



No. 14

N° 14

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 41^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 6 October 2016

Jeudi 6 octobre 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

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

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

Index inquiries

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

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

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

Renseignements sur l'index

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

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



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

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 6 October 2016 / Jeudi 6 octobre 2016

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016, Bill 7, Mr. Ballard / Loi de 2016 sur la promotion du logement abordable, projet de loi 7, M. Ballard	
Ms. Peggy Sattler	667
Mr. Mike Colle.....	669
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	669
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	670
Mr. Arthur Potts	670
Ms. Peggy Sattler	670
Ms. Daiene Vernile	670
Ms. Ann Hoggarth.....	671
Hon. Liz Sandals	672
Mrs. Cristina Martins	673
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	673
Mr. Wayne Gates	674
Hon. Chris Ballard	674
Mr. Ted Arnott	674
Ms. Daiene Vernile	675
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	675
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	676

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. James J. Bradley.....	676
Hon. Helena Jaczek.....	677
Hon. Eric Hoskins	677
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	677
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	677
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	677
Ms. Soo Wong.....	677
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	677
Hon. Chris Ballard	677
Hon. Eric Hoskins	677
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	677
Mrs. Cristina Martins	677
Hon. Charles Sousa.....	677
Mr. Ernie Hardeman	677
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	677
Wearing of ribbons	
Mr. Mike Colle.....	677
Visitors	
Mr. Arthur Potts	677
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	677

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Hydro rates	
Mr. Patrick Brown.....	677
Hon. Glenn Thibeault.....	678
Special-needs students	
Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	679
Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris	679
Privatization of public assets	
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	680
Hon. Glenn Thibeault.....	680
Privatization of public assets	
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	681
Hon. Glenn Thibeault.....	681
Fiscal accountability	
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	682
Hon. Liz Sandals	682
Personal support workers	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	682
Hon. Eric Hoskins	682
International trade	
Ms. Daiene Vernile	683
Hon. Michael Chan	683
Post-traumatic stress disorder	
Mr. Robert Bailey.....	683
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	684
Fiscal accountability	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	684
Hon. Liz Sandals	684
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	684
Health care	
Mrs. Cristina Martins	685
Hon. Eric Hoskins	685
Human trafficking	
Ms. Laurie Scott	685
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	685
Water supply	
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	686
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	686
Human trafficking	
Ms. Harinder Malhi.....	686
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	687
Mental health services	
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	687
Hon. David Oraziotti	687
Legislative pages	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	688

Islamic Heritage Month Act, 2016, Bill 38, Ms. Armstrong, Mr. Qaadri, Mr. Cho / Loi de 2016 sur le Mois du patrimoine musulman, projet de loi 38, Mme Armstrong, M. Qaadri, M. Cho	
Second reading agreed to	688
Islamic Heritage Month Act, 2016, Bill 38, Ms. Armstrong, Mr. Qaadri, Mr. Cho / Loi de 2016 sur le Mois du patrimoine musulman, projet de loi 38, Mme Armstrong, M. Qaadri, M. Cho	
Third reading agreed to	688
Wearing of hat	
Mr. Michael Harris.....	688

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Hispanic Heritage Month	
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	688
Thomas Doherty and Andy Kennedy	
Ms. Sarah Campbell.....	688
German heritage	
Ms. Daiene Vernile	689
Wilfrid Laurier University	
Mr. Ted Arnott	689
Niagara Falls hospital	
Mr. Wayne Gates	689
Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day	
Mr. Mike Colle.....	690
Oktoberfest	
Mr. Michael Harris.....	690
Disaster relief	
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	690
Abdul Sattar Edhi	
Mr. Harinder S. Takhar	690
Tabling of public accounts	
Hon. Liz Sandals	691
Private members' public business	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	691

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Aggregate Resources and Mining Modernization Act, 2016, Bill 39, Mrs. McGarry / Loi de 2016 sur la modernisation des secteurs des ressources en agrégats et des mines, projet de loi 39, Mme McGarry	
First reading agreed to.....	691
Hon. Kathryn McGarry.....	691
Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016, Bill 40, Ms. DiNovo / Loi de 2016 modifiant des lois en ce qui a trait à la	

sécurité publique liée aux chiens, projet de loi 40, Mme DiNovo	
First reading agreed to.....	691
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	691
Patients First Act, 2016, Bill 41, Mr. Hoskins / Loi de 2016 donnant la priorité aux patients, projet de loi 41, M. Hoskins	
First reading agreed to.....	691
Hon. Eric Hoskins	691

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Highway ramps	
Mrs. Julia Munro	692
Dental care	
Mr. Wayne Gates	692
Dog ownership	
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	692
Crown attorneys	
Ms. Sarah Campbell.....	693
Hydro rates	
Mr. Ted Arnott	693
Privatisation des biens publics	
M. Taras Natyshak	693
Highway ramps	
Mrs. Julia Munro.....	693
Dental care	
Mr. Taras Natyshak	694
Health care funding	
Mrs. Julia Munro.....	694

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS / AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

Water fluoridation	
Mr. Bob Delaney	694
Mrs. Gila Martow	696
Ms. Sarah Campbell.....	698
Mr. Wayne Gates	699
Hon. Dipika Damerla	699
Mrs. Julia Munro	700
Hon. Steven Del Duca.....	700
Mr. Shafiq Qaadri.....	701
Mr. Bob Delaney	701
Saving the Girl Next Door Act, 2016, Bill 17, Ms. Scott / Loi de 2016 sur la sauvegarde des jeunes filles, projet de loi 17, Mme Scott	
Ms. Laurie Scott	702
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	704
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	704
Mr. Michael Harris.....	705

Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	706	Mr. John Vanthof	714
Ms. Sophie Kiwala.....	707	Hon. Laura Albanese.....	714
Mr. Robert Bailey	707	Mr. Yvan Baker.....	715
Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris	708	Mr. Jagmeet Singh	715
Mrs. Julia Munro.....	708	Mr. Shafiq Qaadri.....	716
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	708	Water fluoridation	
Ms. Laurie Scott.....	709	Motion agreed to	717
Albanian Heritage Month Act, 2016, Bill 36,		Saving the Girl Next Door Act, 2016, Bill 17,	
Mr. Qaadri / Loi de 2016 sur le Mois du patrimoine		Ms. Scott / Loi de 2016 sur la sauvegarde des	
albanais, projet de loi 36, M. Qaadri		jeunes filles, projet de loi 17, Mme Scott	
Mr. Shafiq Qaadri	709	Second reading agreed to	717
Mrs. Julia Munro.....	711	Albanian Heritage Month Act, 2016, Bill 36,	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	712	Mr. Qaadri / Loi de 2016 sur le Mois du patrimoine	
Hon. Brad Duguid.....	712	albanais, projet de loi 36, M. Qaadri	
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	713	Second reading agreed to	717

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 6 October 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 6 octobre 2016

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROMOTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING
ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA PROMOTION
DU LOGEMENT ABORDABLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 4, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to amend or repeal various Acts with respect to housing and planning / Projet de loi 7, Loi modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois en ce qui concerne le logement et l'aménagement du territoire.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a pleasure for me to rise today to join the debate on Bill 7, the Promoting Affordable Housing Act. This morning, with the time that I have available to me, I wanted to give an overview of some of the provisions in this bill that we see as most significant. I want to talk about some of the gaps in this bill and some of the concerns that we have on this side of the House about this legislation and point out how it could be strengthened as we move through the legislative process and, as I expect, into committee.

Also, I wanted to give you some context of the need for this bill, based on the reality that people in my community are experiencing when they struggle to find affordable housing in London. Of course, that is an experience that is shared by many, many people across this province, given the crisis in affordable housing that we have had not just in the last decade but for several decades now.

So I first wanted to highlight seven of the key provisions of the bill that I'm going to focus some time on. The first provision, of course, is the Planning Act amendments that will allow municipalities to introduce inclusionary zoning policies and bylaws. This is something that my colleague the member for Parkdale–High Park has pushed for relentlessly. She introduced five private members' bills on inclusionary zoning. She has been a remarkable advocate and champion for this kind of policy change because she knows that the evidence is there to support its effectiveness in increasing the stock of affordable housing. That's why my community, the

city of London, has also long been a supporter of inclusionary zoning and has wanted to have that ability within the Planning Act to enact policies and bylaws that would allow inclusionary zoning to go ahead. That's the first provision I wanted to talk about.

The second provision is around the amendments to the Development Charges Act that will prevent municipalities from levying development charges for second units. Again, in my community, we have just gone through this debate about granny flats. There had been a concern about residences that had introduced granny flats, and there was a lot of opinion on both sides of the issue about whether granny flats and these kinds of secondary units were a good planning tool—whether this is the way that we want to build our community.

I have talked in this House before about the significant public engagement process that we went through in London that resulted in our new official plan. That new official plan recognizes, front and centre, that we need to build up. So granny flats and secondary units are important tools to enable that kind of development that we want to see in our cities and in my community of London.

The third provision I wanted to highlight was the amendment to the Housing Services Act that will change the process that is used to transfer or sell social housing projects. Currently, until this legislation is passed, service managers—that is, the municipality's or the district's—were required to get approval from the minister if they wanted to merge, dissolve or sell their social housing agencies. With the amendments that are proposed in this act, they will no longer have to go through that process. They will no longer need ministerial approval if they want to dispose of their social housing projects.

You can certainly imagine, Speaker, that this may raise some red flags about social housing stock that has become burdensome for the municipality. They want to try to remove this deteriorating stock from their assets and they may decide to sell or transfer, and they'll be able to do that without requiring approval from the ministry.

Now this, in some situations, could be very much a good thing, but in other situations it could compromise the number of affordable housing units that would be available within a jurisdiction.

The fourth provision I wanted to focus on is about the introduction of portable housing benefits. Certainly we have heard repeated calls from municipalities across the province—certainly in my own city of London—for more flexibility. Portable housing benefits do provide a measure of flexibility in terms of providing financial assistance to people so that they can move to other

affordable housing units. Our concern, the caveat to this, the flip side to this, is that these portable housing benefits, by providing cash to people, may not in the end do anything to provide more affordable housing or to ensure that someone is able to become securely housed.

The fifth provision I wanted to highlight is around the amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act. Whereas previously the minister was responsible for receiving complaints about inadequate maintenance in rental units where there were no municipal standards, now all municipalities will be required to receive complaints and to send in inspectors to investigate the level of maintenance, or the lack of maintenance, in buildings.

The sixth provision is also around the Residential Tenancies Act amendments that ensure that tenants who no longer qualify for rent-geared-to-income assistance after they have paid market rent for a period of 12 months no longer will risk eviction because of this. Those of us who have had constituents who are in this circumstance, when they have been living in their home for years and years and years—this is their home. They have made it their home. They have all kinds of happy memories. They have invested in improvements in their home. When they find out that they are going to be evicted after they paid market rent for 12 months, it can be devastating.

0910

I had a constituent in my office who was in tears because of a similar situation. She was being asked to leave an apartment where she had raised her family. This was her home, and her home was being taken away from her because of legislation that we had in place.

Finally, the other provision that I wanted to highlight was around the new requirement that municipal service managers enumerate homeless persons within their area. I don't question that this would provide useful data. There wasn't a lot of information in the bill about how this enumeration is to take place, and, especially, there were no references in the bill as to resources provided to municipal service managers to conduct this enumeration. So there are still lots of questions about that aspect of the bill.

I wanted to talk a little bit about what's going on in my community. Of course, all of us in this House, when we review legislation, when we speak to bills that are before us, we think of it in terms of the people that we represent: Will this legislation actually assist the people that we represent? What are the gaps in the legislation? What are some of the changes that would be needed to actually help us advance the interests of our communities and of our constituencies?

In the city of London, there has been a formal embrace of a Housing First approach to dealing with homelessness and affordable housing in our community. The Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan was formalized a couple of years ago. It sets out a multi-year plan, from 2010 to 2024, to address London's homelessness and affordable housing needs. That plan states right up front that the solution to prevent and end homelessness is housing with supports.

Once people are securely housed, once they have stability in terms of where they live, then they will be able to move on and deal with the complex challenges that many people deal with around addictions, mental illness, trauma, family violence, childhood sexual abuse—and the list goes on and on of the kinds of issues that people have to deal with. Of course, to achieve that level of housing security to enable people to deal with these other issues, we must ensure that there are affordable housing options available to house these people.

In London, we are perhaps a little bit better off than some other communities in terms of our housing affordability. Our rents are lower than the city of Toronto; that is true. Nevertheless, we do face a significant shortage of affordable rental housing.

There are just over 8,000 units of social housing within the city of London, and almost 6,000 of them offer rent-geared-to-income rents. So we do have that stock of affordable housing, those 8,000 units. They are important, but they are stretched to the limit, frankly, in terms of the level of need that we see in the community.

Just over the last couple of weeks, the London Free Press has been running an amazing series of articles about poverty in London. They have drawn on the work that was done by the mayor's task force on poverty, which culminated in a very impressive document called London for All: A Roadmap to End Poverty. That report gave some statistics about the levels of poverty we are facing in the London area. We have 62,000 Londoners living in poverty. Of those, more than 35,000 people live in extreme poverty, what researchers have called brutal poverty. The headline in the paper on the weekend: "'Brutal' Poverty Plagues London Like Few Other Cities Across Our Region." So we have 62,000 Londoners living in poverty. We have 35,000 people in London who are living in the most dire poverty.

We also have 11,000 Londoners who are considered the working poor. Their income is below the low-income measure but they are working. That figure in London, the 5% of our population that is considered working poor, is the second highest in Ontario.

Our challenges are great in London. We need affordable housing. It's the fundamental strategy to enable us to move forward and start addressing these challenges.

You'll recall I started off by saying that we have 8,000 units of social housing, with 6,000 of these offering rent-geared-to-income. As you can imagine, and I'm sure it will be no surprise, there are significant wait-lists to access the available housing that we have in my community. In December 2014, according to the most recent data from the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, we had about 2,800 households that were waiting for access to rent-geared-to-income housing. On that list, the largest single category of households that were waiting was single adults and couples. We had 1,540 single adults and couples on the wait-list. We had over 1,000 families on the wait-list, and we had 265 seniors on the wait-list. So there is a real need to move this file forward and to get more affordable housing built in the province.

Bill 7, the Liberal government's approach to dealing with this challenge, is a start, but one of our biggest concerns with this legislation is that so much of it is left to regulation. There are big statements and big policy approaches; however, the nitty-gritty of the legislation—how it will actually work and what it will actually change—depends on the regulations that are yet to come and that we won't have an opportunity to debate in this Legislature. So whether Bill 7 turns out to be the solution that we have been pushing for is a big question mark. We don't know until we see what those regulations look like.

I had mentioned before some of the concerns about the ability of municipalities to sell or transfer their social housing stock without ministerial approval, and also the introduction of the portable housing benefits. Yes, there is a need for greater flexibility, both for municipalities and for those who are looking for affordable housing, but privatizing our social housing stock is not the solution. That would be a very negative consequence if that is what happens as a result of this legislation.

0920

On the issue of portable housing benefits, I think we really have to ask the question: What happens when the cash flows right from the person receiving it to the landlord, when it's just used as a reason for landlords to increase rent and there is no real benefit to the person who's receiving that portable housing benefit?

In the final time I have remaining, I wanted to talk about two of the most significant gaps in this legislation that my colleagues and I in the NDP will be raising repeatedly. First, there is nothing in this legislation to bring back rent control to address the two-tiered issue that we have right now, where buildings that were built prior to 1991 have rent control but all of those new builds since 1991 are not subject to any kind of rent control provisions. This is a huge gap. It's a huge barrier to creating affordable housing that will benefit communities across the province and my constituents in London.

Speaker, as I said, we are supportive of this legislation. It is a start. It's something we've called for for a long time. We're glad that the work of my colleague the member for Parkdale–High Park has been acknowledged in the inclusionary zoning provisions, but you can be assured that we will have a lot of ideas for amendments that can improve and strengthen this bill, that can help ensure that this bill actually addresses those dire needs of people who are struggling, who are on social assistance, who are in that working poor category who can hardly afford to put a roof over their heads.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: I was just at the desk trying to recall when, as the government, we passed the secondary suite legislation—I think it was about 2010—because I know the member from London mentioned that they just went through a process in her own riding about whether the secondary suites or nanny suites can be used as one tool by municipalities to provide for affordable housing.

The interesting thing about that is that we've had it in Toronto for a number of years and it is one very effective

tool, because there are many people in our cities, strangely enough, who are over-housed. They're in huge houses—2,000 to 3,000 square feet—and they may have the potential to rent out part of their house.

For many years, there was so much NIMBYism. I remember that the bylaw officers were constantly called in, when I was on city council, to essentially threaten people with almost the death penalty if they didn't get rid of their basement apartment or the second suite upstairs. All they were trying to do was provide housing, make a little bit of money if they were on a fixed income or were retired seniors and give people a place to start in housing. So I'm glad to see London is looking at that.

One of the problems is that many municipalities are not doing it. Even that small option which helps they're not even doing, and they're making it difficult for people to incorporate secondary suites by putting all kind of roadblocks in their way. I'm glad the city of London came to the conclusion that they're going to allow them, it seems.

I thank the member for her very thoughtful and very clear explanation of what's in this legislation. I appreciate her input on this.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to continue in the same vein as the member opposite, which is that he was talking about secondary suites and what an effective tool they can be to provide affordable housing in many of our communities.

There are a few issues with secondary suites that I think make the voters a little bit jumpy. One is that they are concerned about parking. For a lot of secondary suite residents, unfortunately, the transit isn't viable in the communities where they're living, and they're still purchasing cars. Even newly arrived Canadians, one of the first things we hear of them doing, and it's very unfortunate, is to go out and purchase a used car. So parking becomes a major issue and a major headache in many of the communities where people only have on-street parking or very little parking. People go and pave over their front lawns to provide parking for these new tenants and then are told to take out the parking. It's a serious concern.

But the reality is that there are lots of secondary suites that are not following the rules and regulations. They may not be providing the proper safety: electrical safety, water safety, sprinkler systems, exits in terms of fire. A lot of times with secondary suites, we know when we go out campaigning that we can catch that there are other tenants in the house, but they're kind of hiding from us because they feel they're not supposed to be there. They're not registered to vote, and I think they don't have a voice if they don't vote. I fully support everybody in the community who could vote being able to vote and being registered to vote, but I also recognize that those who are in secondary suites have to pay the taxes in their community that provide them the services, the garbage collection.

I think the main concern is those bad tenants that people hear about. I think there are a lot of people who

would put in a secondary suite if it was zoned in their area but they don't when they read all the articles about bad tenants.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments. I recognize the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure. I'd like to make comments on the distinguished member from London West, but first let me say, being from Windsor, my hometown team is the Detroit Tigers, but today let me say: Go, Jays! Go, Jays!

The member for London West talked about our colleague from Parkdale–High Park, who introduced inclusionary zoning by way of private member's bills five times. The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore has introduced a private member's bill on inclusionary zoning. We've heard from various people that if inclusionary zoning had been brought in 10 years ago, when it was first introduced in this Legislature as a private member's bill, we would have—on the 10% formula of buildings over 50 units—something like 100,000 affordable housing units built in Toronto alone in the past 10 years, which would really cut into the wait-list.

I read this morning, I think it was on Homeless Hub, that the wait-list now in Toronto—it used to be 76,000. It's now 85,000 people on a wait-list for subsidized housing just in the city of Toronto, let alone across the province. My understanding is, Speaker, that over 175,000 people, families, are on a wait-list for affordable housing.

So this bill could have done a whole bunch more moving us along in this direction, because there is a poison pill in this bill when it comes to inclusionary zoning, and that makes it an either/or provision. If your municipality uses section 37, cash in lieu of parking, parkland or whatever, you can't take cash-in-lieu benefits, section 37, if you bring in inclusionary zoning.

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Speaker, and I recognize the Speaker. It's nice to be here and nice to have an opportunity to contribute to the debate and comment on the member from London West's address to the House. I appreciate very much the way she was able to give us a flavour of the work that's being done in London in affordable housing and some of the rent-geared-to-income suites and such. But a bit of what she was saying causes me some concern, and it's this notion that privatization cannot be part of the solution. There's a myopic sense in that party that the only affordable housing that can exist has to be in public control. That's just not the case.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: No, you're wrong.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I appreciate that the member from Windsor talked about the 100,000 that could be in Toronto. That's the right approach. But I don't think that was reflected in the member from London West's remarks, where she identified 8,000 affordable housing units in London. I can assure you that there are a lot more

affordable housing units in London. They're just not the ones that are in private control; they're not the ones that are in public housing control, 6,000 of which are rent-geared-to-income. Because the whole purpose of inclusionary zoning, as was noted by the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, is that you do have an opportunity for secondary suites.

0930

She also talked about rent control being a gaping hole in this legislation. Let's not kid ourselves. The rent controls that were brought in by the previous NDP government under Bob Rae decimated the affordable housing market in Toronto and other communities in Ontario because it didn't allow the private sector to continue to build. They wouldn't; the returns weren't there. And they weren't able to keep upkeep. So the housing stock went into a dismal state of repair, which is why it had to be reversed, as it was. Rent controls continue on the previous suites and don't exist now. I would resist, tremendously, any amendment to this legislation which would bring back rent control.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from London West to wrap up.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciate the feedback that was provided by the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, the member for Thornhill, my colleague the member for Windsor–Tecumseh and also the member for Beaches–East York.

The member for Eglinton–Lawrence talked about granny flats and the importance of these secondary units in increasing the stock of affordable housing, but one of the concerns that we have about this legislation is that there is no deadline for when municipalities will be required to introduce bylaws for second units. That is a concern because it will allow municipalities to continue dragging their heels in moving this forward, on which the member is absolutely right: This is an important tool to help increase the stock of affordable housing.

The member for Windsor–Tecumseh talked about inclusionary zoning and some of the problems with the way that this bill is proposing to move forward with inclusionary zoning. The other big problem is that there is no requirement for permanence. The bill talks about inclusionary zoning, as the member said. It gives these two options for inclusionary zoning, but at the crux it does not have any kind of requirement to ensure permanence of the stock.

Finally, to the member for Beaches–East York, the NDP recognizes fully that the market has a very important role to play, but this bill suggests that just by clearing away a few regulations, the market will step in and solve it. We haven't seen that before.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I recognize the member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Good morning to you, and good morning to all of my fellow MPPs in the House this morning. I'm going to be sharing my time with the MPP for Barrie and also with the President of the Treasury Board.

I am very pleased this morning to speak to Bill 7, the Promoting Affordable Housing Act. In fact, I don't know if you noticed: I was over chatting with the Minister of Housing on this very issue, trying to convince him to come to Kitchener–Waterloo and to Waterloo region to show him the great successes that we had in my region when it comes to dealing with affordable housing. We have a very caring, a very concerned and a very proactive approach to providing a good supply of affordable housing in my region.

When municipalities had this responsibility downloaded to them about 15 years ago by the previous Conservative government of Mike Harris—and I will tell you that in my region—I was working as a reporter then—my local municipal leaders didn't use the word “downloading”; they used the word “dumping.” They had it dumped in their laps. But they rose to the occasion of dealing with this challenge. I can tell you now that our region has added and now operates 2,700 affordable housing rental units. This is in the city of Kitchener, in Waterloo, in Cambridge, and in Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot townships.

These buildings are a mix of subsidized and non-subsidized market units. In all, there are over 30 of these buildings where we have affordable housing units. I will say, to the member opposite in the NDP and her concern about the private stock of housing: In my region, I will say that more than half of these affordable housing units are being provided by private developers who have a very big social conscience. If it were not for them, we would not have all of this affordable housing. I met with some recently who wanted to talk to me about perhaps government grants that are available and how they can provide more.

Again, in my community, where we have groups like the Mennonite Central Committee—their headquarters for eastern Canada are situated in Kitchener—they have a very big social conscience, and this is part of their responsibility, caring about mitigating poverty by providing affordable housing.

I know that our government is going toward this commitment, addressing this issue with affordable housing, and it is very much appreciated in my region of Waterloo. I know that they're very much looking forward to having a visit from the housing minister and finding out how this bill is going to work and how it's going to help them. This is very welcome in Waterloo region.

We are certainly welcome in my region of sharing our best practices on how to share an affordable housing strategy, all of our success stories. So for the people who are watching at home right now who might be wondering what the highlights in the bill are, let me share some of that with you.

If it is passed, this bill is going to create a meaningful increase in the supply of affordable housing units. We want to work with municipalities on perhaps expanding zoning to allow for more housing. We want to assure more stability and security for city service managers as well as social housing and not-for-profit co-operative housing providers. If we are going to do this, if we're

going to provide more affordable housing, we do need to listen to the people who are actually doing this and getting their feedback for their best practices.

We want to allow social housing tenants to keep more of their income without having to face higher rents or face eviction. The biggest part of expenditure for most people is your housing. If we can reduce the cost, that person who was low-income, who may be unemployed, is going to save more of their income to do things like provide food for themselves and their family, and other things that they need to pay for.

We're going to make it easier for municipalities and their corporations to work with the private sector developers to provide affordable housing in their communities. As you heard me say just a few moments ago, I have been meeting with private developers who have a very strong desire to try to add more housing stock to our community.

We're improving access to affordable housing as part of our plan to build Ontario up. When people have a home, they are going to be happier, healthier and more ready to work, and they're going to be better able to participate in and contribute to their communities.

I commend my colleague the Minister of Housing for bringing forward this legislation, for advancing it. I encourage all members of this House to support it; I know I will be. I look forward to his visit and I look forward to showing him how we are doing this very effectively in my region.

I also want to add that I'll be sharing my time with the MPP for Davenport. Thank you very much. I now pass it on to my colleagues.

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

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Good morning, Speaker. It's lovely to see you this morning, and everyone else. It's a beautiful day out there, and we should enjoy it. I wish everyone a very happy and safe Thanksgiving.

At this time, I would like to speak about Bill 7, the Promoting Affordable Housing Act. As I said yesterday, Barrie in particular desperately needs affordable housing. The statistics came out last year saying that the five most expensive places for rental housing are (1) Vancouver, (2) Toronto, (3) Calgary, (4) Edmonton and (5) Barrie, Ontario—my riding. That is very sad because you would not think that a community of 146,000 would desperately need affordable housing, but we do.

Throughout the consultations on Bill 7, we heard a common view that municipalities should be given the flexibility to tailor inclusionary zoning to local social and economic conditions. We want to ensure that municipalities have this flexibility, and that includes finding a balance between inclusionary zoning policies and section 37.

Section 37 of the Planning Act permits the municipality to authorize increases in allowable height and/or density through the zoning bylaw in return for community benefit like daycare spaces, transit improvements and heritage preservation.

0940

Bill 7 would restrict municipalities applying inclusionary zoning from using section 37 except as provided for in the regulation. In some instances, it might be appropriate for section 37 and inclusionary zoning to coexist. That's why Bill 7, if passed, would allow the minister to make a regulation that could specify the circumstances under which a municipality may use section 37 with inclusionary zoning.

Bill 7 would also help to increase the supply of affordable housing by exempting secondary suites in new homes from development charges. On January 1, 2012, this government enabled municipalities to have secondary suites. In Barrie, we do have secondary suites, and they have helped a bit. However, we desperately need more affordable housing.

If passed, the legislative amendment would require municipalities to exempt second suites in new residential homes from development charges. Currently, a municipality cannot charge a development charge for building a second unit in an existing home. The proposed amendment would help reduce the cost of developing second suites in new homes.

Second suites are valuable because they provide community benefits that include an additional supply of affordable housing rental units, which is what we're looking for. They also provide income-integrated neighbourhoods that better support public transit, local businesses and the local labour market. They provide job creation in the construction and renovation industry, increased neighbourhood densities and more effective infrastructure use. They also intensify the use of existing housing stock.

Secondary units also provide direct benefits to the individuals that include an additional income stream for a homeowner; options for elderly homeowners to age in place; options for elderly homeowners to house live-in caregivers; and options for families to house elderly family members.

I urge everyone to pay close attention to this bill and pass it. We need this all over Ontario. I support this bill and urge you to vote for it, too.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to be able to speak about the Promoting Affordable Housing Act this morning. As I mentioned briefly the other day when we were debating this, Guelph actually also has a real issue with affordable housing. I think it tends to go with university towns: Students are competing for low rental.

There's been a lot of commentary this morning about secondary suites. I happened to grow up not too far from the university. In the neighbourhood I grew up in, at least half of the houses, probably, had secondary suites for students in the basement. In fact, that was the way a lot of people paid their mortgage.

But it also provided great housing at low cost for students and actually had the advantage that the landlord lived upstairs so the neighbourhood didn't become a

student slum, which can sometimes happen when entire houses are taken over by students. It was a wonderful solution for helping people pay the mortgage and finding affordable housing for students—and actually found a great husband for me, because my husband happened to be in a basement suite across the street from the house I grew up in. So that's an added benefit to secondary suites: husband-finding.

The other thing I wanted to talk about was the concept of flexibility in the way we look at affordable housing. Sometimes we have very strict notions about, "We must have social housing that's like this." In fact, having a more flexible view allows you to build much more integrated neighbourhoods.

In Guelph, we've got some examples of great partnerships, both with private developers and with non-profit. For example, one of the affordable housing projects for seniors in Guelph was actually carried out by the St. Joseph's foundation. In Guelph, St. Joseph's health care is a combination of the complex and continuing care hospital, long-term care and outpatient rehab, so they have a lot of outpatient services as well. They also have a lot of land. What the foundation decided to do was to work with the county on an affordable housing project for seniors, which is great because that means the seniors are next to all those services for seniors. Not only do they have affordable housing; they also have some of the outpatient health services that they can connect to right next door. That's a really good, effective partnership.

Another partnership that we have that has worked really well was with a private developer who had bought what was sort of vernacularly known in Guelph as the old bus barns. But the old bus barns had a history before that. The old bus barns were actually the pre-Prohibition powerhouse for the old Silver Creek Brewery. For those of you who have watched your TV ads carefully, you might know that Silver Creek was originally Sleeman, and of course Sleeman got shut down during Prohibition for a little bit of bootlegging.

What was the powerhouse eventually became the bus barns for Guelph transportation, and then they outgrew these buildings. A private developer bought the bus barns and had a combined project where the actual old stone buildings got turned into very cool, upscale units, but at the back—again, there was enough property to do this—there was also some affordable housing with lower-income rental units. So it's this great, mixed-use development of affordable apartments and upscale apartments.

I mentioned the other day that that same developer, Tom Lammer, right now is working on some derelict tennis courts. Again, it will be an affordable housing project for seniors, and it will be a combination of affordable units and upscale units, because it's a great location downtown. It will be that combination again. It goes to both the concept of flexibility and the concept of inclusionary zoning where you've got more than one type of housing, as it were, and in this case all in the same building.

Thank you. I turn it over to my colleague.

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

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It is great for me to rise here today in support of Bill 7, the Promoting Affordable Housing Act.

The Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016, is part of our government's update to the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy. The updated Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy will reflect new research and best practices that support Ontario's transformation towards a better housing system. It will also accomplish our collective goal to make sure that every person has an affordable and suitable home to provide a foundation to secure employment, raise a family and build stronger communities.

Bill 7 introduced legislative amendments to the Planning Act, Development Charges Act, Housing Services Act and Residential Tenancies Act. Most notably, if passed, Bill 7 would help to increase the supply of affordable housing and modernize social housing by:

- enabling municipalities to require the inclusion of affordable housing units in residential development projects through inclusionary zoning;

- exempting secondary suites in new homes from development charges;

- providing local service managers with more flexibility in administering and delivering social housing in their communities; and

- preventing unnecessary evictions from social housing and modernizing the enforcement of property standards in rental housing.

Madam Speaker, today I would like to highlight two changes that will have an immense positive impact on my riding of Davenport, the city of Toronto and the province of Ontario.

In my constituency office, I regularly have conversations with constituents who are waiting for affordable housing. They're on a list and they can't get the affordable housing that they require, or they are currently in affordable housing units and they want to stay there. The housing prices in the city of Toronto, as you know, have skyrocketed. My riding of Davenport, being a very urban, downtown Toronto riding, is a prime example of this, where prices have increased substantially in the last year.

0950

There are many seniors who live in my community who immigrated to Davenport from their countries many, many years ago. They want to stay in Davenport—it's where their local church is; it's where their local grocery store is; it's where their neighbours are; it's where their seniors' groups are—but they can't afford to stay in their homes.

Affordable housing, especially in my riding of Davenport, for seniors is an urgent need and in great demand. To help with this, Bill 7 will provide a range of planning, financial and other tools through the Promoting Affordable Housing Act to help municipalities create more affordable housing.

Speaker, one of the most exciting new tools that Bill 7 proposes is inclusionary zoning. It would allow municipalities to require private sector developers to include

affordable housing units in their residential development proposals. This would enable the private sector to play a much larger role in providing affordable housing.

In Davenport, there are a number of new developments happening right now. If we were to include affordable housing in these units that are currently going up, it would definitely contribute to improving the housing situation in the city of Toronto.

If passed, Bill 7 would enable, or, where prescribed, require municipalities to pass zoning bylaws for inclusionary zoning. Bill 7 would also require municipalities that pass inclusionary zoning bylaws to provide reports and information concerning the affordable housing units as prescribed, and to establish a procedure for monitoring and ensuring the units remain affordable over time.

By creating these zoning allowances, areas like my riding of Davenport can create a large number of affordable housing units, as there are constantly new buildings being developed in my community.

With inclusive communities, those who are in need of affordable housing are included within the community, leading to a change in the way communities think about affordable housing. This is about changing the way we see others. Inclusionary zoning will help address these issues.

Another important part of Bill 7 I would like to talk about briefly is the changes to section 37. Section 37 of the Planning Act permits a municipality to authorize increases in allowable height and/or density through the zoning bylaw in return for community benefits, like daycare spaces, transit improvements and heritage preservation. In Davenport, we are already seeing these discussions happen at many of the community meetings in my riding, as constituents highlight the need for affordable housing projects in Davenport.

In Bill 7, the changes that are being proposed would restrict municipalities applying inclusionary zoning from using section 37, except as provided by regulation.

So it's very important, as we continue to debate this bill—

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: Today we're discussing the issue of affordable housing here in Ontario. It's a real problem in the greater Toronto area and Hamilton. With the rising cost of housing, that means that the cost of rental units goes up as well. We're all aware of that.

One thing that hasn't been mentioned today is the cost of getting approval for permits to create those secondary suites in the areas once they get approval to rezone and to build secondary suites. Obviously, the municipalities have to provide those permits and do the proper inspections. The cost of applying for a permit for a housing unit in the Toronto area is between \$20,000 and \$40,000. Well, that cost has to be recouped by the owner of the property, to the renters. So I think that it really requires better coordination between the province and all the municipalities: how to reduce the red tape, how to reduce the cost of negotiating the permits and how to speed it up—because just here in Toronto, it often takes a year

and a half to two years just to get the permits. We could wave a magic wand and we could enforce—our cousins over on the municipal side aren't very happy when they hear of us forcing things on them. They like to represent their constituents and their needs as well—but to sit down and work together on how we can get that whole process to move much quicker so that the permits could be issued, the construction can get going and the affordable housing can be achieved the way we want it. We also need to work with the system and ensure that so-called bad tenants are dealt with speedily so that people are interested in having tenants.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: Let's not make a mistake about it: Affordable housing is a crisis in the province of Ontario. Right here in Toronto, where we have mostly elected Liberals, 85,000 are on a wait-list today—85,000. They're not my stats, by the way. I didn't make them up or pull them out of my hat. They are from the Homeless Hub. You look at London. We heard the members talk about London—our member, and the crisis she has. We heard the member from the Liberals talk about Guelph and the crisis she has. Everybody knows I'm from Niagara, the Niagara region—not just Niagara Falls, but the entire Niagara. In the Niagara region, since 2011 we've had a 30% increase in families looking for affordable housing. There are 5,500 families on a wait-list; 600 of them are homeless right now as I stand up and speak before you today.

A new piece in affordable housing is seniors. I go to seniors' homes; I go to places with seniors—Coronation Centre in Niagara Falls. They're saying that we've got to do something for seniors around affordable housing. They've kind of been forgotten about, but there's a crisis there.

I want to finish with something about this weekend. I've only got 30 seconds left. I'd like to wish everybody happy Thanksgiving as we go home and enjoy our families and we spend quality time in our homes with our family and our friends, and watching the Blue Jays. But I also want to finish with saying that there are thousands of families that are going home this weekend who collectively are caught up in a crisis, who don't have a home to go to. They can't gather with their friends because they don't have affordable housing. I believe that collectively, in this room, we have to fix that and we have an obligation to do that.

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

Hon. Chris Ballard: It is a real honour to be able to stand again to speak to Bill 7, one that I introduced just a few short weeks ago, and to hear the comments from all sides of the House. I specifically wanted to thank the members for Kitchener Centre, Barrie, Guelph and Davenport.

I have just two minutes, but I could talk much longer than that about the importance of affordable housing. When people have a home, Madam Speaker, they're

healthier, they're more ready for employment and they're better able to participate and contribute to their communities. That's a given; we know that. Ontario is making several investments to achieve our vision, and I will reintroduce that vision: that every person have an affordable and suitable home to provide the foundation to secure employment, raise a family and build strong communities.

When people don't have a house, they are in poverty. We certainly recognize that. This is a very complex issue. There is no one answer to making sure that we have adequate and suitable and affordable housing across the province. That's why we've taken the time to talk to stakeholders right across the province many times over, to make sure that we can put solutions on the table, whether it be exclusionary zoning, as we did back in 2011 with secondary suites—that's another tool. We're trying to provide our municipal partners and our affordable housing suppliers with the tools they need to provide that mix, and it's a job that we need to keep doing.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to have this opportunity to reply to the government members who have offered their, I guess, four speeches with respect to Bill 7, the long-term affordable housing act.

I wanted to respond to the member for Kitchener Centre. She mentioned her experience with Waterloo region. I would agree with her that Waterloo region is in fact a real leader in terms of the provision of affordable housing. Having had the privilege and the opportunity to represent a large part of Waterloo region between the years 1999 and 2007, as we discussed—the townships of Wellesley, Woolwich and Wilmot, as well as a southwestern portion of the city of Kitchener—I had a tremendous opportunity to work with the local officials in Waterloo region and would again confirm that they do a great job and they've shown leadership.

1000

I would also add our perspective within the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party: We believe that there needs to be affordable housing for the people of Ontario, as well, but we also believe that there needs to be a large role for the private sector. We remind the New Democrats and the Liberals from time to time that the government can't afford to build all the affordable housing. We need to ensure that the private sector has a role.

Certainly, through the early 1990s, when we saw a large expansion of the government-run affordable housing program under the leadership of the New Democrats, we used to say, "This affordable housing is anything but affordable for the taxpayer," because we saw significant cost overruns in projects that were estimated to cost a certain amount and the eventual cost was way out of control. So we have to keep that in mind too, as we discuss this issue, and ensure that there is an appropriate role for the private sector to ensure that the citizens of Ontario can afford the decent housing that they live in and ensure, going forward, that the legislation, which ensures the system is there, is in the public interest.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Kitchener Centre to wrap up.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I do want to thank everyone who spoke this morning: the member for Wellington–Halton Hills, you just heard from—we've had chats about this issue and a good chat yesterday about some other important social issues in our community; the Minister of Housing, who has advanced this bill; the member from Niagara Falls, who added some very interesting comments, along with his greetings for Thanksgiving; the member from Thornhill; the member from Davenport; the President of the Treasury Board; and the MPP for Barrie. Thank you all very much for the comments that you have made as we chat about Bill 7, the Promoting Affordable Housing Act.

Speaker, this act is going to update our long-term strategy for providing affordable housing in the province of Ontario. What we aim to do is to adopt some new research and some best practices that are going to create more housing stock for people in the province who require affordable housing. We want to see that municipalities have the ability to compel new development to include affordable housing. We want to give them the autonomy, the flexibility and the power to do this.

We want to be able to alter zoning, as well, because there are some communities where, if they can add attics or basement apartments, that is going to increase the stock. They need to be able to do this without facing any kind of punitive measures. You also heard discussion this morning, Speaker, on allowing secondary units in buildings and homes. We support that. We're also considering exempting secondary suites in new homes from development charges. I know that there are people in my municipalities who have concerns about development charges and this would see an exception for that. So giving city service managers more flexibility in delivering social housing and preventing unnecessary evictions from social housing are all part of this act.

I share with you some of the success stories from my region: 2,700 units have been added, a mix of private and public over the years. I commend all the men and women in our province who work in providing affordable housing.

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: I appreciate the opportunity to rise in the Legislature today to speak to Bill 7 because affordable housing has been a subject of considerable debate in the Whitby–Oshawa area, but in particular in the region of Durham. Members of the Legislature will know that, while a regional councillor within the region of Durham, I was the chair of the advisory committee on affordable housing, the president of the Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corp. and, last, the chair of the Health and Social Services Committee.

One of the by-products of that process was the development of a new Affordable and Seniors' Housing Task Force. The task force had a focus in three primary

areas, one of which was to review information and the supply of the region's current rental housing and policy tools and to consider all of the tools on housing policy—in particular, the Durham 10-year housing plan in order to examine all the tools for the municipalities that comprise the region of Durham to support existing social housing units and encourage new ones. Equally important, Speaker, is to foster collaboration with the federal and provincial governments, as well as businesses, agencies and institutions. As a by-product of all of that activity, the region of Durham will ensure that the outcomes of that deliberation will be provided to the Minister of Housing.

Speaker, I bring forward the Durham perspective because municipal governments are on the front line, responding to community housing needs, and the problems associated with affordable housing are wide and deep, as we've heard previously. Any initiatives, based on my experience, that have to be undertaken must be collaborative.

Let's turn for a moment to Bill 7. There are definite areas where this bill can be improved. For instance, schedule 2 repeals the elderly person's housing act, which allowed aid to charitable or municipal corporations that received a loan under the National Housing Act. While this act may no longer be required, the fact that affordable housing wait times for seniors have increased from 2.5 years to 4.4 years shows that more needs to be done, especially within the context of an aging demographic across the province. The basis for that is proven in the statistics that are provided on a yearly basis by the Ontario Ministry of Finance.

Further, in schedule 3, I'm disappointed that the government has chosen not to amend the requirement under the Housing Services Act for housing providers to purchase natural gas and insurance through the Housing Services Corp. I know that my colleague the member of provincial Parliament for Oxford, in his capacity as the official opposition critic for municipal affairs and housing, has long been an advocate on that issue. In fact, Bill 8, the Housing Services Corporation Accountability Act, which he has introduced in previous sessions as well as this one, seeks to correct this very issue. Bill 8 would save affordable housing providers money on natural gas and insurance by removing the mandatory requirement to purchase them through the Housing Services Corp. Speaker, Toronto Community Housing alone has said that they could save \$6.3 million a year if they were allowed to purchase natural gas at the best price instead of being forced to buy through the Housing Services Corp.

We see this at a time when mayors across the country are appealing to the provincial and federal governments to do more about affordable housing. Recently, the mayor of Toronto said that he was "disappointed that the new government in Ottawa, now being one year in, and the provincial government, being several years in ... haven't stepped forward with more." Mayor Tory went on to say that "in the case of the province, they've done what I'll call the tiniest little kernel."

The previous version of the affordable housing strategy promised that an annual report would be prepared, auditing the progress on the performance indicators, yet they've never been released. We're still waiting for them. The only real outcome is that every year, the wait-list for affordable housing hits a new record high.

In schedule 4, despite the claims to the contrary, Bill 7 gives the government the ability to implement inclusionary zoning. Now, this is despite the fact that many of the questions from municipalities, including the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, as to how inclusionary zoning would be implemented have not been defined.

In schedule 5, under the Residential Tenancies Act, we see prescribed maintenance standards for enforcement, which have been downloaded onto municipalities. This change downloads new costs onto municipalities at a time when most are struggling to keep their taxes within the present cost of living.

Speaker, I also read with interest a letter written by the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, specifically to its provincial planning policy branch in June of this year. The letter has several recommendations. In particular, it said, "We recommend municipal discretion on issues such as depth of affordability and affordability targets, units set aside, thresholds, incentives and minimum requirements for units developed through inclusionary zoning policies."

"Local housing and homelessness plans have been developed to guide municipal priorities on affordable housing investment and local governments are in the best position to determine when and how to implement inclusionary zoning policies. They are also in the best position to determine who in their community needs access to affordable housing and the type and size of housing that is required."

1010

The recommendation, which I support, simply stated, was that local municipal authorities are the best ones to determine when and how to implement inclusionary zoning policies. It's also recommended that the provincial government specify a common measure for affordability that is responsive to Ontarians' income and not to rapidly rising real estate markets.

Speaker, the letter concluded with the observation that the bill as currently drafted prevents municipalities from accepting cash in lieu of units as part of its inclusionary housing policy. Cash in lieu, it concluded, allows municipalities to set lower thresholds for their inclusionary zoning policies.

Enabling cash in lieu would allow municipalities to finance or incent the development of much-needed affordable rental housing or to further leverage federal-provincial housing programs. We understand the need for more affordable housing but have concerns that inclusionary zoning as proposed in this bill would increase the cost of housing for all homeowners and renters.

Further, after they introduced Bill 7, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing launched a consultation with stakeholders on key questions such as who would be

eligible for the units, what percentage of the units should be required to be affordable, and whether that should be up to the municipality. All of these aforementioned questions are concerns that should have been considered and answered before, not after, the legislation was introduced.

Speaker, I also read with great interest a well-researched article in the *Globe and Mail* yesterday. The story talked about how affordability for housing in the greater Toronto area has reached an all-time low. However, further to this, they pointed out the red tape that exists, specifically when it comes to permits for building new homes. The story quoted a study entitled *New Homes and Red Tape in Ontario: Residential Land-Use Regulation in the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, which pointed out that long and uncertain wait times are reducing the potential for the supply of housing in the greater Golden Horseshoe. I'd like to quote the final paragraph, Speaker, because it's something I wholeheartedly agree with: "World-class, growing regions such as the [greater Golden Horseshoe] can only remain successful if their most important asset—people—can find appropriate housing. Reducing barriers to the construction of new homes can help ensure that Canada's largest urban area will keep attracting and retaining the best and brightest..."

What's clear is that we need to reduce the regulatory burden in the system in order to make sure that we have an adequate supply of housing for people in the greater Toronto area. Governing is about priorities, and the Liberal government has prioritized handing out contracts for energy we don't need over addressing affordable housing and the needs of Ontarians. This government has had 13 years to fix the wait-list, yet we now have more than 171,000 families waiting for housing, the highest it's ever been.

As I near the end of my speaking time, I'd like to sum up by saying that while we'll be supporting the bill to go to the committee, we do expect to have some amendments. Bill 7 adds a number of new costs for municipalities, including requiring enumeration of homeless people, administering the inclusionary zoning program, and inspection and enforcement of the prescribed maintenance standards—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Seeing as it is now 10:15, I will be recessing the House until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. James J. Bradley: I'd like to introduce to the members of the assembly a person who's in our gallery today and who is an author. His name is Steve Paikin and he's the author of the book *Bill Davis: Nation Builder, and Not So Bland After All*. I was at the book launch last night. I certainly recommend the book and introduce our special guest, Steve Paikin of TVO.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You snuck that one in there. Forget it; he's just the press.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'd like to welcome to the House two individuals who bid on a silent auction item to come to Queen's Park for question period and lunch: Mark English and Mark Shedden.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I would like to take this opportunity to introduce a few important health stakeholders that we have here with us in the gallery today. It's a long list, Mr. Speaker, so bear with me. I'd like to welcome representatives from the Ontario Hospital Association, the Ontario College of Family Physicians, the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, the Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres, the Association of Ontario Health Centres—I'd better speed up—the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, the Aboriginal Health Access Centres, registered nurses of Ontario, Home Care Ontario, the Ontario Community Support Association, and, last but not least, the Ontario Pharmacists Association. Welcome to you all.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It's a great honour for me to have two special guests from British Columbia. Please welcome Reeta and Sammy Ahluwalia. They are parents of Ron Ahluwalia, who is a legal counsel in my office as the government House leader. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: About 40 years ago in Oakville, a 21-year-old and a 19-year-old decided to get married. I was the 21-year-old. My wife, Jan, was the 19-year-old. I just wanted to wish her a happy 40th anniversary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's a case of trying to get brownie points any way we can, I guess.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Today, October 6, marks a very special day. There are members on both sides of this House who were elected five years ago. So to the class of 2011, happy fifth anniversary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This jovial attitude is most definitely invited to spill over into question period.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'd like to welcome friends and colleagues from the RNAO: Doris Grinspun, and Carol Timmings from Toronto public health, who's also the president of RNAO. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'd like to welcome a visitor here today: Ilyas Ally, the imam of the Islamic Dawah centre and the executive producer of "Let the Quran Speak" on VisionTV. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Chris Ballard: I'd like to welcome members from the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition to Queen's Park today. I look forward to meeting with them later on.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I know this is the last day for our pages. I want to congratulate Cameron, the page from St. Paul's, for his hard work over the last several weeks. He is joined today by his parents: Maretta Miranda, along with Joanna Radbord, are here today.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I notice that a good friend of ours, Darcy McNeill, is in the House. He used to work at Queen's Park. Welcome again, Darcy.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I know he has been introduced already, but he is from my riding of Davenport. I did want to introduce once again Ilyas Ally from the Dawah Islamic centre in Davenport. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'd like to welcome two individuals here: Mr. Carlo Mirabelli from the great city of Vaughan and Mr. Domenic La Neve from Royalpark Homes. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Speaker, may I add also that Darcy McNeill was instrumental in helping us produce multiple budgets in this House? Thank you, Darcy, for all that you've done in the past.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I would like to introduce Erin Morgan. She's the executive director of the co-op association of Ontario. She's here with us at Queen's Park today. She would like an opportunity to speak to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: On behalf of the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, the page captain today is Amelia Spacek. Her mother, Shannon Elliott, is here today; her father, David Spacek; and her brother, Liam Spacek. Thank you, and welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Mr. Mike Colle: On a point of order: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that the members be permitted to wear special purple pins to recognize Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton-Lawrence is seeking unanimous consent to wear a ribbon in honour of the day that has been proclaimed. Do we agree? Agreed.

VISITORS

Mr. Arthur Potts: I hope I'm not too late. I would like to introduce a neighbour and a constituent, Theresa Agnew, who is the executive director of the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario. Welcome again to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Colleagues, we have with us today in the Speaker's gallery His Excellency Pavlos Anastasiades, the High Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus, and his wife, Maria. Please join me in welcoming His Excellency. Thank you for being here.

I thank and welcome all of our guests. It is therefore now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Each and every day I hear another story from

another family or senior who can't afford their hydro bills. Some parents have had to cancel their children's extracurricular activities. Long-term-care homes are being pushed to the brink. I've heard from hospitals that have to cut necessary medical staff to pay their hydro bills. Seniors will have to leave their heat off because they can't afford the bills.

Why is all this happening? Because the Auditor General revealed that this government overpaid for renewable energy by \$9.2 billion.

So my question to the Minister of Energy is this: Tell me if the \$1.3 million in donations to the Ontario Liberal Party was worth overpaying for hydro contracts by \$9.2 billion.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. You are already giving me signals that I may have to tighten things up a little, and I will if it's necessary. I'm asking you to stop now.

Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to rise and answer the question from the Leader of the Opposition. He talked about hospitals. I was very proud to be at my hospital in Greater Sudbury, Health Sciences North, which actually worked with Greater Sudbury Utilities, saving \$300,000 a year in electricity because they use one of the programs that we brought forward. We've got so many programs out there to help small businesses, hospitals and long-term-care centres that they can take advantage of this. Many long-term health centres can save up to 34% if they get on the ICI program. We've got programs out there that are helping organizations right across the province.

In terms of fundraising, I want to know why you'd have to pay \$2,000 to golf with the Leader of the Opposition.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, come to order. And if it sounds like it's going to sound now, I'll move to warnings. Thank you.

Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Minister of Energy. Since the minister does not want to talk about the donations to the Ontario Liberal Party and the contracts that should not have been signed, we can try something else.

I want to read to you a quote from the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. He said that the Ontario Energy Board "certainly should not be justifying a rate increase based on the fact they believe there was too much conservation ... because that sends the wrong message."

Mr. Speaker, it certainly does send the wrong message. It's absurd, but Hydro Ottawa is doing exactly that: trying to raise rates for those who conserve. So far, the Minister of Energy refuses to stand up for those people.

Does the Minister of Energy agree with the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and will

the Liberal government finally condemn what Hydro Ottawa is doing and say very clearly it is unacceptable to charge more for conserving? Yes or no? Will you do it?

1040

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I was very pleased to be with my honourable colleague in the Soo talking about all the great programs we're bringing out to help the families in Sault Ste. Marie and area and to help families in Ottawa.

In relation to the OEB, the OEB has done a very good job at being a quasi-judicial organization and at arm's reach from the government. They've made sure that they've actually seen rates go down when asks have come in place.

Let me show you their strong record of reviewing rate applications with the consumer in mind, Mr. Speaker. When Hydro One asked for a rate increase for distribution, it received a 9% reduction for its capital request. Hydro One, once again, asked for a rate increase for transmission and received a 3% reduction for its capital request. When OPG applied for a 6.2% rate increase in 2011, the OEB denied that request and lowered rates by 0.8%. The OEB has a good track record of consumers in mind.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Minister of Energy: The Minister of Energy does not want to talk about the donations to the Ontario Liberal Party for these renewable contracts. The Minister of Energy does not want to talk about the fact that they're now charging people more for conservation.

I don't think the minister understands how this is affecting families. Let me tell you about a letter I got from my own riding of Simcoe North, from Don and Carolyn Copping from Penetanguishene. They are two seniors, 73 and 80. Don and Carolyn own their own home, but they still have a mortgage. They have energy-efficient bulbs and they use the air conditioner as little as possible. They even kept all their appliances off for 16 days this summer, but they still can't afford their hydro bill. It's a significant amount of money. Seniors are being forced to the brink.

So my question is, rather than window-dressing, will this government finally help Ontario seniors when it comes to out-of-control hydro bills?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I do hope the honourable member is telling that—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. I'm going to remind the chief government whip that holding things up as props is not allowed in the House. I will have them confiscated if it happens again, and I will offer him—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I will offer him a warning.

Please, finish.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do hope the honourable member is telling that family about the OESP, in which seniors can qualify for up to \$75 a

month off their bill, and come January 1, these families as well will be getting that 8% reduction once the legislation passes through this House.

Also, I'm hoping he's telling those families about that saveONenergy program, to work with their utilities, to make sure that they can find other ways of reducing their electricity bills, because we do have many programs in place to help these families.

But when it comes to fundraising, I know it costs \$2,000 to play as a person with the Leader of the Opposition, but also, to have a steak at Barberian's Steak House, \$5,000 a plate.

Interjections.

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

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Acting Premier. I have an email from a mother of young boy named Conrad. Conrad has autism and attends Yes I Can Nursery School. Let me share what his mother had to say: "Yes I Can has been life-changing. We don't say this lightly. It has changed the lives of us, Conrad's parents; it has changed the lives of his sisters. And most importantly, has had an enormous impact on the life of Conrad."

Can the Liberals please explain to Conrad and his family why Yes I Can will be forced to close their doors?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Associate Minister of Education.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. Absolutely, our government wants to give our kids the best start in life. That's why we are making sure that we're moving more than \$1 billion towards child care in this province on a yearly basis.

In addition to that, we are now transforming the way we deliver child care. What we are doing is moving our capacity to 100,000 new licensed spaces over the next five years.

Applause.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you.

When it comes to Yes I Can daycare and ensuring that our children there get the best start in life, I want the member opposite to know that we are actually providing the city of Toronto with \$351.7 million in order to ensure that the child care spaces and centres in the city are taken care of. Some \$300,000 of that is being moved forward to Yes I Can child care.

In addition to that, there was one-time transitional funding that we moved forward to the centre. That funding was one-time transitional funding and—

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

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you very much.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Your transformation is leading to the closing of the doors of Yes I Can, which has been doing exceptional work in the city of Toronto.

Back to the Acting Premier: The Liberals keep telling us that Yes I Can can talk to the city, but it won't do any good. There is no mechanism for the city of Toronto to provide operating funds. In fact, a director of the city's children's services branch wrote exactly that to the school: "There are no operating funds available to your agency outside of [the current] mechanisms." I repeat: "no operating funds."

Mr. Speaker, will the Liberals stop passing the buck and give Yes I Can the sustainable funding they promised nine years ago?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: First of all, \$351.7 million going to the city of Toronto to ensure that the child care spaces and centres in the city are getting the support they need, I think, is a lot of money.

In addition to that, as I mentioned earlier, \$300,000 is being moved forward and, in addition to that, this particular centre got one-time transitional funding of \$150,000. Actually, it was moved forward more than once. It was one-time transitional funding in the end totalling \$450,000—\$450,000 that was only supposed to be one-time transitional funding to enable them and to ensure that they were coming up with the plan they needed in order to be able to take care of a sustainable financial plan.

But let me tell you about our transforming of child care. That is going to be starting off from 2017 and over the next five years. We are working on that plan and—

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

Interjection.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: The Minister of Children and Youth Services just chirped, "This is a private operator." Is that really the issue? Is the problem that they are a private child care operator instead of a public one—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Through the Chair, please.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Back to the Acting Premier: I want to share more of what Conrad's mom had to say. She asked that we "imagine the immense feeling of relief we as parents feel, knowing our son with special needs is being taken care of as if he is a member of the school's family."

She asked you to "try and visualize the look of joy in Conrad's sisters' eyes as they heard him say his first word, sing his first song, or best of all, play with them."

Conrad's mom added, "This school has changed all of our lives, and we can't imagine" life without it.

Will the Acting Premier tell Conrad and Conrad's mom, dad and sisters why Conrad won't be able to attend his school any longer?

Interjections.

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

I would also appreciate the conversations that are going on between caucuses while the question is being put, not to take place.

Minister?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I really look forward to the opportunity to talk about what we're doing in child care because I really think that this is a historic initiative, and it really shows the vision—

Interjections.

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

I will make the same comment as I just made for another group of people: The conversations will stop here.

Mr. Han Dong: She started it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I don't need the member from Trinity-Spadina to armchair-quarterback. I am not impressed.

Answer, please.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: That's why we have committed to transforming the way we deliver child care in this province.

1050

We understand that that's a conversation that can't go one way. It has to happen with a number of the stakeholders out there and parents and people who are actually informed about what our child care system needs in this province. We are getting ready to have consultations across the province and have those conversations to find out where we should be looking and concentrating our efforts.

I want you to know that when we came into government in 2003, the party opposite had actually supplied parents in this province with 10% of the spaces that children needed when it came to child care. We immediately moved forward to double that capacity, and now we're moving forward to double that to 40%.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Deputy Premier. The mayor of Toronto says he's discussing the sell-off of Toronto Hydro with the Premier. My question is: Does the government think it's a good idea to sell off Toronto Hydro?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'd like to thank the leader of the third party for that question. Ultimately, decisions on how to manage Toronto Hydro are at the discretion of the mayor and council of the city of Toronto. The province will not interfere with what is an important decision under municipal jurisdiction.

In fact, we on this side of the House are looking at broadening our decision with Hydro One. The decision is facilitating key investments and infrastructure priorities right across the province that are improving lives and the quality of lives of people of Ontario.

There are a few examples, and I know I'll be able to get more in the supplemental, but \$13.5 billion is being invested in the GO regional express rail in the GTHA, with quadruple the number of weekly trips, to 6,000. There are so many great infrastructure projects going right across the province. I'll get more to that in my supplemental.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This government is not only leaving the door wide open to selling Toronto Hydro—and it indeed is, in fact, willing to facilitate that sell-off with brand new tax giveaways—but there are more than 70 local hydro utilities in this province. It begs the question: Which other local hydro utilities does this government hope will become private for-profit corporations?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Back in 2012, the LDC panel presented a report that talked about the Ontario Distribution Sector Review Panel. It recommended that LDCs merge to create eight to 12 regional LDCs through mandatory consolidations. The panel suggested that this would result in a net benefit of roughly \$1.2 billion, in present value terms.

After the consolidation report, this is actually money that we can go and put back into the system to continue to put downward pressure on rates for ratepayers. Consolidating is actually something that the panel is recommending. If you look at California, for example: With a population of 30 million people, they have four LDCs. We have 72. We have voluntary consolidation out there, and it's something that would benefit the ratepayers.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The bottom line is that selling off Hydro One and selling local hydro companies might be good for the minister's friends and the people at the top that the Liberals tend to actually spend a lot of time helping out, but it's not good for everybody else. It's lousy for everybody else, because it's families and businesses that pay the freight for the benefits that actually accrue to the very few people at the top with these privatization schemes. Guess what? Families and businesses in this province simply cannot afford it.

While the Premier might like to pretend that she has no say over the cost of hydro, it's simply not true. We know that these privatization schemes increase the price of our electricity across the province of Ontario. Selling off the hydro system absolutely means bills will go up. The cost of electricity is four times higher than it was when this government took over. Why is the government making things worse when they could be saving the people of this province by stopping any further sell-offs?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I do have to say that it's disappointing to hear that the great work that was done by this panel with some great people who put a lot of time and effort into this to recommend this—

Interjection: Like who?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: One person who's very well respected by all parties is Floyd Laughren, who was on this committee that brought forward this report.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? We're finding ways and continuing to find ways to save billions of dollars for ratepayers. The voluntary consolidation is one way that this could happen.

In terms of the broadening of the sale of Hydro One, I was talking earlier about all of the great infrastructure projects that are happening across the province. I know I talked about the GO regional express and the Eglinton Crosstown LRT. One billion dollars is being invested in the infrastructure for the Ring of Fire. The Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund is being tripled to \$300 million—not only \$20 million coming into my community; \$173 million on Highway 69.

I know I'm running out of time, but we keep having more and more infrastructure investments right across the province.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Deputy Premier. Yesterday, the Liberals and the Conservatives once again voted in favour of privatizing Hydro One and helping to privatize local hydro utilities. Can the government tell the people this: On what page of their platform did it say that they were going to dole out tax giveaways worth over \$100 million to help privatize even more hydro utilities in this province, including Toronto Hydro?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, I'm very pleased to rise to answer this question, because I know the platform talked about jobs and growth. The investments that we're making with the broadening of the sale of Hydro One—I know I didn't have enough time the last time, so let me continue: The Hurontario LRT in Mississauga and Brampton will provide 20 kilometres of new, modern, reliable rapid transit beginning in 2022, thanks in part to a \$1.4-billion investment by this government. Another \$1 billion will support phase 2 of Ottawa's LRT expansion.

I know I talked about \$173 million coming to help expand Highway 69 to four lanes. That's doing great things for us in the north. Not only is it making our highway safer, but it's actually bringing more jobs and growth to our communities because we have opportunities for businesses to see us as part of the 400 series of highways. I want to really thank the Minister of Transportation for seeing the importance of that and investing in that.

We're doing great things right across the province, building jobs and building this province up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, everywhere I go in Ontario, people tell me that they can't afford their hydro bills. This government is not understanding where the people of this province are at. They tell me that they are bitterly, bitterly disappointed in the Premier and her party because the hydro sell-off is making life harder for folks instead of making life better, and that is not what was promised to them during the last election.

When people tell me they can't afford a privatized Hydro One or the sell-off of their local hydro company, it begs the question for me: What does the government think? Does the government think these people are wrong? Does the government think Ontarians are wrong when they're saying we shouldn't be selling off our hydro system?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The only thing that's wrong, Mr. Speaker, is the understanding that the NDP has when it comes to the broadening of Hydro One. The OEB sets the rates. The sell-off and the—the broadening of the sale has nothing to do with it.

But we do recognize that some families are having a difficult time with their electricity bills, and so we have those six programs in place: the OESP program and the LEAP program. We also have the northern Ontario tax credit. We eliminated the debt retirement charge. On top of that, we brought forward our speech from the throne, which has an 8% reduction for all families right across the province, and 330,000 families living in rural, remote and northern communities will also see a 20% reduction. We've actually recognized that some families are having difficulty and we've put in place programs to help.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what the Liberals don't understand is what 80% of the people of this province want, and that is to maintain a public electricity system in the province of Ontario for our generation and generations to come. That's what they don't understand. They want to know that there's going to be a good future for them and their families right here in the province of Ontario.

1100

They know the Conservatives aren't the answer. They know that will lead to more cuts and more privatization, but they feel that the Liberals have let them down in a very, very big way. Instead of stopping the sell-off of Hydro One, the government is taking that bad idea and one-upping it by clearing the way for the sell-off of local distribution companies, of local hydro companies.

Speaker, people want hope for the future. Will this government stop the privatization of our electricity system and do what 80% of the people in this province actually want?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: What the people of Ontario want is actually jobs and growth, and this government is delivering. We're building this province up.

Again, they're not understanding the concept that we have a quasi-judicial organization called the OEB, which is our regulator, and the regulator is the one that sets the rates.

But what we've done by building infrastructure is we're making sure that we're creating jobs and growth right across the province. We've also invested heavily in renewables. We have 18,000 megawatts of renewable energy in this province.

Do you know what's really important is the—

Interjection: What did Frances Lankin say?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Yes, exactly—the \$4.3 billion that we’re saving in health care costs. And you know what? This year, Toronto’s Vital Signs Report came out, and let me quote: “Premature deaths and hospitalizations as a result of air pollution have dropped by 23% and 41% ... since 2004.” That’s a record that everyone should be proud of.

Interjections.

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

New question?

FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is to the President of the Treasury Board. This week, the government released unaudited financial statements without verification from the Auditor General. This is unprecedented in Ontario’s history. It’s clear this government has something to hide. They refuse to co-operate with many independent legislative officers. They continue to break their legal obligations, and now they are viciously attacking the credibility of the Auditor General.

But the people of Ontario know better. They trust the numbers of the independent non-partisan auditor, not the numbers of a government mired in waste, scandal and mismanagement. I ask the minister: Will you stop attacking the credibility of the Auditor General?

Hon. Liz Sandals: What I wanted to point out was that I think you missed a comment yesterday that the Auditor General made, which was to confirm that in fact our 2015-16 bottom line is accurate. Of course, that’s because cabinet made a regulation, the purpose of the regulation being to resolve, for this year at least, the dispute between the Auditor General and the public servants who are our accountants. We needed to resolve that. Cabinet made a regulation saying to use the auditor’s numbers, which is exactly what we did in the financial statements that we released. So in fact, as I pointed out yesterday, our numbers agree with her numbers, and our current year—

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the minister: The Auditor General has now confirmed a number of troubling revelations. The deficit is \$1.5 billion higher than the government’s projections. Debt increased more than \$20 billion during last year. Taxes imposed by this government have increased to a record of \$91.8 billion this year. That’s up more than 20% in the last five years. Under this government, Ontario is now both the most indebted and the most taxed province in Canada. That just doesn’t even make sense. It does not add up.

Rather than address their financial waste and mismanagement, this government continues to attack the credibility of the auditor. I ask the minister: Will you come clean and apologize to the Auditor General for attacking her credibility?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I think one of the pieces of information that is missing in that little catalogue is that, in fact, Ontario has the lowest per capita program spending of any province or territory in Canada, of any jurisdiction. So when you actually look at our per capita program spending, we have controlled that very, very successfully, which is why, when you look at our deficit projection in the 2015 budget, you would see it was \$8.5 billion. When you look at the actual deficit we achieved in the last year, according to the Auditor General, our deficit is \$5 billion. That is a \$3.5-billion improvement on our position in the budget, and it shows we will be able to balance, as we promised.

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

I’m sure the members would forgive me my interruption. Given the time, and we don’t know what is going to happen shortly, I would like to introduce in the House, in the members’ gallery, from Beaches–East York 37th and the Beaches–Woodbine 35th and 36th Parliaments, and now a member of our Canadian Senate, Frances Lankin.

I won’t start the clock until the question is put.

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Acting Premier. People deserve to have confidence in our health care system, but all too often Ontarians are let down by this Liberal government. This morning, we’ve learned that the health ministry was spending \$2.5 million a year for an outsourced PSW registry that never did what the Liberals promised. For four years, the Liberals failed to provide oversight to make sure the registry was working for the people of Ontario.

Why did this government spend so much time and so much money on a PSW registry that did not help home care patients, did not help families and did not live up to the Liberals’ promises?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It is true that following a review of the registry, I made a decision to suspend that registry. We felt that on a go-forward basis, we would work with our stakeholders and partners to actually improve what the registry is fundamentally set out to do, and that’s to protect the safety and security of Ontarians and to provide an important resource for both caregivers and those who might want to employ a PSW, and also for organizations that are in the business of employing them. So we’re working on that.

But I have to say that I’m so proud of the efforts of this government and the success of this government in elevating our PSWs across this province, beginning with a \$4-an-hour wage increase that that party voted against, and also in working to establish a common curriculum as well. It’s really about not only providing that confidence to Ontarians, but elevating this important profession and giving them the respect that they are due because of the hard work that they engage in each and every day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Back to the Acting Premier: PSWs do extraordinary work every day, and families deserve to have total confidence that their government is looking out for them. But the failure of the PSW registry shows that the Liberals are more interested in making big, flashy announcements than in actually helping people.

In 2011, five years ago, it was the Acting Premier who promised that the PSW registry would “promote greater accountability and transparency.” But it never did that. In fact, the government’s secret report found that home care clients and family caregivers could not rely on the registry to actually help them.

Why did this Liberal government fail to keep their promise to front-line workers, families and hundreds of thousands of people who rely on home care across the province of Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We are keeping our promise. They had no promise to our PSWs, and it’s only when we introduced important measures—a \$4-an-hour wage increase for our PSWs; a \$10-million training fund, which is rolled out and is providing support to allow our PSWs to further enhance their training; a common curriculum.

1110

We’re working across the board with our PSWs—which they have never done—and we’ve made those commitments and we’re following through. Ontarians are better off as a result and our health care system is better off as a result of the hard work that our PSWs do every day.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for Minister of International Trade. In June of this year, the Premier unveiled a new cabinet and a number of new ministries. Notably, the portfolio of international trade became a stand-alone ministry for the first time in the history of Ontario.

In my riding of Kitchener Centre we have a number of businesses that currently export or are looking at growing internationally. I can tell you that I have ongoing conversations with many stakeholders who are looking forward to this. They couldn’t be more excited with the creation of this new ministry.

Could the minister please tell us how his new ministry is going to better serve businesses in Ontario?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity. I want to thank the honourable member from Kitchener Centre for asking and also for her business outreach in her area.

I was so pleased when I heard that the Premier would be creating a stand-alone international trade ministry. Since then, I have travelled extensively to numerous municipalities in the province and met with countless businesses and foreign dignitaries. Everyone I have spoken with shares that excitement.

International markets play a critical role in the growth of Ontario’s economy. This new ministry will allow me

to focus on bringing jobs and investment back to Ontario as part of our commitment to grow our economy. Whether it be convincing overseas companies to invest in Ontario or assisting Ontario companies in going global, our ministry will help connect Ontario to the world.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I’d like to thank the minister for his answer. I’ve invited him to come to Kitchener Centre to speak to my stakeholders about this new Ministry of International Trade.

The Premier and the minister have said they have very big plans for the new Ministry of International Trade as part our promise to grow our economy. Specifically, this government’s commitment to trade missions was noted in both the 2016 budget and in the throne speech that was brought forward just a few weeks ago. I know that the minister has participated in a number of trade missions over the past couple of years.

Could the minister please explain why these trade missions are so important to growing our economy here in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Michael Chan: Again, I want to thank the honourable member for asking the question. In business, relationships are key. Trade missions allow our government to meet with business counterparts in person: We can prove to them why Ontario is where they need to invest in a way we never can over email or telephone.

In just two years, trade missions have secured \$3.7 billion in investment to the province. We have connected Ontario businesses with opportunities abroad, brought jobs to municipalities like Cambridge, Waterloo and Kitchener, and promoted Ontario worldwide.

We will continue to participate in missions to key markets abroad and will continue to build on this success. We are living in a highly globalized world. We must make our mark worldwide.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Mr. Robert Bailey: Speaker, to you and through you to the Acting Premier: Last Friday, I received a call from Lonnie Cope, a constituent of mine in Petrolia, a first responder with more than two decades of experience responding whenever and wherever he was needed.

Lonnie told me that the workplace traumatic stress program at the London Health Sciences Centre, which he has been utilizing to deal with symptoms of PTSD, is being cancelled effective December 2. London Health Sciences Centre says there’s no support from your government to keep this program running. Lonnie is being told that the next closest place that he can access the same services now offered by the workplace traumatic stress program is in Toronto, hundreds of kilometres away from our community.

The workplace traumatic stress program at London Health Sciences Centre closes for good in eight weeks. Will your government commit today to stepping up to support this program before the December 2 deadline?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you for the question.

Certainly, I think the interest the province now has in post-traumatic stress disorder and the impact it has had on first responders in this province has really accelerated over the years. WSIB now has a program in place. Those people who are first responders in our province now have presumptive legislation. The ease of obtaining that treatment has been accelerated over the years. One of the centres we have used at the WSIB is the London Health Sciences Centre.

As we take a look at services that are made available to our first responders, we'd obviously like to see them provided on a province-wide basis.

I will take the question from the member and talk to the WSIB again to see if these changes are indeed in the best interests of the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Back to the Acting Premier: Earlier this week, CTV News London, a station in your town, reported that the workplace traumatic stress program at London Health Sciences Centre was closing because of a \$500,000 annual shortfall in program funding from your government. First responders and clients of the workplace traumatic stress program have called this news devastating.

It takes a special type of person to risk their own health and safety to rush to the aid of others in an emergency. Every community in Ontario depends on these brave individuals in a time of crisis.

To the Acting Premier: Will you commit today to fully funding the workplace stress program at London Health Sciences Centre so that first responders in our province have access to treatments and services where they need them?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thanks again to the member. I know that he's asking the question in a sincere manner. I think all members of this House understand what we haven't done in the past when it comes to our first responders, and that treatment for PTSD is something we should do in the future and something we can get better at.

As we examine the services that are available to first responders around the province, obviously we try to make those services as localized as possible. The WSIB, which is an independent agency, strives as hard as it can to make sure people don't have to travel long distances to obtain those services.

I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I think it's a sincere question. As I said, I will interact with the WSIB—the board of directors and the people who are running that organization—to make sure we're providing services in the way we should.

FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Acting Premier.

Never before has a provincial government released unaudited financial statements. What's more astonishing

is that several sections from these statements were missing, such as the financial statements from the WSIB, the Ontario Clean Water Agency, the OEFC and the former Hydro One Brampton.

Yesterday, I asked the Premier to explain why these sections were missing; she could not.

During the public accounts committee yesterday, I was repeatedly told by government members that the WSIB statements had been posted. I checked again this morning, but they are still not there. What is the government hiding by withholding the WSIB statements?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I do want to assure the member opposite that the WSIB economic statement for 2016 is available online, as is the 2016 sufficiency plan update. All of the material related to the WSIB will in fact be included when we are able to table the public accounts. So I do want to assure the House of that.

I also want to assure the House that, while we are obviously in the process of collecting documents and having them printed, all of the finances of these various agencies have been accounted for in the financial statements that were made available earlier this week.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is my understanding that the chair of the WSIB signed off on the financial statements weeks ago, but they are still not posted. The statements are complete. The government refuses to publish them. It refuses to explain why.

1120

There have been growing calls for an Ombudsman investigation of the WSIB by injured workers who say that they were denied benefits that they are entitled to. I raised this yesterday at public accounts. There is great interest in the accountability of the WSIB to the public, certainly from injured workers.

Why is the Premier withholding the WSIB statements? Publish them now.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for that question. The statements have been available online for quite some time. In addition, the numbers that are in those statements I think are something we should all be proud of in this House.

The WSIB has been an organization that all parties, when they've been in government, have tried to organize and have tried to run in a better manner. I think what we're seeing coming out of the WSIB, with the figures and with the numbers that the member is talking about, is a very good news story. We passed historic legislation last year that's included in these numbers, reinstating, for the first time, full indexation of WSIB benefits—something that the opposition, the NDP, took away from injured workers.

When you look at this, you see full CPI applied in the way that it should be. By 2018, all injured workers, both partially and fully disabled, are going to receive their full CPI. That's what's contained in the figures. Those figures have been available online.

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, in the spring, you introduced the Patients First Act to further improve patient access and experience. This bill, formerly known as Bill 210, included a plan to transform the health care system into one that puts the needs of the patient at its centre.

I've often heard concerns from my constituents in Davenport—and really concerns from many Ontarians—about access and the ability of our health care system to meet the growing needs of Ontarians for today and into the future. I'm pleased that our government introduced a bill that would help modernize our health care system to better respond to patient needs.

Speaker, can the Minister of Health please update this House on the government's plan to put patients first?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you to the member from Davenport for this important question, and I want to once again acknowledge the abundance of talent that's represented by our health care sector partners who have joined us in the gallery today. It's an important day, Mr. Speaker.

We've listened to Ontarians and we've heard their concerns. I want this province to know that this government is committed to making sure our health care system directly reflects patients' needs.

Later today, I will reintroduce the Patients First Act, which would, if passed, put patients at the absolute centre of a truly integrated health care system. It would give Ontario's 14 LHINs the ability to connect all parts of the health care system, including primary care and home and community care, to improve the planning and delivery of front-line services to patients. This will mean easier and more equitable access to care and better coordination and continuity of care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you to the minister for that response.

I know our government has worked hard to ensure that patients are at the centre of Ontario's health care system, and I understand that the proposed system changes would strengthen local health care planning and increase efficiency to allow for more funding to be directed to patient care.

I'm also pleased to hear that our government is recognizing the importance of the French language in the provision of health care services and honouring our commitments to meaningful engagement with our indigenous partners.

Speaker, can the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care please tell this House about what this proposed legislation could mean for Ontarians?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thanks again to the member. The Patients First Act, if passed, will be the next step in our government's efforts to build a better Ontario for patients. Our plan includes priority initiatives that we know are important to Ontarians, including expanding

access to home and community care and ensuring that every Ontarian has access to a primary care provider.

These proposed legislative changes reflect our vision for creating a truly integrated system that facilitates local health care planning to ensure that patients receive more equitable access to care that meets their needs, establishes a formal relationship—importantly, Mr. Speaker—between our LHINs and our local boards of health to support joint health services planning and, most importantly, ensures that patient voices are at the heart of a system that is accountable to patients and connects them with the care they need.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Attorney General. Over the last few months, I've travelled across the province meeting with police and front-line service providers who expressed frustration about the government's lack of action on human sex trafficking.

Just last Friday, I was in Hamilton meeting with local police and victim organizations who echoed the same frustration. They told a story of a girl at a local university who was pursued by a fellow student and was convinced to go on a date with him, but he proved to have other motivations, and manipulated her into a situation where she was trafficked. What this shows is that this can happen to anyone, and it is happening across the province as we speak. The government may say they've taken action but to date, no one on the front lines is clear on the details.

My question to the Attorney General is: Is the government ready to admit they can't keep up on human sex trafficking and they are failing the children and all the other victims of this evil, evil crime?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Minister responsible for women's issues.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I thank the member for the important question. We know human trafficking is a complex issue, and our message to those who engage in this horrible crime is very, very clear: It will not be tolerated in Ontario, in none of its forms. That's why we launched our strategy in June. Up to \$72 million is committed to this initiative, and action is under way. There are many actions under way across a number of different ministries, including—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ahem. We were doing quite well. Keep it that way, please. Thank you.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: We are setting up the provincial anti-trafficking coordination office with community and social services. We're establishing a provincial human trafficking prosecution team. We're expanding a quick victim response team and enhancing the Victim Crisis Assistance Ontario program. Many other initiatives are under way that I can speak to in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Well, Mr. Speaker, it is just a message, because there is no action. I'm going to go back to the Attorney General. I'll remind the Attorney General

that his own predecessor is on record as saying, “We don’t know enough about human trafficking.” Front-line service providers and workers do know, and they are exasperated that there is still nothing advancing the law to support them in fighting this horrific crime. In fact, the legislative measures in my private member’s bill, such as a protection order, could have directly protected the victim in Hamilton I just mentioned. Legal changes and awareness efforts are part of the solution.

My question to the government is simple: Will you bring the Saving the Girl Next Door Act up for debate at committee, and will you support it through to the end?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: This member was part of the round table on sexual violence and harassment. She was very active in that, and I acknowledge her efforts for that. But she also knows that our strategy is comprehensive, multi-ministry and involves a lot of different investments, and there are dedicated resources and a coordinated planning process. So our strategy is much, much broader than creating a task force or the legislative changes in her Bill 158.

A cornerstone of the strategy, as I mentioned, is the human anti-trafficking office. It requires a lot of work by different ministries, different levels of government and police forces. This is complicated. It will take time to solve, but we’ve already taken steps. We’re investing across the system. I hope she joins me in supporting the investments we’re making to end this horrible crime.

WATER SUPPLY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Deputy Premier. Water should be a public trust. Last week, I met with people from Guelph, including two city councillors, who are very concerned about the government’s rubber stamping of permits to take water. It’s clear that we need an Ontario water strategy to ensure that there is enough clean water for people today and for generations to come. We need to see change now.

The President of Treasury Board thinks concerns about water are based on misinformation. Does the rest of the government feel the same way, Speaker?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

1130

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you to the honourable member opposite for the question. We have been doing a lot of work on zero waste and climate change and probably have about the heaviest environmental legislative agenda of just about any government in many, many years. This is the intersection of all of those problems. There are waste issues, there are environmental issues, and, with the terrible droughts that we’re having in climate change, we know these are going to become acute.

We’ve been working very hard over the last year with environmental groups and with industry. We will soon be bringing forward a very aggressive program to protect groundwater, to ensure issues of water pricing.

I am very interested in hearing from the parties opposite and the member opposite. I would be happy to sit

down with her to ensure that the input of her party is reflected in the actions of the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What seems worrisome to myself and others is that the government seems to think that the way to protect water for generations to come is to simply charge more. Well, that’s not good enough, Speaker, because that simply means it goes to the highest bidder. Instead of ensuring that there’s good, clean water for drinking, growing food and sanitation, it’s just going to be about who can pay a higher price.

People deserve a real strategy that puts the public interest first, that’s based on the idea that all Ontarians should be able to access clean water, that has sustainable long-term planning and that isn’t based on commodifying one of our most precious resources. Absolutely, it’s time for a full review of the permit-to-take-water system and a comprehensive, evidence-based Ontario water strategy to ensure access to clean water for all Ontarians in this generation and for generations to come. Does this government agree?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes, we agree. To go further than that, I take that as very constructive criticism from the leader of the third party, and I appreciate it. I share her concerns. She is quite correct, as far as I am concerned, that simply charging for water is not the solution. It is more complex.

As the member for Guelph has expressed, we have a complex farm, agricultural and food community here. We know that our food security and our water security and the great work that farmers do and the great work that’s being done by OMAFRA and the University of Guelph is also important. We don’t see the agriculture and food industries here as the problem; we see them as important parts. I think the member from Guelph has articulated that.

She has also articulated to me the importance of water conservation because she is very aware that in her area, as in the Cambridge area, they have some of the most water-stressed areas in the province. We have to look at this through the lens of water stress and the role of municipalities in being able to manage regional water. I think the member opposite will be happy to see all those things reflected in our actions.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Ms. Harinder Malhi: My question is to the minister responsible for women’s issues. The media has been reporting that Ontario has become a hub for human trafficking. Every day, more victims are being forced into the sex-trade industry and trafficked across the province and the country.

Human trafficking is a deplorable crime that has long-lasting sociological and psychological impacts on survivors. It overwhelmingly targets young women, girls, boys and, particularly, those in indigenous communities.

I know our government takes this issue very seriously and recognizes the devastating impact human trafficking has on victims and their families. Minister, could you tell

me what steps you are taking towards combatting the heinous crime of human trafficking in our province?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the member from Brampton–Springdale. Again, it's an important question on this very serious issue of human trafficking. We know that some of the most vulnerable people in our society are at the greatest risk of being trafficked, and it's our duty to act decisively and effectively to protect them from exploitation.

Human trafficking, in all its forms, cannot be tolerated. That's why we are making the investment of up to \$72 million. I want to say two things about that, Speaker: It's focused on supporting survivors and it's focused on holding offenders accountable for their horrific actions. We will not tolerate this. So we will have more support for survivors and more mechanisms in place to hold offenders accountable.

I'll speak more in the supplementary about the different aspects of that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I'd like to thank the minister for her answer and for the hard work she has been doing to make our province safer from human traffickers. I know that the minister has been working with other members of cabinet on various initiatives that will make Ontario a safer province. These collaborations across ministries are important to ensuring that our most vulnerable members of society are protected from traffickers, that human traffickers are caught, and that we have strong supports in place for survivors.

Can the minister please describe some of her work across government to address these important issues?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Again, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about some of the measures we're putting in place to combat this horrific crime. For example, with the Ministry of the Attorney General, we're working on enhanced justice initiatives to support effective prosecution of human trafficking crimes. We've already begun to hire crown prosecutors for a provincial human trafficking prosecution team. With our Ministry of Children and Youth Services, we are strengthening support for youth leaving children's aid societies, and we are enhancing protocols between children's aid societies and police services.

These are just a few of our initiatives, Speaker, that we are undertaking to address this crime and to create a strategy that, again, is focused on supporting survivors and holding offenders accountable. This is a very serious issue, and we are very committed to tackling this in Ontario.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Acting Premier. The London police estimate that they handled over 2,000 mental health calls in 2014. These calls could be better dealt with by the medical community. This problem has gotten progressively worse under the Liberal government. Police services have reported that the num-

ber of mental health calls has skyrocketed over the last decade. The average wait for funded counselling and treatment is measured in months, not days, and this forces people to call 911 instead.

To the Acting Premier: Why does Ontario force those experiencing mental health issues to call the police instead of providing medical help?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. David Oraziotti: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. First of all, I want to commend our police services right across this province for the incredible job that they do, day in and day out, dealing with very, very challenging circumstances.

The member is quite right, and there are a number of exemplary enforcement detachments that we can talk about; in particular, the example in Hamilton and the work that is being done with the mental health experts who are participating with police in calls where there's a belief that an individual may have mental health issues. Recently, through our proceeds-of-crime grant, we've also supported projects across the province for various municipal police forces so that they can engage with mental health partners in their communities to bring them along on calls to address these types of issues.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Minister, I won't disagree with you on the fact that our police do exemplary work. The Liberal government's status quo is an inefficient use of public dollars and an unfair burden to place on emergency responders. The London Police Service estimates that mental health calls account for roughly 15% of its budget, costing them more than \$14 million. But worst of all is the human cost. The status quo is a tragic disservice to Ontarians suffering from mental health issues. Police have called on this government time and time again to step up and to address the issue, but to date the Liberal government has a failing grade: all talk, no action.

To the minister, when will the government start to take mental health seriously instead of leaving front-line officers and emergency responders to deal with the fallout?

Hon. David Oraziotti: Speaker, the characterization is completely unfair. I was at the Ontario Police College a couple of weeks ago meeting with folks at the college about the training they are getting to address individuals with mental health issues. I had an opportunity to speak to a class—in fact, a new class of recruits—and they were in the middle of de-escalation training related to mental health. We know there is an Ombudsman's report with 22 recommendations that our government has committed to implementing. I'll have more to say on that at the end of the month. But our police forces across the province are being equipped and are being supported with mental health resources so that they can deal with the exact types of calls and issues that they are increasingly facing in our communities today. This is very, very important to policing across Ontario.

I will have more to say about our Strategy for a Safer Ontario that we want to implement, which also has tremendous benefit for individuals with mental illness.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To my colleagues, I do want to make one sad announcement. This is the last day for our pages. We want to show our appreciation for the wonderful work that they have done for us during the weeks.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will thank you for that kind reception.

I will recognize the leader of the third party on a point of order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I seek unanimous consent for the immediate second and third reading passage of Bill 38, an Act to proclaim the month of October Islamic Heritage Month, tabled by my colleague the member for London–Fanshawe along with the members for Scarborough–Rouge River and Etobicoke North.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader of the third party is seeking unanimous consent for second and third reading. Do we agree? Agreed.

ISLAMIC HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE MUSULMAN

Ms. Armstrong moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 38, An Act to proclaim the month of October Islamic Heritage Month / Projet de loi 38, Loi proclamant le mois d'octobre Mois du patrimoine musulman.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

ISLAMIC HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE MUSULMAN

Ms. Armstrong moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 38, An Act to proclaim the month of October Islamic Heritage Month / Projet de loi 38, Loi proclamant le mois d'octobre Mois du patrimoine musulman.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: I would like to invite all members of the House to attend a reception on marking Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day in Ontario in room 247. I would like to invite all the medical professionals that are here to learn more about the important investment we are making in pregnancy and infant loss across this province. It's in room 247.

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

The House recessed from 1144 to 1300.

WEARING OF HAT

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

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to seek unanimous consent to be allowed to wear my Oktoberfest hat for the duration of my member's statement.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener–Conestoga is seeking unanimous consent to wear his Oktoberfest hat during statements. Do we agree? Agreed.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'd like to recognize Hispanic Heritage Month. On May 5, 2015, Bill 28 was passed, proclaiming October as Hispanic Heritage Month. Ontarians of Hispanic descent have left, and continue to leave, an historic mark on our province, with over 400,000 Hispanic-Latino Canadians residing here.

I have the privilege of being the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus liaison for the Hispanic community in the greater Toronto area and participate in several events within that community. I encourage all Ontarians to participate in the celebrations this month and to learn about the vibrant Hispanic community's people, food and arts.

We live in a province where different cultures are valued, as it is our diversity that strengthens us collectively as a province. I look forward to continuing to work with the Hispanic community on our shared journey towards building a better Ontario.

On behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus, I'd like to wish the Hispanic community a joyful heritage month.

THOMAS DOHERTY
AND ANDY KENNEDY

Ms. Sarah Campbell: On the heels of World Teachers' Day, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize two of the many outstanding educators I have in my riding of Kenora–Rainy River.

Thomas Doherty is a native-language teacher at St. John Catholic school in Red Lake who was recently recognized for being the "best of the best" in the province. He was awarded the teaching award for excellence by the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan for his creative approach to teaching language. The key to the success of his teaching and the work that he does is encouraging his students to embrace and take pride in their culture. A life-

long northerner, Mr. Doherty is proof that northerners are leaders in Ontario.

Andy Kennedy is a grade 5 teacher at Open Roads Public School in Dryden who uses superheroes to teach model values and who teaches through creativity and play. His math program allows students to build Lego robots. At the start of the school year, his students created their own video game avatar which tracks their class participation and behaviour through experience points. Some of Mr. Kennedy's most inspirational work is around empathy, teaching his students to "be someone that makes everybody feel like somebody." His class created a video that is the most powerful inoculation against bullying I have ever seen.

I would like to offer my thanks and appreciation for the outstanding work and that these and all educators do right across Ontario. They are an inspiration to us all and are helping to shape a very fine generation.

GERMAN HERITAGE

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This year marks the 100th anniversary since my home riding changed its name from Berlin to Kitchener, and with Oktoberfest starting tomorrow, it is the perfect time to talk about the German Mennonites who settled the community.

Recently, we hosted an Oktoberfest event here at the Legislature for the German Canadian community of Ontario to celebrate their culture and their heritage. Very soon in my home riding, many more kegs are going to be tapped and dirndls and lederhosen will be worn.

Before the festival even began in Bavaria, German-speaking Mennonites from Pennsylvania sought the freedom to practise their beliefs. With this in mind, these Mennonite farmers migrated from Pennsylvania to Waterloo county, buying land from Loyalist Colonel Richard Beasley. The purchase included 160 farms.

By the year 1800, the first buildings were built. In 1816, the settlement was designated the township of Waterloo and eventually, in 1833, was renamed Berlin. Then finally, in 1912, Berlin was officially designated a city, but following much debate and controversy during the First World War, the city of Berlin changed its name to Kitchener.

On the eve of Oktoberfest in Kitchener, I wish to honour the pioneers who moved to a new world, making the city of Kitchener what it is today. The names in our community are still visible in businesses, city streets and community buildings: Eby, Erb, Bean, Bechtel and Weber. In the coming weeks, we not only celebrate the Bavarian tradition of Oktoberfest, but the pioneers as well.

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Mr. Ted Arnott: On September 27, Ontario PC leader Patrick Brown and I met with representatives from Wilfrid Laurier University here at Queen's Park to discuss their proposal for a new university campus in Milton.

Laurier's Milton campus would be leading-edge and would showcase environmental sustainability and planning excellence, and would be a hub of innovation, culture, learning and discovery. It would also support the jobs and economy of the future. It would also provide students throughout the western GTA, including in our riding of Wellington-Halton Hills, with another option to access high-quality post-secondary education close to home.

According to the university, the 150-acre Laurier Milton campus would be the centre point of a 400-acre Milton education village, a purpose-built, fully integrated community of education, research and commercialization, with complementary residential and commercial development and amenities.

It's my understanding that land has been secured at no cost to government. Land use planning is well under way and infrastructure servicing has been secured. This means that the project can proceed to the planning design phase as soon as the provincial support is announced and the initial funding is allocated.

As we all know, the region of Halton is one of the fastest-growing communities in all of Canada. Its population is expected to exceed one million by 2041. That makes it an ideal location for a new university campus.

The Halton-area MPPs, myself included, Halton regional chair Gary Carr, regional council, town of Halton Hills mayor Rick Bonnette and town council are all very enthusiastic about this exciting proposal.

I urge the government to get behind our vision of a Laurier Milton campus. Let's work together to build the promise of the future.

NIAGARA FALLS HOSPITAL

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's a pleasure to rise today to talk about an important issue for my riding, and that's the new Niagara Falls hospital we were promised.

In January 2014, it was announced that Niagara Health System was going to build a new Niagara Falls hospital. They rolled out a banner, which today looks so faded that you can barely read it, and put a planning grant in place.

Now, two and a half years later, the people of our community and hard-working people of the NHS have made some fantastic progress towards achieving that goal. I understand that land for the hospital was donated and community groups have worked hard to bring awareness to some of the issues around the hospital, and we expect that the NHS will be submitting a phase 2 plan in November. But we have a problem.

In April of this year, the NHS submitted their phase 1 plan that laid out where the different units of the hospital would be placed. They have their phase 2 plan that shows the specifics of what will go into each unit ready to be submitted in November, but they can't do that yet. They can't submit their phase 2 plan because phase 1 hasn't been approved yet. That is simply unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, this government needs to take action to ensure this new hospital is built quickly. The phase 1

plan is in, so let's get it approved. When the phase 2 plan is submitted, let's make sure it is approved as quickly and safely as possible. And more than that, let's make sure that when the hospital is built, the benefits are shared throughout our communities. Let's use local tradespeople, engineers, architects and labourers to complete this project so that we share its economic benefit with their families. Let's source out materials locally, wherever possible, to help keep our hard-earned tax dollars right here in Ontario. Simply put, let's get this hospital built now.

PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS AWARENESS DAY

Mr. Mike Colle: On October 15, the whole world will be marking Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day—across Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. There will be a Wave of Light worldwide, when there will be candles lit in purple, pink and blue as they stop and reflect about the thousands of women who have lost their babies through early pregnancy loss or infant loss—or infant death. On this day, they will stop and reflect about the need for more investment in health care for pregnancy and infant loss, better care in hospitals and better compassionate care at work.

1310

As you know, Mr. Speaker, over 30,000 Ontario women every year go through pregnancy and infant loss—30,000 losses every year. Thankfully, we have now begun, thanks to the Ministry of Health, to invest in pregnancy and infant loss care. This October 15, we can at least rest assured that we finally have broken the silence about pregnancy and infant loss.

I want to thank the mayors of Ajax, Pickering, Toronto, Elliot Lake, Sudbury, Burlington, Barrie, Brockville, Timmins and Ottawa for joining Ontario in recognizing pregnancy and infant loss through proclamations in their own cities and towns.

OKTOBERFEST

Mr. Michael Harris: Guten tag und herzlich willkommen. Speaker, it's time again to roll out the barrels at Kitchener-Waterloo's Oktoberfest, Canada's greatest Bavarian festival. As the second-largest Oktoberfest in the world, it's a festival fact: Oktoberfest in Kitchener-Waterloo is wunderbar.

Drawing on Waterloo's long history of German roots, our annual celebration has had something for everyone since the launch in 1969. The festival proudly hosts Canada's largest Thanksgiving Day parade, while featuring 48 family, cultural and sporting events and, of course, 19 festhallen to experience some true Gemütlichkeit. Whether German for life or just for a day, festival goers will have a chance to join Onkel Hans, Tante Frieda, their nephews Ziggy and Zaggy and over 700,000 visitors annually in our polka-infused celebration.

While the official opening keg-tappings kick off tomorrow morning—followed by many more throughout

the day—the Oktoberfest team of 500 passionate volunteers has already been hard at work preparing and hosting pre-festival events that recently saw the crowning of Vanessa Buttinger of Kitchener-Waterloo as Miss Oktoberfest 2016. Vanessa is a lifelong Oktoberfest participant, from walking with the maypole float to volunteering with her father, Paul. We all wish her the best in her reign, representing the spirit of Oktoberfest this coming week and throughout the year.

So I invite ladies to get out your dirndls and gentlemen to don your lederhosen, suspenders and hats, and join me at Oktoberfest as we look forward to the first keg tap. I also invite you to join today in our festive call: Eins, zwei, drei, g'suffa; zicke-zacke-zicke-zacke hoy, hoy, hoy!

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If you hadn't said that at the end, I would have ordered you to say it.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, as you know, today there is a hurricane heading to Florida and other states: Hurricane Matthew. We give tropical storms and hurricanes names, but we don't do it for heavy rainstorms, no matter if they cause road closures, basement flooding, disrupt our lives and leave us with millions of dollars of damage.

Such was the case a week ago in parts of Windsor, Tecumseh and Lakeshore. Many feel those torrential downpours in such a short period time are a result of climate change. We've been seeing more of them in recent years all across Ontario, from Thunder Bay to Toronto, Windsor to Wawa. Weather experts tell us to expect more of them in the future.

Our municipal sewer systems can get overwhelmed. They can't keep up; there's simply too much water coming down in a relatively short period of time. Private insurance is a must, if you can get it. Some people can't because of past flooding issues in their neighbourhoods.

That's why we need to update Ontario's disaster relief programs. We need to lift restrictive provisions when rainstorms cause sewers to back up and municipal leaders to declare a state of emergency. Our provincial programs aren't meant to replace private insurance, but when water is of such a magnitude that it turns neighbourhoods into disaster zones, I believe the province should make exceptions.

I call on the government to rethink provisions that were written in the last century and update them to meet the realities of climate change and the heavy damage caused by unprecedented storms in this century.

ABDUL SATTAR EDHI

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: On July 8, 2016, the world lost someone who had selflessly become a beacon of hope through his charitable works. Mr. Abdul Sattar Edhi was undoubtedly a true global humanitarian in every sense of the word, and was even described by some as an angel of mercy, a saint, and "the world's greatest living

humanitarian” by the Huffington Post. He was also widely respected in my riding of Mississauga–Erindale.

At the age of 11, Mr. Edhi’s mother became paralyzed from a stroke. His experience caring for her caused him to develop a system of social services. A donation allowed him to buy his first ambulance, which he drove around himself. Today, the Edhi Foundation runs the world’s largest ambulance services, operating 1,500 of them and transporting an estimated one million people to hospitals each year.

The Edhi Foundation has rescued over 20,000 abandoned infants who have Edhi registered as a parent or guardian. He also filed a court case that ultimately won the right for abandoned children to get the vital national identity card. The Edhi Foundation has rehabilitated over 50,000 orphans and trained over 40,000 nurses. It also runs more than 330 welfare centres in Pakistan and has established a welfare trust.

The Edhi Foundation is now a multi-million-dollar enterprise that operates relief operations all over the world. I’m really honoured to pay tribute to this great humanitarian.

TABLING OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have the President of the Treasury Board on a point of order.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I wish to inform the House that I have tabled the 2015-16 public accounts with the assembly.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you; so noted.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do have one more announcement: I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been in the order of precedence on the ballot for the private members’ public business such that Ms. Sattler assumes ballot item number 11 and Ms. Armstrong assumes ballot item number 54.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

AGGREGATE RESOURCES AND MINING MODERNIZATION ACT, 2016 LOI DE 2016 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES SECTEURS DES RESSOURCES EN AGRÉGATS ET DES MINES

Mrs. McGarry moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act to amend the Aggregate Resources Act and the Mining Act / *Projet de loi 39, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ressources en agrégats et la Loi sur les mines.*

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: The bill proposes amendments to the Aggregate Resources Act and the Mining Act. Schedule 1 of the bill sets out the proposed amendments to the Aggregate Resources Act. Schedule 2 of the bill sets out proposed amendments to the Mining Act as part of the ongoing Mining Act modernization process. For convenience, each schedule will identify the ministry responsible for the act to be amended, along with consequential amendments and commencement provisions.

PUBLIC SAFETY RELATED TO DOGS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE LIÉE AUX CHIENS

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 40, An Act to amend the Animals for Research Act and the Dog Owners’ Liability Act with respect to pit bulls / *Projet de loi 40, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les animaux destinés à la recherche et la Loi sur la responsabilité des propriétaires de chiens en ce qui a trait aux pit-bulls.*

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The bill repeals provisions in the Animals for Research Act relating to the disposition of pit bulls under that act. The bill also repeals provisions of the Dog Owners’ Liability Act that prohibit restricted pit bulls and provide for controls on pit bulls.

1320

PATIENTS FIRST ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 DONNANT LA PRIORITÉ AUX PATIENTS

Mr. Hoskins moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 41, An Act to amend various Acts in the interests of patient-centred care / *Projet de loi 41, Loi modifiant diverses lois dans l’intérêt des soins axés sur les patients.*

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Local Health System Integration Act, 2006, and makes related amendments to several other acts to expand the mandate of local health integration networks to make them accountable for primary care planning, responsible

for the management and delivery of home care, and to formalize linkages between LHINs and public health units.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On a point of order, the member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Just very briefly, Mr. Speaker, I want to make mention of the fact that the government has introduced two important pieces of legislation this afternoon, the Aggregate Resources and Mining Modernization Act and the Patients First Act.

It appears that the Patients First Act is similar, perhaps, to a bill that was introduced in the previous session of Parliament, although in the very brief statements that were made by the two ministers who introduced the bills, we really didn't get any information as to what the bills contained in any detail. The government bypassed the opportunity to make statements in the House.

Traditionally, in previous years, if the government was introducing important legislation in this House, there would be a ministerial statement giving a more fulsome explanation as to what the bill would entail, and there would be an opportunity for the members of the opposition to respond. So I would ask that you—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I understand the member's point on this point of order. I would indicate to him that there is no mandate that they have to do that. You're referring to a practice that had happened. There is no rule that compels them to do that, and in the introduction of the bill, you would also know that once the bill is introduced, it has three levels at which debate can take place between first, second, and third reading. First reading tends to be a brief explanation, usually taken from the explanatory notes, just to simply indicate what that bill is.

I thank the member for his point of order.

It is now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

HIGHWAY RAMPS

Mrs. Julia Munro: My petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario reads as follows:

"Whereas the town of Bradford West Gwillimbury will continue to have robust growth of population and commercial activity in proximity to the Holland Marsh, Ontario's salad bowl, which consists of 7,000 acres of specialty crop area lands designated in the provincial Greenbelt Plan and is situated along the municipal boundary between King township and the town of Bradford West Gwillimbury, as bisected by Highway 400;

"Whereas the Canal Road ramps at Highway 400 provide critical access for farm operations within the Holland Marsh allowing for efficient transport of product to market, delivery of materials and equipment and patronage of on-farm commercial activities; and

"Whereas the loss of that critical access to Highway 400 may threaten the significant financial benefits that the Holland Marsh contributes to the Ontario economy;

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

"That the council of the corporation of the town 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 of Canal Road 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 complete agreement with this, I have affixed my signature and given it to page Jack. Thank you.

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Wayne Gates: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lack of access to dental care affects overall health and well-being, and poor oral health is linked to diabetes, cardiovascular, respiratory disease, and Alzheimer's disease; and

"Whereas it is estimated that two to three million people in Ontario have not seen a dentist in the past year, mainly due to the cost of private dental services; and

"Whereas approximately every nine minutes a person in Ontario arrives at a hospital emergency room with a dental problem but can only get painkillers and antibiotics, and this costs the health care system at least \$31 million annually with no treatment of the problem;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to invest in public oral health programs for low-income adults and seniors by:

"—ensuring that plans to reform the health care system include oral health so that vulnerable people in our communities have equitable access to the dental care they need to be healthy;

"—extending public dental programs for low-income children and youth within the next two years to include low income adults and seniors; and

"—delivering public dental services in a cost efficient way through publicly funded dental clinics such as public health units, Community Health Centres and Aboriginal Health Access Centres to ensure primary oral health services are accessible to vulnerable people in Ontario."

I sign my name to the petition and give it to Brendan.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: These are thousands of signatures from Kingston and the Islands. I've already delivered thousands and thousands of others. It's a petition to repeal Ontario's breed-specific legislation.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

"Whereas breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

“Whereas problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

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

“To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners’ Liability Act (2005) and any related acts, and to instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types.”

I couldn’t agree more. I’m going to sign this and give this to Jack to be delivered to the table.

CROWN ATTORNEYS

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have a petition which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas all Ontarians deserve fair and equitable access to justice as a basic right;

“Whereas the former crown attorney for the Rainy River district has retired and the Ministry of the Attorney General has not yet appointed a new, permanent crown attorney for the district;

“Whereas the Premier of Ontario has said that she does ‘not have the time frame’ for when a new crown attorney will be appointed;

“Whereas the Attorney General said, ‘No final determination has been made regarding the permanent filling of the crown attorney position;’

“Whereas statistics show that the crown attorney of the Rainy River district has the highest case load per capita in northern Ontario;

“Whereas a temporary crown attorney from another district may not understand the needs and dynamics of the Rainy River district, in particular the specific needs of First Nations communities;

“Whereas the towns of Fort Frances and Atikokan, the Fort Frances Chiefs Secretariat, the Rainy River District Municipal Association, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, the local law association and numerous residents of the Rainy River district have called upon the Ministry of the Attorney General to reappoint a permanent, resident crown attorney for Rainy River;

“We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to recognize the needs of the residents of the Rainy River district and the numerous First Nations communities of northwestern Ontario by appointing a permanent, resident crown attorney for the Rainy River district.”

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

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;

1330

“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 support this petition and I’ve affixed my signature to it as well.

PRIVATISATION DES BIENS PUBLICS

M. Taras Natyshak: J’introduis une pétition intitulée « Privatiser Hydro One : une autre mauvaise décision ».

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que la privatisation d’Hydro One est un aller sans retour; et

« Attendu que nous allons perdre des centaines de millions de revenus fiables d’Hydro One pour nos écoles et nos hôpitaux; et

« Attendu que nous allons perdre le plus gros atout économique provincial et le contrôle de notre avenir dans le secteur de l’énergie; et

« Attendu que nous allons payer de plus en plus pour l’électricité, tout comme ce qui est arrivé ailleurs;

« Nous, soussignés, pétitionnons l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario comme suit :

« D’arrêter la vente d’Hydro One et de faire en sorte que les familles de l’Ontario, comme propriétaires d’Hydro One, en bénéficient, maintenant et pour les générations à venir. »

Je suis en accord avec cette pétition. Je la signe et l’envoie avec page Gideon.

HIGHWAY RAMPS

Mrs. Julia Munro: I appreciate the opportunity to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the town of Bradford West Gwillimbury will continue to have robust growth of population and commercial activity in proximity to the Holland Marsh, Ontario's salad bowl, which consists of 7,000 acres of specialty crop area lands designated in the provincial Greenbelt Plan and is situated along the municipal boundary between King township and the town of Bradford West Gwillimbury, as bisected by Highway 400;

"Whereas the Canal Road ramps at Highway 400 provide critical access for farm operations within the Holland Marsh allowing for efficient transport of product to market, delivery of materials and equipment and patronage of on-farm commercial activities; and

"Whereas the loss of that critical access to Highway 400 may threaten the significant financial benefits that the Holland Marsh contributes to the Ontario economy;

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

"That the council of the corporation of the town 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 of Canal Road 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 to give it to page Zoe.

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads:

"Whereas lack of access to dental care affects overall health and well-being, and poor oral health is linked to diabetes, cardiovascular, respiratory disease, and Alzheimer's disease; and

"Whereas it is estimated that two to three million people in Ontario have not seen a dentist in the past year, mainly due to the cost of private dental services; and

"Whereas approximately every nine minutes a person in Ontario arrives at a hospital emergency room with a dental problem but can only get painkillers and antibiotics, and this costs the health care system at least \$31 million annually with no treatment of the problem;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to invest in public oral health programs for low-income adults and seniors"

I support this petition, I approve of this petition and I will sign it and send it to the Clerks' table through page Gideon.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs. Julia Munro: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the province of Ontario, upon passage of this resolution, act to replace the outdated Fluoridation Act with an updated section of the Health Protection and Promotion Act and remove the portions of the Ontario Municipal Act that allow a municipality to either opt out of fluoridation of its drinking water, once the process has started, or to fail to start the fluoridation of municipal drinking water; and that the province of Ontario work with municipalities to provide financial and technical assistance to Ontario cities and towns to begin water fluoridation, or to continue and upgrade fluoridation equipment and processes so that all Ontarians, to the fullest extent practicable, are protected with municipal drinking water fluoridation.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Delaney has moved private member's notice of motion number 27. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Well, thank you very much, Speaker.

About two years ago, I moved a motion in this House that essentially asked members to say that the practice of fluoridating drinking water was essential to minimizing tooth decay and helping restore tooth enamel. In other words, was this or was this not a good idea? Unanimously, members said this was a good idea, so this resolution is going to build on that by asking this House to take a position that all Ontario communities, to the fullest extent practicable, have access to fluoridated drinking water.

Now, Speaker, I got interested in this after having met some of our local Halton-Peel dentists. Almost in passing, one of them talked about the danger of having

Peel's drinking water no longer fluoridated, and I would add that such a motion is actually before Peel council now. Now, our residents of Peel constitute one in nine of the province of Ontario's population, and the prospect of egregiously exposing one out of nine people in Ontario to completely foreseeable and preventable tooth decay is one that has me troubled and also a lot of our people who live in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon.

So I'd like to make my resolution of two years ago much more specific and ask the province to act, and to act in very specific ways, to take an outdated act, the Fluoridation Act, repeal it and replace it with specific provisions in the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act and amend the Ontario Municipal Act, which removes from municipalities the ability to opt out or fail to opt into municipal water fluoridation treatment.

Now, I was also surprised in the last municipal election at the number of fringe candidates who had thrown into their literature the notion that somehow or other fluoridation of municipal drinking water was anything but beneficial. In fact, it's very, very beneficial, and it's something that, across the province, the province is doing very well. Most of our communities have access to fluoridated drinking water.

1340

Just as a quick recap: Fluoride is a naturally occurring element in drinking water. It's found in nature, it's found in all water, and it's combined with minerals and rocks in the soil. When water passes over the soil or through the rocks, it dissolves some fluoride compounds and releases fluoride ions into the water. It's happened since time immemorial.

Where fluoride concentration is somewhere between 0.8 to 1/1000th of one gram per litre of the water—in other words, 0.8 to one milligram per litre—then drinking such fluoridated drinking water regularly makes the outer layer of teeth stronger and less likely to get cavities.

The reason that this link was found was that in the early part of the last century, researchers wondered why rates of dental decay varied so widely. After years of study, it came down to the naturally occurring level of fluoride in different communities. For example, in the province of Ontario, Stratford is one city where naturally occurring drinking water contains exactly the right concentration of fluoride. As a consequence, without needing to fluoridate its drinking water, Stratford residents benefit from exactly the right concentration of fluoride. In other communities that have lower levels, what researchers found was that bringing that level of fluoride up to the 0.8 to one milligram per litre also served the purpose of reducing tooth decay and reducing cavities.

Something that's worth pointing out is that, after the common cold, tooth decay is the most frequent disease in the world, and it's one of the leading causes of absences from school. Let's put it another way: We are in October now, where, in my community, I almost sound like a broken record, year after year, urging people to take the flu shot. I say, "Take the flu shot, because the flu shot is

free and it works and you won't get the flu if you take the flu shot." Indeed, I have yet to find someone who has taken the flu shot regularly, as I do, year after year—this will now be the 15th year in a row that I've taken the flu shot—and I've never got the flu.

Similarly, why wouldn't you want drinking water that strengthens your teeth and protects them from decay? After all, we pasteurize our milk to protect ourselves from dangerous bacteria. We pasteurize our milk and we treat our food to ensure that we're protected from salmonella, E. coli, listeria, and a whole host of other things. We also add small trace amounts of chlorine to our drinking water to kill similar bacteria in our water.

In 2012, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Arlene King, published a report on oral health. I talked about it two years ago and I'm going to repeat some of these points now. It made four recommendations for action by the province of Ontario. I'm going to read recommendation number one verbatim. It goes as follows: "Conduct a review of current policies and mechanisms to ensure that all Ontarians have access to optimally fluoridated drinking water."

The fact is that tooth decay and gum disease are not only preventable, they're easy to prevent. Fluoridation works by just having a drink of water, and it reaches everybody served by a fluoridated supply of municipal drinking water. You don't need private dental insurance to get access to it.

Most municipalities in Ontario bring the levels of naturally occurring fluoride in their water up to this optimal level of 0.8 to one milligram per litre by adding the difference at the filtration plant where their water is treated.

Another way to see the cause and effect of tooth decay in the fluoridation of water is to look at areas where misguided city councils have listened to the stupidity, the junk science and the nonsense and removed fluoride from their water. One area is near where I grew up, in Dorval, Quebec, where within three years, the rates of tooth decay had doubled. Another is in the city of Calgary, where the local residents, having seen their rates of tooth decay soar, have asked city council to put fluoride back in their water. Their city council has refused to listen to them. In the Windsor-Essex region, there was also an action by city council a number of years ago to remove fluoride from water.

One of the dentists who has worked closely with me is a wonderful guy named Dr. Charles Frank, and I'd like to read again some of the comments that he made that were very helpful to me. To use his words exactly:

"It can take a few years before the effects of removal of fluoride from the water supply become noticeable. It hasn't been very long" here in Windsor-Essex "and already I've noticed an increase in the level of dental decay...."

"I treated three children from Windsor, all between the ages of four and five years of age, who, due to their young age, and the quantity of dental treatment needed, required this treatment in hospital as outpatients, under general anaesthesia.

“A child of this age normally has 20 teeth. The first child had nine teeth which needed to be treated; the next, 13; and the last, eight. This is far in excess of what I am used to seeing in Windsor for children of this age.

“As a health care professional, it has been disheartening to see this needless increase in preventable dental disease in these children—one of the more vulnerable segments of our population.

“As an aside, each of these children are on the social services program administered by the city, another vulnerable segment of our community.”

Speaker, it seems that Windsor city council chose the expedient route of saying, “We’re not going to repair or upgrade our fluoridation treatment, but we would rather spend many more times that in looking after children who contract foreseeable and preventable dental disease.”

Most of the so-called arguments against water fluoridation range between the silly and the paranoid. I’ve actually read through some of them because, following my last private member’s resolution, I got a lot of abusive messages on my Facebook page. I looked them up, and most of them actually came from outside Canada. In reading them, most were simply paranoia. I especially enjoyed reading the one about fluorine being a mind-control agent used by dictators.

The fact is that the real science is methodical, it’s clear, it’s consistent and it’s conclusive. Fluoride in the right concentrations, coupled with regular dental care, means stronger tooth enamel and less tooth decay and gum disease.

I have asked our Ministry of Health to step up and to implement the actions of Ontario’s then-Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Arlene King, and to insist that all Ontario municipal drinking water be treated not just with chlorine to kill bacteria, but fluorine to prevent tooth decay, just as all milk in this province must be pasteurized and all children vaccinated against preventable diseases.

It’s time for our health care professionals—particularly our dentists, our doctors, our hospitals, our community care access centres and our private health clinics—not to take the good sense and the sound science of fluoridation for granted. I have asked them to use their access to patients not merely to treat them, but also to raise their awareness and that of their families and to teach them why their water is treated with fluoride, and why it’s important that communities that are already fluoridated remain so and communities that are not fluoridated as soon as possible adopt the good, sound, sensible practice of fluoridating their drinking water.

I also want to acknowledge the work from the Ontario Dental Association and especially my dentists in the Halton-Peel Dental Association for the help and support that they have given me—where all of our dentists have said that they see their job as helping people to build a better smile, and not by spending their time, their patients’ money and their families’ money repairing foreseeable and preventable dental diseases.

Thank you, Speaker. I’ve appreciated the opportunity to, hopefully, make my resolution from two years ago

that much more specific and that much more helpful to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, to the province of Ontario and to my colleagues.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to mention to everybody who might be listening at home that today we’re talking about a motion put forward by the member from Mississauga–Streetsville, from the government side of the House, about fluoridation of our water systems in the municipalities.

I’ve often stood here and said that we in the PC caucus are the party of science. We’re always talking about data. We’re always asking for scientific evidence to support any claims or any bills that are being put forward by the government.

1350

I think fluoridation is actually an interesting topic to debate here. We have the growing scientific evidence, which continues to grow, to show that fluoridation of the water reduces decay of teeth. Most people support that science, I think, but there are people who have concerns. I don’t think it’s helpful in the debate to say things like—and I’m going to quote the member opposite, who said, “silly” and “paranoid,” that anybody who doesn’t agree with this is somehow silly and paranoid. I don’t think that’s helpful. I think that people are entitled to their opinion and to their concerns, and I think that there have been times where common perceptions have been proven to be completely false. I don’t think that whether or not the earth is round or the earth is flat is debated any more, but we do know that there was a time when people had very strong beliefs one way or the other, and people were even killed for their beliefs. People feel very strongly about this, and I think we have to respect them, even if we don’t agree with them. Even if we don’t support them, we definitely have to respect them.

We also have to respect our municipalities. Many people here served as municipal councillors before they came to this House. When they move—some people would say up the ladder, other people would say down the ladder—to provincial or federal politics, I’m very surprised when somehow they forget their roots and how they felt serving the residents of their community on various councils throughout the province. Then they come to the Legislature and they somehow feel that they should be ordering those same municipalities who are just really representing the interests of their residents.

So I think that, yes, we have overwhelming scientific evidence that fluoridation reduces tooth decay, that it protects for children, and it also protects adults’ teeth. It helps to close the gap in decay rates among various groups and it saves money, of course, by reducing the need for fillings. And as provincial legislators, we have to be conscious of the fact that for many in our communities, we are covering dental care. We are not here to debate about whether we should be covering dental care for everybody, but there is a significant number of people whose dental care is covered by the province, and we want to be concerned about that budget.

I'm reminded, when we're talking about fluoridation of our water systems, of the vaccination—I don't want to call it a war; the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is nodding at me. But it's also not helpful—we have people who come to our constituency offices who sometimes ask us to notarize the forms for the schools saying that, because of their beliefs, they will not be vaccinating their children. Everybody sort of deals with it in their own way; my way, the couple of times that I have had to deal with it, has been to say, "I will sign this form. I'm not agreeing with what you're doing, but I will notarize your signature, if you give me 10 minutes of your time." I explain to people that they must be aware that there are people who cannot be vaccinated, children who, because of health care reasons—they may have had cancer, they may be going through cancer treatment, other health care problems—cannot be vaccinated and I would prefer to save the few spots in our schools for unvaccinated children, if we can call it sort of a virtual spot. I prefer to save that for children who cannot be vaccinated. Those who can be vaccinated I feel very strongly should be vaccinated.

But on the other hand, I respect parents' rights to decide what is best for their children. Even if I don't agree with them, I do respect their rights. And I respect the citizens of Ontario who feel very strongly about fluoridation. I know that there was a time when they claimed it was a communist plot to somehow cause health care problems. We don't hear that any longer, but we hear a lot of other conspiracy theories about about intentionally somehow poisoning or making people sick.

Well, we all know that that's not the case. I think the scientific evidence is overwhelming that water should be fluoridated. It is possible that certain segments of the populations—very minute—who have certain health care challenges maybe shouldn't be drinking tap water if it is fluoridated, and they have to drink bottled water. I would make the suggestion to the government that, if there is scientific evidence or if there isn't, maybe they should fund some scientific studies to show that, if there are certain segments of the population that should not be drinking fluoridated water, that somehow they receive some kind of tax credit, tax break or funding for bottled water.

I think it is far simpler to say that certain minute segments of the population should have to bring outside water in and not use tap water for ingesting, rather than saying that the entire population should not have fluoridated water and should somehow fluoridate their own water. I think that's not feasible. The scientific data doesn't support that. But I certainly wouldn't call people "silly" and "paranoid" for suggesting it.

I think that we're here to represent everybody and also to respect the municipal councils throughout the province of Ontario who may choose to not fluoridate their water. I think we want to sit down and we want to have that discussion. I don't know if a motion making demands is the way to have the right dialogue. We know that a motion isn't a bill. It can't be enforced. If this motion

passes, we can't go to the municipalities and say, "You must fluoridate your water, because we passed a motion on October 6 in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario." That will not be effective; it will not happen. But I don't know that it contributes to the dialogue with those municipalities and with the residents who are concerned about it if we make unilateral demands.

There are some myths and facts that I got off the Internet. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to speak personally with people who have concerns one way or the other, because we just found out about this motion late in the afternoon yesterday. I'm just going to read what I did find.

This is from Campaign for Dental Health, so I'm sure that people who are concerned about fluoridated water will say, "Well, the dental industry has an agenda." I kind of find it hard to believe because, personally, I think that, if the dental network—I won't say just dentists because we have a lot of people who work in dental health who aren't dentists. But if they had an agenda, Madam Speaker, wouldn't their agenda be to not fluoridate water, because then people will have more tooth decay and they will have more business? Here we have a situation where the dental industry, if we want to call it that, supports fluoridated water. I can't imagine what their agenda would be.

"Myth #1: 'Fluoride doesn't belong in drinking water.'"

Basically, their truth to counter the myth that fluoride doesn't belong in drinking water is to say: "Fluoride occurs naturally in water, though rarely at the optimal level to protect teeth...."

"Fluoride exists naturally in ... all water supplies and even in various brands of bottled water." That's maybe a concern for people who are drinking bottled water, thinking they're not getting any fluoride; they're obviously getting some amounts.

"Myth #2: 'Adding fluoride is forced medication.'"

"The truth: Numerous scientific studies and reviews have recognized fluoride as an important nutrient for strong healthy teeth...."

"Myth #3: 'Our city council can save money by ending fluoridation of our water system.'"

"The truth: Fluoridation is the most cost-effective way to prevent tooth decay and promote healthy communities." Again, we never want to see that we're saving money at one level of government only to spend much more money than what we're saving at the one level of government at a higher level of government.

The last myth is "Myth #4: 'Fluoridation is a "freedom of choice" issue. People should choose when or if they have fluoride in their water.'"

"The truth: Fluoridation is a public health measure, a modest community-wide investment that benefits everyone."

I'm just going to end, Madam Speaker, by saying that, here in the Legislature, we get to debate a lot of very interesting things, but one of the things we always have to remember is that you don't do something to hurt one

community just to benefit a much smaller community. Well, I think the opposite is true with fluoridation. The scientific evidence is there and, unless something changes with that evidence, we are helping a majority of our constituents by supporting fluoridation, and there are very few who seem to be against it. Thank you. I'm going to share my time with my colleague.

1400

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

Ms. Sarah Campbell: It is an honour to rise in this chamber and weigh in on this issue. The text of the member from Mississauga–Streetsville's motion reads as follows:

Be it therefore resolved that "the province of Ontario, upon passage of this resolution, act to replace the outdated Fluoridation Act with an updated section of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, and remove the portions of the Ontario Municipal Act that allow a municipality to either opt out of fluoridation of its drinking water once the process has started, or to fail to start the fluoridation of municipal drinking water."

Be it further resolved "that the province of Ontario work with municipalities to provide financial and technical assistance to Ontario cities and towns to begin water fluoridation, or to continue and upgrade fluoridation equipment and processes so that all Ontarians, to the fullest extent practicable, are protected with municipal drinking water fluoridation."

While the issue of fluoride in municipal water systems has recently become contentious at the municipal level, water fluoridation is endorsed by a number of agencies, well-respected agencies including, but not limited to, Health Canada, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Canadian Dental Association, the Ontario Dental Association, the Canadian Medical Association, the Ontario Medical Association, public health dentists, the Chief Dental Officer of Canada, and the list goes on, including the World Health Organization.

In 2007, a review by Health Canada concluded that there is no harmful health risk from the fluoridation of community drinking water at current levels, and that fluoridation continues to be an effective public health strategy to prevent dental disease. I should state for the record that New Democrats support municipal water fluoridation.

That said, this motion is not without its problems. My primary issue with this motion is its premise that tooth decay in "all Ontarians" can and will be prevented through mandatory water fluoridation, which is why I wanted to refer to the specific language that's contained in this motion. The problem is that the member's reference to "all Ontarians" means only the Ontarians who drink fluoridated municipal water. It leaves out rural Ontarians who reside outside of municipal boundaries and who rely on personal wells for water, rural Ontarians who reside within a municipality but who live in areas too rural for municipally supplied water—of which there

are many in Kenora–Rainy River—and many indigenous people.

As of August 31 of this year, there are 28 First Nation communities in my riding of Kenora–Rainy River alone that are under boil-water advisories or "do not drink" orders, and 43 First Nation communities in similar situations within Ontario. This means that nearly half of all 89 First Nation communities with undrinkable water across Canada are communities right here in Ontario. This is a disgrace. The Wynne government should be very concerned and very ashamed of the statistics that I just mentioned, and it should be the focus of this government's attention. Instead, we have a government that seems to only focus on recognizing indigenous people in speeches and on changing the name of the ministerial portfolio that is charged with solving this provincial crisis.

Renaming the ministry to include the word "reconciliation" in the name does not mean that reconciliation has occurred. Indigenous people need more from this government than words. Communities are looking to this government for action. When this Liberal member talks about providing fluoridation to all Ontarians, what he really means is select Ontarians, which begs the question: How can this government step up and actually prevent tooth decay and provide fluoridation to all Ontarians?

The answer is, first and foremost, to fix the water crisis that we have in First Nation communities right here in Ontario. The answer is to do it also through universal dental care, recognizing that our teeth are part of our body and intrinsically linked to our whole body health. New Democrats believe that dental services should be provided to all Ontarians, along with other health services provided by OHIP. The bottom line is that we will never be able to fully prevent tooth decay and the resulting chronic health conditions in children and adults across this province until we implement universal dental care.

Right now, the costs of seeking dental care are totally prohibitive for many Ontarians. Between the out-of-control hydro rates and the cost of food, housing and insurance, there just isn't money left over to shell out hundreds of dollars to get teeth treated, never mind investing in regular dental hygiene. The money is just not there. Asking families whose budgets are already stretched tight and who, in the north in particular, are left to travel hundreds of kilometres to afford basics like groceries and health care to go in to see their dentist for regular preventive oral care just isn't going to happen.

If we really truly want to tackle tooth-decay-related diseases such as heart disease, respiratory conditions, osteoporosis and rheumatoid arthritis, as well as many others, and crack down on emergency room visits and other hospitalizations that are being funded through our health care system, this government would improve water quality in First Nation communities and implement universal dental care for Ontarians.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: Speaker, I realize I'm short, but I'm not that short. You should still be able to see me all right. Just saying.

It's a great pleasure, as always, to rise today and speak in this House about an important issue in my riding of Niagara Falls, the fluoridation of drinking water.

As the father of three daughters and a grandfather of five, I know first-hand just how important dental care is for our children. From the never-ending battles to get them to brush their teeth when they're young or trying to convince them to go to the dentist on their own once they've gotten a little built older, it's always important to get your children to take care of their teeth.

As most of you know, I grew up in a family with not a lot of cabbage. We didn't have access to the best dental care because, let's be honest, it's really expensive. Thankfully, I was still able to have good teeth coming out of that and that is at least in part because I grew up in a community that had fluoride in the water in an area of Niagara where many communities had naturally occurring fluoride in the water.

Unfortunately, there are many communities in my area that don't put fluoride in the water. I think it is unfortunate that those communities don't have fluoride in the water. In 2008, Niagara regional council decided not to introduce fluoride in the water, not because they didn't think it was effective, but because they thought it would cost too much money. I know that the member from Welland, who is not here today, was part of that debate and made it very clear that she supported introducing fluoride across the Niagara region.

I understand that we all want to ensure our tax dollars are being spent wisely, but I think those councillors who voted against the plan might have missed the boat.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated \$38 in avoidable costs for dental treatment for every dollar invested in community water fluoridation.

Quite frankly, the process of putting fluoride in drinking water is a safe and effective method of promoting good oral health and preventing tooth decay that has been proven beyond a doubt.

Putting fluoride in drinking water is a protective measure for at-risk groups, particularly low-income adults and seniors without access to both private dental insurance and limited provincial dental health programs.

Although it is often overlooked by our public health system, oral health is something we all need to pay close attention to. There are not a lot of people who have never suffered a toothache. We can all likely remember at one time or another when we had that pain from a toothache, and we all wanted to go to the dentist and had to wait. You might not want to remember it, but you certainly didn't like it.

Beyond the pain, however, oral health is an integral part to good overall health. When people don't have good oral health, it can lead to serious side effects that can have an impact on our province. Our economy is affected through lost work and school days and expensive emergency health care costs for untreated dental problems and

their side effects. So it is important that we take care of our teeth. It is important for our immediate comfort, it's important for our current and future overall health, and it's important for our economy.

1410

That is where fluoride comes in. Fluoride strengthens tooth enamel and prevents tooth decay. Water naturally contains some fluoride. In some communities, natural fluoride levels are sufficient, but in others it makes sense to add a little bit.

When we do add a little bit of fluoride, we improve oral health for a large number of people at a very low cost. In turn, we save municipalities and the province in question money when it comes to addressing more serious dental health problems and the related issues that I've already mentioned.

Madam Speaker, across Ontario it's estimated that between 70% to 75% of the people in our province have access to water that has fluoride added to it through municipal drinking water systems. That means that there are still around three million people in the province of Ontario who don't have fluoride in their drinking water. That's three million people who don't have drinking water that reduces the number of cavities and reduces tooth decay. That's three million people who are going to have to spend more of their hard-earned money on dental care than the rest of the people in this province. That's three million people who don't have access to what the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have called one of the greatest public achievements of the 20th century. And that is three million people who don't have access to a public health measure that was first implemented in our province in 1945. That is 71 years ago, for those trying to do the math.

Madam Speaker, I understand that not all of those three million people would gain access to water with fluoride as a result of this bill. There are a large number of rural Ontarians who don't get their water from municipal drinking water but instead from their own wells. Despite that, the bill and its goal of expanding access to water with fluoride in it across Ontario is an important one, and one that I am proud to be supporting today.

I also understand that there is some opposition to adding fluoride to our water systems. There are people out there who believe that fluoride, in the small doses that are added to our water, is harmful to humans. Some of them believe that fluoride does things like lower your IQ, damage your bones, cause arthritis or even cause bone cancer. Let's be clear as I finish up here: The scientific community has spent more than 70 years examining the results of putting fluoride in water, and they have been very clear that none of that is true.

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

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I am delighted to rise today to speak to this motion. In particular, I am delighted because it is being brought forward by the member of provincial Parliament for Mississauga–Streetsville. I want to take a moment to really acknowledge the leader-

ship that the member from Mississauga–Streetsville has shown, not only on this issue but on a number of health-related issues. I know he has brought forward health-related bills in the past as well. I want to thank him for all of his leadership.

Madam Speaker, I just want to set the context for this bill. The context is quite simple—many of us have already talked about it—which is the fact that the evidence very clearly shows that fluoridation is good for our oral health. In fact, I was reading about a very clear example, I believe in 2011. It was the city of Calgary, which stopped the fluoridation of water. Five years later, the results are quite startlingly conclusive. Tooth decay in children in Calgary is twice the rate of tooth decay in neighbouring Edmonton, where they still continue to fluoridate the water. So I think it's quite clear—the science and the evidence around fluoridation.

The context for this bill is really that in the region of Peel there's a possibility that the region is looking at not fluoridating water anymore, at discontinuing this practice. It is in this context that this bill, to some extent, comes forward. I just want to say that what Peel does makes a big difference in Ontario. If Peel were to stop fluoridating water, it would affect about a million people in Ontario. But the effect goes beyond that. Because it is such a large regional municipality, the rest of the province is looking at Peel as well. What Peel does could have a domino effect in terms of what other municipalities do.

I'm also cognizant of the fact that fluoridating water is truly a municipal responsibility. The one thing that we've heard clearly from municipalities is that they would like the province to respect their jurisdiction. I happen to agree with that. I happen to agree with the sentiment that the province ought to recognize the jurisdiction of the municipalities, but there is a saying that, "With power comes responsibility."

So my plea to all municipalities across Ontario is to listen to the science, to listen to the evidence, and to do the right thing, which is either to start fluoridating the water, if they're not, or, if they happen to be fluoridating water right now, to continue to fluoridate water, because that is the key to oral health. We've heard many, many examples of the evidence.

The last piece that I'd like to add is that while my personal preference truly is that municipalities show the leadership that they ought to show on this file, I also recognize the need for education, because truly, this is an issue where there are people who, for whatever reason, are concerned that it might be harmful. I do believe there's a big role for education, but I also do understand the intent of this motion, which is to show leadership, because what the region of Peel does is really important to the rest of the province.

My plea to the region of Peel would be, not only as a local MPP but also as a resident, that they show leadership on the fluoridation issue and continue to fluoridate water.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I only want to add a couple of words to my colleague's comments of earlier. That is, simply, being the mother of a baby, living on a well, obviously we didn't have fluoridated water. It wasn't something I had thought about until I came to take her to the dentist for the first time and they said, "Do you live on a well?" I said, "Yes." They said, "We can take care of that." She had regular fluoride treatments instead of living on fluoridated water.

There are ways to get around some of the practical problems, and I think that the recognition of the need for fluoride is well understood. Sometimes it just takes a different angle to get it.

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

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm delighted to have the opportunity this afternoon to lend my voice to this discussion, this debate. I've had the chance to listen to members on all sides of the Legislature speak about the matter that is before us.

I actually want to begin by recognizing that my colleague the member from Mississauga–Streetsville, who has brought forward this measure, is someone who I know has given this a great deal of thought. It is interesting, of course, as everyone here would know, that he serves as a member from Peel region, which is kind of at the epicentre of the discussion that we're having on this particular issue.

I think it's also noteworthy that both the member from Mississauga–Streetsville, who is sponsoring this motion, and the minister responsible for seniors, who spoke just a moment ago, represent Peel region electoral districts, or ridings, here in the House. I think that speaks volumes about the concern that is felt with respect to discussions that are taking place at the municipal level that may lead to a significant departure from what has been long-standing practice with respect to a very, very important public health matter.

Our colleague the minister responsible for seniors did point out the important role that historically municipalities have played in this regard. I think it does bear repeating right off the top that everyone on this side of the House and I believe everyone across all three parties here in the Legislature understands the fundamental importance of respecting local decision-making when it comes to not just matters like this but matters that cover a wide variety of issues.

Having said that, I would add to what's been said so far today on this matter to say, as someone who represents a riding, the riding of Vaughan, which is a neighbour to the region of Peel, on the point that was made about the importance of setting good examples, that Peel region is a wonderful place. It's a great neighbour to York region; it's thriving, it's doing well across a multitude of issues. I don't think we would want to see, in any way, shape or form, anything take away from Peel's reputation—the sense that people have with respect to Peel being a wonderful community in which to live and work and to raise a family.

I will also point out that, from a public health perspective, I do find it interesting, certainly, to listen to what members of both opposition parties are saying on this matter—understanding that, depending on which part of the province you're in, there are other challenges with respect to dealing with some of the matters that we're talking about today.

1420

I will say, as someone who has lived his entire life in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, that I do find it, in a way—"unfortunate," perhaps, is too strong a word, but there's a sense that I have that it is, at the very least, a little bit unfortunate that in 2016 we're having this exact conversation here in the Legislature. I've been blessed throughout my life to have lived not only in Ontario, but in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, and the notion of fluoride in our drinking water is not something that I ever expected I'd be engaging in a debate regarding when I was first elected to represent Vaughan four years ago here in the Legislature. So I understand all that.

I will also say, going forward, as the father of two young girls—an eight-year-old and a five-year-old—making sure that the Legislature continues to work closely with all of our municipal partners so that we are in the strongest position possible to make sure we're maintaining a standard regarding public health throughout—whether we're talking about tooth decay or whether we're talking about a multitude of other issues, that we're able to provide a standard here in the province of Ontario, understanding there are challenges, depending on what part of the province we're in. But the notion that we can provide some degree of balance or a standard across the province for my daughters' future and for the future of so many others who live across this province is something that is so important.

I will close by saying that I salute my colleague from Mississauga–Streetsville for bringing this matter forward. I sincerely hope that the region of Peel will do their due diligence and will come to a logical conclusion about the importance of making sure that we continue to provide fluoride in the water of those living in Peel region, and that we continue to work hard, together with all of our municipal partners, on this and a wide variety of other issues.

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

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I start off, of course, respectfully acknowledging and saluting my colleague the MPP from Mississauga–Streetsville, the honourable Bob Delaney.

But I'd now either ascend or descend into slightly more, I suppose, angry tones, and would invite not only the region of Peel but all those who are responsible for these types of chemical additions to really begin to respect the chemistry of the body, and I say this, Speaker, as a physician.

There are a lot of chemicals—salts, electrolytes, sodium, potassium, chloride, fluoride, iodine—which are floating around and are absolutely essential for the maintenance of good health. I'll give you an example: Folks

who come from abroad, from the Third World, do not have salt that has iodine added to it. Have a look at the salt box that you have in your home; it will say "iodized salt." And with that simple, unacknowledged, silent addition—that public health quiet move—the incidence of thyroid disease has been changed, certainly in the First World, in North America.

A similar story goes with fluoride. When I first learned that there is a region in Ontario that may be potentially removing fluoride—frankly speaking, I didn't think this would be coming from North America. To a physician who sees the effects of tooth decay, who knows that if the optimal environment is not offered to children—and, by the way, not merely young children, but even in the pregnancy stage—for bone mineralization, for the enamel formation, for the structural integrity of teeth, then this is going to affect people on a lifelong basis.

Many things have been said; for example, how the United Nations supports this as a massive public health initiative, and how \$1 spent in terms of fluoridation of water will save something on the order of \$40 or \$50 of money spent in the rescue of tooth decay. All of us, whether in a personal experience or in my, for example, professional experience as a physician, know the importance of this.

I also would just like to highlight that there are many, many jurisdictions in the world, often from the Third World—for example, they don't vaccinate against polio; they don't add fluoride to the water; they don't add iodine to the salt. We who inherit those kinds of patients see the extraordinarily either moderate or super-tragic effects of those missing public health manoeuvres.

So I would strongly support the initiative and this particular bill brought forward by my honourable colleague Bob Delaney, the MPP from Mississauga–Streetsville. Whether it's the Ontario Medical Association, the Ontario Dental Association, the World Health Organization, the United Nations, Public Health Ontario, the ministers who are involved, obviously we deeply support—because at the end of the day, this is, I would hope, one aspect in which the municipal folks would defer to people who have long-held experience and who have processed and engaged in these issues from medical school to this day—which, by the way, for me is now 30 years and counting.

I would very strongly urge everyone in this House, whether it's a financial aspect, a suffering avoidance—and, frankly speaking, you've got to respect the chemistry. Don't Trump out on this one. This is really an important issue. I can't believe that this is even an issue before us, as my colleague the Minister of Transportation said, in 2016.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville to wrap up.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I thank my colleagues from Thornhill, York–Simcoe, Kenora–Rainy River, Niagara Falls, Mississauga East–Cooksville, Vaughan and Etobicoke North for their very helpful comments, onto which I just have a few thoughts to add.

I definitely agree that the scientific evidence for fluoridation is conclusive and overwhelming: that fluoridation does protect against tooth decay, and I thank the members for elaborating upon that.

When it comes to accommodating what I would call the willful propagation of junk science, I would really like to call that what it is: It's junk science. You're welcome to have your own opinion, and everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but what they're not entitled to is to make up their own facts.

Many of the speakers who were kind enough to contribute their thoughts today quoted many of the authoritative sources that support fluoridation, and those sources are overwhelming and exhaustive.

I note to some of my colleagues who asked about it that, with regard to rural areas and people who are on wells, the motion said, "to the fullest extent practicable." We understand that where people are spread out few and far between, it may not be practicable in 100% of the cases. The point is to get the maximum benefit to the maximum number of people with the greatest effect.

Finally, Speaker, Peel is the epicentre now of where this propagation of anti-fluoride nonsense is going, and there are 1.5 million people in Mississauga and Brampton and Caledon who stand to be placed in harm's way through the needless removal of fluoridation from their community drinking water. Peel has always been a well-governed place, and now we need our regional councillors to act for the benefit of the people who sent them there.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will vote on this motion at the end of private members' public business.

SAVING THE GIRL
NEXT DOOR ACT, 2016
LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SAUVEGARDE
DES JEUNES FILLES

Ms. Scott moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to enact the Human Trafficking Awareness Day Act, 2016 and the Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act, 2016 and to amend Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000 / Projet de loi 17, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur la Journée de sensibilisation à la traite de personnes et la Loi de 2016 sur l'exploitation sexuelle d'enfants et la traite de personnes et modifiant la Loi Christopher de 2000 sur le registre des délinquants sexuels.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I stand today to once again present my private member's bill, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act, to this House for your consideration.

The bill targets one of the fastest-growing and most appalling crimes in Canada: human sex trafficking. Let me remind the House that an RCMP report in 2014 found

that 93% of sex trafficking victims in our country are Canadian-born, and over 60% of all victims are found in Ontario—our province, the major hub for human sex trafficking.

All along the 401 corridor, from Windsor to London to Kitchener and Toronto, and all along the Trans-Canada Highway in northern Ontario, our children are falling victim to this evil crime.

Shockingly, the average age of a trafficked person is just 14 years old.

In the past year, we have read stories in newspapers across the province highlighting how quickly this issue is spreading. I want to read you some of the examples.

1430

"Ontario Named 'Major Hub' for Human Trafficking," says the Globe and Mail.

"Dad Feels 'Helpless' After Daughter Targeted for Human Trafficking"—the CBC.

"Windsor a Hub for Human Trafficking"—the Windsor Star.

"Sex Trafficking Investigation Reveals One of Ontario's Biggest Secrets"—the CBC.

"Notoriously Violent" Nova Scotia "Gang Recruiting Women, Girls and Pimping Them Out in Ontario: Police"—National Post.

These troubling stories and facts motivated me to introduce the Saving the Girl Next Door Act, which tackles the issue in four ways.

First, the bill will make every February 22 a day of awareness of human trafficking, as that marks the date in 2007 when Canada's Parliament unanimously condemned all forms of human trafficking and slavery. I think it's about time that we set aside a day to help educate Ontarians on the fastest-growing crime in our province.

Second, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act will expand current laws to allow the courts to file a protection order against a perpetrator of human trafficking or child exploitation. A protection order, similar to a restraining order, would force the trafficker to stay away from the survivor for a minimum of three years. If a trafficker breaches this protection order, they would face a penalty of up to \$50,000, up to two years of jail, or both.

Third, this bill will allow a survivor to sue their trafficker for damages. We know that the effects of human trafficking are devastating and that recovery is emotionally and financially difficult. This may help deliver a measure of justice to the victims.

Fourth, the bill will expand the definition of "sex offence" under Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000, to include offences related to the trafficking or purchasing of sexual services of persons under the age of 18. This will help to increase public awareness of the presence of traffickers in their community.

Speaker, these are simple and effective changes that have proven their value in other jurisdictions. Manitoba, although 10 times smaller than Ontario, led the way. They invested significant financial resources, and their

Legislature passed its own law on human trafficking with an emphasis on protection orders.

As you know, we last debated this very same bill in February. I was happy to see that it received unanimous support from my colleagues at that time. But since then, the bill has also received support from over 160 municipalities throughout our province, including cities like Peterborough, North Bay, Brantford, Essex, Toronto, Oshawa, Hamilton and Cornwall.

Unfortunately, not only has there been no legislative action on the part of the government since my bill was first introduced; their decision to prorogue forced us to start from scratch. This government is simply not taking this issue seriously, and they have not made it a priority. Even the US Department of State's 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report singled out Ontario for not doing enough: "In Ontario, children 16 and older were not eligible for child protective care and were often diverted to co-ed youth shelters, leaving them vulnerable to recruitment into sex trafficking."

Over the past few months, I've travelled right across our province discussing the critical issue of human sex trafficking with police and front-line service providers, as well as with community groups and concerned parents. Everywhere I went, I was approached by Ontarians who were horrified to learn that sexual exploitation of our children is on the rise, and that it could happen to their kids—

Interjections.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm hoping the minister responsible for children and youth services is actually listening.

Police and front-line service providers shared with me their deep frustration about the government's lack of action and support for their efforts to fight human sex trafficking, as well as the lack of province-wide awareness initiatives. So I want to take this opportunity to share some feedback from my meetings with these very courageous Ontarians in order to underscore how desperate the situation really is and how important it is for the Wynne government to finally listen to those who are out there every day fighting this horrendous form of modern-day slavery.

Early in the summer I was in Kitchener-Waterloo, where I heard from local police about how human sex trafficking is exploding—"exploding" was the word—in the region, with over a hundred online advertisements selling sexual services being posted every night. Websites hosting these ads are so easily accessible, even from your cellphone, which shows how easy it is for traffickers to operate. The Internet is also where many young girls get lured by traffickers and then trapped into a situation from which they can't escape.

Traffickers are skilled manipulators who have no regard for their victims. One horrifying example in the Kitchener-Waterloo area involved a 15-year-old girl who had been deliberately injected with crystal meth and exploited.

The tactic of getting young girls addicted to drugs and exploiting them is unfortunately very common. When I

visited North Bay, I was told about a girl who was trafficked across the country, but managed to escape her exploiters in Toronto and hop on a bus to North Bay. She went to the airport to escape farther. She had no identity because they strip them of their identities. The police were called. She said she had been trafficked. The local police didn't have the resources to help her. They actually called the local MPP and said, "I have a victim here who has been trafficked. What should I do next?" They need support. They need help.

Speaker, many trafficked girls have the incredible courage to leave, but nowhere to go. Ontario lacks specialized safe houses and transition programs that are designed to help trafficking victims. Ontario also needs to dedicate more resources to front-line training for our service providers, including the police. It shouldn't have to fall to former victims like Timea Nagy to travel across the province on her own, without government support, training those on the front lines. If those brave individuals can come forward, they deserve to have the services available so they can escape this horrific crime.

When I went to Kenora, I was inspired to see local victims' services providers join with the police and community leaders in establishing the Kenora Coalition to End Human Trafficking to coordinate local efforts to protect vulnerable women and girls. One of the participants, Dr. Jacqui Linder, underscored how important it is that the public be made aware of what is happening. Unless our governments properly allocate resources, it will fall on the shoulders of a few goodwill champions, like her, who see this evil occurring.

In Sudbury, I heard about the need for a province-wide structure to coordinate efforts to combat human sex trafficking. To this point, the House may remember that I introduced a motion in the Legislature in May 2015 calling on the government to create a multi-jurisdictional and coordinated task force, to be modelled after the successful guns and gangs task force. But again, we see no real action from this government on a proposal that would have helped coordinate the efforts of those involved in the fight against human sex trafficking.

Finally, just last Friday, in Hamilton, Police Chief Eric Girt highlighted the importance of resources and legal tools to fight sex trafficking. He said simply that more resources mean more victims rescued.

The common thread in the discussions I've had in cities across Ontario is the need for immediate action. Unlike the former Liberal Attorney General, who told us this last June, "We need to know more about human trafficking," the front-line fighters against human trafficking are telling us the exact opposite—that we don't need to know more; we need to get the boots on the ground right now.

The changes proposed in my bill represent an opportunity for the government to take concrete action now. I don't claim that the Saving the Girl Next Door Act represents the full answer to this very complex problem, but it can help victims and it can help law enforcement now.

I once again call on the government to stop ignoring the issue, bring this bill to committee and pass it as soon as possible. Our vulnerable children simply cannot afford to wait any longer.

1440

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thanks to the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. She really is a one-woman champion on this issue and has done a great deal to educate everyone in this chamber about it. I, for one, was not aware of the extent of it.

There's one stat here that I think is chilling in and of itself. Apparently about 550 persons were trafficked in Ontario between January 2011 and December 2013. That's the only time we've kept track of it. That's a significant number of lives lost.

I also want to make it clear that her bill is, in a sense, modelled after a federal bill, C-268, and our party, the federal NDP, voted in favour of that, as we will today in favour of hers. There's a broader scope to this, and it's Canada-wide, of course.

Another thing I want to make clear—and we've been very vociferous in our objections, in the NDP, to the Harper Conservative bill, C-36, which essentially criminalized johns. This is a totally different area. So I want to talk to the sex trade workers out there who I've been in touch with: It's a completely different issue from the issue of, predominantly, child sex trafficking—let's name it for what it is—across the country. Although, of course, we're vehemently opposed to that, because it criminalizes those who choose sex work, this is about those who don't choose it, and that's a critical distinction.

The member talked about 14-year-olds and—exactly, it is that age group. As a kid who had some street experience myself around that age—not that young; 15, 16, and never involved in this, really, thank God. When you're 15, first of all, you think you're immortal, and, second of all, you're super-sophisticated and you think you know more than your adults do. You're incredibly vulnerable to being exploited, partly because of that, but also because—these are girls who will go to a party where drugs are involved, and the next thing they know, they've been doing drugs and they're told they have to pay for them and they don't have any money. You can see how one thing leads to another—certainly, this is coincident with the problem of making our children aware of the ramifications of drug use—and how easy it is to exploit someone who doesn't know their rights, who's young and impressionable and who really thinks they have all the answers and pretends, to themselves sometimes, that they're more sophisticated and worldly than they really are. The next thing they know, they're in a situation that's completely out of control and there's not a friend in sight. That's exactly what happens here. And it doesn't happen rarely; it happens, as we know now—550 persons in a two-year period in one province.

I commend the government for their ads about sexual violence. They were good ads, but I hope that's not all

the response we're going to get. I hope we're going to see some response to this, on the government side, in some concrete fashion.

I know from my own work in this area, about domestic violence, with Victim Services that's just down here on College Street, that the amount of funding—they get the largest in Ontario—per victim has gone down dramatically over the last 20 years. It hasn't gone up, it hasn't stayed stable; it has gone down. These are predominantly volunteers who go out with police on calls, who do the mediation work to anything that involves violence against women and presumably get called for calls like this as well. That's sad, because we need to be funding our front-line agencies so they can do the necessary work.

The member also mentioned shelter supports. It's so hard for young women to find shelter room in this province, in this city. It's difficult. There are very few shelters for women, and there are very few shelters where young girls would be safe at all. Again, it's a huge and gaping need.

The larger issue, of course, of equality for women also looms behind this issue, because you know that where you have economic opportunities for older girls, where you have equal pay for equal work, where you have access to services—all of that plays into this and makes all women more vulnerable, and particularly young women more vulnerable.

So, again, I just want to say thank you. It's wonderful when a member brings passion into this place around any issue, but particularly an issue where there is such a glaring need, and just will not give up. You always know, when that happens—you see it; it's rare, but you see it—that they will get results. Of course, we never know when, but I hope that you get results.

So thank you again for bringing this forward. Thank you for educating all of us. I look forward to this bill passing, and more to the point, going to committee and coming back to become law.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this bill today and talk about, as well, what our government is doing to address human trafficking in Ontario. There's no doubt, Speaker—we all agree—that human trafficking is devastating, it's complicated, it's a multi-faceted crime, and therefore it needs a number of things. It needs compassion. We need a comprehensive and multi-faceted response to this problem.

To be frank, it takes more than a bill, more than a task force, more than a plan. It takes decisive action within a broad strategy, a very broad strategy, one that involves many government services, many supports, and many Ontario communities and different levels of government.

We know the facts, Speaker. It's a hidden crime, and we know that Ontario has, unfortunately, the majority of cases of human trafficking. It's about 65%. We also know that indigenous women and girls are disproportionately affected. I've said before in this House, and I want

to say it again: It affects boys as well. It's very important to acknowledge that.

We know, too, that trafficking results in very few charges and even fewer convictions. The conviction rate is actually in the single digits; it's below 10%. Of course, that's unacceptable.

Last June, acting on facts, research and on the expert evidence gathered by the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment that the member was part of, we moved forward. We moved forward with consultations with service providers, first responders and indigenous organizations. We looked at what other Canadian jurisdictions were doing. Yes, we looked at the Manitoba work, and I, along with a number of other ministers, announced a province-wide strategy to end human trafficking: a commitment of up to \$72 million over four years. It actually involves a dozen different government ministries. That's the kind of comprehensive commitment that is required to end this violence. We need to help our most vulnerable people in our society who are at the most risk of being trafficked.

We know how horrible this is, and we know, as the member from Parkdale–High Park spoke, about how these relationships often start for young, vulnerable people and how trauma bonds are formed with traffickers. It's a devastating crime.

I just want to mention briefly what work is under way. I spoke about this in question period this morning, but I want to highlight this again. I think when we go back to the member's bill, there's much here in terms of what our government is doing that speaks to her bill and then some. We have the provincial anti-trafficking coordination office with the Ministry of Community and Social Services. They are providing strong provincial leadership to support implementation of the strategy. They're also overseeing the establishment of an indigenous human trafficking liaison program. These approaches, Speaker, are designed, delivered and developed by indigenous people for indigenous people.

As well, the Ministry of the Attorney General is leading the way for an advanced prosecution model across Ontario so human traffickers can be brought to justice.

I'm pleased to report that the hiring and training of specialized crown prosecutors is already under way as part of a new provincial human trafficking prosecution team.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Hear, hear.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Yes, it's fantastic progress.

Also under way are plans to expand the Victim Quick Response Program to serve the unique needs of survivors in what will be a very survivor-centred plan.

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and its dedicated law enforcement officers will also have an important role to bring and will fund projects to combat human trafficking. They will be creating an anti-human trafficking intelligence team with the Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario organization. There will be an OPP-led anti-human-trafficking investigations corroboration team and, at the police college

level, a training program for officers. I think that is so important.

1450

I've also mentioned that this crime affects young girls and boys. Our children and youth ministry recognizes that youth who come into care are at a very high risk of being trafficked. Youth-in-transition workers play a vital role connecting youth to services and resources. We're expanding that program, and new protocols are being developed between children's aid societies and the police.

Our Ministry of Labour plays a unique role in combatting human trafficking. They're targeting enforcement and outreach at workplaces that hire temporary foreign workers, and specializing in recognizing the indicators of labour trafficking.

The Ministry of Education has the job of reaching young people through the updated elementary and secondary health and phys ed curriculum. Youth are learning about healthy relationships, consent, and the awareness and prevention of gender-based violence.

Finally, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will work with front-line health care workers to inform best practices in supporting recovery from trauma—because trauma happens in the context of human trafficking. This work will be done through our local health integration network agencies. It will be accessible and it will be culturally sensitive.

I am very pleased to speak to this, and as the minister responsible for women's issues in Ontario, I hope we can all work together to end this horrible crime. It's my pleasure to speak to what we're doing here.

I do want to acknowledge the member for her work, especially her work on the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: As legislators, we have a unique opportunity at times to right wrongs, to fill the cracks that our most vulnerable slip through and to take direct aim at those who take advantage of inept laws to profit off the victimization of others. Today is such an occasion.

It's an honour to add my voice to the chorus of those calling on government to move past empty words and on to real, definitive action to combat the scourge of human trafficking, as proposed by my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock in the Saving the Girl Next Door Act.

This summer, I had the chance to invite the Haliburton MPP down to Waterloo region, where our NDP colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo and our regional police chief joined us to host a round table on human trafficking and the impacts in our community. The difficult stories shared were compelling, heart-wrenching and called out for a concrete action plan to address human trafficking operations that for far too long have been able to operate and victimize young people right here in our community.

It was just weeks before the round table that Waterloo residents were shocked to hear details surrounding the arrest of four adults relating to a human trafficking

scheme that victimized a 14-year-old Kitchener girl, among many others. She had been taken to two Kitchener hotels to participate in human trafficking offences. As Waterloo Regional Police Chief Bryan Larkin asked the day of the round table, “If every citizen would just pause and think. A 14-year-old. The natural question is ... how do we end up here? How does a 14-year-old end up being trafficked and engaged in sexual acts? How do they end up ingesting meth, a significant hard-core synthetic drug? We should all be concerned about that.”

The fact is that once people are made aware, we are concerned. We are asking those questions of how a 14-year-old could fall into this trap, and how she and so many others—many younger—could continue to be victimized while society fails to hear their cries for help.

The problem is that those cries are too often silenced by intimidation and shame, while perpetrators continue to victimize those unprepared or unable to protect themselves. And it’s happening right here in Ontario, in major cities across the province.

Our province, of course, is home to 65% of the human trafficking cases in the country, and the Highway 401 corridor is the key conduit, providing an accessible thoroughfare for traffickers and the ability to keep victims isolated—victims who are often lured, groomed, manipulated, threatened and exploited for sex as often as 10 to 15 times per day for the trafficker’s financial gain, and victims who are often transported to and through the Kitchener-Waterloo area.

While victimization has only grown in recent years, support and outreach organizations in my area continue to use their limited resources to provide vital awareness and support. Ms. Timea Eva Nagy, one of the most recognizable champions for trafficking victims in Ontario, has devoted herself to bringing that needed awareness to the fore. A former victim herself, Timea has worked with many in Waterloo region and beyond, founding the Walk With Me organization and publishing a book, *Memoirs of a Sex Slave Survivor*.

Thankfully, Timea is not alone. Our round table saw representatives from Women’s Crisis Services of Waterloo Region, Victim Services Waterloo Region, YWCA Kitchener-Waterloo, Distress and Crisis Ontario, and the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region. We were also joined by Sarah Witmer, who aims to have her Restorations charity open a rural home where victims of human trafficking can heal and be fully restored.

I know that there are many others working to support the victims who are able to escape the clutches of human trafficking. I note that the newest addition to my constituency staff, Meaghan Martin, has worked to put together the Sleep Tight initiative, collecting pyjamas to send a message of comfort and hope while also raising much-needed awareness.

There’s a lot of good work going on, on many different fronts, but it’s that elusive awareness that continues to be the missing key. We continue to work to create that awareness and step up support efforts.

That’s why I’ll be supporting the Saving the Girl Next Door Act and its aims to: enable protection orders for

victims; expand the Sex Offender Registry to include traffickers; allow victims to sue their traffickers; and proclaim Human Trafficking Awareness Day in Ontario.

I look forward to seeing members opposite lending their support as well to speak with a united voice on such an important, neglected issue that has, for too long, been allowed to victimize too many.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Let me begin, if I may, by thanking our colleague the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for, first, her work on this subject and this issue specifically, but also for having the fortitude, the passion and the compassion to bring it forward again and to allow us in this House the ability and the time to dedicate to this important issue. I think that’s something you don’t realize often enough in this place. There are so many issues out there that we may not ever get the time in our tenure to focus on. Despite our partisan differences and affiliations, it is really a gift when another member takes their slot to bring forward such an important issue and to allow us to speak on it. I really commend you, and I thank you on behalf of our caucus as well.

As I read the bill, two words jump out at me: “practical” and “effective.” “Practical” doesn’t mean that it’s simple in its prescription. In fact, some of it will eventually be complex, especially some of the legal interpretations when it comes to tort law, I see. We’ll be looking forward to seeing some experts at committee. Some of the practical implications—setting aside February 22 of each year as Human Trafficking Awareness Day, which would, according to our colleague, shed much-needed light on the seriousness and severity of human trafficking in Ontario. Of course, we should have a day to inform our communities, to dedicate to having this discussion. It’s something, even if it comes across the ticker on the morning news, where it reminds us that, “Today members of the Legislature will be acknowledging human trafficking day.” We can sit down with our daughters and our sons around the breakfast table and explain to them what human trafficking is and that it actually exists in our communities and in our province.

I think I’ve heard from the minister of women’s issues—let me get that right; yes, the minister responsible for women’s issues—and I thank her for her submission and highlighting some of the work that the government has done.

1500

I too had the honour of sitting on the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. I learned a lot from our colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock as she was able to put a lens on everything we heard around that committee, reminding us that this exists and that human trafficking should also be a part of the subject, because it was a little bit excluded from the overall focus of the select committee. I know it’s all in the same realm, but for some reason or another—that just highlights the need for us to focus on it because it is so

unknown; it flies so under the radar. Maybe it's because in this province we can't believe that this could exist. How low of a human being do you have to be? It's got to be the lowest form, to take advantage of vulnerable children and to use them, essentially, for slavery. It's unfathomable. That's maybe why we don't have these discussions. But it is important that we do and, again, I'm very honoured to be a part of it today.

But to the minister: I sense that maybe you're being a little bit protective of your turf in the sense that the government is taking on these initiatives—as you should—as a multi-ministerial approach, crossing various ministers. I think that's probably good as well. But in my mind, I'm thinking, as I'm listening to you, that there's no end to this until we stop it. There are no efforts that we can put forward that will be enough until it is completely eradicated. Whether it's ministerial initiatives, or those that come from opposition members in terms of what else we can do, that can only add to the arsenal that we give our front-line workers in combatting this.

Our colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock noted the community of Kenora, which has taken this head-on and collaborated, coordinated their efforts, because that might be the epicentre. As we learned on that committee, the select committee, our northern communities are vulnerable in all respects, maybe more so than anywhere else in this province. When you live in a northern community and you don't have access to clean drinking water, that simple life-sustaining aspect, you are more vulnerable down the chain when it comes to societal issues, in effect. We know that that is where, maybe, we should start and the focus should be there.

Let's ensure that we have the proper resources and that you're given the leeway, through your cabinet colleagues, to ensure that you have the money to put into these initiatives. We hope that it's enough, but if it isn't, have the fortitude to listen to other colleagues that you might have to add some more to ensure that it's eradicated.

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

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It really is a pleasure to rise in the House today and speak on Bill 17, Saving the Girl Next Door Act. I do want to start my remarks with acknowledging the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for her work on this very important file.

I know that along with your role as the women's issues critic, you were also the vice-chair on the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment that we launched a year ago, in March. It seems like just yesterday in some ways. I do know that you are very, very committed on this subject and I want to acknowledge you for a fantastic job done.

This is a very, very important issue. It's one that we are all very concerned about. I'm a mother of three girls. I obviously worry about my children, as all mothers worry about their children. But there's a difference when a baby girl is born. We have different worries about those children, unfortunately.

I do think, however, that it's a little bit unfair that the member says that we haven't done enough. I think that we've done quite a bit. We have a provincial strategy, which is called Operation Northern Spotlight. The Kingston city police are taking part in that strategy. I think they have done fantastic work. As the minister of women's issues has mentioned, we have allocated up to \$72 million, and a dozen different government ministries are taking part in that initiative. I think that that really does speak to how committed we are.

We understand that it's a very complicated issue. We understand that there is no simple, quick fix. All of the changes that are being made and that are proposed in Bill 17 are excellent, but we think that they need to go a little bit farther. Our strategy is a lot broader than creating a task force or the legislative changes proposed in Bill 17.

As I mentioned, the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment launched Ontario's Strategy to End Human Trafficking, a response to several different recommendations which were made by the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. It is going to include multi-year investments, stronger collaboration, a coordination of services and supports, and information and knowledge sharing across sectors and jurisdictions to improve those outcomes for survivors. That just speaks to the dozen different ministries that are involved.

We know that it is a very encompassing and complicated issue. I'm very pleased to speak to it. Thank you very much, and best of luck with the bill. We're very pleased that it has been brought forward again.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a pleasure to rise today and add my voice to the discussion of Bill 17, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act. This is a very important topic across the province and, of course, in my riding. It impacts every riding and community.

I want to once again commend my colleague the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for bringing forward this important piece of legislation. I hope that, following the discussion here today, the government will prioritize the passing of this bill.

Again, as I mentioned in my previous remarks on the sexual violence and harassment action plan, the true extent of human trafficking is not fully known in Ontario or in local municipalities. The signs that someone is being trafficked are not always recognized.

Anecdotally, my constituency office in Sarnia assisted the mother of a young woman last winter in a situation where the mother believed that her adult daughter was caught in this vicious cycle of drug abuse and human trafficking. I want to commend my staff and the local community support agencies for helping to find this young woman assistance and the opportunity to try and break free from the violent, coercive grasp of traffickers. Moreover, on August 31 of this year, six individuals were arrested on the American side of the Blue Water Bridge, which connects my riding of Sarnia–Lambton with Michigan, on suspicion of human trafficking.

This is a problem in our province, and, on the surface, it does not appear to be getting better, which is why we need to see the bill passed. Provisions in the bill, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act, will assist authorities by giving them the tools they need to go after traffickers. This is something that is needed and should be enacted immediately by the government.

Again, I want to thank our member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and all of the members in the Legislature who have worked on this. I certainly want to see this bill passed.

I've spoken on this bill before, and I'm going to say it again to the people out there that are watching this: There are people working in the hotel and entertainment business, in the taxi and that type of industry, where they're actually moving people between point A and point B, whether it's along the 401 or in these hotels and places like that. When we see something, we need to say something. Speak up. Let's put an end to this nasty deed.

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

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise today to speak about Bill 17. I want to thank the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for her hard work on what I think is a very important initiative, Bill 17, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act. The member's commitment, dedication and tireless efforts on this act are very much appreciated.

Human trafficking is a complex and, as we've heard, often hidden crime. It results in serious and long-term trauma for survivors. This is a terrible crime, and our young victims often have to deal with a life of abuse, trauma and despair. Traffickers prey on our vulnerable and use tactics to abuse, exploit and traumatize victims and, as you heard, we know this is an under-reported crime.

1510

Human trafficking robs the safety, livelihood and dignity of those who are being exploited and abused. That's why we brought forward in June a comprehensive strategy to end human trafficking in Ontario, with dedicated funding of up to \$72 million.

The strategy is a survivor-centred approach that responds to needs on the ground and will give police, intelligence services and the justice sector the resources they require to combat and prosecute traffickers. These are long-term, sustainable solutions, aimed to end human trafficking in the province of Ontario.

However, such solutions don't happen overnight. That's why, as you've heard, we're committed to tracking down human traffickers with our government's \$72-million commitment. We're creating an anti-human-trafficking intelligence team, Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario, and we're doing so much more.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for her work, and I share the understanding that we must take action to combat human trafficking in Ontario. We do believe that the legislative changes proposed—

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I appreciate the opportunity to put a few comments on the record.

First of all, I rise today in support of my fellow colleague's Saving the Girl Next Door Act. I also have had the opportunity to meet with people. She and I met with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection in Winnipeg and certainly shared some key details.

In my community of York–Simcoe, the police have also taken the issue of human trafficking very seriously. They help citizens identify victims by noting some of the signs, such as the victim being unable to present identity documents or not having a cellphone and things like that. The York Regional Police have compiled data and information through experience in fighting human trafficking.

The other issue I want to raise in the time I have is what other jurisdictions have done.

The minister has mentioned the initiatives that she has begun, but it always comes back to what the individual can do. I have a prop that I can't show you, but I found it very prominently displayed on the inside door of a washroom cubicle. It says, "You see a girl who could do anything. He sees a girl he can force to do anything." If you needed a definition for human trafficking, I think it's contained there.

This is produced by the Tennessee Women's Funds Alliance and it was in all the public washrooms—I didn't make a trip around the public washrooms, but I noted the proliferation and also the opportunity to be given a copy when I went to the information.

There are things that we can do, and the first obligation is reduction and being able to identify. That's getting us closer to eliminating the problem. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise today, not to talk about this topic, because it's such a difficult topic, but to support my colleague and to raise awareness of what we're trying to achieve here today.

The Saving the Girl Next Door Act is Bill 17. It's to address the fact that there is sex trafficking in our communities and we have basically left our police forces with their hands tied, because there isn't a province-wide task force to address the issue. There isn't enough public awareness being done in our schools, in our communities and maybe even in our summer camps and our youth organizations so that we could be getting more involved in raising awareness.

A lot of the issues have been touched on already today. We're working to get sex traffickers registered as sex offenders, and in February have an awareness day as well.

But I just want to touch on the fact that I have a daughter who, unlike myself, was so much more savvy at such a young age. I recall her telling me that when she was about 15 years old, she was buying makeup at a Shoppers Drug Mart in Thornhill and a man, who she says was about in his early 40s, came up to her and was trying to tell her what makeup she should buy and

offering to purchase her makeup. She knew exactly what he was trying to do, but she didn't think to mention it to me because I would have called up that Shoppers right away and warned them of what was going on on their premises. I think that's something we can address: talking to the girls, finding out where they were approached and letting those businesses be made more aware of what's going on.

I hope that we're going to be supporting on all sides of the House and that we can move forward on this quickly.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock to wrap up this debate.

Ms. Laurie Scott: How awful is it that more and more of our children are falling victim to sexual exploitation here in Ontario, a province that they should feel safe in?

The minister mentioned the poor record on convictions, but she is the government. They've been in for 13 years. The fact is that police and victim services are crying out for help in the fight against human trafficking. If they could get more assistance, they'd have more convictions, and the best part is they would be able to save more victims.

Just before this debate began, I sat down for a press conference with Megan Walker, who is the executive director of the London Abused Women's Centre and has long been an advocate for victims of sex trafficking. She told the story of parents going online on backpage.com and finding pictures of their daughters being exploited by traffickers. Can you imagine anything more horrifying in your life than to be searching for your daughter on a website that's selling sex? I can't even imagine how horrifying that is.

But she expressed the same frustration: that the Wynne government is not taking enough action when it comes to the fastest-growing crime in North America, human sex trafficking. She could not understand why the government would not take this bill and make it law.

Again, I remind everyone here that the police, the front-line service providers across the province are so frustrated with the government's lack of action or support of more legislation, more initiatives for awareness that this is going on in every corner of our province.

It's not a partisan issue; it's a basic rights issue. This government needs to pass this legislation and follow through with other pieces—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. We will vote on this bill at the end of private members' public business.

ALBANIAN HERITAGE MONTH ACT,
2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE ALBANAIS

Mr. Qaadri moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month / Projet de loi 36, Loi

proclamant le mois de novembre Mois du patrimoine albanais.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's of course always a privilege to rise and address the Ontario Legislative Assembly and to lead the second reading debate, as you've just mentioned, on An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month.

You may recall, Speaker, that we had a similar debate just a few months ago when my esteemed colleague the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, MPP for York South–Weston, the Honourable Laura Albanese, brought forward exactly the same bill for the House's consideration. I am honoured now to continue that particular legacy on behalf of the minister, the Liberal caucus and the entire Albanian Canadian community that has gathered in force here.

I would like as well to take this opportunity, Speaker, with your permission, to welcome a number of our distinguished colleagues from the community. Good afternoon. Mirëdita.

Among our guests today, we have His Excellency Mr. Ermal Muça, the ambassador of the Republic of Albania to Canada. Welcome, sir.

1520

We also have representatives here from the embassy of the Republic of Kosovo to Canada. We are joined, for example, by Mr. Ramazan Këllezi, president of the Albanian Canadian Community Association of Toronto, and many other leaders of the Albanian Canadian community, including the lovely youngish members of the Little Eagles ensemble.

Mr. Speaker, I would also recognize the presence of Ruki Kondaj, honorary president of the Albanian Canadian Community Association of Toronto and current chair of the heritage committee of the association. Dr. Kondaj has been instrumental and forceful—a force of nature unto herself—in advocating for this bill on behalf of the Albanian community. She is dedicated, passionate and a valuable member of the Albanian Canadian community.

Welcome, all of you, to the Legislature of Ontario.

Remarks in Albanian.

If passed, this bill would recognize and celebrate the accomplishments and the contributions of the community to Ontario. November is a particularly significant month for the Albanian community. On November 28, 1912, Albania declared its independence. On this day, the Albanian community also celebrate Albanian Flag Day, of course a unifying symbol of the Albanian community. On November 29, 1944, Albania was liberated from Nazi Germany. The day is known as the Albanian Liberation Day. The Albanian Canadian community celebrates these dates in Ontario by raising the flag here at Queen's Park, as well as organizing cultural events, banquet dinners and many, many different forms of celebrations throughout the country.

Mr. Speaker, we ask ourselves, who are some of the most prominent Albanians that we know? The list is long, and I'll detail a few, but I would also like to mention that we are fully cognizant and we are also exploiting to the fullest the fact that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the Honourable Laura Albanese—you may be interested to know, Speaker, that the word Albanese in Italiano—in Italian—actually means Albanian, so she's officially Laura "the Albanian."

Speaker, as you know, Mother Teresa was proclaimed a Roman Catholic saint some months ago. Her family is originally from Kosovo; born in Macedonia, but of course with the objective of becoming a missionary, migrated at the age of 18, to learn English, to the Sisters of Loreto; and she made the eventual journey to India, where we are all of course very familiar with her lifelong dedication to the poor and the sick and the infirm, I believe, in the city of Calcutta. She won the Nobel prize in 1979. So she's an extraordinary symbol of Albanian heroism and multi-faith identity.

Members of this House, those who are historically inclined, may be interested to know about Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg, a 15th-century national hero who unified the Albanian nation in its resistance against the imperial rule.

Of course, a famous writer, who I think shares a namesake with me, Ismail Kadare, a world-renowned writer who, by the way, won the Man Booker prize in 2005 for a long contribution of historical novels, political satire and so on.

We know, for example, Jim and John Belushi, the American Albanian actors and comedians; Rita Ora and Dua Lipa, internationally known singers; and last but not least, a couple of people: Tie Domi, of the NHL; and Inva Mula, an internationally recognized soprano.

Speaker, if you'll allow me, I'd also like to take a few moments to share with this Legislature a short historical background of the Albanian nation and the resilient Albanian Canadian community right here in Ontario. As many of you know, Albania is a country in southeast Europe, bordered by Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Greece. It has a coast on the Adriatic Sea, located east of Italy, and the Ionian Sea to the southwest, just above Greece. With abundance of natural beauty, nearly 500 kilometres of coastline abutting expanses of rugged mountains, Albania, which has endured centuries of foreign rule and a brief but impactful Italian rule, is a mélange of old- and new-world influences.

Today, Albania is a member of NATO and has received the status of an official candidate for accession to the European Union. However, the country and its people have had a long history far exceeding that. The Albanian Canadian community, and of course, our esteemed guests who have joined us here represent the different parts of southeast Europe, where Albanians have inhabited countries for centuries, including Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Greece.

As the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has shared previously, Italy has a historic Albanian minority

to this day of approximately a quarter of a million, scattered mostly across southern Italy. The historical Albanian community in Italy are known as the Arbëreshë. They settled in Italy in the 15th and 16th centuries, displaced by changes of imperial boundaries in southeast Europe. The Arbëreshë are known to have preserved their authentic language, religion, traditions, customs and art.

I know the Albanian community here will be welcoming a number of Arbëreshë community members during next month's—November 3, by the way, Speaker—Albanian heritage festivities, hosted by the Liberal caucus and my colleagues. The Albanian diaspora exists globally, but in particular in countries such as Canada, Turkey, the United States and western Europe.

I would also like to note and share with this House some background on the character and national identity of our esteemed community members from Albania. Studies in anthropology show that Albanians share the same ancestry as most other European peoples. In fact, Albanians are very ancient people, descendants of the ancient Illyrians, and you can catch some Shakespeare references in there too, Speaker.

During most of their troubled history, Albanians have been conquered and ruled by three major empires: Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman. These long occupations brought significant anthropological and social changes, most importantly, of course, with the introduction of three major religions: Catholicism, Orthodox, as well as Islam. The Albanian nation is comprised of mainly Islamic, Catholic and Orthodox Christian faiths, with small pockets of evangelical and Jewish faiths. However, the Albanian national identity, which transcends all of these, has remained resilient throughout the centuries. Speaker, all you have to do is meet a few Albanian Canadian community members, whether it's the ambassador to Dr. Kondaj to young kids, just to see how proud they are, as we are of you, in maintaining your national heritage, culture and identity.

The community, for example, here in Ontario, has held on to its traditional customs, songs, dances, instruments, stories, legends, oral histories and literature, also dear to you and to us together. They have held on to what's known as the code of Besa, a collection of principles which regulated Albanian social, economic and religious order, together with traditional customs and cultural practices of Albanian society—not for 10 years, not even for a century, but for centuries.

Besa suggests being faithful, keeping a promise and keeping your word of honour. Besa has also the meaning of being hospitable, taking care of guests, travellers and those in need. As an example, during World War II, Albanians in Europe sheltered more than several thousand Jewish people from Nazi persecution and, of course, sacrificed locally for that very extraordinary effort.

And now, about our Canadian Albanians: According to our latest statistics, Albanian Canadians make up on the order of about 30,000 people and counting here in Canada, mostly around the GTA, in Ontario. The first wave of Albanian immigration occurred in the early 20th

century, mainly as a result of the uprisings and dislocations in southeast Europe, post-World War I. The second wave of Albanians arrived following World War II, escaping Communist-run Albania and the former Yugoslavia.

However, the third and biggest wave of immigration occurred as a result of the collapse of the Communist dictatorship in Albania in 1991 and the 1990s ethnic conflict that led to the breakup of the former Yugoslavia.

A troubled, challenged but deeply proud and deeply esteemed community: We salute you for maintaining your heritage and culture after all the changes of governments and dictatorships and rulers and empire to this very day.

The government of Canada, Speaker, as you may know, established a residency program to accept 7,000 Kosovo Albanian refugees fleeing the Kosovo conflict in 1998 and 1999.

Today, the majority of Albanian Canadians reside here in our great centres—the GTA, Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Ottawa, Peterborough and Windsor—and nowadays members of the community can count on several community associations for support and networking opportunities within our system here.

Within our publicly funded school system, there are a number of different elementary schools. As you know, Premier Wynne, our entire caucus and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration deeply respect and support multicultural Canadians. As an example of that, we actually offer the teaching of the Albanian language in elementary schools here in the province of Ontario.

One unifying organization within the community—and I salute its director and president and executive lead—is the Albanian Canadian Community Association of Toronto, led, as I said quite earlier, by Dr. Ruki Kondaj. It has been active since its establishment in 1989 and the association is developing a greater awareness and pride among its members within the entire Canadian community.

1530

Albanian Canadians, as we are, should also be proud of their centuries-old contribution, not only to the world, but particularly now here in the province of Ontario. I would, with respect to Hansard, like to say now that we thank you for maintaining all this heritage and culture, and in Albanian:

Remarks in Albanian.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: It's my pleasure, on behalf of the official opposition, to welcome you to Queen's Park. I appreciate the leadership shown by Ms. Albanese to recognize you and give us the opportunity to recognize you in a more formal way, not only as a group, but also the contribution and the culture you bring, in a manner similar to the rest of us.

Whether we came two months ago or 200 years ago, there's a certain theme that goes through all of those

people, like you, who have come to Canada. I think that perhaps one of the motives, kind of stepping into what I think you might be thinking, is the opportunity to bring the best of what you have and do the best with what you get when you come to Canada. To be able to do that means that all of us are able to hold in one hand the ideas and values of our families, but also to be able to move along and recognize the opportunity to live with people of other persuasions and other cultures. It's very much in keeping that we should be able to spend this brief time today and, as a result, the outcome that we all expect, of course, is that there will be a heritage month.

Much of what I had thought I might comment on has been mentioned, but the fact that the Albanians have come to Canada, pushed by the war and struggle and disruption in their own country—as I said a moment ago, many of us could say the same thing. After World War II, the country of Albania then was under a Communist regime, and we all know that travel would not have been permitted in a normal way.

In 1986, there were fewer than 1,500 Albanian Canadians. It's really interesting to see that the current number is 30,000. It gives some recognition to the opportunities that were provided to allow you to make the decision to come to Canada. That, of course, came as a result of the upheaval and instability in that part of Europe, which then promoted people fleeing from the area in order to come to Canada.

Shortly thereafter, in the early 2000s, there was a new war which sparked a second wave of immigration of Albanians to Canada. As I say, coming here has provided you with the security and stability of community life and the opportunity for a better future for your children—the opportunity that it provides for all of us.

As time has passed, Albanian Canadians have created community organizations to maintain their culture and to help new Albanian immigrants adjust to life here in Canada. One of the things that struck me which really speaks to that motive and that ability to turn ideas into action is the Albanian Canadian Excellence society, which has an annual set of ACE Awards that they give to Albanian Canadians celebrating success in business, the arts and entrepreneurship. While the most recent set of awards has not yet been released, they have announced the nominees. It's certainly something that I'm sure everyone will look forward to. Nominees include Edor Kabashi, who has made discoveries in health research surrounding ALS; and Blerina Hoxha, who works for Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment and volunteers by building schools in Jamaica.

They also give an award to a non-Albanian. One such nominee is Robert Austin, a professor at the University of Toronto with the Munk School of Global Affairs, who has dedicated much of his career to studying Albania and Kosovo. Another is Elliott Behar, who has worked as a crown prosecutor. In 2008, he became a war crimes prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

We can just get a glimpse here of the kind of breadth of community that you reflect, and we wish you the best

of all that we have to offer. I know that you will be able to continue to contribute to Canada as a strong democracy with a strong tradition of immigration, helping people build our country. It's my pleasure to support the bill.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I am pleased to rise to speak to this private member's bill calling to establish November as Albanian Heritage Month. I genuinely believe bills like these are wonderful opportunities that allow us to celebrate, but also provide us with unique learning opportunities. By learning about other cultures, we promote harmony and history, all of which makes us an inclusive province.

We know that Ontario is home to approximately 40,000 Albanians, with another 20,000 throughout Canada, and that Toronto is home to the largest Albanian population in our country.

Canada's relationship with Albania has evolved over the past few years. By moving past the historical context, where Albania was a formerly closed and centrally planned state, they have taken important yet challenging steps towards becoming a more modestly democratic country. It is our intention to celebrate the emerging democracy in Albania, while promoting and celebrating Albanians in Ontario right now.

The effort of culture sharing as diverse as Albania is indeed a challenging task. Many Ontarians are unaware that Albanian Canadians come from a variety of European countries.

As an ancient people, Albanians are descendants of the ancient Illyrians, being conquered and ruled by three vast empires throughout most of their history. The Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman empires, through their long occupation of Albania, introduced significant religious influences including Catholicism, Orthodox and Islam. Yet their powerful connection to their lands and language never faltered and helped to ensure the Albanian national identity remained strong and true. We are eager to help celebrate and embrace that identity here in Ontario.

By once again looking to the past, we can see that the month of November is truly significant for the Albanian community. On November 28, 1912, the Albanian people attained their independence as a sovereign nation and so commemorated the celebration of their declaration of independence.

Another important milestone celebrating Albania's rich heritage is Albanian Liberation Day. This is a day that recognizes the importance of resistance—resistance in the face of true evil that had risen to power, for November 29, 1944 is the day that Albanian forces stood their ground against Nazi Germany and defied their occupation.

These days, recognized here at Queen's Park through flag-raising ceremonies and other receptions and events, reinforce the reasons for naming November as Albanian Heritage Month.

This history of Albanian immigration to Canada began at the start of the 20th century, following internal pre-war revolutionary upheavals. Few emigrated to Canada after World War II, following the establishment of the Communist regime, which banned Albanians from travelling abroad. The huge wave of migrants came after the collapse of the Communist regime in the early 1990s. Despite this migration, by 1986, the number of Albanians was recorded at just under 1,500. However, in 1991, these figures nearly doubled. The number of Albanians in Canada peaked in the late 1990s as they fled economic and political crisis in both Albania and Yugoslavia.

1540

At the beginning of the 21st century, the armed conflict between Albania and the Serbian military and police caused many Albanians to feel compelled to leave Kosovo as refugees. As refugees, many Albanians began emigrating to Canada. Thus, in 1999, the government of Canada established a residency program to allow 7,000 refugee Kosovar Albanians.

As mentioned previously, Albanians do not come only from Albania and Kosovo, they come from at least five different countries: Macedonia, Greece, Italy, Serbia and Montenegro. This diversity has ensured that over the years, Albanian Canadians established many organizations in Canada to maintain their language, traditions and culture.

I would like to recognize the dedication and hard work of the Albanian groups and organizations here in Ontario undertaking that work. These associations have also helped other immigrants adapt to Canadian life. Many of these partnerships are in Toronto. In this city, the largest associations are the Albanian Muslim Society of Toronto, founded in 1954, and the Albanian Canadian Community Association of Toronto, founded in 1990. There are other notable organizations, such as the Albanian-Canadian Organization of Ottawa. Again, I want to thank them for their efforts on behalf of the people of Ontario.

There are so many opportunities to learn from our Albanian Canadians. I for one am looking forward to discovering more about the rich culture, literacy and artistic contributions they have made and I welcome everyone to do so. Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to talk on Albanian Heritage Month.

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm so honoured today to be able to rise for a second time, now, to talk about Albanian Heritage Month and the importance of recognizing Albanian Heritage Month.

I want to thank the member for Etobicoke North for bringing this forward early in this session to make sure that we keep on this. This is an important thing for us to eventually get passed. So to the member for Etobicoke North, thank you so much for picking up on this very, very important bill. I appreciate that.

Applause.

Hon. Brad Duguid: You're even getting applause for that today.

I want to thank as well the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, who, before she was in cabinet, I think, was the original mover of this bill in the last session, for her continued interest in it. I'm going to try to speak as briefly as I can because she's eyeballing me right now; she wants to speak to this as well. I want to make sure I save lots of time for Laura Albanese, because you know how good a speaker she is—as well as the member for Etobicoke Centre, who we all know is a huge supporter of the Albanian community.

It was kind of ironic that one of my colleagues came up to me when they heard I was going to speak to this bill and said, "I always thought you were Albanian." I said to him, "Well, I'm not." He said, "Well, why are you so involved with the Albanian community? You look like you're Albanian." I said, "Maybe I do kind of look like I'm Albanian"—and maybe that's why when I met Ruki Kondaj, the honorary president of the Albanian Canadian Community Association, she embraced me so closely when we met.

We became very good friends. It was really outside of politics that we became very good friends. Eventually, she invited me to some of her Albanian functions. Then they saw me dance with them, and I'm surprised they didn't kick me right out and say, "There's no way you should be involved with the Albanian community," because believe me, Albanians can dance; I really can't. So I don't know how I fit in, but I tried. Maybe they gave me credit for that.

If you ever hear Albanians sing—I don't know if there's an Albanian who doesn't have a good voice, but I haven't met one yet. When you go to Albanian functions, there are kids that come up; there are entertainers, there are musicians. Their ability to sing and act, the love for the culture—and we have some of the participants here with us today—it's just mind-boggling.

In some ways, I kind of embraced the Albanian community, and for some reason, they kind of embraced me. Ever since, I've been involved with them in a number of different things. I just want to say today, in the short time that I'm speaking, thank you to the Albanian community for the love and affection you've given me through the years, and thank you for all you've done for this province. You really are a shining example of what a culture can contribute to Ontario life and Canadian life and how you do it through your song, dance, food, the joy you bring and the sharing of your experiences. I think the member for Etobicoke North spoke very eloquently about the experience through history of the Albanian community. We learned so much from you.

I can't help, as Minister of Economic Development, but to also say, for all of the great Albanian business people, that we have a fantastic business community that's done great things in Ontario.

So congratulations to our Albanian community here in Ontario for all of the great things you've achieved here and continue to achieve. Thank you all so very much for your support for the Albanian community. I'm just honoured to be part of a Legislature which is embracing

our Albanian friends in support—I expect in support—once the vote is taken on this motion once again.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise for the second time to speak on Albanian Heritage Month. It's kind of hard when the bills have to be redone after the government prorogues. It's a little frustrating sometimes, and I think it's hard for people in the communities to understand. But today I think it's kind of fun. It's kind of fun to have all our visitors from the Albanian cultural and political communities come down and hear us talk again, because the first time we did it, we learned a little bit, and now we're learning a little bit more.

A lot of times we do learn from all of the cultural outreach we do. Today, it was a celebration of the 56th anniversary of the independence of the country of Cyprus. They did a flag-raising earlier today and had a very nice reception. There are little tidbits that you learn, such as that the root word of "Cyprus" is from the colour copper, because they used to mine copper there. Those kinds of things we really enjoy learning.

I want to really thank a friend of mine who's here with his mom: Ariel Ora, and his mother is Dhurata Sahatcija. I always have to practise how to say "Sahatcija," so I hope I'm saying it correctly. They're here today. Ariel has taken it upon himself to teach me about Albanian history and Albanian culture a little bit. I want to really thank him for that.

One of the things he taught me is that Albania is known as Shqipëri, which is "the land of the eagles," and the Albanians sort of nicknamed themselves Shqipëtar, or "the sons of eagles." They identified with this noble symbol very early on and it is proudly displayed on their flag. That's why I'm mentioning that Cyprus has the colour copper on their flag.

These are the kinds of things about which we realize we have so much in common, all the different communities. Yes, we have differences—different types of food and dance and music, and even our traditional costumes and things like that—but the more you learn from all the different communities, the more you learn how similar they are. One of the things that I've learned is that Albania, even though it's one of the smallest countries in Europe, has incredible landscapes. I'd really like to go and visit someday. That's what really draws us in and makes us want to learn and want to visit.

It's really a country known for very courageous people. We heard some of the history and the difficult times that they've been through in terms of being conquered by different empires throughout their history. But the character of Albanians is marked by tolerance and hospitality, and I want to mention, as the representative for the Jewish community here in Ontario, that Albania was the only country, after the Second World War, that had a greater number of Jews than it had before the war. That was because of the character of the Albanians, who protected their Jewish citizens. On behalf of the Jewish community, I want to thank the Albanian community.

It was mentioned already that Mother Teresa hailed from Albania. She's probably their most well-known celebrity, I guess, and she has now been canonized. She's Saint Teresa now.

What Ariel also taught me is, in terms of literary personalities, the name Ismail Kadare.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Qadri?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Yes, your namesake, exactly. Or you're his namesake.

1550

He's a very well-known, internationally acclaimed novelist. I think his first famous novel was *The General of the Dead Army*. He was born in—I know I'm not going to pronounce it properly, but I'm going to try—Gjirokastër, which is a small fairy-tale-like town in the mountains of southern Albania. A lot of his novels, I think, were set in Albania, specifically where he grew up. But he ran into problems with the regime, and he fled to France, where he lived in exile for a time.

He was given a doctor honoris causa at the University of Palermo.

He noted that, "Of all the languages of the Balkan peninsula, Albanian was the only one whose writing was banned under the Ottomans." Basically, they had to hide the fact that they were writing. They hid it in texts so that Ottoman soldiers thought it was actually Latin.

That kind of reminded me of ancient stories of the Jews living in Babylonian times, where they played games when they wanted to teach the Torah to children. The Roman soldiers would walk by and think they were just playing backgammon and other kinds of games, but actually, they were teaching the children. Or they would go in the forest and pretend that they were camping and doing hiking, but while they were doing that, they were actually teaching the children.

I think that we all know that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. Unfortunately, a lot of communities that have that inner strength to pass on, from generation to generation, their traditions, their language, their songs and all their art—sometimes they get that drive from the difficult times—not that I wish harsh, difficult times on anybody, but I think that you either lie down and die or you rise up and you get stronger. That's obviously what the Albanians have done—a very strong, wonderful people.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in the House and, today, to speak on Albanian Heritage Month. I'm only going to take a few minutes.

I would like to thank the Albanian people. I'm from Dutch heritage, and my family suffered greatly in World War II for protecting people of Jewish descent. I'd like to thank the Albanian people for also suffering greatly for protecting fellow people of this world.

One thing about private members' bills: On Thursday afternoons, it's one of the best times in the Legislature because we don't really argue back and forth and try and twist the truth; we talk about what really matters to

people and what really is important to people: celebrating people's heritage, celebrating people's culture.

We all learn from each other. I didn't know—this was my first opportunity to be in this debate—that Mother Teresa was of Albanian heritage. That's an incredible fact that I just learned today.

I would like to just close my short remarks by giving a shout-out to my favourite Albanian, who might not be as famous as some others but whom I had the pleasure and opportunity to work with here at Queen's Park. Her name was Zinejda Rita. She was my researcher. She did a lot of research for all of us. She no longer works here; she's going to law school. But I can say that she was a fantastic representative. She emigrated as a child. She was a fantastic representative—and still is—of your culture.

I would really like to thank you and to thank the mover of this bill. It's an incredible opportunity.

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

Hon. Laura Albanese: Good afternoon. Mirëdita.

I, as well, would like to welcome the numerous members of the Albanian community who have joined us in the Legislature this afternoon. Specifically, without omitting anyone, I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Ermal Muça, the Ambassador of the Republic of Albania to Canada; the representatives from the Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo to Canada; Mr. Ramazan Këllezi, who is the president of the Albanian Canadian Community Association of Toronto; and, of course, Dr. Ruki Kondaj, who is the honorary president of the same association.

Ruki and I originally worked feverishly, Madam Speaker—we worked together to propose this bill back in March of this year, 2016.

Just like my esteemed colleague the member from Etobicoke North mentioned, before I became a minister I was proud to introduce this bill in the Legislature. However, as you well know, as a minister—it's a great privilege to be a minister, but you cannot present a private member's bill. I am extremely pleased that the member from Etobicoke North has decided to present it, to carry this bill through the legislative process. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I am truly honoured to stand here to demonstrate my support, obviously, of this bill that promotes and supports the preservation of Albanian culture and heritage in the province of Ontario. This bill provides our province with the opportunity to recognize and celebrate the Albanian Canadian community that lives here in Ontario.

Albanian Canadians have contributed greatly over the last century to the social fabric of our country. Their capacity to integrate well in Canadian society reflects their strong family and their strong cultural values. The Albanian community in Ontario plays an important role in all aspects of our society. They have strong ethics, numerous success stories. They have distinguished themselves in business, science and art. We have a high number of youth, and some of them are present here today, from the Little Eagles Ensemble. Many of them go to our colleges and our universities.

The Albanian community is also very strong in my riding. As you heard before, my last name actually means “Albanian” in Italian. I was born and raised in Italy. That’s a peculiarity of many cultures. Just like my name means “Albanian,” the MPP from Eglinton–Lawrence, Mr. Colle, his last name means “hill.” Who knows? We have to see which hill his family originally came from.

In any case, we heard that the Albanian community will be welcoming here a number of Arbëreshë visitors to Toronto next month. That’s a minority: an Albanian community that lives in southern Italy, mainly in Calabria and Sicily, but also in Puglia, which is the region where I originally come from and the MPP from Eglinton–Lawrence also comes from. I found out that they settled on the outskirts of the city I was born in, Taranto. Who knows? It may very well be—it is possible that the ancient roots of my family are Albanian and I will endeavour to find out one day.

Today we want to talk about the Albanian community here in Ontario. I hope that we will have the support of every member in this House in supporting this bill, because it really merits to celebrate and to honour everything that the Albanian Canadian community has done to contribute to our province.

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

Mr. Yvan Baker: It’s an honour to rise to speak once again in support of the Albanian Heritage Month Act. Mirëdita to our guests from the Albanian Canadian community. It’s good to see all of you again. It’s my honour to stand here to support this wonderful bill.

I’d like to start by thanking my colleague and neighbour Shafiq Qadri, from the riding of Etobicoke North. Of course, I can’t go on without acknowledging my colleague Laura Albanese, also my neighbour to the east, who introduced this bill in the first place and for her leadership on this.

At the risk of being repetitive, I’d also like to acknowledge our guests. I won’t name you all but I do want to make sure I recognize Ramazan Këllezi and Ruki Kondaj for your leadership, and all of you for your leadership in the community.

I just want to take the couple of minutes that I have left to talk about why I think this bill is so important. I’ve shared this story with most of you before, but I’ll share it again for the record and for the members of the Legislature. I grew up in a family where my grandparents immigrated to Canada from eastern Europe. They were not of Albanian heritage. I actually don’t know what my surname means in Albanian or in Italian. They came from eastern Europe and they were very proud of their heritage, as you are proud of yours.

1600

My grandfather in particular was proud of his heritage and he wanted to make sure that I learned about my heritage. One of the ways he made sure I did that was to go to Saturday school. He and my mother worked very hard to make sure I learned the language, the culture and the history of our ancestors, our predecessors.

I remember every Saturday after Saturday school he would sit with me and we would do Saturday school homework. You can imagine this wasn’t something that I really wanted to be doing on a Saturday afternoon, but I did. One day I was particularly frustrated, struggling with the work, and said, “Gido”—I called him Gido at the time—“I don’t want to do this anymore. I want to stop.” And he said, “You cannot stop, and I’ll tell you why. First of all, it’s important to me that you learn about your history and your heritage and your culture. As you get older, as you learn more, you will appreciate it more. But,” he said, “I also want you to learn these things because I want you to learn about the people who made this country great”—made Canada great—“the people who came before you and built this great country.”

That, to me, is what this bill is about. Yes, it’s about celebrating the rich Albanian heritage and culture and history, absolutely, and you have much to be proud of. I’ve had the chance to experience that a little bit with all of you over the course of the last couple of years. But it’s also about celebrating the people who made this country great, the contributions that you’ve made in our social, cultural, business and economic life and many other facets of life here in Canada—the contributions you’ve made and the contributions that you will make.

I’ve had the privilege of attending flag-raising here at Queen’s Park with many of you—your independence day celebrations, for example. During one of those first celebrations that I had the pleasure of attending with Laura and with Brad Duguid, I even learned an Albanian dance that I practise once in a while with many of you. One of the things I learned on that day that I will share with you that Ruki taught me are the words in Albanian:

Remarks in Albanian.

That means “I am proud to be Albanian.” That to me encapsulates what this bill is about. You have much to be proud of. You should be proud of your history, culture, and heritage, but also of the contributions you have made and the contributions you will make—

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I also would like to extend my welcome on behalf of all New Democrats to all the members of the Albanian community here today. Thank you so much for being here.

What I think is so important for us to acknowledge—I feel like I’ve mentioned this a number of times—is that when we talk about Canada as a country and we talk about welcoming other communities, and some of the folks here have spoken about how Canada welcomes this diversity—I want to change the language a bit.

Besides the natives and the aboriginals, Madam Speaker—the people who were here before—everyone here is an immigrant. Everyone here is an immigrant. It’s a matter of time. Some people came here 10 years ago. Some people came here 10 days ago. Some people came here 10 decades ago. But at the end of the day, we’re all immigrants. Because of that, none of us can actually welcome the other.

In fact, Canada is a mosaic. Canada is, by definition, made up of many cultures. That's something that I think we need to acknowledge: that by its very definition, it's a country defined by diversity. It is made up of diversity. So we can't welcome one another. In fact, you are adding to the beauty of Canada. You being here makes Canada what it is. I think that's an important thing to note.

Another thing is—and I notice this with many different communities—we sometimes feel like we are guests in Canada. And because we're guests we think, "We're in someone else's home. We can't really complain. We're in someone else's home and the food is not so good? Let's not say anything. We're in someone else's home, let's not complain about the food or the room being dirty or the place being dirty. We have to be quiet." Let's make this loud and clear; let's make this absolutely without any question: This is not a place where you are guests; this is your home. You can respect it. You can complain about it. You can build it stronger. It is your home.

I think all communities from diverse backgrounds sometimes feel like they're guests, and I want to rid them of that mentality. No one is a guest here. Everyone has a home here. This is your home.

I also really want to take some time to talk about the beauty of Albania itself and its diversity. I find that wherever you see diversity, you see a lot of beauty. The land of Albania itself is diverse. There are mountainous regions and there are beautiful coastal regions. In fact—something that has been mentioned by a previous member—tourism is one of the major drivers of the economy in Albania because it's so beautiful. It's kind of a hidden gem. Numerous websites that talk about travel have listed Albania as a must-visit. So I must visit Albania one day, hopefully, so I look forward to that.

Something else that really struck me as an important part of the Albanian identity is the fact that throughout the struggles, if you see the history of Albania, there is a strong theme of resilience. The community is very resilient. Despite difficulties, despite obstacles, the community has really flourished, and it speaks to the identity of the Albanian people. I think that's why the land of eagles is such an appropriate term because the eagle soars above. No matter what happens, the eagle continues to soar. That's the spirit of Albanians: They soar above all the obstacles, all the difficulties, and continue to prosper. That's something that truly inspires me.

The choice of November as a date is very powerful, given the Albanian declaration of independence and particularly the liberation day, which celebrates the resistance, which is again that spirit of rising against the obstacles, that spirit of resistance that the Albanian people have. I think that's very powerful.

I want to finish, with my last minute, by talking about the culture of Albanian people. A culture is rich in a number of areas and the Albanian people provide richness in all those. The food has, again, that diversity where you've combined the cultures of different areas and brought them together to create the best of all the

region. You have delicious desserts and seafood—even though I'm a vegetarian, I acknowledge that it's amazing. All the cuisine is phenomenal.

The language is also a very rich language that's been built up from diversity from different areas. The music and dance—I really want to talk about this just very briefly. I read a bit about the dance. There was the heroic tones from the north and the subtle, relaxed sounds of the south, the dance, the cultural costumes—the culture is beautiful and strong, and I salute the community for keeping it strong and maintaining that heritage here in Canada. Your identity makes you who you are, and I wish we could all learn from the power of this small but mighty nation that celebrates their identity so powerfully.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. I return to the member from Etobicoke North to wrap up.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Thank you, Speaker. I thank all the members for their very generous support and kind words today, particularly in the presence of His Excellency the Ambassador and members of the Albanian Canadian community. I thank colleagues from my side of course, in particular the Honourable Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Laura Albanese, or "Laura the Albanian."

Speaker, I would just share with the House that after a slight delay, I will be claiming in November 2016, God willing, my honorary bachelor of arts as a specialist in English literature from the University of Toronto. In that capacity of course I was very pleased to read the novelist Ismail Kadare or, as I would prefer to say, "Ismail Qadri."

I would quote from him for a moment. In two separate areas he wrote, "Dictatorship and authentic literature are incompatible.... The writer is the natural enemy of dictatorship." Those of you who know not only the history of Albania but the struggles that he captured, discussed and played with in his many novels—it speaks to the extraordinary resilience of the Albanian community, not only against the Romans and Byzantines but other empires in World War II and, of course, the many, many challenges they have, both cultural as well as geographic.

A final quotation, and I'll go through it fast: "An Albanian's house is the dwelling of God and of the guest. Of God and the guest, you see. So before it is the house of its master, it is the house of one's guest. The guest, in an Albanian's life, represents the supreme ethical category, more important than blood relations." This particular quotation speaks to the spirit of inclusivity, celebration, protection, generosity, compassion and humanity. That, Speaker—as we are appreciating formally today with this bill, if passed, with November being Albanian Heritage Month—is in fact the spirit of the Albanian people worldwide.

Thank you, Speaker. Falemenderit.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

WATER FLUORIDATION

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will deal first with ballot item number 7, standing in the name of Mr. Delaney.

Mr. Delaney has moved private member's notice of motion number 27. Is it the pleasure of House that the motion carry. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

SAVING THE GIRL
NEXT DOOR ACT, 2016
LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SAUVEGARDE
DES JEUNES FILLES

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Scott has moved second reading of Bill 17, An Act to enact the Human Trafficking Awareness Day Act, 2016 and the Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act, 2016 and to amend Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I believe the member can tell us which committee it will go to?

Ms. Laurie Scott: To the justice committee, please.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Justice committee. All right? All right.

ALBANIAN HERITAGE MONTH ACT,
2016LOI DE 2016 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE ALBANAIS

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Qaadri has moved second reading of Bill 36, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to refer to the member. What committee?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: To the committee on regulations and private bills.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Do we agree? Agreed.

Orders of the day?

Hon. Chris Ballard: Madam Speaker, it's with some regret that I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Is it the pleasure of the House that we move adjournment? Carried.

Before I adjourn the House, I wish everybody a happy Thanksgiving. We will be returning on Monday, October 17, 2016, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1611.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
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, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
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 Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
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 and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
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	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Gélinas, France (NDP) Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Nickel Belt 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) Hardeman, Ernie (PC) Harris, Michael (PC) Hatfield, Percy (NDP) Hillier, Randy (PC)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest Oxford Kitchener–Conestoga Windsor–Tecumseh Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB) Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Barrie 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
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
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 Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
MacLaren, Jack (PC) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Malhi, Harinder (LIB) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills Nepean–Carleton Brampton–Springdale Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP) Martins, Cristina (LIB) Martow, Gila (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin Davenport Thornhill London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable du Gouvernement numérique
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB) McDonell, Jim (PC) McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry Cambridge	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC) Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB) Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex Etobicoke–Lakeshore Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
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, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Associate Minister of Education (Early Years and Child Care) / Ministre associée de l'Éducation (Petite enfance et Garde d'enfants)
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	Attorney General / Procureur général
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent-Essex	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth-Wellington	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
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	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
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, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea-Gore-Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
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, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
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 Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation
Vacant	Niagara West-Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest-Glanbrook	
Vacant	Ottawa-Vanier	

**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
Bob Delaney, Cheri DiNovo
Joe Dickson, Han Dong
Michael Harris, Sophie Kiwala
Arthur Potts, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
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
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Han Dong, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Cristina Martins, Peter Z. Milczyn
Lou Rinaldi
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
Yvan Baker, Mike Colle
Grant Crack, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Harinder Malhi
Jim McDonell, 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
James J. Bradley, Raymond Sung Joon Cho
Wayne Gates, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Cristina Martins
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle
Bob Delaney, Randy Hillier
Michael Mantha, Arthur Potts
Shafiq Qadri, Laurie Scott
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Steve Clark
Granville Anderson, Robert Bailey
James J. Bradley, Steve Clark
Vic Dhillon, Sophie Kiwala
Michael Mantha, 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
John Fraser, Ernie Hardeman
Percy Hatfield, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Peter Z. Milczyn, Julia Munro
Arthur Potts
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 / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Jennifer K. French
Ted McMeekin, Mario Sergio
Bill Walker, Soo Wong
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
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Ted McMeekin, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch