Internet voting.

The accuracy of the municipal elections list was a common concern. Most election lists are a concern, no matter what level you're at, it seems. An inaccurate voters list causes significant challenges for voters, municipal staff and election administrators both leading up to and on voting day.

We also heard other suggestions such as shortening the municipal election campaign period—that was very common, by the way; I don't think anybody didn't make that comment, hardly anybody—and examining the requirements to become a candidate in order to help reduce the number of candidates who don't seem all that serious about running for election.

To sum up, Mr. Speaker, we heard that the rules governing how municipal leaders are elected needed to be more modern, more transparent, more accountable and flexible enough to allow for local choice.

But the discussions did not stop there. We heard hours of debate by members of all parties. Over the past few weeks, at standing committee, we have heard from a

number of individuals and organizations across Ontario proposing changes. Speaker, we listened. We listened.

After hearing these views and perspectives, our government brought forward amendments to the bill to make it even stronger. I want to thank all—

Interruption.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: They're cheering outside for this bill right now. Can you hear them?

I want to thank all members of this House for their contributions to this bill.

Now, I believe any dialogue about modern municipal elections must include discussions on corporate and union donations. This is one of the areas where we made changes coming out of the standing committee. I applaud the groups and individuals that have fostered and pushed this conversation forward.

One of the changes we originally proposed under Bill 181 would have allowed municipalities to ban corporate and union donations, but only if their councils choose to do so. At standing committee, we heard that giving municipalities the option to ban corporate and union donations was a step in the right direction, but that we needed to go one step further.

So, to respond to what we heard and to align with strong action we are taking provincially on electoral finance reform, we brought forward amendments that would make it mandatory to ban corporate and union contributions to council candidates in every municipality across the province. The ban would also apply to contributions to school board trustee candidates. This change makes Bill 181 even stronger. It would create an even playing field for all candidates and encourage candidates to seek a broad base of support from within their constituency. A ban on corporate and union donations is something that the city of Toronto has had in place for some time—for the past two elections at least—and they seem to think it's working well.

The province also proposed similar changes provincially by proposing to ban donations by corporations and unions under the new proposed Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act. Boy, isn't that a mouthful. We recognize the need to be consistent in this area and extend the same reforms to the same citizens when they vote at the municipal level. Both provincially and municipally, the government is responding to interest in modernizing the democratic process.

Then we addressed third-party advertising. Throughout our consultation and debate, we have heard about the need to ensure that the rules governing how municipal leaders are elected are transparent, accountable and flexible enough to allow for local choice. To increase transparency in municipal elections, we are proposing a framework to regulate third-party advertising so as to increase accountability for advertisers and to ensure more fair and transparent support. This would include setting contribution and spending limits. Third parties would also have to specifically identify themselves on signs and advertisements. Candidates would not be able to direct a third-party advertiser on where they should focus their

efforts or what their advertisements should say. Sounds a little bit like the States, doesn't it, the super PAC; you know, candidates can't talk to—or they're not supposed to, anyway.

Corporations and unions would still be able to register as third parties and would be permitted to make contributions to third-party advertisers, but requiring them to register as third-party advertisers will provide greater transparency during the election period. We all want that, right?

During standing committee, we also brought forward an amendment to change the definition of third-party advertising—this is important—so that it covers only advertisements supporting or opposing candidates during an election. It would not affect advertising on issues. So if you want to fight for a clean environment, you can do that.

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The proposed definition of third-party advertising will allow charities and groups that do public outreach on issues as a matter of normal business to continue their issues-based advocacy work throughout the election period. We feel that's important, and we feel these amendments—so we listened again—will be important for this bill, will strengthen our bill.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is about striking a balance. We want to ensure that the rules governing municipal elections are consistent across Ontario. But we also recognize that all communities are indeed unique and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. By proposing a framework to govern third-party advertising and by changing the definition of third-party advertising, we hope to create more consistency around how local elections are run in Ontario while still remaining flexible to local circumstances.

Let me turn to the issue of ranked ballots—you know, government is as easy as one, two, three. If this bill passes, Ontario will become the only jurisdiction in Canada to currently provide municipalities and voters with an alternative to the first past the post system. Once again, we're being bold, taking the initiative.

The details for a municipality wishing to adopt ranked ballots, including consultation requirements, voting and vote-counting procedures and reporting requirements, would of course be set out in regulation, and we've got lots of time to do that between now and 2018. We'll be sharing some of those details today.

Proponents of ranked ballots believe this method of voting can make election campaigns more civil. I agree with this outlook. Ranked ballots send a strong message to members in a community: "Your voice matters"—replace some of that cynicism, give people who believe in nothing something sacred to embrace and to believe in.

As I travel around the province, visiting municipalities on my Building Bridges tour, I've been talking to people in communities all across Ontario. I think I've been in 207 municipalities, meeting with councils and councillors. I haven't been there to plug our government. In fact, I always start out by saying, "I don't want to hear the good things about our government. I want you to tell

us how we can improve things because with critique we can do something about that.” They seem a little taken aback by that approach, but do you know what? It has worked. We’ve got some great ideas, and that’s what good government should be all about, Mr. Speaker, don’t you think? I know you do, because I know you well.

For example, in the recent municipal election, in a ward very close to where I stand today, a councillor was re-elected with only 17% of the vote. I don’t refer to this as a way to delegitimize anybody or the current system. However, a ranked ballot election would have afforded the winning candidate a much higher percentage of the vote and the accompanying broader mandate.

Student Vote runs mock elections in our schools while the real ones are happening. Their analysis of the 2014 municipal election—their election, that is—noted that students were far more willing to vote for non-major candidates. I lose all the time in the school elections to the Green candidate. I don’t know who it is, but often we lose to the Green candidate. That says something positive about where our kids are coming from. They’re consumed in their eagerness to be—

Interjection.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: —environmental rangers. You see those cute kids on the commercials who say, “I’m a ranger. I’m fighting for the environment.”

These kids researched the platforms of the different mayoral candidates. They became informed and engaged in the municipal election process. On election day, the kids held their own election at school, but the results of their election were very different from the real municipal election results and they couldn’t understand why. In wards with several candidates, the choice is made all the more complicated.

I wonder if both the mock student elections and the real elections were held with ranked ballots, their choices might have been much better matched. I remember they did a study in Pennsylvania where they went into a grade 6 class the day before the congressional, gubernatorial and presidential elections and within a couple of percentage points, the results were exactly the same.

Interjection.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Yes, maybe they reflect where their parents are coming from.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Interesting.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: It is interesting, isn’t it? It would be nice if these results were better aligned.

I believe ranked ballots would foster more engagement in the democratic process, so that maybe in the next municipal election, these youngsters’ experience may be different. I believe that with ranked ballots, candidates would have a vested interest in working better together, because you might need somebody else’s support to get over the 50%, possibly reducing negative campaigning. Maybe we could focus on issues. Wouldn’t that be jolly, Speaker, to do that? He’s not smiling.

I think we could all agree that this is what our communities deserve: elected officials who are committed to working together to better serve their communities and

debating issues of substance that are important, rather than engaging in personal attacks. We don’t do that here, so why would we do that municipally, right?

The feedback we received during our consultations was supportive of providing ranked ballot voting as an alternative to the first past the post. We also heard that we needed to ensure that the rules governing how municipal leaders are elected are transparent, accountable and flexible enough to allow for local choice.

We feel that municipalities are in the best position to make decisions about whether a new system is in the best interest of their community, so this is optional. Our job provincially, of course, is to provide them tools to make decisions to meet the needs of their communities, so it will be up to them what they decide. Several municipalities have, as I mentioned already, dealt with this; Oakville unanimously passed a resolution to embrace this ranked ballot system, and I know of several others who are currently hot at it in terms of the debate.

The member from Northumberland–Quinte West will speak a little bit more about this in a couple of moments. I’m waiting in breathless anticipation for that.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Stand by.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Speaker, you’ve got to have fun around this place, right?

We are also proposing changes around campaign financing, with additional accountability measures. We are proposing changes to the campaign finance rules which ensure that the rules are not only transparent but consistent with accountable, fair and modern election finance practices.

Our review of the Municipal Elections Act told us that the rules did not need an overhaul. We heard they needed to be updated to make them clear, more modern and easier to comply with, so that’s what we’ve done. The proposed changes provide for greater flexibility for candidates, and they address concerns from various stakeholders and the public regarding campaign contributions and the use of municipal resources.

We are proposing many smaller-scale changes to campaign finance rules. These include things like allowing candidates to accept contributions through modern forms of payment, including Internet banking, credit and debit cards, and PayPal.

Another example is removing the requirement for candidates to open a bank account if they do not raise or spend any funds. This would reduce the burden on small campaigns.

We are also proposing to allow for a regulation to set out spending limits on post-campaign spending on gifts and parties. There was a situation where one elected person raised \$239,000 more than was required for his election, so he threw a \$239,000 party, right?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Why wasn’t I invited to that?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I wasn’t either.

Our proposed changes would help voters, candidates and contributors alike to better understand election rules. In fact, there will be changes to encourage greater compliance with these rules. For instance, one proposed

change is to refund nomination fees to candidates only if they file their financial statements by the deadline. In this way, candidates would be encouraged to be on time.

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I also want to acknowledge that we've heard a fair bit about contribution limits. We recognize that there are a range of interests held by many different groups and members of the public. During the review, we wanted to take all of these views into account. Through standing committee, we heard that some members of the public are concerned that the current contribution limits are high while others view them as appropriate and others think they're too low. So we had to struggle with that.

On campaign length—we heard a lot about that in the campaign. The idea was echoed during our discussions in standing committee. Ontario, just for the record, has the longest nomination period of any province in Canada. This contributes to campaign fatigue amongst candidates and voters. John Tory told me he went to something like 800 meetings. The same people showed up at every meeting to ask the same question. He said he could have sent a tape with the answer. They could have just played the tape, right? Anyhow, there was a lot of fatigue attached to that.

Based on what we heard, we are proposing to shorten the municipal election campaign by 120 days. Candidates would be able to register between May 1 and the fourth Friday in July instead of January 1 to the second Friday in September in the year of the election. Shortening the length of the nomination period would give municipalities more time to prepare ahead of the election should they choose to use ranked ballots. That's another benefit.

On accessibility—another issue that I've spoken about—we're acting through the bill to make sure that clerks are able to prepare accessibility plans to identify, remove and prevent barriers that could affect voters and candidates with disabilities. Municipalities must produce a plan to do so. That's novel, right?

On the voters list, we're going to continue to work on improvements to the list because the accuracy of the municipal voters list was a concern and we heard a lot about that during our consultations. An inaccurate voting list just causes significant challenges for voters, municipal staff and election administrators, both leading up to and on voting day. We're going to continue to try to make that more understandable and easier for voters to add their names to the list or make changes to the information, as well as make it easier for clerks to remove names of deceased electors from the list.

In addition to these shorter-term solutions, we continue to work with a stakeholder working group to identify systemic issues with the voters list. We will continue to develop ways to help ensure a more accurate voters list over the long term.

Today I am proposing legislation that responds to the changing needs of our communities. By increasing the transparency of municipal elections and promoting local choice, the proposed reforms represent a big step forward for local government. The proposed changes reflect what

Ontarians said they wanted, and the bill reflects the feedback that we heard during debate and through the standing committee process itself.

I want to thank everyone who brought forward their ideas about how to make municipal elections better. This is a pragmatic, comprehensive attempt to make things better, and I urge all members to vote for the passing of this bill.

With this, I'm going to turn it over to an extraordinary orator, one who needs no introduction, somebody who understands this better than I do because he has done a lot of work on it: my parliamentary assistant, the member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's good to weigh in on some of the comments the minister has made. What a great job. I could almost say "ditto" and the debate would be a lot quicker, but I just want the opportunity to add some of my own comments on the consultation, the clause-by-clause. I want to thank the minister for allowing me the opportunity to do that and to speak here today.

It's been a great pleasure over the last year to work with Minister McMeekin and his staff and ministry staff to try to, as we review this piece of legislation every four years, make it the best we can. There's always room for improvement, Speaker.

In the past few weeks, I have been happy to work closely with him through the standing committee process, where we heard a variety of perspectives on Bill 181, the Municipal Elections Modernization Act, to be precise.

As part of my responsibilities as parliamentary assistant, the Premier gave me a mandate to strengthen municipal governance through the Municipal Elections Act review. Some of us with municipal background know how challenging it is at each election and we try to get better with these reviews each and every time.

The Premier asked me to help ensure that the act continues to meet the needs of communities, including providing municipalities with the option to use ranked ballots as an alternative to first-past-the-post. As the minister mentioned, there's a lot of interest in ranked ballots. I'm going to speak for a few minutes about that. There were some 3,400 submissions, both in writing and in person, that were made; and out of those 3,400 the majority touched ranked ballots in one way or another.

Ranked ballots allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference. We know that most political parties do that to elect their leaders, or for us to get nominated in our own riding.

Interruption.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I don't think it's me. I was checking.

Speaker, as you heard, the minister said there's no Canadian municipality currently using ranked ballots, but many jurisdictions around the world do. Some municipalities in the United States have either the option to use or currently use ranked ballots, including Minneapolis, Minnesota. Ranked ballots are also used in other places

around the world, including London, England, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand.

Let us be clear though, Speaker. We are proposing to give municipalities the option to use ranked ballots in future municipal elections, starting as early as 2018. Again, we're giving the municipality that option; ultimately they will make that decision. Ranked ballots will not be mandatory for municipalities.

Supporters of ranked ballots say that they have the potential to give voters a great say in who is elected and may result in elected officials who better reflect the diversity in their communities. In my years working here at Queen's Park and back at home in Northumberland-Quinte West, I have come to understand at first hand the need to have a voice on local issues and the local democratic process.

Most of the public input that we received favoured allowing municipalities that option of using ranked ballots for future municipal elections, and we continued to hear about ranked ballots during standing committee—a number of times. I want to acknowledge some of the feedback that we heard in standing committee on ranked ballots.

We heard some say that municipalities should be required to put a question on the ballot before changing their voting system to a ranked ballot election. Yes, we've heard that. We recognize that changing the voting system is a big decision for a municipality and its citizens, its residents. But we also recognize that municipalities are a responsible and accountable form of government, and they are in the best position to make those decisions based on the interest of their communities. In some cases, some rural communities, that might not be there. In some other rural communities it might be there. The same with cities, Speaker.

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Our job is to provide municipalities with a range of tools to provide flexibility for local needs and circumstances. We feel that municipalities are capable of determining whether a question on the ballot regarding ranked ballots is the best way to consult their communities, and they do have that choice.

To ensure that the decision to use ranked ballots is supported by local residents, regulations would set out a minimum standard to consult before a municipality could implement a ranked ballot. Municipalities will still have the option to put the question on the ballot, such as in a referendum, should they choose to do so.

Our proposed legislation will give municipalities the flexibility to consult in a way that works best in their own community, once they have met the minimum standard that will be set out in regulations. In giving municipalities the option to use ranked ballots, we are allowing more choice at the local level as to how municipalities elect their leaders, because every community is unique, and a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't always work.

Regulations for ranked ballots will also set out:

—conditions, limitations and procedural requirements for municipalities;

—rules governing ballots, voting procedures, the counting of votes, recounts and reporting the results; and

—deadlines when decisions around ranked ballots have to be made, so that municipalities have enough time to prepare for the 2018 municipal elections.

To come up with a proposed method to implement ranked ballots and decide on details such as ballots, voting procedures, the counting of votes, recounting and reporting issues, we listened to what we heard during the public consultations. We also held a number of meetings with key stakeholders, including the city of Toronto; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, AMO; and municipal clerks across the province. We also looked closely at the experience of other jurisdictions that use ranked ballots.

We were able put through some other amendments during the amendment section of the proceedings.

A vital part of small, rural communities, like the ones I come from, is our volunteer firefighters. Back home in Northumberland-Quinte West, I see it first-hand. The current provisions in the Municipal Elections Act allow volunteer firefighters to run for municipal office without having to take a leave of absence or resign if elected. During committee, we also heard about the need to restore the exemption for volunteer firefighters who wish to run for municipal council. As I mentioned, particularly in small and remote communities we heard that changing the legislation might discourage volunteer firefighters from running for office or make them unable to perform their duties while running for office or after being elected. By restoring the exemption for volunteer firefighters, we will ensure that potential candidates can participate with minimal interference in their day-to-day activities.

I want to talk a little bit about the overview of the ranked ballots. As you know, Mr. Speaker, there are two kinds of elections used in Ontario: single-member and multi-member. I have both in my riding with the eight municipalities I represent.

Single-member elections are elections where only one candidate will win, such as the election of a mayor or a ward election where one person will be elected to represent the ward. Multi-member elections are where more than one candidate will win a seat, such as when council members are elected at large—that is, when they're elected by voters in the entire municipality, instead of any one specific ward—or a ward election where two or more people would be elected to represent it.

Speaker, I can tell you that in the riding that I represent, we have a real combination. We have elections for mayor and, in some cases, elections for deputy mayor; we have single elections for wards; and then we have election for mayor plus a possible election for deputy mayor, but not necessarily. In many cases, they're appointed. Then there's the election at large.

If Bill 181 passes and a regulation is made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, ranked ballots could be used by municipalities in both kinds of elections. With ranked ballots, voters could rank their choice from their

most preferred to least preferred candidate. When using a ranked ballot in a single-member election, a candidate strives to get at least 50% plus one of the votes. In a multi-member ranked-ballot election, the number of votes needed to be elected will depend on how many seats are being filled. In a ranked-ballot election, there may be multiple rounds of counting before a candidate is declared the winner.

It is important to note that ranked ballots are not being considered for school boards at this time. School boards often span municipal boundaries. Each municipality conducts elections for four types of school boards: English public, English separate, French public and French separate. As a result, separate consideration will be needed for ranked ballots for school boards. This may be revisited after the 2018 election, as we would normally do. In the meantime, if a municipality decides to use ranked ballots to elect council positions, voters will still use the current voting method to vote for their trustees for school boards.

Yes, ranked ballots will require education and training for everyone involved in the municipal election: candidates, voters and election workers. Municipalities have opted in the past to make other changes to how they hold their elections, such as Internet voting. I can tell you that when I was first elected mayor of the amalgamated municipality of Brighton, it was the first time we used vote by mail. There were a lot of skeptics out there, there were a lot of questions and, yes, there were some hiccups. But at the end of the day, that's still exercised today. As a matter of fact, in some other municipalities in my riding, they use vote-by-phone and through the Internet. So we've come a long way.

As part of the education system, they will do outreach before any municipal election and will presumably do the same for ranked ballots. There will be a process of education, and this is one of the things that they will provide that education for.

Our government currently produces guides for municipal candidates and electors, and provides training upon request for clerks. This would not change. Any changes would be part of the training process. These guidance materials will be updated and expanded to include information about ranked-ballot elections.

Municipalities already have a lot of flexibility in the way they structure their councils and run their elections. Introducing a ranked ballot as an option for municipalities would only add to the range of options available. For example, many municipalities divide their territory into wards, and each ward elects one or more representatives to council. Some municipalities do not use wards and choose to elect their entire council at large. Others use a combination of wards and at-large representatives.

Municipalities also have a number of choices in the way voting works. A municipality can make decisions on how voters cast their ballots. By default, municipal voters cast their ballots in person at a voting place. However, as I mentioned a minute ago, a municipality may decide to use alternative voting methods to cast their ballots, and

many municipalities have decided to do so already. For example, voters may have the option of voting online, by mail or via telephone.

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The option to use ranked ballots in municipal elections provides another choice for municipalities looking to tailor their municipal elections to their local needs and circumstances.

Speaker, in conclusion, Bill 181 is about ensuring that the rules governing how our municipal leaders are elected are transparent, accountable and flexible enough to allow for local choice.

The option to use ranked ballots, along with other proposed changes that Minister McMeekin and I have outlined today, will enable us to take a big step forward in making our municipal elections more modern and transparent. I join Minister McMeekin in supporting Bill 181 and I urge all members to vote for the passing of this piece of legislation. Thank you, Speaker.

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

Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to speak to the Municipal Elections Modernization Act. As I said on second reading, municipalities are a responsible level of government. They need a Municipal Elections Act that allows them to hold modern elections in a way that suits their circumstances.

I want to start by thanking the people, municipalities and organizations who took the time to contact me during this process or to come to the committee and share their concerns.

While much of the debate in this Legislature has focused on ranked ballots, the presentations were on a variety of issues. A number of people came to request parties at the municipal level. We had quite a few presentations on the need to reform campaign financing further, and one requesting term limits. That's how the democratic process should work: that people have an opportunity for input.

The people of Ontario would likely expect that a bill about elections would be one of the most democratic, both in content and in process, but unfortunately, that was not the case. Despite what was said in this Legislature and to the media, we were disappointed in committee to find that the government voted down every single one of our amendments and refused to add requirements for public consultation regarding electoral reform and regulations.

The government even voted down amendments which would have helped municipalities to consult with the public. For instance, there are a number of places where this legislation moves the deadline earlier for municipal councils to put questions on the ballot. These questions are examples of clear, objective, measurable public consultation. When a municipal council has an issue that they believe should be decided by the people, we should make that process as easy as possible. Instead, this government just made it harder. We put forward amendments

to move these deadlines back and give council as much time as possible to decide to put a question on the ballot, but the government voted our amendment down.

Municipalities are already leading the way on public consultation using ballot questions. In the 2011 election, numerous municipalities used this tool to consult on electoral reform.

East Gwillimbury asked if residents were in favour of the existing electoral system of electing four councillors at large.

The township of Stone Mills asked whether residents were in favour of replacing the system of electing council representatives by wards with a new system of electing council representatives at large.

The city of Kitchener and the region of Waterloo asked whether residents supported Kitchener and Waterloo councils engaging in discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of merging the two cities.

Ajax, Pickering, Scugog, Uxbridge, Brock, Whitby and Oshawa all asked residents if they were in favour of changing from electing their chair by appointment of regional council to elections by general vote of the electors.

These municipalities and others all recognize that electoral reform should be approved by the people. That's a fact this government seems to have forgotten. During second reading debate, our caucus was very clear that we could not support a bill which allows the candidates being elected the sole authority to determine the electoral system. There must be a requirement to consult with the people through a referendum.

Elections belong to the people, and it should be up to the people to determine how the elections are run. As I said, municipalities are a mature order of government. We recognize that. That is why we believe they should be held to the same standard as other governments.

When Ontario, British Columbia and Prince Edward Island proposed changing the electoral system, they all had referendums. In 2007, this government understood that when it comes to electoral reform, there is a need for a greater level of consultation through a referendum before changing how people vote. In fact, the report from Ontario's Select Committee on Electoral Reform, which included the current Premier, stated:

"Legitimacy must also apply to the process by which electoral reform is achieved. If the process is unimpeachable, even those who disagree with the eventual outcome can accept it as legitimate. Such judgments are at the heart of democratic decision-making. A key ingredient in that process will be measuring public support through a plebiscite or referendum, about which more is said below."

American cities that have changed to ranked ballots or instant run-off voting, have held plebiscites, often in the form of a voter initiative question on the ballot. The city of London, England; New Zealand, Great Britain—around the world governments have recognized the need to hold referendums before changing an electoral system.

A Toronto Star editorial in January said, "Referendums on voting change have already been held in three provinces, setting a precedent of sorts. All failed, and some reformers are so hell-bent on dumping first-past-the-post that they are urging the Liberals to be 'brave' and move ahead on their own hook. That makes no sense. The lesson of past referendums cannot be that the people are too blind or foolish to see the light; it must be that those who want change have to do a better job of persuasion."

The city of Toronto passed a motion last October which stated very clearly they did not want the option of ranked ballots, but that if the province was to proceed anyway, there should be a requirement for a referendum.

During the committee hearings, Halton region councillor Mike Cluett said, "I can't stress enough the importance of seeking comprehensive public input and holding a referendum before any changes are made. Direct voter input about how we vote in elections is critical and I personally can't support a bill that takes democracy away by allowing a government to change the way they are elected without appropriate consultation. As elected officials we have a responsibility to consult the voters in the province of Ontario."

In their submission to the Municipal Elections Act review, the city of Markham said, "A provincial referendum or some method of formal public consultation on ranked ballots should be conducted prior to amending the Municipal Elections Act to permit ranked ballots."

Mr. Speaker, we put forward an amendment to require a referendum that was based, in part, on An Act to provide for a referendum on Ontario's electoral system, the bill the Liberal government brought forward when they were proposing electoral reform. The amendment would have allowed municipal councils to hold a referendum at the same time as a municipal election or in a separate vote. It also would have given municipalities the flexibility to determine whether a threshold of 50% or 60% was appropriate for their municipalities. Despite all the requests from MPPs, presenters in committee and municipal officials, the government voted down our amendment.

One of the things we heard very strongly in committee is that there isn't universal support for ranked ballots. I was surprised how many people came to express concerns about ranked ballots or recommend that there be a referendum before municipalities were allowed to change the voting system.

Patrice Dutil, a professor of politics and public administration at Ryerson University said, "There is absolutely no evidence whatsoever that the transferable vote has ever made any difference to turnout. There is no evidence of this. In this period when we are talking constantly about evidence-based policy, I'd like to see a study, any study, that shows that STV has ever made a difference."

He went on to say, "No municipality should have the right to change the voting system without going to the people, period. In fact, I'll go so far as to predict that any

change to any municipal system this way will be challenged in the courts, and it will be challenged on constitutional grounds. There should have been more research on this. I'm very disappointed that there wasn't."

Another presenter at committee, John Pepall, stated that "preferential voting is fundamentally flawed and irrational and should not be allowed."

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Councillor Justin Di Ciano spoke at committee, on behalf of the city of Toronto, regarding concerns with the ranked ballot system. He said, "Under our current first-past-the-post system, every ballot is counted, every voice is heard and the candidate with the most votes wins. Under ranked choice voting, the winner is defined as the one who wins the majority of what are called 'continuing ballots'. This means if a voter uses all of his or her three rankings on candidates who do not have a chance of winning, that ballot will be exhausted and not part of the continuing ballots."

Councillor Di Ciano cited an example from San Francisco where counting went on for a number of rounds, and there were so few ballots left where someone had selected a candidate still in the race that the winner actually received only 24% of the votes cast, even including all the people who had picked her as second or third choice. Councillor Di Ciano also pointed out that since ranked choice voting was implemented in San Francisco, the number of women elected to council has actually decreased by 20%.

During his committee presentation, Stephen O'Brien from the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario said, "I would like to highlight some of the concerns that clerks have about this change. As you can see on slide 6 of the materials, more than 75% of the clerks that we surveyed indicated that if their council decided in favour of using ranked ballots for the 2018 election, they would not feel prepared to do so."

Fred Hahn, president of CUPE, said during his presentation, "The proposal to allow ranked ballots comes without any prior discussion and without sufficient research to determine what effects that change would have in municipalities. So we propose that this section of the bill be removed, and that a more open and separate consultation on the process of electoral reform in municipalities be undertaken."

By the end of the committee, we had to wonder whether ranked ballots are really something that people want, or whether this is just another idea that Kathleen Wynne came up with at her kitchen table.

Even the Liberal member from Durham raised a concern about ranked ballots during the committee. He said, "It's something that I am not quite sure is the best way. The analogy you used when you use political parties—I have seen some terrible leaders be elected because of ranked ballots, so that's really not a great analogy ... you don't necessarily get the best candidate by ranked ballot."

Since the last time I had the opportunity to speak to this bill in the Legislature, there has been an election of

the mayor of London, England, which was conducted by ranked ballot. There are two things I want to point out about that election. First, the voters in London voted to change to that system; it wasn't simply imposed upon them. Secondly, despite what the people say about ranked ballots resulting in kinder, fairer campaigns, by all reports the campaign for mayor of London was incredibly negative. As the member for Etobicoke North noted in the House, the "election was not without its controversy. The usual suspects did speak in the usual way...." No candidate should have to deal with negative comments based on their race, but it is clear that ranked ballots don't solve that problem.

During clause-by-clause, we asked the government about some of these questions and what research they had done. I was disappointed in the fact that they weren't able to provide any research or evidence to the committee at all.

When I asked whether the government had done any research on the question that had been raised on whether ranked ballots resulted in higher error rates in areas that are low-income or that are highly multicultural, the parliamentary assistant couldn't tell us. I asked whether the government did any research into the impact of language barriers and whether changes to a system that requires more explanation would make it more difficult for cultural communities to vote. Again, the government members on the committee couldn't answer. One of the presenters said that ranked ballots actually resulted in less diverse councils. I asked whether the government did any research into whether that was true. Again, they couldn't answer.

A decision to change the electoral system is not one that any government should take lightly. It should be well researched, thought through carefully and must be approved by the people. It appears that the government decided to proceed with this bill with very little research. There is no evidence that they have looked into the impact on multicultural communities. There is no evidence that they have done any research into whether it is true that the error rate increases in lower-income neighbourhoods.

Mr. Speaker, I hope I'm wrong. I hope that the government didn't ignore the impact on these groups. If the government has done the research, I would like them to table it with the Legislature before we vote on this bill.

Over the last two months, a number of questions and concerns have been raised that, so far, no one seems to be able to answer. When there is this much debate over ranked ballots, it would be irresponsible for a government at any level to proceed without requiring a referendum. It should be up to the people to decide which system they think is the best.

During his presentation to the committee, OPSEU president Smokey Thomas said, "Given the vagueness in the current bill, I would definitely recommend a change to require that any municipality that opts to change its voting system must hold a referendum of citizens prior to making that change."

Bill Tieleman, who led the “no” side in the BC referendum on electoral reform, spoke to the committee and said, “Where I have an objection with the proposed legislation is that it does not give voters a mandatory and required referendum on an electoral system change. I think that’s a requirement. I think there are two areas where it is required in a modern democracy: one on constitutional change, and the other on electoral system change, because it has such an impact for such an extended period of time.”

He also said, “Every electoral system has pluses and minuses, advantages and disadvantages and all sorts of things that we can and can’t see into the future. That’s why I think it’s important to have that fulsome debate with voters participating and giving them the final choice and not having it by elected officials.”

As Cathrine McKeever, one of the presenters at the committee who spoke strongly against ranked ballots, said, “If you are so convinced this is the perfect system, why not allow the voters an opportunity to agree with you?”

Gloria Kovach, a former city councillor from the city of Guelph and a former president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, talked about the need for a referendum and pointed out that Guelph had held one when they were considering electoral reform. She said, “They first held a referendum via ballot in 1988, on the issue of changing from an at-large voting system to a ward system. There was resounding support for that change. The change came into effect in the 1991 municipal election. It didn’t cost any extra money to do this, and we heard what the citizens wanted. Yes, there were some unhappy people after it. However, even they recognized the democratic process that had brought about this change.”

In fact, no municipal official has stated that they don’t want public consultation. After the bill was introduced, I received an email from a northern mayor that said, “Elections are supposed to best represent the views and wants of the people voting, not those that serve the people. As such if my municipal voters desire to have a ranked ballot vote I would support it.”

I received an email from a mayor in southwestern Ontario who said, “This bill should not pass. We as voters should have a say in this process. I hope you will voice all the concerns in this matter.”

A mayor in eastern Ontario wrote, “I agree that some aspects are good in the proposed changes but once again this current Liberal government wants to remove democracy from its citizens.”

The mayor of Kingston said, “Changing how our voting system works is an important decision. We need to understand the pros and cons of moving to a ranked ballot, and most importantly, have discussion and debate across the community.”

During the second reading debate, a number of members mistakenly stated that this bill would require a public meeting before a municipality changed to a ranked ballot electoral system, and it does not.

In fact, whenever the government had the opportunity to add public consultation to this bill, they voted it down. They voted against our amendment to require a referendum and did not put forward a single amendment of their own to require public consultation. They even voted down our amendment that would have required a minimum of 90 days of public consultation on regulations regarding ranked ballots.

The government isn’t willing to commit to a standard of public consultation on the change to the ranked ballots or even consultation on how those elections will be run. We have said repeatedly that elections belong to the people, and these people should get a say in how these elections are run.

As the deputy clerk of the municipality of North Grenville, Katie Valentin, said, “The one that’s gotten the most publicity is of course the new act will allow the option for ranked balloting. Unfortunately, the way the bill is written, all it says is ‘We’ll give you the option; all the details about how you can implement that will come later in regulation.’”

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When we put forward amendments that were requesting them to clarify how some aspects would work, the government said those details would be coming out in regulation in due course. It’s hard to believe that this change is about engaging people and improving democracy when this government refuses to listen to the people of Ontario, municipalities or other members.

It’s disappointing, because the Minister of Municipal Affairs repeatedly said that he would consider ways to make this bill better. In this Legislature he said, “I’ve already asked staff to go over all the points that have been raised and to specifically come up with a response and/or a change, given those points have been raised. I think the member opposite knows that I’m sincere when I say that. So when we get standing committee, this is about coming up with the best possible bill we can, and we will do that.”

Even after the bill went to committee, the minister repeated that commitment to *Now* magazine. He said, “You raise it, we talk about it. I make a commitment to revisit and look at it. We put our best minds to it, and we come up with what we think is best. Then we present it to the public, and the public comments and says, ‘You’re full of hooey’ or ‘We really like this.’ And if we’re full of hooey, then we revisit it again. Right? ‘Cause that’s called democracy.”

That would be democracy, but that is not what happened. We heard from people. They asked for changes to this bill. The PC caucus listened and put forward amendments that would make the bill better, amendments that would increase public consultation, add better definitions, reduce hardships on candidates and ensure that good people could run for office and would strengthen the section on accessibility for people with disabilities. The government voted down every single one.

They voted down amendments that were requested by multiple people who appeared before the committee. They voted down amendments that would have given the

minister regulatory powers. They even voted down an amendment that would have added a definition from Bill 201, the Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition has an important role in pointing out where the government has missed the mark and working to make the legislation better. We take that role seriously; that's why we put forward amendments.

I want to take this time today to go through our proposals to strengthen this bill. For instance, Bill 181 contains a section regarding making municipal elections more accessible for voters with disabilities. Now, I want to acknowledge that we support the government's goal in this. But during committee we heard that more was needed to make it stronger. During committee, John Rae of the Council of Canadians with Disabilities said, "Subsection 2 provides that the clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers. That is a useful framework, but that's all it is: a framework. In order to be successful, it must be added to and made more robust and prescriptive."

We put forward an amendment that said the minister, by regulation, could prescribe standards for the plan. This simply gave the minister more power to reduce barriers for people with disabilities if required, but the government members of the committee voted it down.

We put forward an amendment that would require that the clerk's report after the election include a report on the implementation of the plan that they had developed to reduce barriers. This would ensure that for the future it was identified what worked and what didn't.

We heard that Elections Ontario has developed a list of accessible locations which could be of assistance to the clerks as they are planning their voting locations. We also heard that people with disabilities need to be involved in the developing of that plan. During the committee, John Rae of the Council of Canadians with Disabilities said, "In the disability rights movement, sir, we use the phrase, 'Nothing about us without us.' It's the clarion call of the disability rights movement."

We put forward an amendment to address this which read, "In preparing the plan, the clerk shall consider input from accessibility advocates and any resources available from the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer of the province of Ontario regarding barrier-free locations." This amendment would have ensured that the clerks had resources that could assist them in reducing barriers while ensuring that they have the flexibility and authority they need to create the plans that work for their municipalities. But once again, the government voted against this amendment.

During his presentation, John Rae also said, "It has been suggested that the most important act any citizen performs in a democracy is casting one's vote." The government had a chance to strengthen this section of the bill to ensure that people with disabilities are able to vote, and they refused.

Mr. Speaker, we put forward an amendment to add a definition of "minister" to the act. This was an amend-

ment that was actually recommended by legislative counsel. The Municipal Elections Act has 40 references to "a minister," and Bill 181 has approximately 10 more, but nowhere in the act or in Bill 181 does it define which minister. The legislative counsel we were working with recommended this to make both our amendments and the act as a whole clearer, but the government voted it down.

We put forward a motion to amend the definition of "third-party advertising" to include advertising that takes a position on "an issue with which a candidate is associated." The parliamentary assistant on the committee said, "Chair, this is way too broad. I recommend not supporting it."

To be fair, before we voted on the amendment, I pointed out that the definition actually came from the bill that the government had introduced just two days before, Bill 201, the Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016, and yet the government members of the committee still voted against the amendment. It's hard to believe that the government members were really considering the amendments when they voted against adding their own definition to the bill.

It's also hard to believe that the government was really listening and considering amendments when they voted against one that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing had told the media he supported just days before.

In committee, we heard from a number of presenters that unpaid labour which is provided at the direction of an individual, corporation or trade union is a problem in municipal elections. We heard stories of so-called volunteers who had actually been hired by companies for the sole purpose of volunteering on campaigns full-time.

Liberal MP Deb Schulte said in her presentation, "You need to include 'volunteer hours' that are paid for by external individuals as a contribution from that individual and make it subject to the same limits."

"I have experienced this directly, the boosting by a developer that's not declared by the candidate."

The concern was also expressed by Campaign Fairness and Professor Robert MacDermid, who said, "I want to be very clear what this is. This is not people who are volunteering to work on a campaign in their off-working hours; this is people who are being paid to work on a campaign by their employer and being paid to work on the campaign of their employer's choice."

He went on to say, "This represents a huge black hole in municipal campaign finance, and probably in campaign rules at other levels as well. I would estimate that it's hundreds of thousands of dollars that go unreported, undisclosed and unlimited."

On May 12, QP Briefing interviewed the Minister of Municipal Affairs about this issue. The article says, "McMeekin said Thursday he believed the bill said the opposite—that the pay should be considered a campaign contribution—and he would 'fix it' if he was wrong."

"Well, I think if that becomes a substitute for direct developer or union influence, to send a whole shift off to work on putting somebody's signs up or deliver bro-

chures, that could have the ability to do exactly what we don't want to see done,' said McMeekin. 'If that's the case, I'll revisit that.'"

"Asked if he believes that 'loophole' should be closed in the forthcoming legislation that will ban corporate and union donations in provincial campaign financing, McMeekin said it should be covered.

"'If it's not, we'll look at that again,' McMeekin said."

I was happy to hear that, because it was one of the areas of the bill that we believe should be fixed. The minister and his office later clarified and said that he would listen to the recommendations of the committee.

This committee heard from many people who recommended that these paid volunteers be banned: a former municipal candidate, now an MP; a political science professor who has extensively studied municipal campaign finance; an organization that is dedicated to ensuring that municipal campaign financing is fair.

One week after QP Briefing interviewed the minister, we put forward an amendment that would have made paid volunteers a campaign contribution, but when it came to clause-by-clause, the government used their majority to block an amendment that, only a week before, the minister had stated he thought was already in the bill and, if not, committed to fix it.

I would welcome an explanation on what happened, because from this side of the House, it's difficult to understand. Perhaps by then they realized that the government had created the exact same loophole in section 1 of Bill 201, the Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act, the government's new political fundraising bill.

Mr. Speaker, that was not the only loophole in this bill. There were also concerns raised by the third-party-advertising section of this bill. We heard from a number of presenters, including the Ontario Nonprofit Network, that if the bill didn't contain an exemption for organizations that spent below a certain threshold, this legislation would be open to a court challenge. The NDP critic introduced an amendment to address that and the government voted it down. He proposed a threshold of \$1,000, but in debate he said that he would be willing to amend to it \$500 or any other number. Instead of working with him to find the right number, the government simply voted it down.

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That is particularly interesting, given that Bill 201, the Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016, introduced by the government two days before clause-by-clause, includes the following exemption for third-party advertisers: "A third party shall apply for registration under this section immediately after having incurred expenses of a total amount of \$500 for third-party political advertising during a period referred to in section 37.10.1."

We put forward a number of amendments to improve the rules on third-party advertising. We put forward an amendment to increase transparency by requiring the municipal clerk to make the list of third-party advertisers

public. But once again, the government members on the committee voted it down.

There are a number of circumstances where an individual with a lot of resources has influenced campaigns. We put forward an amendment to ensure balance and fairness by limiting the amount that an individual could contribute to their own third-party advertising campaign to \$5,000. Again, the government voted it down. That means if a wealthy individual decides they don't like a specific councillor, they can create a third-party advertising campaign against that individual and there's no limit to the amount that they can contribute.

There's another loophole in Bill 181, which states, "If the spouse of a registered third party is not normally resident in Ontario, the spouse may make contributions only to the registered third party." This clause allows someone who is not a resident of Ontario to make unlimited donations to a third-party campaign. This would allow someone who doesn't live in the municipality or even Ontario to have a significant impact on the election. We don't believe that is right, so we put forward an amendment to remove this clause, but again the government voted it down.

We also heard at committee that the current limit on contributions up to \$5,000 a campaign within a single municipality is too high and can result in a single person having a large influence in a smaller municipality. If there are a number of third-party advertisers who have the same goal, contributing a total of \$5,000 to them has the same result as contributing \$5,000 to one.

We put forward an amendment which limited the contribution to third-party advertisers within a municipality to \$3,000, except in Toronto, where it would remain \$5,000. But again, the amendment was voted down.

As part of our efforts to make third-party advertising more transparent, we put forward an amendment to create more of an incentive for third-party advertisers to file their financial statements. Under Bill 181, the rules have been changed so the candidates don't receive a refund of their nomination fee until they have filed their financial statements after the election.

That's a change that we support. We believe the same should apply to third parties. We put forward an amendment to require a registration fee of \$100 for individuals or non-profit corporations registering as third parties and \$500 for unions and corporations. Similar to the nomination fee, the cost for registration would be refunded to third-party organizations if they filed a financial statement as required. This would have added accountability, but once again, the government members voted down our amendment.

The government says that they want a shorter municipal campaign, and we've heard that from across the aisle today. But anyone who has read the bill knows that under Bill 181 they have actually made it longer. Nominations will now close about six weeks earlier, the fourth Friday in July, instead of the second Friday in September as in previous campaigns. This would result in a campaign longer than the one for the last federal election.

The longer campaign will not only be exhausting for the public; it will create hardships for all of those people who are forced to take a leave of absence from their jobs to run for office. As Gloria Kovach, a former city councillor from Guelph and the former president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, said during committee hearings, “I have been involved with women across the country on increasing women’s participation in local government. One of the barriers that I heard time and time again was the cost and financial concern of campaign. The consequences of extending an active campaign period may indeed negatively impact diversity on municipal councils.

“While 13 weeks of advertisements, signs, debates and fundraising is well exhausting for the general public, it has a far bigger impact on persons who are required to take a leave of absence to run for municipal office. These aren’t just municipal employees—or perhaps volunteer firefighters, as I know this committee has heard in the past. There are often people who work in other industries who are required to take that time off during an election campaign. It’s just prohibitive. It will be a barrier and it will discourage good people from running for office.”

During his presentation to the committee, Gary McNamara, the president of AMO, said, “However, debate in the Legislature has raised some legitimate potential issues around the withdrawal date of the fourth Friday in July. The concern is that this earlier date may disadvantage volunteers and others who can’t afford a longer leave of absence from their jobs to campaign.”

This longer campaign will not only create challenges for candidates; it will limit the ability of municipalities to function because the Municipal Act restricts the decisions that council can make after nomination day.

Unless based on acclamations, three-quarters or more of council will stay the same. After nomination day, council is prevented from appointing or removing any officer of the municipality, hiring or dismissing any employee of the municipality, the disposition of any real or personal property of the municipality which has a value exceeding \$50,000, and making any expenditure or incurring any liability which exceeds \$50,000. This means that from July until the new council is sworn in, the municipality can’t function properly. When this concern was raised in committee with Gary McNamara, the president of AMO, he agreed with the fact that this period would be lame duck.

The government has stated that more time is needed due to the ranked ballots, so we put forward an amendment to move the end of nominations to the fourth Friday in August instead of the fourth Friday in July. That would allow an additional two weeks compared to previous elections to give clerks the time they need while ensuring minimizing hardships to potential candidates. But, despite the fact that the July date will cause challenges for municipalities and that AMO agreed that the close of nominations should be moved later, the government voted down our amendment.

While the government is forcing candidates into a 13-week long campaign, they aren’t giving them some of the

tools they need. Under Bill 181, there is a gap of about six weeks when the nominations are closed but the candidates don’t have the information that they need to contact voters. While this is frustrating for most candidates, it creates a significant challenge for people running to be school board trustees, particularly for French or Catholic school boards. We put forward an amendment which would require candidates to receive a copy of the voters list when nominations close, but the government voted it down.

Bill 181 gives municipal clerks new responsibilities for reviewing financial statements to ensure that contributors have not exceeded either their maximum contribution to a single campaign or to multiple campaigns within the municipality. We support the additional oversight, but we heard that there are challenges, because some financial returns don’t have enough information for the clerk to determine whether it is the same individual. If there are two John Smiths listed on the financial statement, each with a maximum contribution, and there are no addresses provided, how can the clerk determine whether this is the same person or two separate people?

During the committee, Professor Robert MacDermid said, “I would also argue that clerks or compliance audit committees should also be given the power to ensure that the campaign statements are complete. In my experience in looking at thousands of these, about a quarter of them—and the statements of many sitting council members—are not complete.”

We put forward an amendment that would give the clerk the authority to request more information when a financial statement is not complete. This would ensure that they have the tools they need in order to fulfill the responsibilities that the government has given them, but, like all of our other amendments, the government members on the committee voted it down. The third party put forward an amendment to deal with this problem as well, and once again, the government voted it down.

Another one of the concerns that was raised in committee was what happens in the event of a tie with ranked ballots. During his presentation, the mayor of Oakville said, “On the question of ties, theoretically, it’s possible for there to be a tie at some point in a ranked ballot system, depending on the counting method used. There are about five different known counting methods. I’m expecting that the government will probably prescribe the counting method, but in the event of a tie—right now, we have this flip-a-coin, draw-a-card, game-of-chance approach to breaking the tie. In a ranked ballot system, what would be wrong with having the tie go to the one with the most first-place votes?”

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We put forward a motion to ensure that the person who was the first choice of more people would be the winner. I think that people would have a difficult time arguing that there is a more democratic way to settle a tie. In fact, in the rules regarding counting preferential ballots, Robert’s Rules of Order states, “In the event of a tie in the winning position—which would imply that the

elimination process is continued until the ballots are reduced to two or more equal piles—the election should be resolved in favour of the candidate or proposition that was strongest in terms of first choices (by referring to the record of the first distribution).”

The city of Aspen Instant Runoff Voting Procedures Manual states, “The first tiebreaker shall be based upon the number of first choice rankings, with the candidate with the largest number of first choice rankings being determined the winner of the tiebreaker.”

It seems logical and democratic that in the event of a tie, the winner should be the person who was the first choice of the majority of people, but once again, the government chose partisanship over democracy and voted down the amendment.

There are also concerns about the method for the count. Previously, a judge had the ability to order that a recount be done in a different manner than the original count, if he or she was of the opinion that the manner in which the original count was conducted contributed to the doubtful result. Bill 181 exempts ranked ballot elections from this clause, meaning that if a ranked ballot election is counted by electronic tabulators and the result is flawed, there is no ability to change the method to get accurate results.

There are a number of problems that can occur with electronic tabulators. You could have a thousand people vote and the machine only register 200 votes, but there is no ability to have a hand recount to ensure that those other 800 votes count. When San Francisco switched to tabulators for the instant runoff, they found that the machines would only read certain types of ink.

There is also a huge potential for a need to hand-count certain ballots because the machines are unable to read voter intent because of confusion with the new ballots. One of the concerns raised in committee was that since school board trustees are not subject to ranked ballots, when voters get to that section of the ballot, they will be confused. A hand count might be able to pick up voter intention from the fact that there is a “1” beside one of the trustees’ names, but if the machine doesn’t, that vote won’t count.

We raised this on second reading, and the concern was confirmed in discussions with experts as we prepared for clause-by-clause. We put forward an amendment to fix this problem and ensure that all votes would count, but once again, the government members on the committee voted it down.

One of the other concerns we raised on second reading was that new section 41.1 of the act gives the minister power to overrule any part of the legislation by regulation. We understand that there are some circumstances in which a minister needs to prescribe certain things by regulation. We support the section that gives him the flexibility to define what is a residence for the purpose of determining who can vote in a municipal election, because we recognize that there are some unusual situations that the legislation could not contemplate, such as people using a barn or storage unit as an address. In fact, we

proposed two amendments that would have given the minister more regulatory authority: one to strengthen the accessibility section of the bill and one to allow the minister to define advertising. That was something that Smokey Thomas, the president of OPSEU, pointed out was needed during his presentation.

During the committee hearings the representative from Sustainable Vaughan stated, “My work advocating for the community is at risk due to the ambiguity in the definitions of both ‘third party’ and ‘advertising’ within this bill.” The government voted down our amendments on specific regulatory policy. Instead, they voted to keep the broad regulatory power that allowed the minister to overrule any part of the legislation by regulation. As the parliamentary assistant said again, “I recommend voting against this motion, because the provision is included as changes may be required to certain sections of the act for the purpose of implementing ranked ballots for elections starting in the year 2018.”

Mr. Speaker, I think the parliamentary assistant captured our point precisely. The government hasn’t fully researched this issue, so they don’t know all the changes required to the act. Rather than researching it properly and having full, open and public debate in the Legislature, they are passing the legislation, knowing full well that they may overrule parts of it later behind closed doors, with no public scrutiny.

Regulations should not be used to avoid public scrutiny or consultation on legislation, and they shouldn’t be used to make up for legislation that isn’t well researched and well written.

We saw over and over during this process that the government hadn’t properly researched or thought through this bill. The afternoon before clause-by-clause, we received a package of amendments submitted by the government which would ban union and corporate donations to all municipal candidates. We supported the intent of these amendments, but I want to point out that there was a concern from municipalities that the government had reversed position at the last minute, which left no time for consultation.

Less than a week earlier, in providing the clarification to Queen’s Park Briefing on his position on paid labour, the minister said in a statement, “In consulting on Bill 181, it was important for me to respect the rights of municipalities to decide how they proceed forward with using ranked ballots or banning corporate and union donations as well as third-party advertising.”

During second reading, the minister said, “Furthermore, I believe that any discussion about modern elections must include the option to ban corporate and union donations. Where have I heard that before? It’s important that our cities and towns undertake this important conversation with their citizens.”

I can understand why municipalities were caught off guard by the new amendments. As Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie said in a Toronto Star article, “Consultation with all municipalities is necessary when making changes of this magnitude and I would welcome the

opportunity to provide feedback on these brand new proposed amendments [to] the legislation currently being debated.”

During the committee presentations, the president of AMO said that banning corporate and union donations should be left up to the municipalities, but that if the province was to ban them for all municipalities, they should also increase the individual donation limits to reflect the fact that this will result in increased challenges for fundraising. It seems that on this issue the government simply ignored AMO’s advice.

They also ignored comments from presenters that there should be a greater requirement for candidates to demonstrate a minimum level of support before nomination papers are accepted. We heard that it would assist voters in being able to identify the candidates and learn their issues.

Under Bill 181, candidates are required to get 25 signatures to run for office. We put forward an amendment to require that those signatures be from the area where the candidate was running. A councillor would have to get the signatures of 25 people in their ward in order to run. We also put forward an amendment that would increase it to 100 signatures to run for mayor in the city of Toronto. The government members of the committee voted that down because the parliamentary assistant said that they wanted “a consistent process across the province.”

Mr. Speaker, this is interesting because Bill 181 doesn’t actually create a consistent process. For instance, under Bill 181 the limit for donations for everyone other than the mayor is \$750 but for the mayor of Toronto it is \$2,500. We understand that. Toronto is unique; because of its size, it leads to more expensive campaigns. But I’m not sure there’s another municipality in Ontario that had 65 candidates run for mayor. As the presenter pointed out, that created challenges for voters, and I’m disappointed that the government wasn’t interested in working with us to solve them.

There were a number of other amendments we put forward to solve problems with the bill. While some are small, technical fixes, they can create real challenges for candidates. For instance, Bill 181 requires that both candidates and parties provide advertisers with contact information for the person responsible for advertising, including business addresses. We all know from our own campaigns that some of our volunteers are people who are retired or not working. Sometimes these are people who have the time available to take on major roles in a campaign. We put forward an amendment to clarify that addresses could be a home address if the person did not have a business address. But once again, the government voted it down. The government also voted down an amendment that the clerk of the city of Toronto requested to make the compliance audit committee more efficient and effective.

Mr. Speaker, there’s one section where the government listened. Section 22 of Bill 181 removed the clause of the Municipal Elections Act that allowed people to

continue to serve as a volunteer firefighter while running for municipal council. I’ve never heard an explanation from the government of why they put that in the bill, but I’m pleased that during the clause-by-clause it was voted out.

I also want to point out a couple of things that municipalities raised that still aren’t addressed in this bill. Two of them may not require a legislative change, so I hope to government will move to address them. The first is the accuracy of the voters list. We’ve heard over and over about the challenges with the list. This is probably the number one request from municipalities: that the government look at ways to make the list better. I want to acknowledge that Bill 181 makes the process for removing deceased people easier, and we were happy to support that, but much more needs to be done before the next municipal election.

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As AMO said in their submission on the municipal elections review, “Inaccuracies, errors, and omissions on the municipal voters list have been raised by many municipalities, election after election. These result in mistakes that aggravate voters, can frustrate voting behaviour, and question the capabilities of municipal elections staff and the process. AMO supports the need to improve the municipal voters list to safeguard the integrity of local government elections.”

During their committee presentation, Stephen O’Brien, the chair of the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers elections act advisory team, said, “Following the last several municipal elections, one of the biggest priorities for clerks in this province has been the poor quality of the municipal voters list. As you can see on slide 4 of the presentation materials that we’ve provided to you, when AMCTO surveyed its members last May, 92% of them indicated that Ontario needed a new approach to the voters list.”

The second change—and it’s one we heard about from the mayor of Barrie, a councillor from Toronto and others—is the need to have more resources to help guide candidates. When they are struggling to fill out financial forms correctly or trying to make sure they are following all the rules, there is no one who is willing to give them advice. It seems often that the only guidance they receive is to tell them to call a lawyer, which is an expensive way to get an answer. Provincially, we have the ability to call Elections Ontario. We’re able to get guidance in writing to ensure that we follow all the rules. Municipal candidates are asking for a resource to help them with similar advice.

I know the ministry has been conducting a review of the Municipal Act, and I hope that the last request I want to raise will be part of that review. We received a number of requests to shorten the so-called lame-duck period between the election and the first meeting of the new council. AMO recommends that municipalities be given the flexibility to hold the first meeting between 18 and 39 days after the election to suit local circumstances. We hope to see that change in the upcoming bill.

We also hope that in upcoming bills we will be able to work together to ensure that municipalities get the changes they need.

I'm disappointed in this bill and the committee process that it went through. I'm disappointed that the government put forward a bill that clearly wasn't ready, where government members, including the minister, were confused about what was actually in the bill and where they claim that broad regulatory powers are needed because they don't actually know how the ranked ballots will be implemented or whether they will need to overrule parts of the legislation that we are debating today.

I'm also disappointed in how little respect the government had for input from others, both from the public and other members of this Legislature. People travelled to appear before the committee. They did a lot of work to prepare their presentations, and the majority of their time, it seems, the government simply didn't listen. As a result, we missed opportunities to add transparency and accountability, as well as opportunities to make municipal elections more accessible.

We put a lot of work into preparing amendments based on those presentations and our analysis of the bill. We attempted to fix a number of problems that it created, and the government members simply voted down every single amendment, even those based on a government bill or that were supported by the minister's comments just a week before.

I understand how the critic from the third party felt near the end of the clause-by-clause when he said he was so disappointed by the previous vote that he did not even wish to continue, and withdrew his last motion.

What's most disappointing is that the government did not agree to public consultation through a referendum before a municipality can change their electoral system. It shows a lack of respect for the people of Ontario.

As the organization Defend Democracy said, "Canada's electoral system is the basis of our democracy. Considering the potential impact, no one government or political party has the authority to fundamentally alter our democratic system. If our system is to be reformed, it is up to the people of Canada to decide directly through a referendum."

Elections do not belong to the Liberal Party, this government, or even a municipal council. They belong to the people, and we cannot support a bill that attempts to override the right of the people to determine how they elect their government.

With that, that ends the presentation, but, Mr. Speaker, you did notice that I mentioned in my remarks the president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. I just got a note here from the Speaker's chair that Mr. Clark Somerville is the new president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. He takes over in June, and we want to congratulate him on his new position.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the time to make this presentation, and thank you very much for giving me that information to be one of the first

to welcome him to the presidency of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

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

Further debate? I'm pleased to recognize the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Good afternoon, Speaker. I hate to break it to you and the member from Oxford, but I welcomed Clark Somerville as the new president of the FCM last week. So, yes, it's about time you guys got caught up. He is from Halton, right?

Seriously, it's always a pleasure to be called upon in this House to represent my constituents in Windsor–Tecumseh. This bill, Bill 181, amends the Municipal Elections Act, and it is of interest in my riding.

For me, at the core of this bill is the intent to get big money—corporate money, donations from developers—out of municipal politics. Quite frankly, it doesn't belong there and it never has, but it has crept in as part of the accepted practice of doing business for many people in some parts of the province. That's because election campaigns can be very expensive to run. Over the years, people seeking influence over candidates exploited that. Slowly, ever so gradually, this trickle of corporate money became a flood in some areas. Developers knew that if they could claim their money actually helped a candidate win an election, then they could expect that candidate to take their calls, listen, and perhaps—just perhaps—be persuaded to vote for whatever issue the corporate funders were pushing at that time.

I am by no means saying that this has corrupted every municipal politician who has ever accepted funding from a developer. In fact, in my two municipal elections I had several people from the development industry make campaign donations—it could have been \$100; it could have been \$200. I never ran very expensive campaigns, and I never felt beholden to anyone that made a contribution to my campaign. But in some areas of the province, there is certainly the perception that developer money—big money—controls the votes on council.

As a matter of fact, at committee we heard from a federal member of Parliament who ran three times in the municipality of Vaughan. Deb Schulte is a former Vaughan and regional councillor in York region. She told us that back in 2010 an anonymous attack campaign was launched against several sitting members. There was so much time, effort and money put into that negative campaign that several incumbents lost their seats. Because of this, what happens is, for those who win a seat, according to Ms. Schulte, there's always the threat that, if you don't play along, you'll be targeted in the next municipal election.

The MP for King–Vaughan told us that after that election, when she wasn't the target, she was told flat out by someone trying to exert his influence over her on planning and development issues, "We put you in, and we can take you out." That's exactly what they did to her: Someone in the development industry paid for and ran what she described as "an extensive and expensive

attack campaign” against her the next time out. They did it in such a way that no one could figure out who was pulling the strings or who was paying the bills.

She told us that she wasn't a bitter losing candidate. After all, she's now a sitting member of Parliament in the Trudeau government, and she feels she got there because people in her riding knew that what had been done to her in the last municipal campaign was wrong.

Big money has had a big say in who was elected municipally in certain parts of the province for far too long.

We heard from Robert MacDermid, who teaches political science at York University. He is, without a doubt, one of the experts in this province on municipal campaign finance. He has connected the dots, so to speak, because of the many studies he has conducted in this field. He's done it for two decades. He's looked at thousands and thousands of campaign statements filed by municipal candidates.

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He's worked with the grassroots group, Campaign Fairness, as they focused on the 12 or 13 municipalities that share the Lake Simcoe watershed. Some of the winning candidates in those areas get 80% of their donations from the development industry. Others aren't so lucky; they only get 60% or 70%. Of course, a few get none at all. Professor MacDermid says what that has led to, because of the developer influence on council decisions, is unregulated urban sprawl in many of those municipalities where development interests are greatest. His research shows that although many of the big developers actually live in the municipality of Vaughan, they fund municipal campaigns in all of the surrounding areas in the watershed as well. In fact, when I asked him how widespread a problem this has been, he said that development money from Vaughan is given to candidates in 20 or 30 other municipalities in southern Ontario.

So the timing is right for this section of the bill banning corporate donations at the municipal level. It's an issue whose time has come.

By the way, Speaker, the bill will ban donations from labour unions as well, and just so you know, after years and years of looking at financial statements filed by municipal candidates, by comparison, Professor MacDermid says that union donations are trivial. There's not much there and what there is small potatoes.

That sentiment was echoed by Fred Hahn, president of CUPE Ontario. CUPE, as you know, represents 250,000 workers across the broader public sector in Ontario; 80,000 of them are municipal workers, and they have another 55,000 at various school boards in the province. His studies show large corporations donate between 40% and 50% of all the money raised in municipal election campaigns. By comparison, Mr. Hahn told us at committee that union contributions range in some municipalities from 1% to as high as 10%.

To quote Fred Hahn, “This legislation empowers municipalities to ban both corporate and union donations, and it appears to imply that the role of unions and

corporations is relatively equivalent. Despite the apparent false equivalency created by this legislation, we are supportive of it in principle, including the sections that ban both union and corporate donations.”

We heard very similar words from the president of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. Warren Smokey Thomas said, “We often hear the phrase ‘corporate and union donations,’ as if corporations and unions are somehow equivalent ... players in democratic debates, and as if they both spend about the same amount of money trying to influence the outcomes of elections. This is not the case.”

He went on to say, “Let me say at the outset that we wholeheartedly support eliminating the influence of big money on municipal elections. If there's any organization in this province that has done and said more than OPSEU on the way big money corrupts government decisions, I haven't heard of it.

“But corporations and unions are not the same, for two reasons. First of all ... unions are democratic; corporations are not. Their structure is authoritarian....

“Corporations as a group donate far more to political candidates than unions ever do.

“At the municipal level, as I think we all know, the big issue is not campaign donations from working people and their unions; it's donations from developers.”

Speaker, Smokey Thomas concluded that part of his presentation with this: “The positive effect of banning corporate donations will, we believe, be much greater than the negative effect of banning donations from democratic organizations like ours. On balance, it will lessen the impact on big money on elections, and that's a deal I'll take any day of the week.”

Speaker, just for your edification, corporate and union donations for municipal campaigns were banned in the city of Toronto in 2010. It hasn't posed a problem there, so it shouldn't create issues any place else in Ontario.

Next up, we at the committee level had to wrestle with the concept of a voluntary ban or a mandatory ban on corporate and union donations. Initially, the bill said that municipal councils would be able to decide for themselves whether such a ban was acceptable. In other words, it would be voluntary and up to them. However, we heard from a number of witnesses who said that that just wouldn't work. They feared that with councillors beholden to the development industry, especially since some of them were getting 60%, 70% and 80% of their campaign contributions funded by developers, there would be no way that those mayors and councillors would vote to turn off the financial taps. If the intent was real, if the purpose was to get rid of corporate influence on municipal candidates and to get big money out of municipal campaigns, then we had no choice. Voluntary wouldn't work. The ban had to be mandatory.

I want to compliment the Liberals on coming to terms with that. What we have in that section of the bill, I believe, is somewhat groundbreaking. I believe that it is the most democratic thing we have done with this bill. We've taken a major step towards getting big money out

of municipal campaigns. Now that's not to say the more creative and the more determined of the big money boys won't find ways to continue to insert themselves into municipal campaigns, but it is a start, and it's a good one at that.

Before I say too much about the good stuff that's in this bill—I wouldn't wish to disappoint the members opposite who expect me to say some not-so-good things, especially in my role as opposition critic for municipal affairs and housing—let me touch on something that I think should have been in this bill but it isn't. That, quite simply, is that we've missed an opportunity to be creative, to be progressive and to open up our democratic process to hundreds of thousands of newcomers to our province.

They come here from all over the world, some from our neighbour along our southern border but many more from much more far afield. They come here to work. They come for a safe refuge, in some cases, to escape war, to escape oppression and to find a better home for their families.

They work. They buy homes or rent apartments. They pay municipal taxes. They use our municipal services: our transit systems, our libraries and our schools. They may join the parents' club or the church choir, or they may help coach our soccer teams.

Permanent residents: Many of them take great pride in their new neighbourhoods. They commit themselves to building up the areas in which they choose to live. After everything they've been through in their homelands, they see it almost as a duty to take part in neighbourhood events. They participate in the life of a community. They celebrate life and they celebrate freedom. They are affected by the decisions and actions taken by their municipal politicians. Why shouldn't they have the same right to hold those municipal politicians accountable by exercising their vote? They may or may not be on the path towards Canadian citizenship, but the bottom line is this: They pay municipal taxes and property taxes. They pay them, and yet we deny them the vote for the people who decide on their municipal services. They pay their property taxes, and yet they have absolutely no say. That isn't right.

The city of Toronto knows that. Councillors in Toronto have been asking for the right to allow permanent citizens the right to vote for the past three years. In fact, Toronto councillors believe that they should have the right to vote in provincial elections, as well.

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Now, let's think about that for a moment. Let's look at our recent history if we could—well, relatively recent leadership election history, held by my good friends in the Conservative Party. There was a party insider, Ms. Elliott, the former member from Whitby–Oshawa. She was supported by the vast majority of the PC caucus. Then there was this outsider by the name of Patrick Brown—a federal member of Parliament from Barrie. No one gave him much of a chance. He only had what—three, maybe four members of the provincial caucus who said they would support him?

So what did Mr. Brown do? He assembled a team. He courted supporters in groups and neighbourhoods not normally associated with his party in any big way before. He reached out to newcomers from other countries, folks who spoke languages other than English and French as a mother tongue. He promised them a say in how things were done in Ontario. He said, "Your vote is important, and so are you." And, well, the rest is history.

Mr. Brown won that leadership race. There was no one at the door on voting day saying, "Show me your proof of Canadian citizenship." It didn't happen. You had to be 14 years old and a resident of Ontario. So those who voted were residents of Ontario. They paid their municipal taxes. They used municipal services. They exercised their new right to vote in a leadership campaign and they helped elect someone who nobody gave much of a chance to just a few months previously.

So why, pray tell, if we value the votes of non-residents in that case—voting for the leader of a political party—if we grant them the right and the ability to vote for the leader of a provincial political party, why do we deny those same people from voting for their school board trustee, their city councillor or their mayor? There's a problem with that picture. We could have fixed it with these proposed amendments and we didn't. We allowed that opportunity to slip through our fingers.

Now, this isn't just a Toronto issue. City council in North Bay has voted in support of giving non-residents the right to vote in municipal elections. North Bay is doing what it can to attract newcomers up that way. They see this as an opportunity to get people from other countries to consider their region.

I was reading a story the other day by John Michael McGrath, writing for TVO.org. He was quoting Meg Ramore, the local immigration partnership coordinator for the North Bay and district multicultural council. She was saying, "The more welcoming North Bay is to newcomers, the more newcomers will come to North Bay and bring their talent, their families, their money. Employers are screaming for people, and we've seen newcomers are willing to come here."

Electoral rules get updated all the time, Speaker. I don't have to tell you that. Until the 1960s, only homeowners could vote in Ontario. That right was granted to those who were renters, not owners, just 50 or so years ago. As John Michael McGrath reminded us in the article I just quoted, non-Canadian British subjects could vote in our municipal elections into the 1980s.

There's also a Desmond Cole article I was reading last month. He was talking about the former campaign, I Vote Toronto. The intent of that campaign was to convince then-Premier Dalton McGuinty to extend voting rights to non-citizen permanent residents. Mr. Cole writes:

"The idea that allowing non-citizens to vote will 'devalue' the franchise of citizens is a naked appeal to privilege. In Canada's good old days, white, male, Anglican property owners of a certain age were the only people eligible to vote.

"There is no doubt that as others gained the franchise—women, indigenous people, religious minorities,

people living with disabilities—the value of each privileged, God-fearing white dude’s vote diminished.” That, Mr. Cole says, “was a good thing.” He sees immigrants to our province as the backbone of Ontario’s economy and the source of much of its growth.

Mr. Cole points out that when it comes to extending the municipal vote to non-residents, Ontario is lagging behind the times, because officials in Halifax and in five municipalities in New Brunswick have made the same request of their provincial governments. It’s an idea whose time has come, but unfortunately not at this time and not in this province, whose Liberal government still tries to spin the tired line of being the most progressive ever.

I know that we may take the right to vote for granted; voter turnout at the municipal level in Ontario hovers in the 30% range in many locations. Some politicians see extending voting rights to non-residents as an idea to boost that percentage, but it also sends a powerful message to people from other countries who maybe never had the right to vote: “Not only do we welcome you to your new home, but we value your opinion and we want you to have a say in how we run our schools and our municipalities. You are the ones using our municipal services; you should have a say in how we do that.”

I have great respect for the Liberal member from York South–Weston. I hope to hear in the next few weeks that she has been rewarded for her talent and her hard work by being named to cabinet. But during our committee hearings, the member for York South–Weston, Ms. Albanese, said that she believes extending municipal voting rights to permanent residents is “an important issue” and that it “merits conversation and consultation.” Then I asked the Liberal government—the proposed amendments were put in there for public debate, for consultation: “Why, knowing that the Toronto and North Bay councils were already asking for this, and knowing that politicians on the east coast are way out in front on this issue, didn’t you include this as a possibility at this time?” This was the time to do it. This was the time for public discussion. This was the time to put such subjects on the table, along with everything else, and have people have a say.

You could have left it open as an option for those municipalities that chose to do so. It could have been put in as a voluntary suggestion. Instead, it was ignored, so debate was stifled. That, to me, is a shame.

Speaker, that is one of the failings of this bill. I won’t belabour the issue; I know the time is short. But I would hope that others over there agree with the insightful member from York South–Weston that this is an important issue and does merit more debate and more consultation.

Let’s talk about ranked balloting. We talked a lot about ranked balloting at the committee. Again, ranked balloting is not a top-of-mind, burning issue for most municipalities in Ontario, but it does have very passionate supporters who see it as a long-overdue concept. They see it as a very democratic reform. They say we’ve been using the first past the post system for far too long.

They see municipal councillors being elected with less than 20% of the votes, and they see that as wrong. They want more votes counted: your second choice, should your first not receive 50%, or your third or fourth until one candidate gets support from more than 50% of all the votes cast. They see this as a possibility for more people of colour, more women, more young people being elected; in other words, more new newcomers and fewer incumbents.

Detractors say, “Hold on a moment. This is a fundamental change in the way democracy works in this province—or has worked for 150 years.” They say, “We can’t touch that with a 10-foot pole unless we hold a referendum of all the people first.”

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We were told by one of the delegations that such a referendum in Toronto could cost as much as \$15 million. Obviously, the cost would be much, much less in smaller towns and cities. Some even call for a referendum that wouldn’t be valid unless one side or the other won a super-majority, meaning not 50% plus one but 60% or even higher. To further complicate matters, some detractors say that such a referendum wouldn’t be valid unless the voter turnout was 50% or more. Obviously, the concept of a ranked preferential ballot has touched more than just a few buttons around here.

The intent is to allow municipalities the right to deal with the idea as they see fit—leave it up to them. If they want to hold a referendum, let them hold a referendum. If they don’t, if they just want to take it to a public meeting and make a decision, let them do it that way. If they don’t want to touch it at all, then they don’t have to touch it at all. That’s the voluntary approach taken with this. After all, as my friend the mayor of Tecumseh, Gary McNamara, who is also the president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, says, “Municipal governments are mature orders of government” and “municipal governments are the most open and accessible order of government in Canada.” He says that when it comes to ranked ballots, leave it as a local choice for the municipal leaders to make on a case-by-case basis.

Speaker, in most cases the call for ranked balloting comes from cities with high population counts. Eighty-five per cent of Ontario municipalities have fewer than 50,000 residents, and for the most part this is an issue that has rarely surfaced. That’s not to diminish the concept in any way. I recognize the difficulties and complexities that voters in large metropolitan areas face when trying to determine who to vote for. It’s different in our small towns and medium-sized cities.

If those who advocate for ranked ballots see it as a means of enhancing democracy, I can’t argue with that. I do believe, however, that this is one of those circumstances where we can’t take a cookie-cutter approach and mandate that municipal councils must adopt ranked balloting. It must be left up to individual councils to decide if they want to go that route.

I know that at one time in Toronto, city council under a previous administration was in favour of the concept.

Times have changed. At committee, we were told by a councillor assigned to speak on behalf of the mayor and council—or at least a council committee looking into this—that “ranked-choice voting suffers from a number of democratic shortcomings which cannot be overcome.”

In fact, ward 5 councillor Justin Di Ciano says, “Contrary to what Torontonians and the broader public have been led to believe, ranked-choice voting does not guarantee a majority result. RCV is a plurality system, just like first past the post. The federal United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has gone as far as ruling that ranked-choice voting is not a majority system and in fact remains a plurality system.”

So it doesn’t look like a ranked ballot will be coming to a polling station in Toronto any time soon. That’s not to say we won’t see it in Ottawa, Oakville, Kingston, London or anywhere else that has been looking into it. Maybe, if it gets adopted and has proven a success in some of those areas, it can be revisited in Toronto. Who knows?

Speaking of revisiting, there is part of the bill that concerns the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario. It’s the part that puts the onus on the city clerk to oversee the campaign financial statements filed by the candidates. This puts the clerk in a bit of a conflict of interest because the elected councillors automatically become the employer—the boss, if you will—of the clerk. It’s expected normally that they would have a good working relationship—even cordial. They see each other a lot, and they have to work together.

So what happens if the clerk, in looking at the filed financial statements, uncovers something wrong: either something that was perhaps meant to be hidden or not accounted for, or something embarrassing to the new councillor or the incumbent such as, I don’t know, say, a contributor has given too much money, more money than the limit allowed? When the clerks were surveyed by their association, only 21% of them said that they would feel comfortable fulfilling that responsibility of blowing the whistle on the new councillor or the incumbent councillor.

You see, Speaker, the clerk is supposed to blow the whistle and take action against their boss. This puts the clerk between a rock and a hard place. According to Stephen O’Brien, the clerk in Guelph who’s also the chair of the association’s Municipal Elections Act advisory team, “This new requirement puts the clerk in an impossible situation. They must on the one hand build a positive working relationship with council, while on the other hand monitor campaign contributions to those very same councillors—and bear in mind that we’re also appointed and serve at the pleasure of our councils. While collaboration with members of council is important for the healthy functioning of a council-clerk relationship, it places the clerk in a potential conflict whenever they have to deal with election compliance.”

The clerks hold the view that such oversight properly belongs to an ad hoc audit and compliance committee, at arm’s length from the clerk and administrative staff. It’s hard to argue with that. Why would you intentionally, as

this bill does, put the clerk in an impossible situation—between a rock and a hard place—having to blow the whistle if they find something that shouldn’t be there in the audited financial statements? Why not have someone outside, someone giving the authority to audit the campaign financial statements—have them, if there’s a problem, blow the whistle and bring it to city council for determination.

Indeed, one of our witnesses is a former MPP, a former school board trustee and a long-time former city councillor in Ottawa. Alex Cullen told us that in Ottawa a blue-ribbon panel was appointed for just such a role, the outside audit compliance committee role, appointed by city council. One of its members—get this, Speaker—included a former Chief Electoral Officer of Canada. It doesn’t get much better than that. They acted on a complaint from a citizen on a campaign reporting irregularity. They did the compliance audit, they held a public hearing, and they found an incumbent councillor guilty as suggested by the citizen. The blue-ribbon panel recommended unanimously that the candidate be prosecuted. But the candidate in question was an incumbent and the clerk declined to prosecute.

Mr. Cullen’s view is that such matters should not lie with the discretion of an employee of council. He was a councillor in Ottawa for 16 years, and he believes the relationship between a clerk and a council is normally too close to rely on this method of oversight. And yet that’s what we’re stuck with.

There’s no reason for it. There’s no reason why the government couldn’t see this coming. There’s no reason why the government didn’t listen when they heard from the association of clerks, managers and treasurers of Ontario and say, “Oh, jeez, we weren’t thinking about that. This is a problem. How do we fix it?” The way to fix it is to strip away those responsibilities from the clerk and give it to an outside blue-ribbon panel, if you will, appointed by city council, to look at any suggestion of indiscretion on behalf of any candidate when they file their financial compliance audits. It could have been an easy fix. Instead, it’s going to be a headache right across the province for a lot of clerks and treasurers, a lot of people who have to work with the councillors who are coming in and who have bungled in some way their financial accounting.

Let me just touch on third-party advertising for a moment. That’s another major issue we had for the committee. Speaker, I must say, in many ways, some of us were left wondering about the timing of this bill and the provisions in there—and we’re talking municipal politics. In many ways, the issues are identical to the ones being considered not just at the municipal level but for provincial elections as well. At times, it felt like we were a sounding board, a trial run, if you will, for pending changes to the provincial act to amend the way we do our provincial business.

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Third-party advertising: It’s not nearly as big an issue at the municipal level as it is during provincial or federal campaigns. What we have is what some people see as a

six-month gag order imposed on groups that may have a burning desire to wade in during a municipal election campaign. There's no low-end spending threshold that would exempt small community groups from taking a side.

We know—we've talked about it in this House before—the problem in British Columbia, that there's no low-end limit there. That law has been challenged. It has made its way all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. In British Columbia—and this is at the provincial level—for example, if you even have a bumper sticker that takes a position on one of the platforms of one of the parties in the provincial election, like “Save the trees,” “Save the whales,” whatever it is, if they wanted to prosecute you for having that bumper sticker or for wearing a T-shirt with a political statement on it, they can do it because there's no low-end spending limit. A third party, a charity, a non-profit group or anybody that prints off some literature and hands it out in their neighbourhood—“Save the trees,” “Save our park,” whatever it is—if they don't comply and register as a third party, they face legal action because there's no low-end spending limit. We tried to make that a point here.

We know—we talked about this before—that the government of Ontario has asked for intervenor status in the federal court, at the Supreme Court, for the BC court case, and we're wondering why. But now, when they bring in this bill and don't have a low-end spending limit on it, it makes you wonder: What are they trying to stifle? Why is there a gag order going to be imposed on any third party? Why are they trying to gag citizens from having a voice during municipal elections? We're only at the municipal level now; we're not talking provincial. But if they get away with it at the municipal level, does that mean they're automatically going to do it at the provincial level as well?

Are we going to be allowed to speak out during municipal campaigns on any issues? With what's before us right now, no. It's for the duration, from the time you file your papers to the time of the election. That's six months.

I mentioned earlier, as the member from Oxford has also mentioned, that Robert MacDermid, who was one of the witnesses at committee, teaches political science here in the city at York University. He has warned the government already that this will be subject to a court challenge in the Supreme Court because it goes against our Constitution and freedom of speech. You can't shut somebody down for six months and prevent them from speaking out during the term of a municipal election. He's already warned the government. When we tried to put in a low-end spending limit by way of amendment to say, “Look, guys, just look at it this way—save yourselves some trouble. If these groups want to speak, if they want to run off some literature and pass it around in their neighbourhood, allow them to do it,” and the answer was, “No, we're sticking to what we have.”

There is a favourable section in the bill dealing with the disabled. We heard from John Rae, who came from a

disability group. He said that the legislation makes it mandatory for the clerk to develop a barrier-free plan for polling stations at any place that will be hosting meet-the-candidates meetings. That's absolutely correct: We have to make Ontario barrier-free. We have not been doing enough in this province since we introduced the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Talk to David Lepofsky, one of the world's experts on disability issues, and he'll tell you that we're in real danger of not meeting the deadlines that that act has placed on the government. We're just not doing enough to get action.

In this bill, the clerk is mandated to come up with a plan to make sure that any polling station or any community meeting room where there will be meet-the-candidate nights, evenings, afternoons or breakfasts must be barrier-free. The clerk has to go out and physically examine the circumstances of those situations and come up with a report. The problem with that section of the bill is, that report on how well we did comes in after the election is over, as opposed to mandating that it's an ongoing process and that the reports come in during the campaign so any action that needs to be taken is actually taken before we get to voting day.

Mr. Rae said that if you want to be really barrier-free, you have to look at the technology that we have to vote with; you have to consider methods other than the traditional methods. He wants that included as part of that report as well because, to be barrier-free, perhaps you do boost voter turnout if those with disabilities register in advance and want to vote with a PIN number over the phone, over their computer or by some method other than actually going to a polling station and filling in a ballot. That plan could have been improved, and perhaps it will at some point. But right now, it isn't.

I must say, there was a feeling amongst many of the people we spoke to that the bill was rushed, that it was being pushed through in a hurry for some political purpose. There's even a section towards the end that they seem to tag on there that's basically a notwithstanding clause, meaning notwithstanding anything in the bill, the minister, at the minister's discretion, can disregard it all and do whatever the minister wants to do. I suppose one could say that the intent is for the minister to be able to recover from anything that has slipped through unnoticed but discovered as a problem later that needs to be fixed. But it could also be seen as being there as a backup plan in case of political fallout or a funder revolt or anything that would allow the minister to change the wording to something more suitable to those who objected to something that was in the bill.

We heard from a number of people from Toronto, from Ottawa, from elsewhere, who spoke of the need to allow municipal candidates, should they so choose—to allow the name of their political party to be on the ballot, meaning that it could say, “Percy Hatfield, Green Party of Toronto” or “Toronto Green Party” or “Independent” or whatever. They wanted the ability, through the legislation, to identify at the municipal level whatever political party or civic party they belong to.

They didn't get very far with that suggestion, but they feel it is a strong, democratic motivation to increase the vote, to say to the voters, "Look, you know what the Toronto Green Party stands for or the Toronto Civic Party, and I'm a member of that party so I stand for everything that they stand for." They think they would increase the voting turnout by that. They believe they would get more people elected who are normally more on the fringe on the ballot because people don't know their name; they're not an incumbent and they're not normally written about in the newspapers or heard on the radio. So they think they would have a better chance if they could identify by party.

You wouldn't necessarily have to call yourself a Liberal, a Conservative or a New Democrat. I suppose you could, if you so chose. But if you wanted to be known as a Green Party candidate or a Toronto Civic Party candidate—they wanted that ability. They wanted it in Ottawa as well.

We had a political science professor come in and say, "Look, if you really want to increase the turnout," because we know it's not very good in municipal campaigns, "hold your municipal elections on a Sunday." In the old days in Ontario, referendums and elections were held on Sundays. He said, "Most people aren't working on Sundays." Some people are. We have to respect that.

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But when you hold an election, when you hold a polling station in a school, for example, it would be easier for the school administrators to hold elections on days, be it a PD day or a Sunday—if you could think ahead and close the schools the day of the municipal election, because you have the security issues. You don't want strangers wandering around the classrooms. You have the janitorial/custodial issues, as well.

Very good suggestions—and what better time to think about times we vote, be it on holidays, be it on Sundays, be it on days when the schools are closed, because, as you know, Speaker, in many municipalities, most of the polling stations actually are in our elementary schools or our high schools. If you could do it on days when they were closed to the students, that might help in terms of security and so on.

Some people thought there should be term limits on the number of terms you could actually serve on council. The other side of that coin is that, other than, I suppose, the Canadian Senate, which has an age limit, there is no real term limit that I'm aware of in Canada. But that's not to say that it's a bad idea. I mean, we all have our shelf life and a best-before date, and some people have been around—be it federal, provincial or municipal politics—a long time. The idea of term limits, I believe, is something that we could have a discussion about.

There was also a suggestion by my friend from Oxford, who suggested that we can't make any changes at all unless we have a binding referendum on the way we do a democratic process in Ontario. The barb tossed back in his direction was that, back in the Harris days, when the Harris government regionalized many of the

municipalities and squeezed them down into one across the province, nobody thought then to do it by referendum first to see what the people who were going to be affected felt about that. But that was just one of the barbs that was tossed out there.

What else? The voters list. Gosh, the municipal voters list is as bad as the provincial voters list, which, I'm sure, is as bad as the federal voters list. Of all the brains that we have in all the three orders of government, surely, through MPAC, driver's licences or health cards or whatever it is, with all the modern technology we have in the world today, why can't we come up with a suitable, acceptable, practical list of voters? It just seems like they are so outdated.

It's not just in one area of the province; it's right across the province, Speaker. No matter where you go, you talk to anybody in this chamber, you talk to anyone on their town council or their city council, the voters list is absolutely—I wouldn't say "useless." I mean, it does have many names that are there, but you really have to dig down deep to find out exactly what the most up-to-date information is.

I just want to compliment, as well, when I think about it, the chair of our committee, the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Mr. Milczyn. He did an excellent job at the committee level, guiding us through the presentations of those who came to speak.

I know that there was a city councillor from Toronto, Jim Karygiannis, who used to be a federal Liberal member of Parliament, who came. He spoke about the need for almost a municipal returning officer, available to answer questions, as we have at the provincial level, when candidates run at the municipal level and they have questions on "Is this allowed, or do I have to do something different?" There's really nobody at the municipal level that he found who could answer those questions, be it around fundraising: "How much can I raise? Where can I raise it? What gifts can I write off after?"—all of those questions. There was nobody really at Toronto city hall when he was running who could answer those questions for him.

I know that I found the same thing, time and time again, when I was on city council in Windsor. I would say to the city solicitor, "Do you think I'm in a conflict on this because of this or that?" He would say, "If you think you're in a conflict, declare a conflict. That's the easy way out." He said that his job was to advise the city on municipal matters; it wasn't to advise individual councillors on whether they had a conflict or not.

What we're faced with here is an act that is going to change the way municipal elections are run in Ontario. Some of the improvements are going to be accepted; some are going to be challenged, as we've heard; some will make some people happy and won't make others happy; and some will be totally ignored, but that is to be expected.

Municipal candidates know what they have to do. They used to be able to register in January. They won't be able to do that anymore, so they can't start collecting

money for their campaigns until much later in the year. It was put to the committee that that gives the incumbents an advantage and newcomers a big disadvantage because they can't go out and actually raise money. They can't even distribute literature, because they can't spend money on their own literature to say, "I'm going to be running." It doesn't mean you can't hold a news conference and say, "At the first opportunity, I will be signing my application form to be a candidate for mayor or to be a councillor in this or that ward," but they can't do it in January anymore.

I used to take advantage of that when I ran. You'd register early and get noticed every time somebody else jumped into the race. They'd say, "So far the only other candidate is," and list the one or two who had registered. I saw it as an advantage to get my name out there. But now, with this change in the legislation, you won't be able to do that until much later in the year. We're going to hear pros and cons on that.

I know you're also going to hear more about the number of names it takes on your nomination form. You're going to hear more about the cost: If you want to run for mayor in a major municipality, you should have to pay a lot more, to try to weed out fringe candidates. Incumbents certainly like that idea; people who like to run and have their voice heard, maybe not so much.

All in all, I think that for the most part the bill has some things in it—I mentioned earlier about getting big money out of municipal campaigns. I think that is the biggest move we've made with this proposed legislation—long overdue. I mean, there's just no need for it, and if we can clean up that aspect of municipal councils, then I think we've really accomplished a lot.

As I said earlier, I don't mean to impugn motives or impugn reputations by saying that if you've accepted money from developers, you're automatically a bad guy or a bad woman. It's just that the perception in some municipalities is that developers are calling the shots, that urban sprawl is getting ahead of urban planning, and that we should be doing more infill and concentrating more on the inside and building a stronger core before we extend outward. This bill, perhaps, will curb some of that enthusiasm for developers to fund so many candidates.

That's not to say that candidates who have been funded by developers were beholden in any way. If I were a developer looking for somebody to donate to and I knew that Randy Pettapiece was going to be elected—he always gets elected, and he always gets elected by 20,000 votes—then why wouldn't I give money to Randy Pettapiece just so that he could return my calls, perhaps, when I want a call?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'll give you my address, okay?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'll get your address.

That's the idea: It's not that you're necessarily funding your own people. You might be supporting those who are going to win anyway, despite your money, but you just want to retain a relationship with them. That's not to say that if you don't do that, you can't establish a relationship

with anybody you didn't fund, but I think the bottom line is that big money is coming out of municipal campaigns.

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In the same way—I don't have a crystal ball in front of me. I do have a glass of water, from which I'll take a drink. But in the same way we're going to do it at the provincial level, the same way that they've done it in Toronto and the same way they have done it in Ottawa, it's time to get the big money—corporate money and a little bit of union money—out of our campaigns, and do it in a different fashion.

Some municipalities already offer a subsidy on the number of votes earned or received. You get a certain dollar amount—maybe not quite a dollar—back for every vote that you receive, and that helps fund municipal campaigns. It helps fund people who otherwise perhaps wouldn't get money from certain segments of the industry, people who take an interest in municipal politics. That's a good thing. That's something that may be expanded. There may have to be caps and limitations put on that sort of thing, but at least this bill gets us started in the right direction on that.

I'll go back to the missed opportunity we had on looking at other ways this bill could have been improved by talking to newcomers to our province and giving them an opportunity for a vote. I really hope that the government will at some point take this as a serious suggestion and try to work it in there, because we have so many newcomers coming to Ontario. We ask them to come here. We rely on their skills, their expertise, their training. We want them to feel welcome. We know it could take three or four years or more to get citizenship papers. The last I heard, the tests were becoming much more difficult than they used to be; the pass rate is going down. Our municipal elections are only every four years, so it's not something that can't be done in the future. But to leave it out there as something we don't want to talk about at all, I think, is wrong.

It's the same with the other suggestions, be it putting the party name on the ballot or voting on a Sunday or a PD day. I think there are ways that we can improve the bill, even without legislation now, but through regulation. When it comes to the way we conduct our municipal business, the way we conduct our municipal elections and the way we finance our municipal campaigns, I think there are lessons learned, and we can learn from them.

I still do feel bad for the clerks and treasurers, the clerks who have to do the financial audit compliance on the campaign statements filed by candidates. They really will be between a rock and a hard place, because they have to blow the whistle on anything they find that didn't work out or wasn't up to the exacting standards that each candidate had to comply with. Believe you me, reporting on your campaign donations and contributions—depending on how many you get, of course, but if you're getting a large number, then you have to be very exact. That's one of the most important parts of any campaign, provincial, federal or municipal: You have to keep account of the money. You have to account for everything that is brought in and everything that is spent. By putting that

onus on the clerk, when the clerk has so many other duties, as opposed to an outside audit compliance committee, I think the government has made a mistake. I hope that they can see fit between now and the passage of the bill, when they put it into regulation, that that duty can be reassigned to somebody else: somebody more arm's-length, somebody who doesn't have to deal with, on a daily basis, the councillors they are scrutinizing and reporting on.

Those are just some of the ideas, Speaker. I know that there are lots of other ones out there.

As I say, you can expect a court challenge on the gag order that the third-party advertising puts on people for six months, that tells you not to say anything about anything going on in the municipal campaign. That is something, again, that the government could have looked at, didn't look at, but still has time to improve, should they so decide. But it's one of the areas that we need to turn our attention to because the purpose behind these bills, I believe, is to get them right, get them right as much as we can the first time out, and try to improve, as we go along, any of the legislative changes that we get there.

I don't want to eat up any more of your time, Speaker. I probably went on too long, but I want to thank you for the opportunity to stand in the House on behalf of the good people in Windsor–Tecumseh and have a say and try to bring some of attention to some of the issues this afternoon.

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

Mr. McMeekin has moved third reading of Bill 181, An Act to amend the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and to make complementary amendments to other Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

I wish to inform the House that I have received a vote deferral request pursuant to standing order 28(h), requesting that the vote on third reading of Bill 181 be deferred until the time of deferred votes tomorrow. It's signed by the chief government whip.

Third reading vote deferred.

ALTERNATIVE FINANCIAL SERVICES
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
CONCERNANT LES SERVICES
FINANCIERS DE RECHANGE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 11, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 156, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to financial services / Projet de loi 156, Loi modifiant diverses lois concernant les services financiers.

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

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I rise today to continue debate on Bill 156, the Alternative Financial Services Statute Law Amendment Act. The proposed legislation represents a complex issue regarding the alternative financial services industry in this province. The government's motion is far-reaching and will amend the Consumer Protection Act, the Collection and Debt Settlement Services Act and the Payday Loans Act.

Unfortunately, this legislation does nothing to address important issues at hand. Unless amended, this legislation will only make things worse. As many of my colleagues have already stated, this bill is just bad legislation. We can't support this bill until the concerns we have raised regarding the amendments are recognized and understood by this government.

One of the biggest problems with this legislation is that this bill is more micromanaging than creating a safer and more informed consumer environment.

This government has a history of micromanaging. As my colleagues well know, it just loves red tape. The issue of micromanaging and creating excessive regulations goes hand in hand with the MO of this government. In fact, their own special adviser, Ed Clark, was quoted in the Star as saying, "Ontario has 380,000 regulatory requirements for businesses, almost double the number in some provinces."

He went on to further say, "While the number is staggering, the structure and complexity of compliance is even more problematic."

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This type of approach makes Ontario less competitive. Who is going to want to move to this province and do business if they have to go through all of this red tape? Who would want to move a business to a province with one of the highest numbers of regulations in North America? Under the Liberals, we are seen as one of the slowest places to do business in the world.

I was reading an article in the National Post by Philip Cross. He talks about the micromanaging and red tape created by this government. He tells a story about Ontario's ladder law. This new law requires anyone working with a ladder in the building and trades association to take an online government course at a cost of \$29. Can you imagine? You graduate from a trades school, and the Liberals think you need to take a course on how to use a ladder. I'm sorry, but any contractor who can't use a ladder probably shouldn't be in the trades business.

Another example from a few years ago was the requirement to force all barbers to obtain an occupational licence with a \$140 fee attached. As Mr. Cross pointed out in the article, "The market has always protected the consumer from barbers who either can't trim properly or lack a rapport with customers, by quickly driving them out of business."

Many of my colleagues have highlighted the need for financial literacy. In fact, the member from Leeds–Grenville expressed concern that money management

should be part of the secondary school curriculum. The need for education starts with our youth.

An article in MoneySense from November 2013 provided a shocking statistic, that “39% of Ontario high school students feel ill-equipped when it comes to money” management. “Parents and teens want financial education in the classroom.” According to a new survey for the Investor Education Fund, 84% of Ontario parents and 70% of teens agree that “students aren’t prepared to manage their money after high school.”

“Financial education was introduced in the Ontario school curriculum for grades 4-12 in fall 2012. One year later, more than a quarter ... of parents don’t think it’s being taught and more than half ... say they aren’t sure if it is.”

Education is key. Students need to leave high school knowing how to spend their money while living on a budget.

Our leader, the member for Simcoe North, has rightly identified that portions of this proposed legislation are incomplete. Further amendments are needed. I quote from an article in the Toronto Star in December 2015 about Ontario’s plans for tighter rules for payday loan companies:

The “Progressive Conservative leader ... said he was disappointed in the lack of specifics in” the minister’s “announcement and is looking forward to more detail.” I imagine he’s just as disappointed today.

“I think government has a role to play to make sure people aren’t taken advantage of,” said the member for Simcoe North. I couldn’t agree more.

Since coming to power in 2003, this government has hit Ontario families with continual tax increases such as the health tax, eco taxes, the hidden hydro tax, the electronics tax, the tire tax, increased taxes on tobacco and wine, increased airline travel costs, increased fees on driver’s licences and health cards and hunting and fishing licences, the Ontario Registered Pension Plan and the cap-and-trade program, leading to increased costs of 4.3 cents per litre on fuel and 3.3 cents per cubic metre on natural gas, while at the same time the government is eliminating tax credits for programs like the tuition and education tax credits, the children’s activity tax credit and the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit in the 2016 budget, and delisting OHIP services for eye exams, chiropractic services and physiotherapy.

The list goes on with increases and mismanagement to include continuing to force Ontarians to pay for the ridiculous Drive Clean program e-test fee, a program about which the Auditor General said in 2012, “Vehicle emissions have declined significantly since Drive Clean’s inception in 1999, to the point that they are no longer among the major domestic contributors to smog in Ontario.”

This is in addition to continued increases in hydro rates associated with their green energy policies.

We have issues concerning Bill 156, the Alternative Financial Services Statute Law Amendment Act. The government claims there would be increased protection

for consumers in several ways. However, adding rules to keep people with money problems from accessing legal ways of obtaining emergency cash without providing them with a clear path to financial stability may well drive them to the illegal loan market.

From reviewing the content of this bill, we call on the government to amend this legislation. This legislation is short on details, long on rhetoric and, simply, legislatively incomplete. We look forward to further clarification. To reiterate what many of my colleagues have been advocating: If the Liberal government would focus more on eliminating the waste and mismanagement in how it runs the Ontario economy and stop nickel-and-diming Ontarians, perhaps then individuals would not have to turn to these institutions in times of dire need.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? The Minister of Government Services.

Hon. David Orazietti: I will be brief, Speaker, but I did want to respond to the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills. I thank him for his contribution to the debate this afternoon and appreciate the feedback from all sides on this particular issue and on Bill 156. I look forward to further discussion on this at committee, and reinforce that our government is committed to making improvements to specific areas through Bill 156: cheque-cashing, rent-to-own services, debt collection, instalment loans and, of course, payday lending.

We’ve just recently concluded a consultation publicly on the Regulatory Registry around different rates of borrowing. We look forward to, and are currently reviewing, that information.

Again, I want to encourage all members of the Legislature to support this very, very important legislation that broadens protections for consumers across Ontario.

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

The member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills may reply.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Minister, I would say it is fairly clear that this legislation is well-intended, but it does not quite hit the mark or achieve the goal. In fact, it is a tricky matter of what needs to be done to make things right. I would say that the fact there is even a need to consider such amendments to legislation like this—and to be talking about payday loans—is an indication that we’ve got some serious problems in the province, where people are desperate for credit and are forced to go to non-conventional sources of money, such as payday loan cash establishments, because they’re unable to get credit at conventional banks and other places or with their credit cards.

Those indications would indicate that we have people in need of money—perhaps because they can’t find good work, perhaps because we have high unemployment in Ontario—and that we have an ailing economy which is forcing people to do things as a last resort, like payday loans. Those are really the problems that we need to be addressing and fixing. It’s the economic health of the

province of Ontario. This is nothing but an indication that our economy is sick and needs to be remedied. It's taken a long time to get in this much trouble, and it's going to take quite a while to get back out of this major hole that we're in.

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

Mr. Oraziotti has moved second reading of Bill 156, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to financial services. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I wish to inform the House that I've received a request for a deferral of this vote, pursuant to standing order 28(h), requesting that the vote on second reading of Bill 156 be deferred until the time for deferred votes tomorrow, Tuesday, June 7, 2016, signed by the chief government whip.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day? I recognize the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Mauro has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10:30.

The House adjourned at 1652.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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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

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| 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 |
| McDonell, 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**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
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

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Peter Z. Milczyn
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

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
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**

Chair / Présidente: Cristina Martins
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
Robert Bailey, Wayne Gates
Monte Kwinter, Marie-France Lalonde
Amrit Mangat, Cristina Martins
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
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
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
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Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
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

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
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
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