



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)**

Tuesday 29 November 2016

Mardi 29 novembre 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Todd Decker

Greffier
Todd Decker

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

Tuesday 29 November 2016 / Mardi 29 novembre 2016

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

All Families Are Equal Act (Parentage and Related Registrations Statute Law Amendment), 2016, Bill 28, Mr. Naqvi / Loi de 2016 sur l'égalité de toutes les familles (modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne la filiation et les enregistrements connexes), projet de loi 28, M. Naqvi

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Hon. Yasir Naqvi | 1901 |
| Mr. Randy Hillier | 1903 |
| Ms. Cheri DiNovo | 1904 |
| Third reading vote deferred | 1907 |

Putting Consumers First Act (Consumer Protection Statute Law Amendment), 2016, Bill 59, Mrs. Lalonde / Loi de 2016 donnant la priorité aux consommateurs (modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne la protection du consommateur), projet de loi 59, Mme Lalonde

| | |
|--|------|
| Mr. John Yakabuski | 1907 |
| Ms. Jennifer K. French | 1908 |
| Hon. Dipika Damerla | 1908 |
| Mrs. Gila Martow | 1909 |
| Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong | 1909 |
| Mr. John Yakabuski | 1909 |
| Second reading debate deemed adjourned | 1910 |

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

| | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Ms. Lisa M. Thompson | 1910 |
| Mr. Taras Natyshak | 1910 |
| Hon. Deborah Matthews | 1910 |
| Mr. Norm Miller | 1910 |
| Ms. Catherine Fife | 1910 |
| Hon. Helena Jaczek | 1910 |
| Ms. Lisa M. Thompson | 1910 |
| Mr. John Vanthof | 1910 |
| Hon. Jeff Leal | 1910 |
| Mr. Todd Smith | 1910 |
| Hon. Eric Hoskins | 1910 |
| Ms. Cheri DiNovo | 1910 |
| Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong | 1910 |

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Highway tolls

| | |
|----------------------------|------|
| Mr. Patrick Brown | 1910 |
| Hon. Charles Sousa | 1911 |
| Hon. Steven Del Duca | 1911 |

Mining industry

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| Mr. Patrick Brown | 1912 |
| Hon. Glen R. Murray | 1912 |

Hydro rates

| | |
|----------------------------|------|
| Mr. Jagmeet Singh | 1913 |
| Hon. Glenn Thibeault | 1913 |

Hydro rates

| | |
|----------------------------|------|
| Mr. Jagmeet Singh | 1914 |
| Hon. Glenn Thibeault | 1914 |

Ontario economy

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Mr. Victor Fedeli | 1915 |
| Hon. Charles Sousa | 1915 |

Smart meters

| | |
|----------------------------|------|
| Mr. Peter Tabuns | 1915 |
| Hon. Glenn Thibeault | 1916 |

Pork industry

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Mr. Mike Colle | 1916 |
| Hon. Jeff Leal | 1916 |

Consumer protection

| | |
|----------------------------|------|
| Mr. Jim McDonell | 1917 |
| Hon. David Oraziotti | 1917 |

Agri-food industry

| | |
|----------------------------|------|
| Mr. Taras Natyshak | 1917 |
| Hon. Glenn Thibeault | 1917 |
| Hon. Jeff Leal | 1918 |

Senior citizens

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| Mr. Lou Rinaldi | 1918 |
| Hon. Dipika Damerla | 1918 |

Hydro rates

| | |
|----------------------------|------|
| Ms. Laurie Scott | 1918 |
| Hon. Glenn Thibeault | 1919 |

Hydro rates

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Mr. Paul Miller | 1919 |
| Hon. Chris Ballard | 1919 |

Assistance to farmers

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Ms. Sophie Kiwala | 1920 |
| Hon. Jeff Leal | 1920 |

Ontario Drug Benefit Program

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Ms. Sylvia Jones | 1920 |
| Hon. Eric Hoskins | 1921 |

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Burden Reduction Act, 2016, Bill 27, Mr. Duguid / Loi de 2016 sur l'allègement du fardeau réglementaire, projet de loi 27, M. Duguid

| | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Second reading agreed to | 1921 |
|--------------------------------|------|

| | |
|---|------|
| All Families Are Equal Act (Parentage and Related Registrations Statute Law Amendment), 2016, Bill 28, Mr. Naqvi / Loi de 2016 sur l'égalité de toutes les familles (modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne la filiation et les enregistrements connexes), projet de loi 28, M. Naqvi | |
| Third reading agreed to | 1922 |

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

| | |
|--|------|
| Lyme disease | |
| Mr. Steve Clark | 1922 |
| Skilled trades | |
| Mr. Wayne Gates | 1922 |
| Ottawa Hospital | |
| Mr. John Fraser | 1923 |
| Grey Granite Club | |
| Mr. Bill Walker | 1923 |
| Shared services organizations | |
| Mme France Gélinas | 1923 |
| Tour for Humanity | |
| Mrs. Cristina Martins | 1924 |
| Wind turbines | |
| Mr. Todd Smith | 1924 |
| Mentoring Juniors Kids Organization | |
| Mr. Han Dong | 1924 |
| Order of Vaughan recipients | |
| Mrs. Gila Martow | 1924 |

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /
RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS**

| | |
|--|------|
| Standing Committee on Government Agencies | |
| The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) | 1925 |
| Report deemed adopted | 1925 |

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

| | |
|--|------|
| Computers Mean Business Inc. Act, 2016, Bill Pr54, Mr. Dong | |
| First reading agreed to | 1925 |

MOTIONS

| | |
|---|------|
| Private members' public business | |
| Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris | 1925 |
| Motion agreed to | 1925 |
| Order of business | |
| Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris | 1925 |
| Motion agreed to | 1926 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Order of business | |
| Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris | 1926 |
| The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) | 1926 |

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| Dental care | |
| Mr. Jim Wilson | 1926 |
| Alzheimer's disease | |
| Mr. Percy Hatfield | 1926 |
| Home inspection industry | |
| Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn | 1927 |
| School closures | |
| Mr. Bill Walker | 1927 |
| Long-term care | |
| Mme France Gélinas | 1927 |
| Ice machines | |
| Ms. Ann Hoggarth | 1927 |
| Hospital funding | |
| Mr. Jim Wilson | 1928 |
| Secours aux sinistrés | |
| Mme France Gélinas | 1928 |
| Wind turbines | |
| Mr. Todd Smith | 1928 |
| Shingles vaccine | |
| Mr. Percy Hatfield | 1928 |
| Health care funding | |
| Mr. Jim Wilson | 1929 |
| Privatization of public assets | |
| Mme France Gélinas | 1929 |
| Hydro rates | |
| Mr. Victor Fedeli | 1929 |

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

| | |
|--|------|
| PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day Act, 2016, Bill 43, Mr. Bailey / Loi de 2016 sur la Journée de sensibilisation au PANDAS/PANS, projet de loi 43, M. Bailey | |
| Second reading agreed to | 1930 |
| Nurse Practitioner Week Act, 2016, Bill 63, Mme Gélinas / Loi de 2016 sur la Semaine des infirmières praticiennes et infirmiers praticiens, projet de loi 63, Mme Gélinas | |
| Second reading agreed to | 1930 |
| Time allocation | |
| Hon. Tracy MacCharles | 1930 |
| Mr. Yvan Baker | 1931 |
| Mr. Steve Clark | 1932 |
| Mr. John Vanthof | 1933 |
| Mr. Victor Fedeli | 1933 |
| Mr. Percy Hatfield | 1938 |

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Mr. Taras Natyshak | 1940 |
| Mme France Gélinas | 1941 |
| Mrs. Lisa Gretzky | 1942 |
| Vote deferred..... | 1943 |
| Time allocation | |
| Hon. Bill Mauro | 1943 |
| Motion agreed to | 1944 |

| | |
|---|------|
| Modernizing Ontario’s Municipal Legislation Act, 2016, Bill 68, Mr. Mauro / Loi de 2016 sur la modernisation de la législation municipale ontarienne, projet de loi 68, M. Mauro | |
| Hon. Bill Mauro | 1944 |
| Mr. Lou Rinaldi..... | 1946 |
| Second reading debate deemed adjourned | 1949 |

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Tuesday 29 November 2016

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mardi 29 novembre 2016

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ALL FAMILIES ARE EQUAL ACT
(PARENTAGE AND RELATED
REGISTRATIONS STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT), 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ÉGALITÉ
DE TOUTES LES FAMILLES
(MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI
CONCERNE LA FILIATION ET LES
ENREGISTREMENTS CONNEXES)

Mr. Naqvi moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act, the Vital Statistics Act and various other Acts respecting parentage and related registrations / *Projet de loi 28, Loi modifiant la Loi portant réforme du droit de l'enfance, la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil et diverses autres lois en ce qui concerne la filiation et les enregistrements connexes.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm very excited, in my capacity as the Attorney General for the province, to speak today on third reading on the proposed All Families Are Equal Act, 2016.

Speaker, this bill would have not been possible without the support and inspiration of many people who have been actively working on this issue. I do want to acknowledge a few people, such as Jennifer, Kirsti, Ruby and Cy Mathers McHenry; Sheila and Justin McHenry; Rachel Epstein, Andy Inkster and Joanna Radbord; Donna McDonagh, Julia Gruson-Wood; Emery Potter and Goldie Gruson-Potter.

Speaker, people in Ontario value diversity and equality. In Ontario, we believe that everyone should be treated equally no matter their race, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. That's why all parents and their kids need to be treated equally under the law.

Whatever shape a family takes, the most important thing is that children grow up knowing that they have the love and guidance of their parents, a strong and stable

place to call home, and certainty about whom their parents are.

I wanted to take a moment to go over why our government introduced this bill and why it is so important that this bill passes as soon as possible. Members of the LGBTQ2+ community must have the same rights as their heterosexual peers: the right to love and marry the person of their choosing, and the right to start and raise a family.

As you may recall from my previous statements in the House, Speaker, the law governing the legal status of a child's parents at birth has not been substantially changed in Ontario in nearly 40 years. A lot has changed since then. In the year 2016, there's no one way to start and raise a family. Family structures are more diverse.

Right now, under the law, there are extra burdens placed on certain parents who use assistance to have children. LGBTQ2+ parents often have to spend time and money to be legally recognized as their children's parents. I've heard that this experience can be painful and humiliating for families. That's not fair and it's not right. Having a child should be a wonderful time, not a time filled with uncertainty and anxiety.

Speaker, it is not fair to these families that they have to spend their time and their hard-earned money to be legally recognized as their child's parents. The reality is that our province's parentage laws are behind the times and do not reflect the diverse, open and LGBTQ2+-proud province that we are.

Let me recap what we are proposing in this legislation if it passes the House. Passing the All Families Are Equal Act would update our laws so that all kids are treated equally, by recognizing the legal status of their parents no matter if their parents are LGBTQ2+ or straight, and no matter if they were conceived with or without assistance. It would not require them to go to court and spend money on lawyers.

If passed, the bill would also allow parents who use a surrogate to have a child to be legally recognized as parents without having to go to court, as long as they have written agreement with the surrogate and have all received legal advice. To help protect the rights of surrogates, this bill, if passed, would also require the surrogate to confirm that she is still okay with giving up the child after it is born.

To support families where a parent chooses to freeze their eggs or sperm when facing a terminal illness, we are also proposing that a court be able to recognize a deceased person as a parent if the surviving parent decides to conceive a child after the death of their spouse or partner.

In recognition of co-parents and multi-parent families, we are proposing to simplify the process of birth registration so that up to four people could be recognized as parents of a child—regardless of how they were conceived—without having to spend time and money going to the courts.

In order to accomplish all of these things, this bill would amend 41 separate acts.

I believe this bill responds to key priorities of our government: to make everyday life easier for Ontarians, to remove unnecessary burdens and costs, and to create a fair society for all.

Speaker, the All Families Are Equal Act, if passed, would amend Ontario's parentage laws to have gender-neutral language, wherever possible, as well. We're doing this to make the law as inclusive as possible while recognizing that some families don't use "mom" and "dad." I want to be clear, however, that people can still choose to use the terms "mother" or "father" on their child's birth certificate; to suggest otherwise is false. If this bill passes, people would also have the option of choosing the term "parent" on their child's birth certificate.

I would also like to take a few moments to thank the many people who have worked very hard to make the All Families Are Equal Act possible. I know there has been a lot of emotion that has been involved. We are talking about families and we are talking about children, which is something that I know we all recognize in this Legislature and across the province.

This bill has been about inclusion. This bill has been about equality. It is about ensuring that all parents, regardless of their background, reflecting the diversity of our province, are able to care and provide love for their children the way we always, always have done. I think that is exciting. It is highly emotional to know that we are taking this very important step to ensure that we're recognizing and bringing within the legal framework all families in our province with this beautiful diversity, and that we're not requiring parents to take any additional extra steps to be recognized as parents; they will be parents by way of right, as a result of these changes, if this legislation passes.

I would first like to recognize Jennifer and Kirsti Mathers McHenry and their children, Cy and Ruby. I believe Cy and Ruby finally made it into the House for the first time. They're waving at us right now. We want to welcome them both. Give them a big round of applause.

Applause.

It's always good to see little children in the House, Speaker. I think we should have kids in the House more often.

We worked very closely with Jennifer and Kirsti as we developed the bill, and I want to personally thank them. I would say that I think, during the course of the work we were doing, we became friends. We had some very, at times, tough conversations, at times emotional conversations, but—at least I can speak for myself, Speaker—I'm

a better person for it, because I did learn a lot from both of them. I want to thank them for their attention, their love and their care that they gave to this bill.

0910

Both of these women shared their very intense and deep personal stories with Ontarians in this Legislature, the legislative committee and with the media. It's not easy to share your own personal story in such detail, and they both did that, and they did that for the sole purpose of moving public policy forward in our province, and to make sure that other moms and other dads and other families don't have to go through the hurdles that they had to go through as they were having and raising these two beautiful children of theirs, Cy and Ruby.

I also would be remiss if I did not recognize the member from Parkdale–High Park for her advocacy and leadership on this very important issue. I want to thank her personally for the passion she brings. The member and I have now had the opportunity to work on many bills together, and it has always been a great delight. The last time, with one of the bills we worked on, I said great things about the member, which I stand by. I found myself mentioned in her re-election campaign material, which is totally fine. I hope she will say some nice things so I can quote her in my materials too.

It just goes to show, Speaker, that despite what people see on camera during question period, actually members across the aisle do work together, with each other, because we're all driven by the same purpose every single day, which is to make our province a better place to live. So we probably agree more than disagree, and this bill is a great example of that kind of agreement, that kind of unison in voices in making sure that we move forward with a very fundamental human rights issue. I thank the member for all her work, as well as many other individuals and organizations who participated in the formation of this bill over the past few months. And of course I want to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Social Policy for their hard work on this bill as well.

Speaker, I don't plan to talk too long, so I want to make some concluding remarks, and that is to say that this piece of legislation, the All Families Are Equal Act, would help ensure that all children are treated equally by recognizing the legal status of their parents, no matter if their parents are LGBTQ2+ or straight or if they are conceived with or without assistance. Our government is calling on every single member of provincial Parliament to vote in support of this bill. It is important for all members of this Legislature, new and old, to show their support for the LGBTQ2+ community and the values of diversity and equality that are so important to Ontario by voting for this bill. We want this important piece of legislation to pass as quickly as possible, which is why the government will not be putting up any more speakers.

Thank you, Speaker, for the time, and I look forward to hearing the comments of other members.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Further debate?

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's important that we are engaged in this discussion, in this debate on Bill 28, for I feel that it has not been adequately examined in the full details. So I do want to offer some comments during this morning's debate.

I'll start by saying that Bill 28 does play an important role in updating Ontario's laws pertaining to parentage so that they better reflect society's views on same-sex marriages and the use of new reproductive technologies. It is important that our legislation and our justice system are updated to accommodate these changes in the evolution of societal views and in improvements in technology which enable new circumstances to come into play. Ensuring that same-sex couples and parents who use reproductive technologies are able to be legally recognized as parents without additional hurdles and bureaucracy is an important step in ensuring that all people are treated equally under the law.

I believe that these changes within Bill 28 are wholly justifiable updates to our existing legislation. I find no reason to oppose their approval and am supportive of them. If these changes made up the bill in its entirety, I believe that the Liberal government would have had full support, not only from this Legislature but also from the vast majority of people in Ontario.

However, Bill 28 does more than simply update our laws. It also extends our laws into some unknown and uncharted areas, with consequences unseen. It permits four—or in some cases more than four—people to become parents of a child. It does this while providing no explanation as to the problem this aspect of the legislation is meant to solve. We have not seen or had the opportunity to examine any studies, any empirical evidence of just what consequences may result from that recognition. Due to the fact that no real objective problem had been identified and that no objective explanation has been put forward, this aspect of Bill 28 has been opposed by many members of the public, from very diverse political and cultural backgrounds. This public confusion is a symptom of the Liberal government's haste to push Bill 28 through the Legislature and the refusal to spend any time evaluating the effects and consequences such legislation may have.

Because of the emotional nature of Bill 28, it would seem imperative that the government ensure that it be properly communicated and justified, not only to the Legislature, who is tasked with approving it, but to the people of Ontario, whom such legislation will ultimately affect.

What is also worrisome, Speaker, is that this obvious expedience has caused the government to be negligent, I would say, in their task to ensure that the bill is complete and that safeguards exist to ensure its functionality. By putting so much stock into our judicial system to protect the best interests of children, the government has ignored our own responsibility as legislators to craft effective legislation and uphold our responsibilities to protect the children. It seems that rather than allowing the Legislature to ensure that the proper safeguards and functionality

are in place, and that unknown consequences are evaluated, the government would rather quickly throw the burden onto the court system rather than examine these issues ourselves.

Reasonable amendments were proposed at committee to place safeguards into the bill that would close up areas of uncertainty and ensure effective functionality. These amendments included an addition which would ensure that children born through reproductive technologies would be able to access the relevant medical histories of their biological parents in order to ensure they could take part in effective health planning for their future. This health care information is crucial for any person who wishes to understand potential health issues passed down to them by their parents and is a reasonable method to address a potential issue caused by modern assisted reproductive technologies. This amendment was ruled out of order, and it highlights a perfect example of how the government has not taken the appropriate time to deliberate and review Bill 28 and come to a full understanding of the unanswered questions and potential issues this legislation may pose.

0920

An amendment was also introduced to put a reasonable safeguard on the words "mother" and "father" by ensuring that they would remain as options on government forms such as birth certificates, alongside the option of "parent," as it is changed in Bill 28. That amendment was voted down by the government and the third party. That amendment was offered up in a response to the government claims that this terminology of "parent" and the terminology of "mother" and "father" would not be removed. We put that amendment in to safeguard its continued use, and it was voted down. It has caused some public opposition to this bill, that the threat of these identities, "mother" and "father," may be deconstructed and eliminated in subsequent regulations.

However, rather than ensuring all parents were accommodated in this legislation, it seems the priority was yet again to rush the bill through the Legislature without fully evaluating the consequences. The arguments that were made against this reasonable amendment, as well as the treatment of some of the deputants who were supportive of the amendment, was shameful, to say the least. The people of Ontario who come to this Legislature and to our committees ought never to be subjected to ridicule and malice from those who are elected and charged to listen to their concerns.

It is true that there are aspects of Bill 28 that are fully appropriate and changes that need to take place to bring our parentage laws up to speed with new technology options and social views. For those changes alone, the bill, in many ways, is supportable. However, we did fight for reasonable amendments and safeguards to ensure that unforeseen consequences of Bill 28 could be minimized or mitigated, because it was obvious that questions and risks were not being fully investigated or examined.

The NDP and the government showed no intention to ensure that all views, questions and people were accom-

modated, and they are responsible for voting down those reasonable amendments. I trust that the government in future will take the time to review the effects this legislation may have on all our families, and in our family courts, and that should negative consequences arise, they find the same expediency and the same courage in correcting any of the consequences that may arise.

When I was putting together thoughts for this morning's debate, I recalled the comments of our recently departed Clerk, Deb Deller. When she left this Legislature, in her comments that final day, she implored the government to look up to the owl that is engraved in this Legislature, that it represents wisdom, guidance, thoughtfulness. I think the government has lost sight of the owl. Hopefully, as this bill makes its way through society, if there are negative consequences, that wisdom will prevail and courage will prevail to correct any of those failings.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm going to start by making some comments about what we've just heard from the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. Before I get into what I was going to say before I listened to his words here, first of all, I'd like to say that I'm very proud to be part of a Legislature where all views are not accommodated. I'm very proud to be part of a Legislature where racism is not accommodated, where misogyny is not accommodated, and where homophobia and transphobia are not accommodated. I think, in this post-Trump world, it's incumbent upon all of us to have the courage, and sometimes the ability, to resist those very forces.

We keep in mind that we are debating this bill against a world backdrop where some 80 countries have laws against homosexuality, where many of those countries have the death penalty for those who are LGBTQ2S, where massacres like the one in Orlando still occur in North America, and where the very tenuous rights of LGBTQ2S folk are always and ever under attack. That is the backdrop here.

The very same arguments—that we haven't thought through all of the ramifications—were made around the fight for equal marriage. Well, guess what? We've had equal marriage for a long time now, certainly in this country, and the sky has not fallen. In fact, even at the time that we were hearing testimony around Bill 28, the parent equality act, I saw some of my old adversaries come: the same people with whom I used to debate equal marriage; the same people and their followers who are out at the front protesting advances around sex education in our schools; the same people who actually proffered death threats around equal marriage—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Further questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Wait a minute, what are you talking about?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Your time is up. This is questions and comments.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Oh, sorry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Further debate? I recognize now the member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: To be continued, Mr. Speaker. Sorry about that.

Again, the same quarter that was responsible for all of that, they haven't gone away. I think it's really important for those of us who sometimes feel like we live in a bubble of equal rights—rights that we feel really are equal—that those folk are still out there. Mind you, the good news is, they are not the majority. The majority of Ontarians and the majority of Canadians do support equal rights for LGBTQ2S folk. That means a great deal in the range of policy, and that's what brings us here today.

A few other things he talked about: the haste with which this bill is going through. No, no: 10 years later. It's taken 10 years to get here, and I'm going to talk about that. Ten years isn't fast; it's a decade. It hasn't happened quickly.

That we've thrown the burden back on the courts: absolutely not. In fact, it's the reverse: The courts have thrown the burden on us. The courts demanded of this Legislature that we act because the law was so clearly discriminatory.

That “parents” is actually the appropriate legal term: There's nothing revolutionary about that. Guess what? Even after the parent equality bill passes, there will still be mothers and fathers. Who knew? It's amazing. There will still be mothers and fathers even after parent equality is passed, and they will be acknowledged as such.

His question—we've heard about this: four-parent families and how this is a completely revolutionary idea. Well, I can tell you that every divorced heterosexual couple who then remarries is a four-parent family. And heterosexual couples who have divorced and remarried, where children spend some time at one household and some time in another—they already have four parents. This is not a social experiment. This has been going on for as long as marriage has been going on. Mr. Speaker, this is just equality we're talking about, so that LGBTQ2S communities can also experience, legally, four parents.

0930

But that's not the issue, really. That's not what he's really speaking about, and not who he's speaking for and to. Who he's really speaking for and to is that drum beat of a voice coming out of the fundamentalist religious right. I can say that I've been fighting that voice for decades. In fact, I've been fighting that voice for 45 years.

I'm a United Church minister by trade, and 45 years ago, in 1971, I was proud to be the only woman who signed on to We Demand, which was the first gay rights demonstration in Canadian history on Parliament Hill, when homosexuality was still illegal. In 1971 we also had the first gay pride. Contrary to some opinions, it was a big picnic over at Hanlan's Point. I have the pictures to prove it. It was a celebration of all things LGBTQ2S—well, just “gay” back then.

In the 2000s we saw, of course, the struggle for legalized same-sex marriage. I was proud to marry two wonderful women in my church using the systems of banns that Brent had started. I submitted it to Thunder Bay, and it became the first legalized same-sex marriage because one of the clerks in Thunder Bay thought that Paula was a male name. A little bit of gender confusion there; it was great. So we got that, and that was the first legalized same-sex marriage in North America, actually.

Then I got elected. One of the first bills that I proposed was Toby's Act, to add gender identity and gender expression to the Ontario Human Rights Code, and I found support all around the House. In fact, Christine Elliott from the Progressive Conservatives and Yasir Naqvi from the government side, the Liberals, supported that bill. After five tablings and much struggle, many years later we got it passed. So now we have gender identity and gender expression in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

By the way—and this is important—Bill 16: Yes, we need it federally, but if you are a trans person in Ontario, unless you work for a federal employer or in a federal institution, you're already covered. Your health is covered, your employment is covered and your housing is covered. We have that basis. Know that, and act accordingly. That's in Ontario.

Then we banned conversion therapy. That bill we got done in two months. It was a record. We banned the attempt to make LGBTQ2S children straight. We banned that in Ontario. Who knew it was still going on? But it was. So that was banned. That just happened in 2015.

Now we're fighting for parent equality, a struggle that has taken some 10 years.

I hope that in that little preamble to what I have to say I've countered some of the myths about how fast this has happened. It has taken 45 years to get to this point; it has taken 10 years for this bill alone.

The Ontario Court of Appeal recognized equal marriage, as I said, back in 2003, but it has taken 10 years since the courts told this government to fix their legislation. In 2006, the Rutherford case: Justice Rivard found the Ontario birth registration scheme to be discriminatory because it excluded non-biological lesbian co-mothers.

Additionally, a 2007 ruling by the Ontario Court of Appeal declared that there is a legislative gap in the scheme for parental recognition. They said that it's in the child's best interest to recognize more than two parents.

On April 8, 2016, 21 LGBTQ families issued a charter challenge against the Ontario government to fight the discriminatory laws. The court ruled in favour of the families and ordered the government to bring in legislation by September 30, 2016, which they did.

Folks will know that in 2015 we brought before the House Cy and Ruby's Act (Parental Recognition), named after the children who are here, Cy and Ruby, which did pass second reading; however, it sadly died with prorogation. Bill 137 is an update of that. Again, there's nothing fast about this.

What will the All Families Are Equal Act do, if passed? And by the way, there has been a lot of nonsense written in our papers about this bill. Here's all it will do:

—It will ensure that all couples who use assisted reproduction to conceive are recognized as their children's parents.

—It will allow parents who use a surrogate to be legally recognized as their child's parents without a court process, as long as the surrogate agrees before conception and after birth.

—It will more clearly recognize the legal status of all parents, regardless of how their child was conceived.

—It will bring our laws up-to-date with British Columbia and Alberta, who have already got laws around this.

Again, this is just about equality with heteronormative families. That's really all it is.

I want to acknowledge those who are here, and some who are not here, who really are the stalwarts and who have really been fighting for this for the last decade. First of all, Joanna Radbord—I don't see her here, but she was very instrumental; Maretta Miranda, Joanna's spouse; Cameron Miranda-Radbord, Joanna's son; and of course, as already acknowledged, Kirsti Mathers McHenry; Jennifer Mathers McHenry; Cy, Kirsti and Jennifer's son; and Ruby, Kirsti and Jennifer's daughter. Also, their parents are here: Sheila McHenry and Justin McHenry.

Robyn Dutt; Andy Inkster from the Sherbourne Health Centre, a very important institution in our community that's been fighting along these lines, again, for at least 10 years; Kathleen Murphy; Poppy Murphy; Sarah Topper; Simon Topper; Dr. Donna McDonagh—I'm going to talk a little about her charter challenge, but she was one of the applicants there; Caroline McGrath; Rachel Epstein from the LGBTQ Parenting Network, again, who have worked so hard for so long for this moment; Ido Katri; Juana Berinstein, Sarah Blackstock, Nica Blackstock-Berinstein and Isa Blackstock-Berinstein; Elizabeth Ruth; Marcidita Duclayna; Carolina Bernstein; and a student from our office, Bri Gardner from Ursula Franklin, who really is the future and whose future we are working to protect this morning.

So all of these folk and many, many more have been working for a long, long time, Mr. Speaker, to make this day a reality. And why have they been doing it? There's a simple answer, and that's love. It's the love of their own children and the desire to protect their own children, the same way every family in Ontario's first rule of action, if they're loving parents, is to love and protect their children. That's why we're here. And when we talk about children, we're saying not just some children, not just the children of heterosexual families, but all children. That's why we're here. Children do not ask which family to be born into. All they ask of us is that we love them and care for them, and they ask of legislators that we make that possible and that we protect those who love them and care for them. That's why we're here: to protect those children.

Again, part of the backdrop to this, when we talk about protecting our children, is the very glaring fact that if you are a trans child or if you're an LGBTQ2S child, your risk of suicide is far greater than a heterosexual child, so it's to protect those children too. It's to protect our children. So I would say to anyone who professes faith of any kind, certainly all of our scripture professes love and calls upon us, no matter what our faith, to love our neighbours as ourselves. And guess what? Some of our neighbours are LGBTQ2S. We are called upon—in fact, it is our duty—to love them, and love means accepting them and treating them as you would someone in your family, someone like you. That's what it calls us to do. Anything short of that is not faithful. It's not faithful. Can I repeat that again? It's not faithful, and particularly where children are concerned, it's not faithful. When we think of what all of the world's holy books have to say about children, we get that message loudly and clearly: It is our duty as adults to protect all of our children, whatever family they are born into, whatever they look like, whatever their families look like. That is a call to us from God. There you go.

Now, to get back to Bill 28 and parental equality, let me talk about Kirsti Mathers McHenry and Jennifer—and this story has been told many times, so I have the permission, of course, to use it. When Kirsti was in labour, she ran into difficulties. She ran into the kind of difficulties that made those who loved her, those who were around and the medical staff fear for her life. In the end, all are well and they're all here, which we celebrate. But Kirsti realized in this process that if something happened to Jennifer, she would not have any legal right to walk out of that hospital with their child. Think about that: that in fact, the sperm donor, who did not want to be a parent, would have more rights than she would.

0940

This is the kind of situation we are trying to protect against in Bill 28. That is the child we are going to protect by passing Bill 28. That could happen. That has happened. So when we think about the call to love and we think about the call to love our children, the current status quo does not do that. That's why we need this bill.

Donna McDonagh's story is more complicated, a little bit more complicated, but it shows again the failings of the status quo. Her daughter was born in the autumn of 2006. A law was about to change allowing two moms to put their names directly onto a child's birth certificate. Their baby was the first in Ottawa to have a birth certificate listing two women as parents. Many women thought this was the answer; they thought this was all they needed.

She had every reason to be confident that she was a full parent before the law. Her name was on the birth certificate. Their child's last name was a hyphenated hybrid of the two moms' surnames. The two women had signed an order of joint custody. She was granted paid and topped-up parental leave. She had successfully applied for the baby's health card and social insurance number,

and was named as parent on the application for a passport.

Wills, powers of attorney, codicils—everything signalled the same intent, that they were equal parents, until the relationship ended in 2009. At the time of the break-up, there was an agreement there would be joint custody, but there was a loophole in one of the laws governing parentage, which could be used to cut McDonagh out. Needless to say, long story short, hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees later, the situation was rectified.

But when we talk about crowding the courts, clogging the courts, that's exactly what this bill, Bill 28, will help to remedy. It's exactly the opposite of what you heard the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington say, exactly the opposite. In fact, the courts will be less crowded because of the passage of Bill 28.

Let us remind also, people who are watching this, that a child who has a medical emergency, who was with, say, Kirsti before this law is brought in, and she needed to sign off on some medical procedure at the hospital if Jennifer were not available—she would not be able to do so. It puts the child's very health and very life at risk. Again, Bill 28, the equal parent bill, will actually remedy that, will keep our children safer.

I could go on and on, but suffice to say, for those who are watching and for those who are here, this is a historic moment. It's a historic moment that has taken 45 years and a lot of work on behalf of a lot of people to get to this moment where we can actually have parent equality in the province of Ontario. It's taken 10 years just for this bill. It's taken a court order for this government to act. It's taken all of the above and putting at risk many families and children in that course of time to get to this point.

In a sense, when the member got up and spoke—and I know where he's getting his talking notes—it was, in point, a question of faith. It is a question of faith in equal rights. It's a question of faith in protecting our children. It's a question of faith that families come in all shapes and forms and always have. This is nothing new—always have. It's a question of faith that if we allow parents who love their children to love their children, those children will be okay insofar as we can protect them. It is a question of faith in that we're acting on children's behalf and not out of prejudice, and not only when those babies are born, but throughout their lives, so that they know, as teenagers, as young people, that they're going to grow up into a world where they can marry who they love and who they choose, and they can have children and those children will be equal. It's a matter of faith in that.

It's a matter of faith in a world that believes in those bedrock principles of equality, of family, of all types of family and of our children's right to exist safely and with love. It's faith in that. And, yes, it's faith in the people who sent us here, that they do support all of that, despite the voices of a few. The vast majority of Canadians and the vast majority of Ontarians want this to pass and faithfully sent us here to make it so. That's the faith we're

speaking about here, and it's a faith that every other religious faith takes part in.

So to all of those who would send me angry emails after this and to all of those who will send us angry notes on social media—which they do—know this: The God you worship and the God we worship is the same God, and this is what God wants.

So here's to parent equality, here's to our children, here's to a truly faithful future, a truly equal future for everyone.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Further debate?

Mr. Naqvi has moved third reading of Bill 28, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act, the Vital Statistics Act and various other Acts respecting parentage and related registrations. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

Third reading vote deferred.

PUTTING CONSUMERS FIRST ACT
(CONSUMER PROTECTION STATUTE
LAW AMENDMENT), 2016

LOI DE 2016 DONNANT LA PRIORITÉ
AUX CONSOMMATEURS (MODIFIANT
DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LA PROTECTION DU CONSOMMATEUR)

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 28, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 59, An Act to enact a new Act with respect to home inspections and to amend various Acts with respect to financial services and consumer protection / *Projet de loi 59, Loi édictant une nouvelle loi concernant les inspections immobilières et modifiant diverses lois concernant les services financiers et la protection du consommateur.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakubuski: I'm a little surprised that we're debating 59 this morning. This was not something that I expected, and I have to be honest with you, I haven't even had a chance to do a thorough review of the bill.

This is a consumer protection bill brought forward by the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, with respect to home inspections and to amend various acts with respect to financial services and consumer protection. It's a very significant bill in its content, so there's going to be an opportunity to look at all of the details here through the second reading debate and have that

opportunity to bring this to committee for further dissection, and also the opportunity for people on both sides of the argument to bring their concerns and/or support for the bill to the committee.

0950

One of the things this is about is door-to-door sales. This will ban certain types of door-to-door sales. I must say that over the years, door-to-door sales have become less and less of an issue as the marketplace has changed. Quite frankly, many people do most of their business today online—not myself; I'm a little bit more traditional. But our daughter Emily, who lives in the Northwest Territories, is continuously doing business online, making purchases online. First of all, they don't have access to all of the stuff within their community of Fort Smith in the Northwest Territories, whereas online you have access to any product that any of those companies that are offering that line of product—you have access to that.

The issue of door-to-door sales, quite frankly, has changed over the years. But there has always been that challenge attached to it and that concern attached—we've always had that picture of the door-to-door salesman that people have some concern about, because the person who meets them at the door has not by choice decided they want to go out shopping for that product. The product is coming to them and, in many ways, they haven't had a chance—I'll say one thing about Emily: Before she makes a purchase, she has gone through every possible avenue of that product. Every possible characteristic and attribute of that product she has dissected and studied. Emily doesn't make impulsive purchases.

One of the challenges with door-to-door sales has always been that you're met with someone at the door who says, "I've got the greatest thing here since they invented the wheel or since sliced bread"—maybe it is sliced bread; I don't know—"I've really got a great product for you. Let me come in and show you this product and I guarantee you're going to buy it." Then there's the concern about some of the techniques that have been used by people who come door to door to sell products.

Our job here as legislators has been and is to protect consumers. It's vital for us to ensure that we don't condone practices that would be considered nefarious or misleading. That's one of the reasons that I think we always need to have good protection for the consumer at their own door. As I said, the person whose door the salesman may come to was not prepared to view that product today, was not prepared to look at that issue, so they haven't necessarily done their homework. They're going to be told all about what is great about this product but not necessarily have the time to find out how maybe that product isn't best for them.

One of the door-to-door sales that we don't allow anymore is contracts for electricity. We give people a lot of room and a lot of latitude to get out of those contracts. You'll remember that years ago the show Marketplace did an exposé on door-to-door electricity contracts and found multiple examples of how consumers were almost coerced and forced into signing a contract, and didn't

even know necessarily that they were entering into a contract. That resulted in some legislation being brought in here years ago which made the practice more regulated and more highly scrutinized. We did that last year again with Bill 122, I think it was, or Bill 132, in the previous Parliament before the prorogation. So there's more protection for those consumers. They still have the right and the option to enter into a contract for electricity; it just has to be done in a different way and there are more clarifications necessary. Anything that has been done has to be reconfirmed a second time to ensure that the consumer has entered into that contract willfully and of their own accord.

I remember my mother-in-law, who is an 83-year-old senior born in Germany, came here in 1954, never worked outside of the home, lives only on the Canada pension and the old age pension that is provided to her, as anyone at that age has access to or is given those. She would have the supplement as well, because she doesn't have any other income of any kind. She's widowed and has been for years. She got into one of those electricity contracts at the door, and she had that contract for about seven or eight months, was paying way too much, but she never talked to me or my wife about it, because she felt embarrassed that she got into that. Then she started to show us her hydro bills, her electricity bills, and we were able to have her taken off that, have that contract nullified.

I must say the energy retailer was quite co-operative; there was no issue in getting it nullified. But my mother-in-law who, when she came here—she doesn't speak the best English even today, but there was no question in our minds that the person who she signed that contract with was less than fully forthcoming and fully transparent in how they marketed that service to her.

She was, to me, a classic case of where the practice was wrong: living alone, not highly articulate in the English language, and certainly everybody—you've got to remember, everybody in this province, if someone comes into their home and says, "I can save you money on your electricity bill," is interested, because electricity bills in this province, under this government, have gone through the roof. In fact, they actually recognized it themselves today, that the electricity bill is one of the biggest challenges that people are facing in this province. The Premier even said—not because she was sincere about it, but because she wants to change the channel and change the message—that she apologizes for what has happened to the electricity bills in this province.

I would like to ask the Premier, where have you been? It didn't become a problem on November 18, 19 and 20 in Ottawa at the Liberal convention, when she made her marvelous speech to the converted. It's been a problem for years—a minimum of seven or eight years that the problem has been ridiculously challenging for people in this province. And all of a sudden, she is going to fix it? We do need protection for consumers, but I'll tell you that what consumers need protection from most in this province is that government on that side of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm glad to be able to stand and put in my two cents and my two minutes in response to the fine member's comments on Bill 59, Putting Consumers First Act. As he talked about the challenges of door-to-door sales or the nature of door-to-door sales, it's interesting. We think of door-to-door sales being almost—well, like out of a movie, where a door-to-door salesperson comes in to sell you a vacuum and show you a product in the safety and comfort of your own home. We think about how it used to be and we look now to what we recognize at our doors.

1000

When I first bought my house, there was a learning curve about all the things that I needed, trying to think proactively and best care for my new home, and juggle and pay for all of these new bills. I remember someone coming to my door with a computer tablet and showing me all of the reasons that, if I didn't sign this, I was going to have bills that were astronomical and I wouldn't be able to manage, and, yes, I worried: "Oh, look at all this that I don't know." I read things and got a little bit tangled in the marketing and signed up for a contract. Then I realized that—I think over the long term, I ended up paying more than I would have if I'd just left well enough alone. But I did not renew, and I called them and said, "Get me off of this." I was able to do that for myself and advocate for myself and learn something through that process.

My grandmother, though, at 95 years old—I was glad she did consult with me about some of these contracts and that she said to people, "I won't sign it today. You can leave me something to read." I'm glad that she did that, because hearing about the member's mother-in-law and her journey—we do need to do what's best for consumers, and that is, indeed, to act on their behalf and protect them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I just wanted to add my voice to Bill 59, and thank the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I have to say, for somebody who said he hadn't read the bill yet, he did a marvellous job of speaking out—mostly, I believe, in favour of it.

I want to begin by thanking the member from Etobicoke Centre, because this is really something that he has championed for a very long time. A good idea is a good idea, and I'm glad that, as a government, we're bringing that forward.

I think the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke made the case for why we need this bill very eloquently by illustrating the example of his own mother-in-law. For me, as the minister responsible for seniors in Ontario, I think this is something that we absolutely need to do because there's no question that seniors, particularly those who may not have English as a first language but even all seniors, are particularly vulnerable to door-to-door sales, in part because they're home.

I am not home, like many of us, so even if a door-to-door salesperson knocks on my door, I'm not at home. But those who do stay at home for long periods of time are particularly vulnerable just because of the opportunity to, I guess, interact in this kind of a sales environment, and also because, as the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke said, often these end up being impulse sales because the deal seems so good and you have to sign now for the deal to be good, and all of those pressure tactics make it very hard to resist.

I have to say that, as a government, we've come to this measure. We have tried, in the past, other measures to restrict the fraud element of door-to-door sales, but found that, despite our best efforts, they were not working as well. Hence, this measure now.

I hope the entire Legislature will support this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise and comment on my colleague the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He was speaking on Bill 59, which is an act to enact a new act with respect to home inspections. Basically, this act is dealing with three areas where I think MPPs' offices get a lot of e-mails and phone calls. One is door-to-door sales. The second is payday loans, which are very common in many of the ridings outside of the GTA and Ottawa. And three is home inspections.

The member who just debated was focused more on the door-to-door sales aspect and the fact that seniors—and, I would add to that, vulnerable people—who are in our communities are at risk of signing and agreeing to things that really are not in their best interests. We all know that in the past, there were many door-to-door sales for energy and electricity contracts which people got trapped in. We've dealt with that in a piece of legislation already, but door-to-door sales still continue and the high-pressure tactics go on, not necessarily to deal with electricity, but I would say that payday loans—it's very possible that many of the people who are going and getting payday loans at extremely high interest rates—as high as 400% a year, we're hearing—could be getting those payday loans to pay their hydro bills. Isn't that unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, to hear that in Ontario, in 2016, people are deciding to borrow money to pay their hydro bills at such high interest?

Home inspectors: Well, we all know that we need better protection of consumers in terms of ensuring that home inspections are done properly. I think that most people would agree with regulating home inspections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm happy to contribute some comments to this debate, and thank you to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for contributing his part to the debate.

Speaker, really, we talk about the Putting Consumers First Act as kind of the short version of this bill. I think about how did we get here, where we're protecting con-

sumers from door-to-door sales or protecting consumers from payday loans, exorbitant interest rates, and we're protecting consumers from home inspections? Those are the three areas that are being highlighted in this bill.

It's the right thing to do; we need to protect consumers, Speaker. But how did we get there in the first place, allowing these payday loans to charge extraordinary amounts of interest to the most vulnerable people? Many people now are in that broad title of vulnerable people even if they have a job, because we're not creating good-paying, sustainable jobs. We're creating precarious work, jobs that don't have benefits, and people can't make ends meet.

When you have hydro rates that are so high, people have to decide between putting food on the table and paying their hydro rates. That is the reality that people are facing today. And what do they do? Sometimes they have to go out to these payday loans and get a loan, just to make ends meet. What's happening to them is that they're getting interest rates basically like 490%, I think it was, when you look at how it accumulates. It's revolving over and over again, and no one catches up.

So having this bill to protect consumers and putting them first is a good thing, Speaker, but honestly, I think about how we got here. It's sad that people had to suffer so much just to get this government to act on legislation to protect them as consumers when they have to buy a product, because contract people coming door to door on sales are taking advantage of people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for final comments.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I appreciate the comments from the member from Oshawa, London–Fanshawe, the minister for—

Mr. Steve Clark: Seniors.

Mr. John Yakabuski:—seniors, thank you very much—and the member from Thornhill.

I just want to finish on my two minutes by thanking them for their comments, but also talking a little bit about the home inspection component of this bill. My wife is a real estate salesperson—agent—in Barry's Bay, serving the whole Madawaska valley.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Not the Madawaska valley.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The Madawaska valley, yes.

Home inspection is a huge part of a real estate transaction today. Years ago nobody ever did a home inspection. You went in, you made a deal, then you found out some things that were problems with the house, and you might have had to have a legal issue with the buyer and the seller afterward.

Today it's almost unheard of in her business for there not to be a home inspection of one kind or another. People can do their own home inspection; they can have their friend do a home inspection. But we do have many, many home inspectors in the area that do this as a living. So any way that we can further professionalize that service I think is something that is positive for the buyer and the seller, because the reality is that it's not the seller

trying to win or the buyer trying to win. It's about making sure that everybody, when they put their signature on that line at the end, when they finalize the deal, when it is a done deal, as they say, is satisfied that they've gone into that with the full information, their eyes fully open, and they're satisfied that with all the knowledge that is available to them, they've made a decision to make a purchase and finalize a sale. So doing something like this, more licensing of home inspectors, is something that I think everybody is in favour of.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It is now time to recess this House. We will be recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1010 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to welcome the mother of our page Liam Cronin to our legislative House this morning. Amy Cronin is here. She also wears the hat of chair of Ontario Pork, but she's most proud today to wear her mother hat because Liam's doing such a great job as a page.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I would like to welcome members of CUPE Local 4914, representing workers at Peel Children's Aid Society. They're here today to raise awareness.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Today is a great day because OUSA is here, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. We've got Jamie Cleary from Western, Colin Aitchison from Laurier, Tyler Van Herzele from Laurier, Julia Wood from Brock, Patrick Foster from Brock, Carolyn Thompson from Queen's, Leah Brockie from Queen's, Antonio Brieva from Waterloo and Zachary Rose from OUSA. Welcome, all. You're amazing people.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'd like to begin by welcoming guests of page captain Sage Nakamoto—her mother, Sara Nakamoto; father, Craig Nakamoto; grandmother Sheila Berrie; and aunt Kim Dickie—to Queen's Park this morning.

She also has her entire class from the Muskoka Montessori School coming to visit this morning: Ava Bijl, Grace Gaughan, Ben Caplan, Heidi Cowan, Connor Macmillan, Keenan Patterson, Will Evis, Braeden Thompson-Horvath, Sara Chouinard, Torin Peters-Millar, Sullivan Lance, Andrea Hill, teacher Jeff Mann, and Sam Caplan and Sara Berry, who are accompanying them from Muskoka Montessori School.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to welcome Julia Wood, Antonio Brieva and Colin Aitchison from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, whom I met with this morning.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to welcome, from Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union, the vice-president of university affairs, Colin Aitchison; president and CEO, Tyler Van Herzele; from the University of Waterloo Federation of Students, Sarah Wiley, vice-

president of education; and Antonio Brieva, government affairs commissioner. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Mr. Speaker, please help me welcome a guest from York region, Gerry Brouwer. He's in the east members' gallery.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'd also like to welcome to the House today Chris Cossitt. He is the representative for Ontario Pork representing Bruce county.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd also like to welcome the members of Ontario Pork here on lobbyist day. A point of trivia: It smells like bacon here every morning, so they've got a special in.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I'd also like to welcome Ontario Pork here today, and all those who were able to attend the wonderful breakfast. Pork producers are a vital part of Ontario's thriving agri-food sector, and we in the Legislature look forward to Ontario Pork's arrival at Queen's Park each and every year. I had the pleasure of continuing discussions with Ontario Pork during a meeting this morning. I look forward to our ongoing collaboration. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome Oliver Haan, who is one of the directors with Ontario Pork. He also serves as chair of Harvest Hastings, which is a local group in Prince Edward-Hastings promoting local food.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to introduce three new staff members who are in my ministry office joining us here today for question period: Selma, Brandy and Suaad.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: We have a number of supporters of the parent equality bill who might be filtering in at various points. We've got Rachel Epstein; we've got Ido Katri; we've got Donna McDonagh. And Joanna Radbord will be joining us later.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to welcome the members from OUSA. I had a great meeting with them yesterday. I want to say a special welcome to Jamie Cleary. He lives in London-Fanshawe, my riding.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've been receiving some indications of how people are going to behave today. I'll deal with it immediately.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HIGHWAY TOLLS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is time for question period. The leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Minister—

Applause.

Mr. Steve Clark: You're clapping for the next Premier.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not helpful when I'm trying to get people to stop.

If all indications continue, I will go to warnings immediately. If you'd like to test me, I will fulfill.

Question, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The Liberals need to open their eyes and realize that life is too expensive in Ontario. They need to open their eyes and realize that 416 and 905 commuters can't afford these new Liberal tolls. The tax on commuters must end; there is no doubt.

My question to the government is, will they make a U-turn before toll booths are on the ramps of the Gardiner and the DVP? Do they not appreciate that commuters can't afford this giant new toll?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Commuters and the people of Ontario appreciate this: You need to make decisions; you need to ensure that we continue to invest in our infrastructure; you continue to look forward to the future; and you continue to be open-minded about what is being proposed. No decision has been made. The council hasn't even reflected on the recommendations and suggestions being put forward by the mayor, and the member opposite has put no ideas forward whatsoever in order to relieve the issue that's before us.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the minister: Let's hear what stakeholders are saying about this. The Durham chair, Roger Anderson, had this to say about the Liberal plan to allow taxes on Toronto roads. He said, "I think this is a short-sighted solution ... they're literally taxing the 905 to pay for" roads that have already been paid for. "Anderson said tolls will end up hurting ... businesses." He concluded, "I think this is going to backfire."

I agree with the Durham chair that this is going to backfire. The government is forcing people of Ontario to pay for roads they've already paid for.

My question to the Minister of Finance is this—I know that Durham Liberal MPPs must be pleading with the Minister of Finance not to put this tax on Durham. I hope they're doing that. So the question to the Minister of Finance is: Will he heed the advice of the Durham chair? Will he take advice from Durham Liberal MPPs and not impose this toll?

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member for his comment because I'm moving to warnings, and we'll go quick.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is warned. Anyone next? It applies to both sides.

Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Transportation, Mr. Speaker.

1040

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the leader opposite for his question. To follow up on what the Minister of Finance said on his first answer, everyone on this side of the House, everyone in Durham, and everyone in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area understands very clearly where this government stands with respect to making sure that the transportation and transit system that we committed to in 2014 gets fully built.

To cite Chair Roger Anderson from Durham in the House in the context of that question is a little bit surprising to me, because I've got to tell you that any time I've had the chance to speak with any of our members from Durham, or the chair himself, I've heard him celebrate the two-way, all-day GO service we're delivering, the support for the Durham BRT, and the 407 phase 1 and phase 2 that we're currently building out to 35/115, Speaker. That chair and our members understand that we believe in producing results, not running away from the tough questions. That leader could take a lesson from us.

Interjections.

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

I always remind members to refer to the Chair when answering and asking questions.

Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of Finance: It's not just the mayor of Mississauga; it's not just the Durham chair; it's most of the municipal leaders in the 905 saying that this is a reckless, bad Liberal tax.

Let's hear what someone else said. Just listen to the Mayor of Oshawa, John Henry: "I had no prior heads-up until I heard it on the radio this morning. Would I support this? No." Henry—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Agriculture is warned. The Minister of Municipal Affairs is warned. I'm resolute.

Please finish your question.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Liberal members opposite don't like hearing what municipal mayors are saying about this Liberal tax, but let me continue. The mayor of Oshawa continued by saying, "There's just no more money that people have left." They can't afford these tolls.

There's no mandate. In 2014, the Premier did not run on tolling the DVP and the Gardiner. The mayors are saying no. Commuters are saying no. Why are they giving the city of Toronto this permission? Why do they want to tax the DVP and the Gardiner? It's wrong, and the people can't afford it.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Listen, I've got to tell you, in the two years and five months that I've been serving as the Minister of Transportation, Speaker, in every corner of the greater Toronto and Hamilton area—

Interjection.

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

Carry on.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: In every corner of the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, what I hear from both commuters and municipal leaders is their strong support for the transportation plan that our Premier and our government are delivering: GO regional express rail, the Eglinton Crosstown, the Finch West LRT, the Hurontario LRT in Mississauga and the Hamilton LRT. The list is literally endless.

But, Speaker, I have to share with the House: When I talk to municipal representatives in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area and beyond and when I talk to residents in every single community that I just referenced, they have a question for me. They want to know where the leader of the Conservative Party stands on transit funding and transportation funding, and more importantly, they want to know why, for 10 years in Ottawa, he was MIA on these very issues.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Patrick Brown: Since I can't get an answer on the Liberal tolls for the DVP and the Gardiner, I'll try something new: a question for the Minister of the Environment.

A billion-dollar capital project that could lead to 1,000 jobs during construction and another 400 to 500 full-time jobs during operation sounds fantastic, but that very project that I'm describing is being held up by this government's red tape. The provincial and federal environmental assessments started at the same time in 2013. The federal government approved the project in April, but the provincial deadline of July 22 came and went.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Minister of the Environment single-handedly holding up the billion-dollar Côté gold mine project near Timmins for no reason whatsoever? Why are we the slowest place to do business in Canada?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Over the last two years, we have gone through major reforms in turnaround times because the wait times when I became minister were long. Some of them were taking up to two years. We had some real challenges.

What is actually happening now is that on January 1, we will be introducing measures that will cut those turnaround times in half. As members are also aware, we are computerizing and operating on the EASR system, which will give us some of the fastest turnaround times in the country.

As to the particulars of the complexity of a gold mine, I know that the member for Nickel Belt and I have been discussing that and raising that. We are reviewing it right now. I will assure the member opposite that it will be dealt with expeditiously.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Minister of the Environment: A billion-dollar project—the local community, on board; the local indigenous populations, on board; the federal government, on board. Yet, this government continues to wage this unexplained war against Ontario's mining industry.

Not only did the minister miss his legislative deadline in July, but now he's asking local groups for reasons to oppose the project because he can't come up with any himself. The deadline to respond: mid-December, more than five months after your own legislated deadline.

But there's hope, Mr. Speaker. There's hope because the Auditor General is reporting tomorrow on environmental assessment delays just like this one. The minister has seen the report. Did he pass with flying colours, or is what's happening with the billion-dollar Côté mining project the norm in this province, and we are the province of red tape? Please tell us, Minister.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: When the party opposite was in power, there was almost zero reform in this area. Since Premier Wynne came into power, she immediately directed the reform of the EBR, which is under way; of the ECA system, which is under way; and of the environmental assessments, which are moving to a highly automated EASR system. These are groundbreaking, national leading reforms that will make us one of the most user-friendly and simplest systems to use.

With the particular issue of gold mines, it's interesting because we have major proposals coming forward from several gold mines in Ontario right now for major reinvestment. As the Minister of Northern Development will tell you, it's a very dynamic and very exciting time for mining in Ontario, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the minister: The Côté Gold Project is reflective of this government's contempt for the north and their failure to get projects moving. Just look at the Ring of Fire. The press releases from 2012 were written as if the chromite mine was a done deal. It touted thousands of jobs coming to northern Ontario and has quotes from five ministers, including the current Premier, that the deal was done. The release was followed by years of empty, empty promises. The failure to act on the Ring of Fire is an embarrassment for this government. It has been years since the Ring of Fire hasn't moved forward at all. Now the Côté Gold Project is experiencing the same neglect, the same red tape.

When will this government finally commit to making sure the incredible potential of the north is seized? We don't need any more delays. We don't need more red tape. We want this government to support northern mining opportunities. Can I have a justification from the minister?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We have a working committee in cabinet, led by the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, specifically working on this.

But I find this passing strange coming from a former federal member who, when we were twinning northern highways, spending five times what that government did in the north—500% more twinning highways—never even raised a peep. We had no federal matching money: 90% of northern highways are paid for by the government of Ontario—not a red cent or a word from the member opposite. He sat back while money poured into

Alberta for the oil sands, no investment in green energy, no investment in the Ring of Fire. Nothing. He was a member from Alberta for the amount of good he was to us in Ontario, and now he has the nerve to criticize the government that is paying—

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

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We're still on warnings.

New question, the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Acting Premier.

Keeping the fridge on, running a pump to get water from the well or running a baseboard heater aren't luxuries. These are necessities. These are basics. Does the Acting Premier think it's okay that working people and seniors can't afford these basics because hydro bills are so high?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm happy to rise to answer that question because it is an important question. It is something that we recognize: that there are families and there are seniors out there who are having a difficult time paying their electricity bills. That's why we brought forward from the speech from the throne the 8% reduction and the 20% reduction for the 330,000 families who qualify for that, Mr. Speaker.

1050

We know that more needs to be done. That's why we continue to talk about the programs that we have in place. The Ontario Electricity Support Program, for example, can provide up to \$45 per month for those families who qualify and for seniors. And for those who need to plug in, for example, a piece of medical equipment, they can actually get up to \$75 a month to help on their hydro bills.

We know that there's more to do. The Premier talked about that a few weeks ago. My ministry is working very hard on that and we'll continue to find ways to help families, to help seniors, to help everyone across the province with their electricity bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, I ask the government to listen very carefully to the story of Bob and Janine. Bob and Janine thought they'd be able to afford to retire. They had budgeted to live on Old Age and CPP. But then their hydro bills started to climb. In spite of heating their home with wood, their hydro bills were almost as much as their rent. Now, after 80 years of living in Sundridge, Bob had to move out of his own community. He had to leave his own community.

Does the Acting Premier think that Bob and Janine need an apology or that they need to actually have lower hydro bills?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Bob and Janine will be getting lower hydro bills, come January 1, with the 8% reduction. I don't know the specifics of their story, but he did mention Sundridge. Sundridge is a community that does get services in some parts by Hydro One, and that means they have the potential for qualifying for that 20% reduction. That's a significant savings for that type of family and for 330,000 families right across the province who will qualify for that 20% reduction.

On top of that, there are other programs in place. There's the northern Ontario tax credit. There's the LEAP program, if they need to access that if they're having difficulty paying their bills. There's also the Ontario Electricity Support Program, which they will qualify for, because he did talk about what their income is, Mr. Speaker. They will qualify and get some benefit from the OESP program. If they're also heating their home with electricity, then they qualify for that higher benefit. I do hope that that family gets that information so they can qualify and reduce their bills.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, last week in question period our leader, Andrea Horwath, brought stories of people who had their power cut off even though they'd done everything they could to conserve. This is 2016, and nobody in this province should be paying as much for their hydro bill as they're paying for their rent. Nobody with a job or a pension—good savings—should find themselves in a position where they're living in the dark; where they can't afford or don't have electricity to keep their fridge on—their food is going bad. They shouldn't be in a situation where mould is growing in their homes because their basement is flooded and they can't run a sump pump.

These are real stories. These are tragic realities here in this province because of the Liberal government's choices. Will the Premier ensure that no more people in this province face the reality of having their hydro cut off?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: When it comes to electricity, it really is an important piece for us that vulnerable customers have the resources to help avoid disconnections. That's why we've enhanced consumer protection rules, including requiring a 10-day advance notice of disconnection, Mr. Speaker, with accompanying resources to help customers with their arrears. There is the LEAP program that will help them. Many other programs in place will help these families who are struggling, because we do agree—everyone in this House would agree—that it is unacceptable for families to have to live that way, Mr. Speaker.

That's why we brought forward the programs that we did in the speech from the throne. That's why we have the programs that we have—

Mr. Paul Miller: It's not working.

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

Carry on.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Because we are proud of the system that we built. We have a clean, green, reliable system, Mr. Speaker, in which we no longer have to send out warnings telling people to not go outside and to worry about breathing, because we've eliminated coal. We're actually saving billions on our health care system. We are very proud of the system that we've built, but we understand we've got to make it affordable for as many as we can.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question again is to the Acting Premier. It's not only people who are struggling; it's also small businesses. Last year, a Liberal back-bencher thought it would be a good idea to declare Tomato Day in Ontario and declare that the tomato was the official vegetable in Ontario.

On Monday, we learned that Mucci Farms, which has been growing tomatoes in Kingsville for 45 years, is opening their newest greenhouse in Ohio because the cost of electricity is so high. Bert Mucci said, "We are paying one of the highest rates in North America. It's causing us to move out of Ontario right now." I think most farmers would agree that they would rather have affordable hydro so they can keep their greenhouses lit up and operating than Tomato Day.

Will the Acting Premier take the first step towards creating more affordable electricity in this province by stopping any further sale of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Last week, I got to meet with the Ontario association of greenhouse growers, and I know many of us had the opportunity to speak with them. They're growing and creating great work, creating jobs in our province, and that's under the leadership of the Minister of Agriculture. I'd like to thank him for all of his great work.

It is concerning when you hear about one business moving out of our province, because we are doing great things. We now have the ICI program, which they are thrilled with. The greenhouse growers' association is thrilled with the ICI program because they will actually save one third of their bill. They've actually talked about the natural gas expansion program that's being done by the Minister of Infrastructure. They're very excited about that. That's a \$200-million loan program, a \$30-million grant program.

We're going to continue to see this sector grow in this province because we've got the programs that are helping.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Small businesses are at their wits' end. The Windsor-Essex chamber of commerce says that they're hearing more and more from businesses ready to relocate to Ohio or simply willing to go under

because they can't afford the cost of hydro. The Kabab N Curry in Windsor is looking to closing because of their bills, because of their electricity costs. Ice Cool Treats is stuck because they can't afford to hire any staff. Just today, we heard from pork producers who were talking about how the cost of high hydro is impacting them.

Admitting a mistake is a good step, but it doesn't help any of these small businesses if it's just an apology. Will the Acting Premier do something concrete and commit to stopping the sale of Hydro One in this province?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: When it comes to small businesses, we actually have many programs in place to help them. The saveONenergy program, for example, is saving many, many businesses thousands of dollars and conserving energy, ensuring that we're actually saving the system costs as well. We've got the ICI program that I mentioned in my previous answer. We also have the 8% reduction that is coming January 1 that's going to help many small businesses.

But don't take my word for that. How about Allan O'Dette, the CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce: "We are happy about this. This is the right thing to do, particularly so that the medium-sized enterprises can remain competitive relative to our largest competitor, which is just across the lake."

This announcement today is very significant for residents and small industry, but the most important group that would benefit will be medium-sized companies like manufacturing.

We've got business after business recognizing that the programs we are putting in place will help them continue to grow. We'll continue to do that because we know that building Ontario up is the right thing to do.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Over and over we see Liberal ministers standing up in question period and patting themselves on the back about how great a job they're doing on hydro. The more and more they do that, the more and more they show the people of this province just how disconnected they are, how out of touch they are with the people who are struggling to pay their hydro bills, who are struggling to pay their bills.

Listen, life is unaffordable. People are being squeezed. People at the top are doing better and better and everyone else is paying the price. Nobody—nobody—in this province voted for that. Will the government stop just apologizing for their mistakes and instead do something concrete to actually fix them?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The concrete actions we have taken are an 8% reduction for five million businesses and families right across the province, effective January 1; a 20% reduction for 330,000 families; 145,000 families qualified for the OESP, and we're asking more families to apply to qualify. We've got five more programs that are helping families and businesses make sure that they stay competitive and actually lower their hydro rates.

1100

It's not just me who's saying this. I talked about Allan O'Dette from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. The Financial Accountability Officer says that our electricity prices are some of the lowest in the country, and when it comes to our energy prices, we're right in the middle of the pack. Do you know who also endorsed that, Mr. Speaker? The Environmental Commissioner, another officer of the House, who also said that our prices are right in the middle of the pack.

We're making sure that we're building Ontario up, creating jobs, building infrastructure, something that neither one of them have a plan—

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

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Every time this minister stands here to tell us something, the Financial Accountability Officer is compelled to release a report refuting what he just said.

The minister tells us he'll balance by 2017-18. The FAO releases a fiscal outlook that tells us they won't. Then the minister puts out a fall economic statement telling us he'll balance, but the FAO releases a commentary saying that's not so. Contrary to the government's fantasy numbers, the FAO says we'll have a deficit of \$2.6 billion and a "significant risk" of structural deficits going forward.

It's time for the Premier and the minister to come clean with Ontario taxpayers. Will the minister be raising more taxes or cutting more services to fill the multi-billion-dollar hole in his budget?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Again, I appreciate the work done by the FAO. As we all recognize, he does have sensitivity about some of the challenges that are faced in our economy, and has done so in the past.

We've exceeded those targets. We have recalibrated and done what's—

Interjections.

Mr. Paul Miller: Don't look at me. I didn't do anything.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not 100% sure.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we have taken the measures necessary to grow our economy. Last quarter, Ontario outpaced the United States, the G7 and Canada. As a result, we are taking those efforts into play. We're taking efforts to control our spending and we've done so, being the lowest-cost government anywhere in Canada as a result. As those revenues grow and as we control our spending, we're balancing the books.

The FAO, in his commentary, references that his assumptions are actually less aggressive than ours. We have taken a more cautious approach in responding to the Auditor General, for example, in order for us to take the necessary steps to come to balance next year and the year after that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the minister: The people of Ontario cannot trust anything this Liberal government has to say. Yesterday, the Financial Accountability Officer confirmed the minister's budget plan is a complete fantasy.

Rather than own up to their years of waste, mismanagement and scandals, they continue to punish Ontario taxpayers. This means more one-time fire sales, such as Hydro One; higher taxes and fees, like the \$500 million more in drivers' licences; and more cuts to front-line services.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell is warned. I have my eye on about three others.

Finish, please.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Will the minister just come clean with the Ontario taxpayers and explain whether he's raising more taxes or cutting more services to fill the multi-billion-dollar hole in his budget?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let's come clean, because the member opposite always sort of misinterprets what is happening right now and always makes comparisons of some decisions that were never made in the past.

We are outpacing Canada in growth. We have the highest growth, and that's identified by independent economists. We take those assumptions and pare them down even more in order to do our projections going forward.

We have the lowest unemployment in eight years in the province of Ontario. We have actually had 641,000 net new jobs since the recession.

We have taken every step to manage our spending and control our debt by ensuring that we lock in our terms over longer periods of time. It's why our interest on debt is the lowest today than it's been since their time in office, as well as the NDP. Our accumulated deficit as a percentage of GDP is the same today as it was 25 years ago.

We're taking the necessary steps. We're investing, we're growing our economy and we're coming to balance next year and the year after that.

SMART METERS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Energy. In her 2014 report, the Auditor General found that the government had forced smart meters onto Ontarians without doing a business case analysis or a cost-benefit analysis. The cost of the program doubled to \$2 billion, just as the NDP predicted it would, and last week we learned that time-of-use pricing had shifted less than 1% of peak demand, even though peak pricing is double that of off-peak pricing. Many Ontarians are unable to change their pattern of energy use because they need to use the power when they need to use it.

Will the government stop forcing time-of-use pricing onto Ontarians?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I am pleased to be able to rise and talk about some of the things that I talked about yesterday that will relate to smart meters. Yesterday, I spoke to the Empire Club. There were 300 business and energy leaders there listening to what we had to say. What we were talking about, Mr. Speaker, is utilizing some customer choice options, because right now, we're doing the long-term energy plan consultations right across the province. Improving customer choice, allowing customers to look at choice, is something that we need to look at. I think that's what we're going to see come from the long-term energy plan.

Smart meters will allow that to happen because, right now, it is an interesting thing when we have condo dwellers in downtown Toronto, for example, on the same price plan as seniors who are living in a bungalow, for example, in my great riding of Sudbury or in Sault Ste. Marie or in St. Catharines. Looking at some of those options would be important, and that was the foresight that this government had by bringing forward the smart meters and making sure we implemented that so we can actually continue to move forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, I've never heard that called "foresight" before—extraordinary.

Time-of-use pricing punishes consumers like new moms, seniors and low-income families who can conserve energy but don't necessarily have the option of using it at another time. They have to use it when they need to use it.

When will the minister stop punishing Ontarians by forcing them to use time-of-use pricing? When will you stop punishing them?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I know he hasn't heard the word "foresight" before because it's actually called "planning," and it's something that they don't have when it comes to the energy sector. But we do have a plan. Our long-term energy plan is actually looking at many things that we can do to help downward pressure on rates. We've talked about that. The 8% reduction, the 20% reduction—we've talked about those quite often. Those are great, great options and great plans for people to actually see downward pressure on rates.

But we continue to find ways and to look at the technology that is coming forward. We've got storage. We've got great jobs coming in the storage sector and great ways of actually reducing our energy costs. Let's look at and challenge the sector to be more efficient when it comes to our great supply mix that we have. There are many things we can do, Mr. Speaker, and that's because we've built a clean, reliable power system, one that we can all be proud of and one that we can continue to enhance.

PORK INDUSTRY

Mr. Mike Colle: A question to the Minister of Agriculture: With the pork producers here today, Minister—I have raised this before with the pork

producers—as you know, with many new Canadians, there's been a real increase in the demand for safe, reliable, respected Canadian and Ontario pork. That is coming from the new Canadians. I know in the Chinese community there is a huge consumption of pork. They love their pork; they love their Ontario pork.

Can you tell me what the pork producers are doing to essentially market their wonderful, safe Ontario pork to new Canadians who are calling Ontario home?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank my colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence for asking me a question today about Ontario pork. Ontario Pork, of course, this morning sponsored a breakfast for all MPPs to take the opportunity to update them on what Ontario Pork is doing. Mr. Speaker, there's no question about that. I've had the opportunity now on two occasions to travel with my colleague the Honourable Michael Chan, the Minister of International Trade. We were in China in April 2015, and just seven days ago, we finished an extensive agricultural trade mission to India.

One thing that everybody in this House should know is that the Ontario brand is known internationally, around the world. It is known for safety and quality. We're looking at ways for Ontario Pork to increase their exports to every corner of the world because, Mr. Speaker, you and I both know that good things always grow in Ontario.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Mike Colle: Thank you, Minister. As you know, the price of beef has gone up in Ontario in the last year. I know when I go shopping at Lady York and Zito's in my riding, they talk about the price of beef. But I noticed a lot of them are switching over to pork, because people tell me that a good pork chop is just as good as a good steak.

What can we do to market all these wonderful by-products of pork whereby, again, people in Ontario finally appreciate the safety, the quality and the integrity of Ontario pork? What else can we do to further market this wonderful, locally grown Ontario product?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for his supplementary. I can assure the members of this House that I enjoy a good steak, I enjoy a good pork chop and I enjoy a lot of good chicken.

But let me tell you what we've done over the last number of years, working with Ontario Pork. They've been so innovative, and now they produce a product that's very, very lean and is being consumed on a world-wide basis, not only here in Ontario, but in other provinces in Canada and around the world.

It goes back to the fundamental thing that we have. Agriculture and agri-food contribute \$36 billion to Ontario's GDP. Ontario pork is giving us a reputation around the world for quality each and every time.

Interjections.

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

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Jim McDonell: To the Acting Premier: This government has utterly failed to consult with reward point providers before bringing forth Bill 47 to the table and to committee. Reward points have to be accounted for as a liability on providers' balance sheets. Were this bill to go ahead and have this government micromanage the industry, programs such as Aeroplan, Air Miles and others could leave this province altogether, gutting consumers' access to reward points programs.

Speaker, consumers value their points, but does this government know what it's actually doing?

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 take a second and commend the good member from Beaches–East York for his leadership on this.

Applause.

Hon. David Oraziotti: Absolutely. His leadership brought forward Bill 47, the Protecting Rewards Points Act, so I want to thank him for his leadership and for being in tune, obviously, with consumers on this particular issue.

As you know, Speaker, loyalty rewards points have value, which is why our government is taking steps to protect them. If passed, the proposed amendments to the Consumer Protection Act would ensure that these rewards points cannot be cancelled or diluted in any way.

I want all Ontarians to know that they don't need to worry if they have points that are about to expire, because we are committed to taking action on this issue. I'll have more to say in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim McDonell: The amendments to Bill 47 filed by this government will give the minister the power to regulate the entire rewards points industry from her office without any industry or consumer consultation—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We were at a point where I thought members were getting their questions and answers in appropriately without it, but there's a lot of dialogue going on now because of our situation. I think we need to bring it back down again, please. I need to hear it. Thank you.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Speaker—without any industry or consumer consultation, and despite the fact that the reward point account is a completely voluntary agreement, where the consumer is rewarded with free products and services just for being a loyal customer. This is just the government trying to clutch at straws to shore up its popularity.

Has this government considered the impact this legislation will have on Ontarians' ability to access reward point programs and their ability to redeem these points in the future? Again, can the minister explain how forcing

reward point programs out of the province is actually helping consumers?

Hon. David Oraziotti: Someone may want to stand up for big business, but we're standing up for consumers in this province. That's exactly what the member from Beaches–East York was showing leadership on.

In fact, as everyone knows, this particular bill will be discussed in the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills today at 4 o'clock, where we'll have clause-by-clause and public hearings on this particular matter.

I'm really pleased with the steps that we're taking to protect consumers in Ontario. Bill 59, the Putting Consumers First Act, helps to ban door-to-door sales and stop those aggressive tactics at the doors, sets up rules for home inspectors, and also takes stronger action on aggressive payday-loan-type establishments that are very predatory to consumers and make it very difficult for consumers to get out of that cycle. On this side of the House, we're taking strong action to protect consumers.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is for the Acting Premier. Back in 2014, the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce identified strong potential for growth in the agri-food sector, in the greenhouse vegetable sector in my riding. Indeed, my region boasts the highest concentration of year-round vegetable production anywhere in Canada.

Yesterday, Mucci Farms in Kingsville announced that it was expanding its operations—in Ohio. They cited the already high and rising costs of electricity in Ontario as their primary reason for leaving.

Can the Acting Premier tell the people of my region how their homes and businesses can be powered by Liberal apologies?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to rise and talk about the great things that we're doing to help small and medium-sized enterprises, and the greenhouse growers of the province as well. I had the opportunity to meet with them just last week. They were here talking to all of us on the hill. They were very pleased to see all of the programs that we're bringing forward to actually help them and many other businesses right across the province.

The ICI program will be a direct benefit to the greenhouse growers' association, but it will also be a direct benefit to 1,000 other small and medium-sized enterprises right across the province. They'll be able to reduce their electricity bills by one third. That's pretty exciting for many of these businesses. They'll also qualify for the 8% rebate for small businesses, the same as homes.

It's not just us saying this, Mr. Speaker. It's the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, which also supports this program.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I've heard the Premier stand in this House and out in the public and talk in glowing

terms about the potential of the agri-food sector in Ontario. Meanwhile, after more than a decade of Liberal promises to expand Highway 3 and to allow for improved access to markets for this critical sector, that promise remains unfilled—after a decade.

When will this Liberal government take its big red boot off the throats of rural Ontario and support affordability and prosperity for the people in rural Ontario?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I know last week the greenhouse growers of Ontario were in to see my colleague the Minister of Energy. My colleague certainly engaged with them in a very positive dialogue about how our changes to the ICI will be very, very helpful for the greenhouse sector in the province of Ontario.

We do know it's growing. Over the last two years, in the agri-food sector alone, we have generated 42,000 new jobs in the province of Ontario—\$2.2 billion in additional GDP—and we've partnered to bring in the new Herb Gray Parkway in Windsor, Ontario, to make sure that Ontario products can get to the border to achieve those exports, because Ontario food is demanded around the world.

1120

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is to the minister responsible for seniors affairs. Minister, I read that last Friday you were in London to announce the 2017 round of funding for the Seniors Community Grant Program. It's my understanding that this program provides funding to non-profit community seniors groups for projects that encourage greater social inclusion, volunteerism and community engagement. This is a great program that provides grant opportunities for small, grassroots community organizations in order to benefit seniors, especially in rural areas.

Can the minister please provide more details on this great program?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I want to begin by thanking the great member from Northumberland–Quinte West for asking this important question about the Seniors Community Grant Program. Indeed, I was very excited to have been in London, joined by the Deputy Premier, the honourable member for London North Centre, for this announcement—an announcement that we are looking to invest another \$2 million in the Seniors Community Grant Program. Might I add that I think that it's among the best \$2 million this government is spending?

In the 2016 round of funding, this program benefited the lives of approximately 142,000 seniors through 380 projects. Nearly half of these programs were organized by small local groups to serve the unique needs of their communities.

Since 2014, we have invested \$5 million. We look forward to investing another \$2 million.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I want to thank the minister for her answer. Supporting over a quarter-million seniors is truly an accomplishment that you and this government should be proud of. In my riding, this program has helped many different agencies and programs, such as the Bridge Hospice in Warkworth, St. John Ambulance, the Northumberland elder abuse network, the Ruth Clarke activity centre in Port Hope, and Campbellford curling programs.

I am glad that we are acknowledging the important role that seniors have played and continue to play in our communities. I've heard that keeping seniors connected, active and engaged has been shown to contribute to their overall health and well-being. As I'm sure we all know, seniors in our communities are not looking to slow down any time soon. But we all know that the needs of different communities are often unique from those around them.

Could the minister responsible for seniors provide an example to this House of the diversity of programs that the seniors community grants support?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Again, I want to thank the member from Northumberland–Quinte West for the question and for himself giving a number of great examples. He rattled off a long list of examples of this program in action.

For me, Mr. Speaker, the programs that jump into my mind are three of the 2016 recipients. ATN Access, for example, based in London, has provided opportunities for individuals with disabilities to gain access to employment, reach their educational goals and improve the quality of life. Seniors community grant assistance is also helping Youth Opportunities Unlimited, again in London. Youth Opportunities Unlimited has launched a pilot project that offers unique volunteer opportunities for seniors to engage with youth. Finally, in the interest of time, a third example: Meals on Wheels in London has used their funding to create a workshop series to educate seniors on common age-related challenges.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Yesterday, the Ontario Association of Food Banks released its annual report on hunger, putting a spotlight on the growing crisis of energy poverty in our province. The report shares stories of low-income individuals, especially in rural areas, who can no longer afford constantly increasing hydro costs.

Too many residents in my riding are suffering. I hear their pleas of desperation at every event. My constituency office is flooded with requests for help with hydro bills. Contrary to what the Minister of Energy says, we do help them access existing programs, but the food bank report confirms what we've been saying all along: They're only a drop in the bucket. While the Premier has taken responsibility for the energy poverty crisis, her words do nothing to help those in my riding who go out of their way to cut back on electricity use but still see their hydro bills rise.

When will the government listen to our food banks and fix the problem, rather than offering band-aid solutions?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: We know that some Ontarians in particular struggle with their electricity bills. We've been aware of that since I've taken over this ministry. But that's because we had to build the system, that they left decimated, back up from the ground. They left it decimated. They actually relied on cheap coal. We no longer do that. We've invested in the system. We've made sure that people have a system that they can rely on. But that came with a cost, and the Premier recognizes that. We recognize that as a government, and that's why we brought forward the 8% reduction for all families and businesses right across the province, and a 20% reduction as well.

We also have six programs in place to help many of these families. I know more needs to be done, and that's why we're moving forward with our plan—something that they don't have.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Laurie Scott: To the minister: Not only are individuals paying the price for the government's misguided policies, so are our municipalities. In my riding, the city of Kawartha Lakes now spends over \$5 million a year for hydro. They are frustrated that delivery charges are very expensive compared to urban areas, and there seems to be no remedy. In August alone, their bill for 51 street lights was \$86 for electricity use, yet the total bill was \$41,000—global adjustment over \$15,000, delivery charges over \$16,000, regulatory charges, debt retirement charges and on and on. This is outrageous, and residents will ultimately have to pay for this. They're going to have to pay twice: first on their hydro bills and again on their tax bill.

My question to the minister is, when will your government act to help our municipalities deal with the mess that the Premier admits she created?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to be able to rise to answer this question because they were talking about the debt retirement charge. That's something that we eliminated for all families, but that's their legacy. They left a debt retirement charge that businesses are still paying to this day, but it's the leadership of this government that's going to eliminate that.

When it comes to municipalities, our government has worked hard over the last 13 years to improve the provincial and municipal relationship that was abandoned by them. They downloaded everything onto the municipalities. You can ask many of our MPPs who were actually in the municipal sector before. Everything was downloaded.

We are no longer doing that. We've seen \$4 billion given to our municipalities, and that will be done by 2017. When it comes to making sure that our municipalities are saving energy, they're actually doing it through—

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

New question.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Acting Premier. The hydro rate crisis caused by this government is now putting hundreds of Hamiltonians at risk of losing the roof over their heads. The city's Homelessness Prevention program has run out of money because so many struggling people have needed help with their hydro bills. The government says it will increase the funding next year, maybe, but the program is facing a \$2.5-million deficit right now, caused by Liberal hydro failures.

What will this government do today to ensure hundreds of people in my community can stay in their homes and keep the lights and the heat on?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Housing and minister responsible for poverty reduction.

Hon. Chris Ballard: It goes without saying that Ontarians should never have to choose between paying for food or their hydro bill. The Minister of Energy has outlined a number of key things that his ministry is putting into place: an 8% rebate—20% for rural—and suspending large renewal procurement.

I can say that when it comes to Hamilton, since 2003, this government has invested over \$166 million for affordable housing. But what does that mean in Hamilton? It means 872 affordable housing units have been created in Hamilton, 470 affordable housing units have been repaired in Hamilton, and 294 households received down payment assistance.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before we move to supplementary, just a reminder that the member has been warned. You have been warned already.

Mr. Paul Miller: Oh, thank you, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, you're welcome.

Supplementary.

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, the Premier likes to call herself the social justice Premier—fair enough. Yet as housing minister, Kathleen Wynne cut and capped funding for municipal homelessness prevention programs, leaving thousands of vulnerable Ontarians at risk. Previously, the province used to fund homelessness prevention based on need, and hydro in this province used to be affordable for all.

Well, Speaker, an apology isn't quite enough anymore. What real, concrete steps will this Premier take to actually bring down hydro bills and keep people in their homes?

Hon. Chris Ballard: I'm glad the member opposite mentioned the Community Homelessness Prevention

Initiative. Last year, that program, called CHPI, helped almost 40,000 families across Ontario. Because of CHPI, 115,000 families and individuals remain in their homes.

Mr. Speaker, this government doesn't need to take a lesson from the opposite side. Their platform, the NDP platform, didn't even mention the word "poverty" in the last election. Come on. And now they're concerned.

The NDP have said no to higher wages for PSWs. They've said no to an increase for families who depend on the Ontario Child Benefit. The list goes on about everything that the NDP said no about.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the awesome Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, support for Ontario's agriculture producers is crucial to ensuring that the province's \$36.4-billion agri-food sector continues to thrive.

Ontario farmers work hard to deliver top-quality Ontario produce and Ontario meat to thousands of people across the province every single day.

This year, we doubled the feeder cattle loan guarantee program from \$130 million to \$260 million to promote the growth of Ontario's cattle industry and retain jobs within the province.

We also introduced production insurance for tender fruit growers who lose their trees as a result of specific risks covered by the plan. Providing accessible, efficient support for farmers is part of our government's plan.

Minister, can you please provide further information—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. That's not acceptable. It's your own member asking the question.

Carry on.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Can you provide further information regarding what we're doing to support farmers and grow the economy?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for the question this morning. I know how hard she works, particularly with the farm community on Wolfe Island in the Kingston area.

A short time ago, Mr. Speaker, we did double the feeder cattle loan program, and we also expanded production insurance to include tender fruit growers in the province of Ontario. Our government continues to have a strong commitment to address the challenges facing Ontario farmers.

But, Mr. Speaker, nothing brings more tears to my eyes than when I've been in a farmer's field to see a leftover carcass of a cow, a sheep or a pig that has been ravaged by a predator—a coyote or a wolf. I've taken the opportunity on numerous occasions to see what is a very tragic situation for a farmer.

So we spent some time over the last number of months to look at ways to improve the wildlife compensation program in the province of Ontario, to make sure, work-

ing with our municipalities, that farmers are justly compensated for their animals that are destroyed—

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

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you, Minister, for explaining to the House how the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program, OWDCP, has been updated to provide Ontario's farmers with the support that they need when their animals are killed or injured by predatory wildlife. I'm sure the farmers in my riding of Kingston and the Islands know just how crucial this support is to protecting their livestock during these difficult situations. Just last night, I attended the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition reception and had the opportunity to speak with representatives from Ontario Pork, Ontario beef and Ontario sheep who shared with me the importance of protecting their livestock in every possible way.

We all know that supporting our farmers is important for their livelihoods and will help them continue to produce some of the best products that land on our tables. It is wonderful to see the work our government is doing to support farmers so they can continue to flourish within the province of Ontario.

Minister, can you please share with the House how the sector has reacted following the announcement that the OWDCP will be updated?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member for Kingston and the Islands for the supplementary question.

Indeed, effective January 1, 2017, compensation rates for animals, bee colonies and hives will be standardized right across the province of Ontario. The updated program will clearly define the requirements farmers need to meet to receive compensation.

One of the things that concerned me about our previous program was the amount of red tape that was embedded in the program. I've taken the opportunity to take a chainsaw to that red tape. So now we have a new, single-stage appeal process that will provide a straightforward approach for farmers and will help to provide them with compensation even quicker.

Rob Scott, the chair of the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency, had this to say: "OSMA appreciates the opportunity that Ontario gave the industry to provide input on the predation program review. Their willingness to work with the industry speaks to their commitment to ensuring the program works" for all farmers—

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

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Minister of Health. Since 2015, I've been working with a family in Dufferin-Caledon whose daughter has PKU, a rare, inherited, brain-threatening metabolic disorder. Did you know people with PKU need treatment for life? My constituent has been taking Kuvan as part of a SickKids hospital drug trial for the past seven years. Now the trial

is set to end and they simply cannot afford the staggering cost of Kuvan, which is \$170,000 per year.

On October 26, the Common Drug Review recommended the government pay for Kuvan. When will the Ministry of Health act and cover Kuvan for people with PKU?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. I know that the member opposite also appreciates that we've taken the politics out of drug funding and deciding which drugs should be made available to Ontarians.

The decision to fund all drugs, including a drug like Kuvan, which for some time has been available to Ontarians on an exceptional basis through our Exceptional Access Program—we base our funding decisions and the availability of drugs on the best scientific evidence. Now we have a system, which is a pan-Canadian system, which allows for review on that national basis. I know that there have been ongoing discussions with the drug review nationally, as well, and further submissions by the drug company. I know the ministry is reviewing that to see if, in fact, we should make further changes to what is already a drug that's available for exceptional circumstances. I expect we'll have a decision shortly.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Families and patients have been waiting too long for the Minister of Health to act. Kuvan is on the exceptional health access program, but the criteria are so restrictive that not a single application has been approved. It has been six years since Health Canada approved Kuvan. It has been over a month since the Common Drug Review recommended that the Minister of Health cover Kuvan.

When will the Minister of Health make an announcement that Kuvan will finally be covered for people who have PKU?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: In fact, the Canadian drug review rejected, in 2013, and made a negative funding recommendation for Kuvan at that time, based on an absence of scientific evidence as to its benefit over existing measures. Notwithstanding that, we made a decision in the province to make it available for exceptional reasons. That is our current policy.

Of course, with additional evidence, should it come forward to demonstrate efficacy, and scientific evidence of its benefit and, of course, in consideration of the national process, if there's a decision made by the Common Drug Review—earlier, I said “Canadian”—to fund this drug in broader circumstances, we of course will look at that. We make our decisions—in fact, I am not involved. I can't be involved in decisions. The experts within the ministry make the decisions on the best scientific evidence available.

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: I seek unanimous consent to delay the votes on parentage, Bill 28, and on Bill 27, until after the swearing-in of the new member from Niagara West–Glanbrook and after he takes his seat, so that the voices of those citizens can be reflected—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Beaches–East York is seeking unanimous consent to delay a vote. Do we agree? I heard a “no.”

DEFERRED VOTES

BURDEN REDUCTION ACT, 2016 LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ALLÈGEMENT DU FARDEAU RÉGLEMENTAIRE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to reduce the regulatory burden on business, to enact various new Acts and to make other amendments and repeals / *Projet de loi 27, Loi visant à alléger le fardeau réglementaire des entreprises, à édicter diverses lois et à modifier et abroger d'autres lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1140 to 1145.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On October 4, 2016, Mr. Duguid moved second reading of Bill 27. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Albanese, Laura | Fraser, John | Munro, Julia |
| Anderson, Granville | Hillier, Randy | Murray, Glen R. |
| Arnott, Ted | Hoggarth, Ann | Naidoo-Harris, Indira |
| Baker, Yvan | Hoskins, Eric | Naqvi, Yasir |
| Ballard, Chris | Hunter, Mitzie | Oraziotti, David |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo | Jaczek, Helena | Potts, Arthur |
| Bradley, James J. | Jones, Sylvia | Qaadri, Shafiq |
| Brown, Patrick | Kiwala, Sophie | Rinaldi, Lou |
| Chan, Michael | Leal, Jeff | Sandals, Liz |
| Chiarelli, Bob | MacCharles, Tracy | Scott, Laurie |
| Clark, Steve | Mangat, Amrit | Smith, Todd |
| Coe, Lorne | Martins, Cristina | Sousa, Charles |
| Colle, Mike | Martow, Gila | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Coteau, Michael | Matthews, Deborah | Thibeault, Glenn |
| Crack, Grant | Mauro, Bill | Thompson, Lisa M. |
| Damerla, Dipika | McDonell, Jim | Vernile, Daiene |
| Del Duca, Steven | McGarry, Kathryn | Walker, Bill |
| Des Rosiers, Nathalie | McMahon, Eleanor | Wilson, Jim |
| Dhillon, Vic | McMeekin, Ted | Wong, Soo |
| Dong, Han | Milczyn, Peter Z. | Yakabuski, John |
| Fedeli, Victor | Miller, Norm | Zimmer, David |
| Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Moridi, Reza | |

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Armstrong, Teresa J. | Gélinas, France | Singh, Jagmeet |
| DiNovo, Cheri | Gretzky, Lisa | Tabuns, Peter |
| Fife, Catherine | Hatfield, Percy | Vanhof, John |
| French, Jennifer K. | Natyshak, Taras | |
| Gates, Wayne | Sattler, Peggy | |

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 65; the nays are 13.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): So be it.

ALL FAMILIES ARE EQUAL ACT
(PARENTAGE AND RELATED
REGISTRATIONS STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT), 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ÉGALITÉ
DE TOUTES LES FAMILLES
(MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI
CONCERNE LA FILIATION ET LES
ENREGISTREMENTS CONNEXES)

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act, the Vital Statistics Act and various other Acts respecting parentage and related registrations / Projet de loi 28, Loi modifiant la Loi portant réforme du droit de l'enfance, la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil et diverses autres lois en ce qui concerne la filiation et les enregistrements connexes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells ran from 1149 to 1150.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Earlier today, Mr. Naqvi moved third reading of Bill 28. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Albanese, Laura | Gates, Wayne | Murray, Glen R. |
| Anderson, Granville | Gélinas, France | Naidoo-Harris, Indira |
| Armstrong, Teresa J. | Gretzky, Lisa | Naqvi, Yasir |
| Arnott, Ted | Hatfield, Percy | Natyshak, Taras |
| Baker, Yvan | Hillier, Randy | Oraziotti, David |
| Ballard, Chris | Hoggarth, Ann | Potts, Arthur |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo | Hoskins, Eric | Qaadri, Shafiq |
| Bradley, James J. | Hunter, Mitzie | Rinaldi, Lou |
| Brown, Patrick | Jaczek, Helena | Sandals, Liz |
| Chan, Michael | Jones, Sylvia | Sattler, Peggy |
| Chiarelli, Bob | Kiwala, Sophie | Scott, Laurie |
| Clark, Steve | Leal, Jeff | Singh, Jagmeet |
| Coe, Lorne | MacCharles, Tracy | Smith, Todd |
| Colle, Mike | Mangat, Amrit | Sousa, Charles |
| Coteau, Michael | Martins, Cristina | Tabuns, Peter |
| Crack, Grant | Martow, Gila | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Damerla, Dipika | Matthews, Deborah | Thibeault, Glenn |
| Del Duca, Steven | Mauro, Bill | Thompson, Lisa M. |
| Des Rosiers, Nathalie | McDonnell, Jim | Vanthof, John |
| Dhillon, Vic | McGarry, Kathryn | Vernile, Daiene |
| DiNovo, Cheri | McMahon, Eleanor | Walker, Bill |
| Dong, Han | McMeekin, Ted | Wilson, Jim |
| Fedeli, Victor | Milczyn, Peter Z. | Wong, Soo |
| Fife, Catherine | Miller, Norm | Yakabuski, John |
| Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Miller, Paul | Zimmer, David |
| Fraser, John | Moridi, Reza | |
| French, Jennifer K. | Munro, Julia | |

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 79; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion 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): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1153 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise to again implore this government to take action to help those suffering the debilitating effects of Lyme disease. Two years have passed since MPPs unanimously called on the government to get serious about Lyme testing and treatment. Since then, we've heard lots of promises from the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. However, for those suffering in Leeds-Grenville and across Ontario, his words ring cruelly empty.

If I sound urgent, Speaker, it's with good reason. In 2014, the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark health unit reported the highest rate of Lyme disease cases per 100,000 in Ontario—nearly 17% of the total cases. Yes, there have been positive steps regarding awareness and prevention, but increasing populations of ticks and longer seasons of exposure mean all the awareness and the prevention won't keep people from being bitten and getting sick. It's these people that our health care system is failing.

Two years on we're no closer to the testing and treatment available in the United States or in Europe. With all of its resources, Ontario should be a destination for those seeking cutting-edge treatment. But rather than working with our doctors and health care providers to champion the fight against Lyme, this government picks fights with the medical community.

On behalf of those who have lost so much to this terrible disease, I call on the minister to act now and restore their hope.

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Wayne Gates: I rise today to speak about an issue that is incredibly important for the men and women who work in the skilled trades in Ontario: removing schedules 16 and 17 from Bill 70, the same schedules that undermine the work our tradespeople do and remove health and safety standards from their workplace.

The skilled trades workers in our province are a crucial part of our economy. They're good jobs that provide so many of the services we rely on. Now the Liberals have decided to undermine their work. They

want unskilled workers with no certification to do the same work as our tradespeople. They want fewer inspectors for health and safety in the workplace. They are fine with making this province less safe just so corporations and developers can save a few bucks. This is serious. People could die. Workers shouldn't have to worry about whether their workplace is safe or not.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that what the Liberals want is to make our workplaces less safe and our workers less sure about their jobs. What kind of message is this sending to our young people who want to pursue the skilled trades, as well as to our young women and men? I can tell you what the message is. It's simple: All the hard work you put into mastering your trade and becoming certified doesn't matter. What does matter is ensuring businesses can use non-certified workers just to save a quick buck.

Instead of attacking skilled trades workers, instead of stripping away the value of their certificates, instead of making the workplace more dangerous for workers, instead of that, let's support our workers in the province of Ontario.

Let me get straight to the point: Schedules 16 and 17 of Bill 70 are wrong. They should be removed from the bill.

OTTAWA HOSPITAL

Mr. John Fraser: Over the last 10 years, there has been a crane at every hospital in Ottawa. As part of that effort, I, along with my colleagues, have been working with the Ottawa Hospital on the development of the new Civic Campus. The new campus is critical to the future health care needs of a growing city and our aging population.

There are serious concerns that have been raised with the selection by the National Capital Commission of Tunney's Pasture as the only recommended site. Amongst these concerns are access, cost to the public purse and risk of a lengthy delay.

Local decision-making is critical, and my colleagues and I fully support the Ottawa Hospital and its community board as it responds to the NCC in moving the new Civic Campus forward.

Mr. Speaker, again, it is critical that this project not be put at risk of significant delay. Our Ottawa caucus has worked hard to secure the funds for the next phase of planning, and we are anxious to get going.

It's important we get this right, and I know that I speak on behalf of all my colleagues in Ottawa in saying that this recommendation needs to be reconsidered.

GREY GRANITE CLUB

Mr. Bill Walker: It is an honour to rise today in recognition of a worthy cause in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. Members of the Grey Granite Club have presented a \$25,000 gift for a cancer services endowment at the Owen Sound Regional Hospital. The

earnings on this fund will support the purchase of new diagnostic and medical equipment to support future cancer care in my constituency.

Since the Grey Granite Club was originally established in 1875, its members have always been active and generous supporters of their communities. They previously organized 13 funspiels to raise more than \$138,000 for new medical equipment at the local hospital. When they weren't helping to raise money for local needs, the Grey Granite curlers were competing in the zone, regional and provincial competitions, bringing home multiple victories and demonstrating that they could compete with Ontario's best.

Their latest gift, which will help doctors, nurses and other medical staff provide care in new ways and introduce new technologies, was also their last, as the members of the Grey Granite Club met one last time on October 1, 2016, to wind down their club. In the words of club president Ron Hopper, "In many ways, this gift reflects the spirit of Grey Granite members. As a new member, you soon learned that fundraising for the community was as important as curling, and both allowed you to meet new friends from across our region. All of our members spent untold hours volunteering for various events—always with a smile."

There is no doubt that their generous donation will have a lasting impact on local patients and their families for many years to come. A sincerest thank you to Grey Granite Club members for your excellent service and for helping to build healthier communities in Grey and Bruce.

SHARED SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Our hospital in Sudbury has given layoff notices to 36 hard-working mostly women, many of them single parents, whose job it is to do the laundry for our hospital. Why? Because the Ministry of Health wants our hospital to do more with less. Our hospital is left with no choice, for fear of repercussions from this ministry, which is pushing shared service organizations, no matter the cost to our community. So starting this April, a shared service organization in Hamilton will be doing our laundry.

It is not the first time that shared service organizations have come under fire. You will remember in 2012 and 2013, 1,212 people received diluted chemo drugs. I was part of the committee that studied this scandal, and we found that the cause of this monumental error was a shared service organization. We recommended that shared service organizations be made transparent and accountable, that they be covered by the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act and the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, that they be subjects of audits by the Auditor General, and that the rebate and value-add—that's a fancy word for kickbacks—be discontinued. None of that has happened.

I urge the government to do the right thing. Keep those 36 jobs in Sudbury until the government acts upon

those very modest accountability and transparency measures for shared service organizations. This way, we can all see where the money goes.

TOUR FOR HUMANITY

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I am delighted to rise this afternoon to speak about the launch of the Tour for Humanity in my community of Davenport.

The Tour for Humanity is an initiative presented by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies. It is a mobile classroom that educates students in a highly interactive environment. This unique project, designed to initiate discussion on critical human rights issues, is now in its second year of operation. As a proud Portuguese Canadian, I am pleased that for this particular Davenport tour, the organizers included in their curriculum a story about the Portuguese hero Aristides de Sousa Mendes.

Aristides de Sousa Mendes was one of the great heroes of the Second World War. As the Portuguese consul stationed in Bordeaux, France, he found himself confronted in June 1940 with the reality of thousands of refugees outside the Portuguese consulate attempting to escape the horrors of the Nazi war machine. In all, de Sousa Mendes saved 30,000 people, including about 10,000 Jews, by issuing visas to Portugal. It has been characterized as the largest rescue action by a single individual during the Holocaust. He has also been recognized by the Yad Vashem in Israel as “the righteous one.”

I am thrilled that students, teachers, families and friends in Davenport will learn from this Tour for Humanity and get an opportunity to learn about this wonderful Portuguese hero who saved the lives of so many, and that this tour will empower students to raise their voices and take action against hate, to make the province and the world a better place.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Todd Smith: Back on September 27, the Minister of Energy told us that the government was going to move away from large-scale renewable projects. He said in his speech yesterday that he was going to be technologically “agnostic” on new power that comes online.

1510

What we’ve known all along is that there are a number of projects that weren’t included in the LRP II that are still at risk of going up and continuing that long-standing Liberal tradition of hiking hydro rates.

One of those is in my riding in Prince Edward county. It’s the wpd project that has been planned for the south shore. What we know is that these projects are supposed to have a five-year milestone operation date. Given that wpd was signed in 2010, we shouldn’t even be talking about this project. But there have been extensions and appeals, so we’re here, almost two years after what was supposed to be the drop-dead date for this project—except we don’t know when the drop-dead date is be-

cause the government won’t tell anyone. However, the minister will claim that they have too much generation—and then let the OEB issue an extension to wpd on October 20 of this year.

Respectfully, the minister has got to pick a lane here. Either we have too much generation, as he stated back in September—which means he can send a directive to the OEB retracting the extension that they granted to March 2017—or he never intended to get out of the large-scale generation game and is playing hydro shell games again.

I’m asking that the minister direct the OEB to retract the extension granted to wpd on October 20—or his power promises are just more Liberal hot air.

MENTORING JUNIORS KIDS ORGANIZATION

Mr. Han Dong: I am delighted to recognize the Mentoring Juniors Kids Organization for their recent Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant.

The MJKO was founded by Miranda and Ibrahim Kamal and is a charitable organization that promotes positive, healthy lifestyle choices through mentoring and leadership training. MJKO teaches our youth to be community champions through physical fitness—such as skipping, non-contact boxing and endurance training. Miranda and her team of coaches teach kids about healthy food choices, believing in big dreams and understanding the importance of volunteerism.

I recently joined MJKO, the MLSE Foundation and Boxing Canada in their new ring, alongside Toronto Police Services 14 division, at their new facility, for a ribbon-cutting ceremony. There was a free barbecue provided by Enbridge Gas and we were joined by the Toronto Raptors mascot, for what was a truly exciting moment for us all.

This \$374,000 grant will fund four additional MJKO-administered projects and allow 1,500 new kids under the age of 18 to access programming.

I congratulate MJKO on this terrific win for our youth and our community.

ORDER OF VAUGHAN RECIPIENTS

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to start by congratulating my colleague Raymond Cho, the member from Scarborough–Rouge River, on receiving the Korean Canadian Heritage Award. I went to the ceremony. It was very exciting. It was for his public service and contribution to the Korean community here in Canada for the last 30 years. Let’s hear it for Raymond. We all love Raymond.

Twenty-five years, city of Vaughan, where I live, and on October 25, 25 recipients of the Order of Vaughan—it was a fantastic ceremony and a fantastic evening, a really gala evening by Mayor Bevilacqua. I just want to list who received the awards:

- John Amendola for media and communications;
- Carlo Baldassarra for philanthropy;

—Avi Benlolo—we just heard the member from Davenport speak about the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center—for equity and diversity;

—Franca Damiani Carella for health and wellness;

—Sam Ciccolini, who I know well, for philanthropy;

—Mario Cortellucci, philanthropy;

—Noor Din for not-for-profit;

—Marie Fiorellino Di Poce for public service;

—Julian Fantino, former MP and cabinet minister, for public service;

—Isabella Ferrara for public service;

—Hannah Godefa, who is just a teenager, for not-for-profit;

—Sandy Keshen for accessibility, and for her establishment of the Reena Foundation;

—Gus Longo for business—everybody in Vaughan loves to shop at Longo's;

—Dominic Mancuso for arts and entertainment;

—Shernett Martin, who I know well, for education—she founded the Vaughan African Canadian Association, CariVaughan and so many other things;

—James Maynard, public service;

—Nick Puopolo for business;

—Vivian Risi for philanthropy;

—David Rocco for arts and entertainment;

—Bob Santos for accessibility;

—Giuliano Todaro for philanthropy;

—Garry Vosburg for public service;

—Nicolas Voudouris for health and wellness;

—Peter Wixson, public service; and

—Daniele Zanotti, not-for-profit—very famous with the United Way.

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

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated November 29, 2016, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

COMPUTERS MEAN BUSINESS INC. ACT, 2016

Mr. Dong moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr54, An Act to revive Computers Mean Business Inc.

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): Pursuant to standing order 86, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

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

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Associate Minister of Health is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Minister?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Associate Minister of Education.

I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 32 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I can identify you as "Minister" if you start the motion, dear.

The minister moves that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 32 be waived. Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' bills.

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

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I move that when orders of the day is called this afternoon, the orders for second reading on Bill 43, An Act to proclaim PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day, and Bill 63, An Act to proclaim Nurse Practitioner Week, shall be called and considered consecutively and that the questions on the motions for second readings of the bills be put immediately without debate or amendment, and that the bills be ordered for third reading.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister moves that when orders of the day is called this afternoon, the orders for second reading on Bill 43, An Act to proclaim PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day, and Bill 63, An Act to proclaim Nurse Practitioner Week, shall be called and considered consecutively and that the questions on the motions for second readings of the bills be put immediately—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispense.
Agreed? Carried.
Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' bills.

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

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I move that the order of the House dated October 6, 2016, referring Bill 36, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month, to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be discharged and that the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That the order of the House dated October 20, 2016, referring Bill 44, An Act to proclaim the month of March as Bangladeshi Heritage Month, to the Standing Committee on General Government be discharged and that the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That the order of the House dated November 3, 2016, referring Bill 56, An Act to proclaim the month of November Hindu Heritage Month, to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be discharged and that the bill be ordered for third reading; and;

1520

That during orders of the day on Monday, December 5, 2016, the orders for third readings of:

Bill 9, An Act to amend the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act; and

Bill 34, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act with respect to the relationship between a child and the child's grandparents; and

Bill 36, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month; and

Bill 43, An Act to proclaim PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day; and

Bill 44, An Act to proclaim the month of March as Bangladeshi Heritage Month; and

Bill 47, An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 with respect to rewards points; and

Bill 56, An Act to proclaim the month of November Hindu Heritage Month; and

Bill 63, An Act to proclaim Nurse Practitioner Week; Shall be called and considered consecutively; and

That 15 minutes shall be allotted to the third reading stage of each bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

That at the end of this time, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of each of the bills without further debate or amendment, and if a recorded vote is requested, all divisions shall be stacked, and there shall be a single five-minute division bell; and

That no vote may be deferred.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): One moment, please.

After notice, I'm going to have to declare that this motion is out of order, for the time being, as some of the bills are still in committee and have not been withdrawn and have to be dealt with at that level. So I will leave it to the House leaders to continue that dialogue. Therefore, this particular motion is out of order.

During the exchange, I made a comment that I should not have made, and I apologize to the member. I said "dear" instead of "Minister," and I apologize for that. It should not have happened.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: It's fine.

Interjection: Dear minister.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dear minister.

It was inappropriate. It was inappropriate, and I apologize, Minister.

PETITIONS

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to thank Norine Baron and Pam McDermid for sending me these petitions. They're to expand public dental programs.

"Petition 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 the people of Ontario.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that

cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

“Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

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

“To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

I agree. I’ll give a copy to Charlie to bring down to the desk.

HOME INSPECTION INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas home inspections are an integral part of the real estate transaction; and

“Whereas there are no current rules and education system to qualify who is and who is not a home inspector; and

“Whereas the public interest is best served by protecting consumers against receiving a bad home inspection;

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

“Ensure the speedy passage of Bill 59, Putting Consumers First Act, 2016, and mandate the government of Ontario to bring in a strong qualifications regime for home inspectors.”

I support this petition and hand it to page David.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

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

“Whereas under the current Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG), one in eight Ontario schools is at risk of closure; and

“Whereas the value of a school to the local economy and community has been removed from the PARG; and

“Whereas the PARG outlines consultation requirements that are insufficient to allow for meaningful community involvement, including the establishment of community hubs; and

“Whereas school closures have a significant negative impact on families and their children, resulting in inequitable access to extracurricular activities and other essential school involvement, and after-school work opportunities; and

“Whereas school closures have devastating impacts on the growth and overall viability of communities across Ontario, in particular self-sustaining agricultural communities;

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

“To place a moratorium on all school closures across Ontario and to suspend all pupil accommodation reviews until the PARG has been subject to a substantive review by an all-party committee that will examine the effects of extensive school closures on the health of our communities and children.”

I fully support it and will affix my name and send it with page Charis.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mrs. Wilda Beaupré, resolutions/legislation, the Catholic Women’s League, for gathering these petitions for me.

It reads as follows:

“Whereas quality of care for the 77,000 residents of (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families; and

“Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in LTC homes to keep pace with residents’ increasing acuity and the growing number of residents with complex behaviours; and

“Whereas several Ontario coroner’s inquests into LTC homes deaths have recommended an increase in direct hands-on care for residents and staffing levels and the most reputable studies on this topic recommends 4.1 hours of direct care per day;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“Amend the LTC Homes Act (2007) for a legislated minimum care standard of four hours per resident per day adjusted for acuity level and case mix.”

I fully agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Giulia to bring it to the Clerk.

1530

ICE MACHINES

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

“Whereas ice machines are found everywhere throughout the health care system, including long-term-care facilities and hospitals; and

“Whereas numerous bacteria and viruses are known to contaminate ice cubes, including cholera, typhoid fever, salmonella, legionella, E. coli, shigella, hepatitis A and norovirus I and II; and

“Whereas the lack of regulation increases the probability of consuming ice from ice machines with unhygienic levels of bacteria and/or viruses, putting public safety at risk; and

“Whereas individuals consuming ice from a contaminated ice machine in a hospital or long-term-care facility are at a greater risk due to potentially weakened immune systems; and

“Whereas the inherent risk and rate at which both bacteria and biofilm grow inside ice machines have caused other countries to mandate the cleaning of ice machines; and

“Whereas there are currently no mandates or guidelines on the frequency or thoroughness of cleaning for institutional ice machines in hospitals, long-term-care or other health care facilities;

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

“That the province of Ontario establish and enforce cleaning and hygiene standards for all institutional ice machines in provincially funded and/or operated facilities.”

I agree with this petition. I will affix my name to it and send it down with page Will.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital is challenged to support the growing needs of the community within its existing space as it was built for a mere 7,000” emergency room “visits and experiences in excess of 34,000 visits annually; and

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

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

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

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

“That the Kathleen Wynne Liberal government immediately provide the necessary funding to Stevenson Memorial Hospital for the redevelopment of their emergency department, operating rooms, diagnostic imaging

and laboratory to ensure that they can continue to provide stable and ongoing service to residents in our area.”

I certainly agree with this petition, and I will sign it.

SECOURS AUX SINISTRÉS

M^{me} France Gélinas: J’aimerais remercier Monique et Sylvio Chenard, de Gogama, pour la pétition :

« Entendu qu’à 2 h le 7 mars 2015 un train du Canadien National a déraillé près de Gogama;

« Entendu que ce déraillement a causé de nombreux wagons transportant du pétrole brut à exploser, prendre feu et déverser plus d’un million de litres de pétrole dans la rivière Makami;

« Entendu que le feu a produit une fumée noire toxique pour plus de 24 heures et a étalé des cendres et résidus dans les environs;

« Entendu que personne n’a donné une réponse claire sur si oui ou non les poissons pêchés en aval du lieu du déraillement sont bons à consommer;

« Entendu que c’était le troisième déraillement du CN dans le nord de l’Ontario dans un mois; »

Ils demandent à l’Assemblée législative : « aider les gens de Gogama et la Première Nation de Mattagami à obtenir une indemnisation juste et équitable du CN. »

J’appuie cette pétition. Je vais la signer et je demande à Charis de l’amener aux greffiers.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Todd Smith: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values; and

“Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approval;

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

“That the Ministry of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments; and

“That the Minister of the Environment conduct a thorough scientific study on the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines.”

I agree with this and will send it with page Henry.

SHINGLES VACCINE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario announced that starting September 15, 2016, the shingles vaccine would be available to all seniors 65 years to 70 years free of charge (until” the end of the year, “any senior born in 1945 is also eligible);

“Whereas seniors over the age of 70 years will still be required to pay for the vaccine if they choose;

“Whereas the government of Ontario claims that studies show that the vaccine is highly effective when seniors are vaccinated between the ages of 65 and 70 and will not cover the vaccine for all Ontario seniors;

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

“This is unfair to seniors over the age of 70 and we urge the government to expand the coverage so that all Ontario seniors are eligible for the free shingles vaccine.”

Speaker, I fully agree. I'll give these pages to Fallon to bring up to the desk.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I'll certainly sign that, Mr. Speaker.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mrs. Diane Rogers from Hanmer, in my riding, for this petition. It reads as follows:

“Privatizing Hydro One: Another Wrong Choice.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good afternoon, Speaker. “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the current Liberal government took office;

“Whereas over half of Ontarians' power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment;

“Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours at a loss;

“Whereas the market rate for electricity, according to IESO data, has been less than three cents per kilowatt hour to date in 2016, yet the Liberal government's lack of responsible science-based planning has not allowed these reductions to be passed on to Ontarians, resulting in electrical bills several times more than that amount;

“Whereas the implementation of cap-and-trade will drive the cost of electricity even higher and deny Ontarians the option to choose affordable natural gas heating;

“Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills;

“Whereas the ill-conceived energy policies of this Liberal government that ignored the advice of independent experts and government agencies, such as the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) and the independent electrical system operator (IESO), and are not based on science have resulted in Ontarians' electricity costs rising, despite lower natural gas costs and increased energy conservation in the province;

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

“To take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians' energy bills.”

Speaker, I agree with this petition, will sign it, and present it to page William.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time for petitions is now over.

1540

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PANDAS/PANS AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA JOURNÉE DE SENSIBILISATION AU PANDAS/PANS

Mr. Bailey moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to proclaim PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day / Projet de loi 43, Loi proclamant la Journée de sensibilisation au PANDAS/PANS.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to the order of the House from earlier today, the bill is ordered for third reading.

NURSE PRACTITIONER WEEK
ACT, 2016
LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SEMAINE
DES INFIRMIÈRES PRATICIENNES
ET INFIRMIERS PRATICIENS

Mme Gélinas moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 63, An Act to proclaim Nurse Practitioner Week /
Projet de loi 63, Loi proclamant la Semaine des
infirmières praticiennes et infirmiers praticiens.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to the order of the House from earlier today, the bill is ordered for third reading.

Orders of the day?

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House related to Bill 70—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me; I need you to call the order first.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Sorry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It's all right. It's not as if we do these things every day.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, Speaker. Government notice of motion number 5; Mr. Naqvi.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the minister for women's issues and the minister responsible for accessibility.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you. So Ms. MacCharles in place of Mr. Naqvi this afternoon.

I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 70, An Act to implement Budget Measures and to enact and amend various other statutes, when the bill is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Thursday, December 1, 2016, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 70:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 1 p.m. on Thursday, December 1, 2016; and

—That witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee on a first-come, first-served basis; and

—That each witness will receive up to 10 minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

—That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Thursday, December 1, 2016; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be noon on Friday, December 2, 2016; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Tuesday, December 6, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That on Tuesday, December 6, 2016, at 4 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the Committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto, no 20-minute waiting period pursuant to standing order 129(a) being permitted; and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Wednesday, December 7, 2016; and

That in the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The votes on second and third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Ms. MacCharles has moved government notice of motion number 5. Back to the minister for further debate. Oh, I'm sorry; forgive me. It's the member from Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's a pleasure to speak to this motion that the minister has just made. I just want to talk about the importance of expeditiously working to get results for Ontarians.

I think I mentioned this the other day: Before I was first elected and I was knocking on doors and meeting with constituents, a lot of the people that I met with talked to me about how they wished that sometimes government could move more quickly, more expeditiously, to get things done. They elected me to get results for them, but also to get those results as quickly as possible and then move on to the next issue and get results on that issue as quickly as possible. So that's really what this is about. It's about making sure that we move Bill 70 along as quickly and as expeditiously as is possible, to make sure that the good, positive measures that are in this bill for the people of Ontario take effect as soon as possible. A lot of the measures in this bill are really about just making everyday life better for the people of Ontario. There are a number of areas where this bill does really important things, and I would like to mention a few of those.

This bill will take action in terms of helping people purchase their first home. One of the things that I hear about a lot in my community—I think we hear it across the province, but certainly in Etobicoke Centre, I hear about young people struggling to afford to buy a home and enter the housing market for the first time. We've taken a step in the right direction to address that by doubling the maximum land transfer tax refund to \$4,000 for eligible first-time home homebuyers. It's a small step, but I think it's an important step.

We're establishing the initial parameters for the Financial Services and Regulatory Authority, which will be a new, flexible regulator of financial services and pensions that will be more consumer-focused and improve protections for consumers, investors and pension plan beneficiaries. Again, we want to make sure that we're protecting consumers, that we're protecting investors. This is really, really important because people, at the end of the day, need to be able to save and invest to secure their financial futures. But we want to make sure that the regulators that are in place are nimble, effective and adaptable to the times and to the investment vehicles that are out there.

Extending the Ontario Securities Commission whistleblower protections to employees who provide information about possible contraventions of Ontario commodity futures law: This is again about protecting investors, and when I say "protecting investors," I'm not talking about large institutional investors. I'm talking about the people who live in my community, who rely on the returns from these investments every single day to secure their retirement, for example.

Requiring the heads of regional municipal councils to be directly elected by voters, which will strengthen democratic representation—my former seatmate, now minister, Chris Ballard introduced a private member's bill in the previous sitting on this issue. I'm really proud

of his leadership. I know a number of members of our caucus have introduced legislation in that vein. I'm really pleased to see this measure in here. I think that's a validation of his good work and the other members' good work. Really, the alternative to moving this forward is to really slow the process down. We're not going to allow that to happen. We recognize the challenges that Ontarians are facing. I've mentioned some of the fixes that are in this bill that will help Ontarians, and we want to move this in place.

1550

What I wanted to do, too, is talk a little bit about the broader picture of what we're doing here and how this bill fits into that. Going back to the last election campaign, we committed to balancing the budget by 2017-18, and we continue to be on track to do that. I have to say that I'm proud to be one of the members of Treasury Board. I'm proud to have had the opportunity to be parliamentary assistant to Minister Matthews at Treasury Board and now to Minister Sousa in finance. I've had the opportunity to provide input, to advise and to use some of my business and finance background to help the government achieve that very goal—not to achieve it with a slash-and-burn approach, as has been done in the past, but to really do it in a thoughtful way, looking line by line through the government budget, getting better value for money, making sure that we're continuing to deliver improved results, but also finding the resources to invest in those programs that people care about. That's going to allow us to balance the budget in 2017-18.

We're not doing it, as I said, with a slash-and-burn approach, as has been done in the past. But we're also doing it in a way, keeping our eye on the economy, making sure that we're making the investments that don't necessarily—not just the short-term investments in programs, but also the longer-term investments that are going to spur our economy, create jobs and really create the foundation for a more prosperous future for years to come. One of the best examples of that is the investments that we're making in transit and infrastructure and transportation infrastructure, in hospitals and schools. These are investments that take time to realize and to build, but once they're built, they create a foundation for economic success, and they create a foundation for greater quality of life and greater health care, education, and all those things that the people of Ontario need, care about and deserve.

So we're balancing the budget in 2017-18. We're doing it in a smart and prudent way. But we're also making sure that we're putting in place the foundations to grow our economy and create jobs for people of all backgrounds and from all parts of the province.

One of the things that I'm really proud to see is Ontario's economic performance over the past number of years. Business investment in Ontario increased by 0.6% in the second quarter of 2016 and 0.9% in the first quarter. We've recovered all of the jobs that were lost during the recession. I think that's a very positive sign. That doesn't mean that we don't have more work to do.

We have a lot more work to do; there's no question. There are a lot of people out there who are still struggling, and we need to make sure we continue to work to spur our economy and provide the foundation for their success. I'm as big an advocate for that as anyone, and the rest of our caucus are big advocates for that. But these are positive signs, and we'll continue to do the work we need to do to achieve the goal of making sure everyone shares in that success.

Our unemployment rate, for example, has been lower than the national average for 18 months in a row now. It's the lowest unemployment rate in eight years.

So these are positive signs, but there's much more work to do.

There are a few things in this bill that I want to mention, in my remaining time, that I'm particularly proud of, that support those objectives that I talked about: balancing the budget, growing our economy, facilitating a better quality of life and protecting consumers. One of the things that we've done is we've made amendments to implement certain recommendations of the November 2015 report submitted by my colleague Laura Albanese, the Minister of Finance's former parliamentary assistant. She did incredible work. In her report, she recommended that we allow Ontario credit unions to participate in syndicated loans outside Ontario remove differential rules for small credit unions, and authorize regulations setting out different deposit insurance limits for different insurable deposits. She completed her review in November 2015. The recommendations were based on extensive consultations. I spoke with the member for York South-Weston many times when she was doing this work, during that consultation process. I know how hard she worked. I know how thoroughly she listened to people across Ontario.

She created a report that found an excellent balance: to ensure that the people who are served by credit unions are supported, and that credit unions can continue to prosper and deliver not only the kinds of services that Ontarians need but also give back to communities. Many of the credit unions really reinvest in their communities. I think of ones that serve my community in Etobicoke. Ukrainian Credit Union is an organization that I know well. Buduchnist Credit Union is another one. They don't just provide excellent service to their members; they also take the profits and reinvest them in communities in Etobicoke Centre and across Ontario.

Another important element that I want to talk about, Speaker, is the establishment of the Financial Services Regulatory Authority, which is a new, independent and flexible regulator of financial services.

Consumer protection is essential to maintaining our position as a leader in the financial services sector. I used to work in the financial services sector, and I know that Toronto—Ontario—has one of the largest financial services sectors in North America. We are actually global leaders in a number of niche areas within the sector in making sure that we have appropriate, flexible regulatory authorities that are flexible to the needs of business, but also protecting consumers is key.

In 2015, we had an advisory panel to review the mandates of FSCO, DICO and FST. In response to the recommendations that were made by the panel, we're introducing legislation that, if passed, would establish the FSRA. This is an important step in modernizing the regulation of our financial services sector and pensions in Ontario.

In summary, Speaker, we have a bill here that's really designed to protect consumers. It's designed to strengthen the economy. It's designed in such a way to make sure that we're fiscally responsible and that we're managing towards a balanced budget in 2017-18 while investing in the services that are most important to the people of Ontario, whether that be health care or education or transit or roads or other kinds of infrastructure.

I'm really proud of this bill. I'm proud of the work that the Minister of Finance and his team have done in pulling this together. I hope that we can get this motion passed so we can move the bill through as quickly as possible and get it passed, because at the end of the day I was elected—we were all elected—to deliver results for the people of Ontario, but also to deliver them quickly and expeditiously. That's why I hope we have support from all sides to move this time allocation forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: I just want to touch on schedule 1 of the bill and how the government has blindsided craft distillers.

For two years, the Ontario Craft Distillers Association was working with the Premier's advisory council on a tax plan to give the government its cut but allow the industry to grow. Businesses like King's Lock Craft Distillery in Johnstown in my riding were hopeful about what those talks would produce. Instead, they were shocked to learn that Bill 70 unilaterally imposes a 61.5% single-tier sales tax. All of that work to develop a graduated tax plan like other jurisdictions in Canada and the United States have used to grow this craft industry was poured down the drain.

It's been incredible to hear the finance minister and the member for Beaches—East York argue that it's actually good news for craft distillers. Frankly, I'll take the word of the industry over the government spin.

The member for Beaches—East York even brought up NAFTA, speculating a graduated tax would "put the whole craft beer industry in the province at risk." What a bunch of fearmongering nonsense, Speaker. The member knows, or he should know, that a graduated tax isn't the issue. We have plenty of graduated taxes. A problem only exists if you tie those taxes to local input. It's just another red herring to justify the indefensible actions of this government.

The finance minister needs to recognize the damage this dispiriting tax is going to cause. I hope he'll agree to take it out of Bill 70 and get back to the table with the craft distillers to work on a real solution.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to speak in this House, but today I have to say I'm not happy to be speaking to this: once again, a time-allocation motion, and specifically, on this bill.

As you will recall, one of the reasons that this bill is now being rushed through the House is that the government wants to get it done before the end of the session. But the real reason, or one of the real reasons, is when the government prorogued the House and when they wanted to change it from—remember the tag line was “Building Ontario Up”? Then they realized that a lot of people weren't being built up, so they decided to change the tagline to “Building Ontario Up for Everyone.” As a result, a lot of things had to start over, and now they're being rushed to manage their schedule.

1600

Obviously, they want to build Ontario up for everyone—except Ontarians who actually want to take the time to speak to this bill, because they're being rushed, now, as well. Our time to debate is being cut. But that's really not the most egregious part. It's the people who actually have issues with this bill: Their time is being cut as well.

If you will recall, when this bill was first introduced in the House, the NDP introduced a reasoned amendment, for two reasons. The first was to try to slow the bill down a bit, because it wasn't even off the presses and they wanted to start debating it. The second reason was that there are many schedules in this bill. It's an economic bill, it's been talked about as a mini-budget, but there are schedules in this bill that don't belong in an economic bill, specifically schedules 16 and 17.

In our amendment, we suggested or demanded or expected that these schedules be removed and that they be reintroduced as independent legislation, because they are both—16 is perhaps not as contentious as 17, and I'm not going to get into all the details, but one has to do with occupational safety, and schedule 17 has to do with the College of Trades. They're both important issues, contentious issues that shouldn't be hidden in the middle of what everyone perceives to be a budget bill. That's what's happening here.

We gave the government notice that we believe, the NDP caucus believes, that those two schedules should be pulled out of the bill and that the bill should be considered without them. I would like to repeat that, because it's not that we don't believe that they should be discussed; we fully believe that we should have an open, public discourse on those two schedules. But they should be separate legislation. They shouldn't just be hidden in this bill.

It is for that reason that we do not support this bill. There are good things in this bill, but they are used more as window dressing to actually hide the egregious parts.

In my five years here in the House, I could never understand why this government continues to do that. The member from Etobicoke Centre, I believe, who I do a lot of work with, said he was proud of this bill. I can't understand that. Why aren't bills more straightforward?

It's supposed to be a budget bill. If that's the way it's being sold—the selling point with this bill was the extra \$2,000 rebate to allow young homeowners, first-time homeowners, to buy homes. That's the tagline, but there's all kinds of stuff in this bill that has nothing to do with the economy per se—and the government continues to do that.

If it's a budget bill, let's talk about budget matters so people can understand what's being spoken about and we can actually have a fruitful discussion or a fruitful debate. But it's never quite as cut and dried as that. I'm sure that when we vote against this bill—“Oh, you know what? They're against first-time homebuyers,” which is not the case—absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. What we are against is taking what could be straightforward legislation and continually inserting poison pills or contentious sections that should be discussed on their own. They should be openly discussed, and people should have the time, when the hearings are scheduled, to actually be able to plan how to attend these hearings.

If you look at this schedule, there are very few people who are experts in any field who can drop everything on a day's notice to talk at Queen's Park for a few minutes. Then, you question whether these few minutes have any validity, because the decision has likely already been made on this bill, whether they come or not. That destroys the whole faith in the democratic process.

But again, the main point for us that I would like, as a representative of the House leaders team here, is that we put forward a reasoned amendment to take schedules out of this legislation so the legislation could be considered on the merits without those amendments. Those amendments, specifically 16 and 17, should be considered as independent legislation so they can have a fulsome debate. We maintain that position.

Some of my colleagues would like to have some time to speak as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this. It's unfortunate, to be quite blunt, that we are talking about this time allocation. I think it's important that we understand what this means. This means that we are condensing the debate on this omnibus bill, because that's really what it is. It was ostensibly, to start off, to be a fall economic statement, and it turned into being a bill with 27 different acts in it, absolutely unrelated to the state of the economy of the province of Ontario. That's what the economic and fiscal outlook was all about.

This bill that we're debating is supposed to be all about the economy and methods to turn the ship around in Ontario.

Mr. Todd Smith: They don't want to talk about that.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: They really don't want to talk about that. I can tell you why, Speaker. I'm going to cover a few topics.

First of all, I just want to speak very briefly—I've never done this part before. We've debated time allocation motions many times, but I just do want to read some past comments about why time allocation should not be.

“Each of the time allocation motions which close off or choke off debate in this House seems to be more drastic as it comes forward, seems to be more sinister as it relates to the privileges of members of this House and as it relates to healthy, democratic debate for the people of this province.”

Mr. Todd Smith: Who said that?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, Speaker, this was said by the honourable member from St. Catharines in December—

Mr. Todd Smith: Mr. Bradley.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Mr. Bradley—in December of 1977. He was dead against—and there are pages: Jim Bradley, December 15; Jim Bradley, 1997; Jim Bradley, December 16, December 11. The list goes on and on and on and on, Speaker. I find it rather hypocritical that this government is introducing something to force this through as quickly as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would ask that the member withdraw the comment he made.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I withdraw, Speaker.

So they're ramming this bill through. It's going to cost people time and money, because—if I can reread what the minister read a few minutes ago, that the standing committee on finance is authorized to meet on Thursday, December 1, from 1 to 6, for the purpose of hearings on this bill. Well, that's two days from now.

Then, they're telling us they're going to invite people to come and speak to this bill in two days—not even two days from now, if you look at the time. These people have to be notified that, by the way, the government's pulling a fast one again. If you want a chance to speak on it, you better get here Thursday. By the way, watch yourself trying to find a parking spot, because we already have hearings scheduled for the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs this Thursday at almost exactly the same time.

I can't imagine that we're going to split ourselves in two and have the pre-budget consultations that were scheduled to begin on Thursday from 2 to 6—actually Thursday morning and then from 2 to 6. What happens to all those men and women, all those volunteer associations, all those people who have booked their travel to come to Toronto on Thursday to speak at the pre-budget consultations? “Wipe those up. Move them aside. To heck with those people. Move 'em out of the way. We want to ram this bill through, and we're going to put it through because we have a majority. We're going to just shove those people aside and scramble to find other people to come in and talk about something that they want to talk about.”

1610

That's egregious, Speaker. That's just downright rude. That's what they're doing. It's not just ramming this thing through; it's pushing everybody else out of the way. People who have booked flights to come in and talk, people who are booked to present, will just be told—I presume they'll be phoned after this thing passes, that they will be phoned sometime today, maybe even

tomorrow: “Don't bother flying in this afternoon for your presentation tomorrow. You're out of luck because we're ramming something else through that we think is better for us to ram through before you have a chance to really think about it.” That's exactly what is happening here. That's just absolutely disgusting, that they can do that. It's absolutely disgusting, Speaker.

Here is what they don't want to talk about, Speaker. This is why they're ramming it through; this is why they're brushing off all of those volunteer groups who are scheduled to come in: because the member here spoke about the fact that they're on track to balance. No. I'll talk about the real facts in a moment, Speaker. He talked about the recovery of jobs since the recession. No. He's talked about how the economy is growing. No.

So, Speaker, I'm going to use a lot of their own internal documents that defy everything we heard from the member earlier in the 10-minute presentation when they told us they were ramming this thing through.

He said, “We're on track to balance.” Speaker, I stood in this Legislature this morning during question period and talked about the fact that our Financial Accountability Officer brought out a commentary yesterday. Go back a little bit, Speaker. We have the Financial Accountability Officer, who brought out his document on the fact that we're not going to see this government balance. It was called his Economic and Fiscal Outlook. It's a pre-fall-economic-statement document. In it, the Financial Accountability Officer is absolutely clear: We are not on a path to balance. In fact, not only are we not on a path to balance, but the Financial Accountability Officer says, “While the government tells you one thing, let me, the Financial Accountability Officer, tell you the facts.” They say we're going to balance, and he says we're going to be \$2.6 billion in deficit. So the government says they're going to balance, and he says, no, it's a deficit of \$2.6 billion. The government says they're going to have growing surpluses each and every year. The Financial Accountability Officer says, no, we're having absolute growing and larger deficits every single year.

Interjections.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: They're in denial, Speaker. You can hear them heckling because they're in denial. They cannot accept the fact that they got caught yet again telling us one thing when the Financial Accountability Officer can give us the facts. He comes out with this document and says, “Don't listen to them; listen to this. Here's what's going to happen.” A few days later, the government comes out with their fall economic statement and, sure enough, they paint this rosy picture, Speaker.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Stop the clock.

I just want to remind all members in this Legislature at this point in time that I am one of the Speakers who will carry forward any warnings that occurred from this morning, whether it be in debate or whether it be during question period. That's what I would call a shot above the bow. Again, I would ask for some order.

I now return to the member from Nipissing to continue debate.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. As I was saying, the Financial Accountability Officer comes out with his report that tells us we're about to hit a deficit and then plunge deeper into deficit. Then the government comes out with their fall economic statement and tells us a completely opposite story, and that forces the Financial Accountability Officer to come out again yesterday with yet another commentary that says that we are not on track to balance; we will have a \$2.6-billion deficit in 2017-18.

I hope the minister corrects his record because he said that we're on track to balance, and yet the legislative officers of this Legislature say, "No, you're not." That's one thing. That's why they want to truncate the debate here.

Interjections.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: You can hear them heckling over there. Heckle away. They're trying to truncate debate because they don't want to talk about that.

Here's the second thing they don't want to talk about. They said, "We've recovered all the jobs lost since the recession." Well, again, I can read you the internal Ministry of Finance document that we received. This is a quote: "There are fewer jobs today relative to the population than before the recession." The quote continues, "In other words, employment growth has not kept up with the growth of the working-age population."

They tell you one thing when their own ministry tells them the complete opposite of that. They have not recovered. It's right here in their own ministry's document. There are fewer jobs today relative to the population than before the recession. I hope that member will retract his statement as well.

Under this government, we've seen 350,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs leave the province. This is why—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Minister responsible for seniors affairs, come to order.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: This is why they continue to heckle: because they don't want to hear us talking about the very issues that they are trying to say one thing on when the experts are saying the other.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Member from Barrie, come to order.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: The third thing: The member said that our economy is growing. Well, you should probably take a moment and listen to the Ministry of Finance's own documents, which said that Ontario's economic growth was only 0.2% for the second quarter of 2016 as a result of poor export performance. I'll talk more about that in a moment.

The ministry also stated that the economy is only on pace to grow by an annual rate of 0.7%. Minister Sousa characterized it as "slow growth." Their own documents tell you one thing when they stand up here and paint a picture that's completely opposite. The government's

previous projection of annual economic growth was 2.2%. So they're coming in at 0.7%.

This is important because the Financial Accountability Officer noted that each percentage point in decline of economic growth is approximately \$885 million that they don't have to work with, so the revenues are going to suffer. In fact, the revenues are suffering. What did they do about that? They have a one-time sale of assets—Hydro One, the OPG headquarters across the street, and the LCBO warehouses. They have a one-time sale of assets and then, because that still wasn't enough, they have to go and dig into the reserves. That's one-time again—one-time reserves, the contingency fund—gut that so that they can artificially present some kind of artificial balance.

Ontario's economic accounts, when they came out recently for the second quarter of 2016, noted that the province's exports actually declined by 3.3%. This is exactly the opposite of what they are saying. They are telling us we're growing; economic accounts tell us that exports declined. They tell us that jobs are created; their own ministry tells us that we have fewer jobs today. They tell us that we're on track to balance; the Financial Accountability Officer sends out an entire book that lays all that bare—that we're not on track to balance; we're actually going to be with growing deficits. They come out and paint a bigger fantasy picture in the fall economic statement, so the Financial Accountability Officer has to come out yet again with another commentary to tell them, "I told you that's not right." Start reading the book.

1620

Speaker, what they are doing is selling one-time assets and bringing one-time revenue in to artificially balance the budget. The Financial Accountability Officer has been very busy. He just came out with yet another book, called *An Assessment of the Fiscal Impact of Cap and Trade*. I said to the minister the other day, "Pick a page." Page 1, the fiscal impact of cap-and-trade: It will "reduce the deficit" now and "increase the deficit ... in future years." So they're going to take this cap-and-trade revenue—book the income from it—and not necessarily book the expenses of it, until after the election. So, again, on page 1, he opens with: The cap-and-trade will "reduce the deficit" now and "increase the deficit ... in future years."

Let's go on a couple more pages. He talks about the fact that the "information currently available suggests some cash raised through cap-and-trade" will result "in the cap-and-trade ... reducing" the deficit. That's another one that he tells us.

On page 16, he tells us the same thing. Cap-and-trade: "The result would be a reduction in the deficit...." Speaker, they're in denial. Either that or they don't understand—one or the other, because you've got a book where the Financial Accountability Officer of this Legislature—he works for all three parties—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Are you questioning the integrity? This is what they do. "Where did he work before?" She

questions the integrity. They did it to the Auditor General. When the Auditor General—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order.

Mr. Victor Fedeli:—talked to the energy minister, he metaphorically patted her on the top of the head and said, “Oh, little girl, you just don’t understand big numbers.” I was in the room when he insulted the Auditor General.

Now she insults the Financial Accountability Officer. She calls into question the integrity—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order. Minister of Children and Youth Services, come to order.

Minister?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Point of order, Speaker: I find the term “little girl” inappropriate to the context of this debate this afternoon. I ask you to consider that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much.

Back to the member from Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Chair, those comments were with your minister because that’s what he did, metaphorically. I was in the room only a few feet from them when he shushed her out of the way. I was there. You weren’t there; I was in that room.

Speaker—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All right. So you want to test me. Fine. You just passed the test, because now I will move to warnings.

Back to the member from Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: So it’s not enough that the energy minister insults—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Minister, you’re warned. I won’t have any more continuation of dialogue after I’ve just asked the Legislature to come to order and then I hear more, so thank you very much.

Back to the member.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Not only did the former energy minister insult the integrity of the Auditor General—continually insult her—then we see the Legislature and the Liberal government—they insulted her further when they suggested that she doesn’t know what she’s talking about when she wouldn’t sign their public accounts. Speaker, she would not sign—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Very close.

If there’s going to be some heckling, it will be regarding the bill, and the bill only. If I hear anything else than that, you will be named.

Back to the member.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: So not only did the former energy minister insult the Auditor General, you have the entire government that insulted her when she would not sign the documents and they accused her of not understanding the documents again. They challenged the Auditor General, and it was insulting to her. I look forward to the auditor’s

comments tomorrow, and I hope—just hope and pray—that we’ll have a day when the Auditor General can make a presentation and this Liberal government ceases insulting her. That will be a new day.

Back to the comments of the Financial Accountability Officer: I am one member here who does respect the Financial Accountability Officer, as opposed to the huffing and puffing that we get from the member from Barrie. The Financial Accountability Officer is very, very clear. He tells us over and over, in document after document, that this government is only going to end up in deficit, \$2.6 billion in deficit, and this government—member after member after member, minister after minister after minister—stands up and tells us something completely different. How can that be in this Legislature? How can that be allowed to be said in this Legislature, when this government does nothing but present numbers that are absolutely opposite to the numbers presented by an officer of the Legislature? I just do not understand how that can happen, and I’m fairly confident that the people of Ontario do not understand how that can continue to happen.

Speaker, when you look at the rest of the things that are in this bill—again, they want to continue; I’ll talk about the auditor. When they said that the Auditor General ambushed them last summer with a change to the accounting rules—they called it an “ambush.” Well, I can tell you, Speaker, that the Auditor General, in December 2015, came out with her annual report, and she had a tremendous amount of pages devoted precisely to that change in accounting. I don’t know how you’re ambushing somebody when you come out in December 2015 with a warning that you’re going to be doing this, and in the fall of 2016 you now call it an “ambush.” Again, they like to point fingers at people to take the blame off of the work that they have not completed and have not done.

It’s interesting to note in this fall economic statement that what they also don’t want to talk about is the fact that Ontario has a massive deficit—a deficit of more than \$300 billion. I’ve only been here five years, but I think back, as many of us followed politics for a while, to 1990. Ontario’s debt in 1990, before the NDP took office, was not even \$40 billion. Today, it’s over \$300 billion, and according to the Financial Accountability Officer, it’s on track to hit a record \$370 billion by 2020-21. We’re talking almost \$70 billion more between now and then.

When you look back to 1990, our entire debt was only 38-point-something billion dollars, not even \$40 billion. That’s absolutely astounding. When the Liberals took office in 2003—it took 137 years for our debt to reach \$139 billion, and this government doubled it in a decade; 137 years to get it to one point, and they doubled it in 10 years. And now it has grown to over \$300 billion.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Quite an accomplishment.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Yes, it is quite an accomplishment.

At over \$11 billion a year, interest on the debt is nearly a billion dollars a month. That means that Ontario

now pays more on interest than it does on post-secondary education, community safety and six other ministries combined. That's how much we spend just on interest.

1630

That's why they're ramming this bill through. They do not want our members and the members of the third party to stand here and give these facts to the people. Oh, they will give us 40 minutes, heckle and yell throughout it and distract and kibitz, but that's it. They know it's over. The pain is over. It's a short-term pain and what they hope is long-term gain, and that we will forget about their misdeeds for yet another decade.

Well, Speaker, this is exactly why we get to stand here and talk about these things. It's because they don't want us to, but we have the right for, at least, these last few minutes to explain to the public what they are doing. They are taking a bill and they are ramming it through. They are cancelling other hearings that have already been set with people who are scheduled. Volunteer groups, non-profits, all of that: They will shove those aside and take their own bill here. It is so upsetting.

When I hear the member tell us again about the growth in the economy and that they are on track to balance, I need that member to listen to the minister who used to say, "In Ontario here, we're number one in foreign direct investment in North America." Well, we aren't anymore. At one time, we may well have been. But I can tell you, Speaker, that you don't hear the minister, after we corrected him, say that in this Legislature anymore, because foreign direct investment in Ontario has fallen off sharply in the last year.

The annual report from the company that tracks this for all of us here—fDi Intelligence—shows that Ontario has dropped to fourth place in North America. We used to be, according to the minister, the number one destination for foreign investment. Well, Speaker, we're now fourth. We're fourth. It fell from \$7 billion to \$4 billion. That's what has happened. As such, Ontario's market share has been cut in half, from 12% in 2015 to just 6% this year.

That's the reality. That's the reality of where we are. It's not what this government and the member who spoke earlier said. It's not a growing economy, it's not on track to balance the budget, and we have not recovered all the jobs.

Mr. Han Dong: Yes, it is.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: They're in denial. I can still hear them over there: "Yes, it is." Well, read the papers. Read the Financial Accountability Officer's document. Page 1, page 5, page 16—read any page out of it, and you'll get a sense that all is not well in Ontario.

At least, finally, after five years of telling the Premier and her various multitude of energy ministers who have come and gone that there is a crisis in energy, they acknowledge that we're in a crisis. They won't acknowledge how they got us into it, but at least they acknowledge there's a crisis.

Well, what you need to do is to also publicly acknowledge that the economy is not growing, because your ministry is telling you that.

You need to publicly acknowledge that you're not on track to balance the budget, because your Financial Accountability Officer is telling you that.

You need to acknowledge that you have not recovered the jobs. Your own Ministry of Finance documents tell you that there are fewer jobs today.

Stop with the stories, and start addressing the issues that you have created. You have created a problem here in the province of Ontario.

This bill that we're talking about—

Mr. Jim Wilson: Explain why it's structural.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: You want me to talk about structural? You really want to get into structural deficit? Well, I would love to.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Well, we're going to be stuck with it.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I can talk about that, thank you. I'll use that as a segue.

I was going to talk about the omnibus bill. It really is a scary bill when you think about the fact that they're bringing 27 different acts, which mostly have absolutely nothing to do with the fall economic statement.

The member from Simcoe–Grey asks that we talk about a structural deficit, so let me at least talk about that, then.

When you've got an issue where your expenses are higher than your revenue, you create a deficit. You're taking money in, but you're spending more money than you take in. That's a deficit. If you continue to do that, if you've got these expenses now that are up here, they're baked in—these expenses are baked in; you can't change them, in your mind—but your revenue is lower, you've got a structural deficit. It's not going to fix itself. So what this government has done is that they have gone out and sold Hydro One; they bring in some one-time revenue. They've got cap-and-trade; the Financial Accountability Officer told us that they're bringing in revenue. They sold the LCBO building—they're bringing in revenue. They're about to sell the OPG. So all of the sudden, what they're saying is, "Look, our revenue is the same as our expenses. We've balanced. Isn't that wonderful?" Next year, once they sell the next building, "Oh, look at us. Our revenue is now higher than our expenses. We have a surplus."

But what they're not telling you and what you need to see is that top-up of revenue from the sale of assets is only one time. Hydro One: You can't keep selling it every day; it's going to be all sold. You no longer have that revenue. So after the election, after 2017-18, after you have artificially balanced, you're back down to your old revenue again. You have no more furniture to sell, no more buildings to sell, no more assets to sell. You're back down to the fact that your expenses are higher than your revenue. That's what we call a structural deficit. That's what the Financial Accountability Officer explained; he explained that.

Now, I realize that the government members did not show up at the briefing from the Financial Accountability Officer and they did not show up at the briefing of the

cap-and-trade presentation. Perhaps they just (a) never read it, or (b) never chose read it.

Mr. Todd Smith: They've read their talking points.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: They definitely have their talking points to read.

Had they shown up at the Financial Accountability Officer's briefings, they would have had an opportunity, like we had to ask questions and to get involved in a dialogue. We had a lot of time with the Financial Accountability Officer, as we do with the Auditor General. We dig deep into some of these things and we ask, "Well, what does this mean? What does it mean if we don't have another asset to sell?" All those questions could have been answered, but they weren't. They weren't there, so they didn't have that opportunity—or they had the opportunity, but they didn't take the opportunity to ask those questions.

Let me share some more of what was in this. I call this an omnibus bill. You've heard that word the odd time. It just means that it's all-encompassing and things kind of have nothing to do with each other. There are 27 acts in here, and some of them are pretty unrelated to each other. You've got the City of Toronto Act; you've got the Registered Insurance Brokers Act; you've got acts that affect the College of Trades.

You've got the Municipal Act, as an example—if you could imagine this was in a fall economic statement. This is a new requirement mandating that the head of council in every regional municipality except for Oxford county be directly elected by voters, and it goes on and on. What on earth does this have to do with the fall economic statement? You can see they've stuffed everything in here that they wanted to do in their housekeeping. So that's why we call it an omnibus bill. It's all-encompassing—

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a turkey, and they're stuffing it.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thanks, John.

So the measures in this bill have nothing to do with the fall economic statement. And the reason we're standing here today talking about time allocation is that it's simply a distraction from Ontario's dire fiscal and economic state.

1640

The Auditor General refused to sign off on the government's financial documents. Can you imagine that? Now, I know they yelled and screamed and, in my opinion, insulted the auditor over that. This is the first time in the history of the province of Ontario that an Auditor General did not sign off on the government's financial statements. That's remarkable, Speaker, and very telling. It's very telling that maybe what they're telling us may be "tell us it ain't so."

The Financial Accountability Officer, in all of his latest documents, confirmed that the government is using one-time money from asset sales and from the contingency fund to artificially balance the budget in an election year—period.

This government said there would be no new taxes. I've asked the minister many times since the fall econom-

ic statement came out. The Financial Accountability Officer says it in here: They're either going to have to raise new taxes or find new assets to sell or try to control their expenses. But we've seen that they can't control their expenses. They said there would be no taxes, but they raised taxes on spirits and they raised land transfer taxes as well. This is the government: "No new taxes"; we have new taxes.

The fall economic statement also revealed that the government is significantly hiking service fees to pay for their years of waste, mismanagement and scandal. Think about the vehicle and driver registration fees: \$503 million more. That's not how much they bring in; that's just how much more they brought in in the last four years. Just in four years, they have hiked that fee by \$503 million. They can't help themselves. It's tax and spend, tax and spend, and insult along the way.

The FAO said, "Growth in business investment has been disappointing over the past four years." That's quite different from what we heard a half hour ago.

Speaker, we've become the number one, most debted subnational government on the planet. That means we have the biggest debt for some organization that is not a country. Yet, we have the highest taxes in the country. How can it be that our taxes are higher than anybody else's and so is our debt? None of that makes sense. It tells you that you have a problem. You have a structural deficit. You have a spending problem.

Exports and foreign direct investment are both declining. We heard earlier this morning, when our leader, Patrick Brown, talked about mining—and Speaker, can you imagine? When this government took office, we were the number one mining jurisdiction in the world—in the world, the number one mining jurisdiction. Today where are we? The member from Simcoe–Grey was the minister at the time—number one mining jurisdiction. And where are we today? Fifteenth. We've tumbled to the 15th place in the world. We've tumbled in foreign direct investment from number one to number four and are continuing to fall.

They've raised taxes by more than 20% in the last five years. That is why they are ramming this through: They don't want us to be able to talk about the fact that they're ramming this through.

Speaker, I appreciate the time that you have given me this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Time allocation: As the former member from Welland the late Peter Kormos would say, Liberals don't want to work.

They don't want to listen, either. They don't want to hear from anyone but themselves. I have 115,000 people in my riding. Some of them have asked me to speak directly to this bill. But the Liberals only want to hear those voices to be heard on time allocation. The shutting down of debate, the silencing of the opposition, their my-way-or-the-highway method of running this province into the ground: Give me a break, Speaker. Building Ontario

Up for Everyone, but shutting down debate for everyone but themselves—they should be ashamed.

There are so many things hidden in this omnibus bill that need to see the light of day—a full hearing, not a truncated debate. For example, Speaker, the section dealing with occupational health and safety: Buried in the bill are questionable changes that set the stage for privatizing the way we set health and safety standards. The proposed health and safety management system would allow the Chief Prevention Officer to accredit and set standards to decide which employers can be certified, trusted, and be delegated powers to set standards and do the training without provincial supervision.

Speaker, a friend of mine pointed out that Bill 70, ironically, is the same bill number used almost 40 years ago that gave birth to Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act. The perverse irony of this Bill 70 is that it allows the government to privatize the process for setting and improving standards for health and safety training courses and training providers. You talk about letting the rooster into the henhouse. Let me ask you, Speaker: Do you honestly believe an industry-dominated group can be trusted to set truly effective standards?

And get this: There's no mention in here of allowing for worker input, no mention of a joint health and safety committee. Are you kidding me?

My friend Len Elliott is a regional vice-president for OPSEU for my part of the province—and yours, Speaker. He's a health and safety inspector. He says routine, regular inspections at workplaces are a cornerstone of our provincial health and safety system. It prevents injuries, it prevents occupational illness and it saves lives. Len says he is not trying to be dramatic, but if this legislation goes through, he says, we'll see more workplace injuries and we'll see more workplace fatalities. That's why we need time to discuss these issues. We don't need time allocation or a shutdown of debate.

Speaker, they want a blank cheque here. And get this: One of these outside managers—once they get their certificate, they would be exempt from proactive enforcement by health and safety inspectors and any other routine burdens; that's right, "burdens." I for one would like to know, when it comes to health and safety, what are these burdens and which of them are going to be removed?

Under time allocation, these answers won't be given. I find that scary. I find that scary because in my area we have had four people die from accidents at work this year. One is bad enough. We've had four—four—since our Day of Mourning ceremony in April. That is totally unacceptable. These four deaths made the headlines, but how many other people died from workplace illnesses that were job-related? We don't know. We simply don't know the answer to that one.

We should be making health and safety a priority, not making it easier for companies to police themselves. That's just one aspect of this time-allocated bill that should be unacceptable to the government members.

Speaker, instead of time-allocating this bill, the Wynne Liberals should be pushing the pause button. If

they've been listening at all to the voices they've been trying to shut down, they should recognize the seriousness of this issue, separate it from this bill and bring in a new bill to deal specifically with this issue. That's an amendment the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane has put forward, and that is a good amendment. That would show leadership, which of course is not what we're used to from this crowd across the aisle, but hey, it's high time they started listening to the people of Ontario.

Time is running out. June 7, 2018: Keep that date in mind, Speaker. That's when the voters in Ontario get their next chance to time-allocate the Wynne Liberal government.

1650

Let me say something positive about the bill, in all fairness. Section 5: As I understand it, you will no longer have to be a member of a credit union to borrow money from a credit union. Speaker, you may recall, I'm sure, the many hours we've spent in this House talking about payday loans. So, to unlock the time allocation on a payday loan, the president of the Windsor Family Credit Union announced at the AMO conference three months ago that the WFCU would be taking on the payday loans industry. Instead of having to pay \$63 to borrow \$300 from a payday lender, you could get that \$300 loan from the WFCU for \$4.25. That's right: On one hand, a payday loan at an interest rate of 555%, and on the other, an annual rate of 37%. These loans from the credit union, by the way, you can get for as much as \$2,500.

Speaker, if this bill wasn't time-allocated, I would have a lot more to say about what other good things the WFCU is doing in our part of the province.

Let me turn to the time-allocated schedule 9, which allows for an arbitration officer to be appointed more quickly in the case of a dispute between a municipality and a firefighters' union. Some municipal leaders will tell you the arbitration system is broken. But let's look at Windsor for a moment. It took an arbitrator—are you ready for this? It took an arbitrator eight and a half years to settle a contract dispute between the firefighters and the city of Windsor. Nobody wins in a situation like that—eight and a half years. So anything that we can do to expedite the arbitration system is a good thing for everyone.

Obviously, some people in this province still feel the Wynne Liberals are pulling us down, not building us up, despite the title they slap on this bill. What about our seniors? What's in there to stop the dramatic increase in the number of seniors having to rely on our food banks? And children: What's in here to do something about the number of kids whose parents can't get by these days without stopping in at the local food bank because they can't afford to put food on their table and pay their hydro bills? I don't know why the Wynne Liberal government isn't admitting that prime-time energy use pricing has been an expensive and failed experiment. They charged us more to encourage us to conserve, and then, because we did such a good job at not using as much electricity,

they upped the rates to make up for the money they lost. Talk about incompetence.

But I guess I have been doing nothing but talking about the incompetence of this Wynne Liberal government for the past seven or eight minutes. I know that's what people in my part of the province think of this Wynne Liberal government: They are uncaring, incompetent. They are not doing the job they were elected to do. They are not standing up for the disadvantaged. They are not protecting our most vulnerable citizens. They are not the progressive bunch we thought they were.

They certainly had no right to start selling off our shares in Hydro One. Liberal math is failed math. The Wynne Liberal government is a failed government. They failed us again by time-allocating this bill, shutting off debate and refusing to answer questions posed by the people of Ontario. Shame on them, Speaker. Shame on them all.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is, as always, a pleasure and an honour to stand in this place to fulfill my duty as an elected representative for my incredible, wonderful riding of Essex and the great people that live there.

One of the major parts of my job, and that of all the other elected officials in this place, is to contribute our knowledge and our understanding of the bills that come before us through words, through the construction of sentences and paragraphs, to formulate a thought and a position in a democratic way. What we have seen today, through the government's imposition of time allocation on this bill, is that our ability, our democratic right and privilege which we have been sent here with has been stymied, so to speak.

The member from Nipissing gave quite a lengthy synopsis of what his party's position is on the bill, and it became a little bit heated. If anyone has been tuning in and watching, it became heated early on.

I gave thought to the simple role of our system here. I was going through some articles on my feed, and I came across an article that named the Royal Canadian Air Force captain who just passed away yesterday due to a crash at Cold Lake, Alberta. He was a Hamilton native. His name was Thomas McQueen. He was 29 years old. He was a 10-year RCAF veteran, and he was passionate about flying. He was to be married very soon. I don't know if we've given a moment to pause, thank him for his service and extend our condolences to his family, but I want to do that during this debate because it puts into context the incredible responsibility and privilege that we have here, and also for us to be mindful of those people who are outside of these buildings that we call our democratic institutions and who protect our right to do this. We should be mindful of this privilege and the need to use it completely.

It's not because we hate each other. It's not because we want to attack each other. It is because it is the foundation which our democracy is built upon, so we

should use it, we should protect it and we should defend it every day that we can, at every opportunity that we can in this House, and we should honour those who do that outside of the House. I certainly do that in recognizing Captain Thomas McQueen from Hamilton and his colleagues. Maybe we'll do that more formally at a later date in this House. I think we should.

Speaker, the bill that we have before us has been referenced as a mini-budget bill because it does contain provisions that ultimately will affect the finances and the function of the entire government over a large scope. It has many schedules. It's an omnibus-type bill.

Many schedules that are within the bill are contentious for certain segments of the group; many are not—all the more reason to have a complete debate and allow stakeholders to tell us exactly what their contention is with the bill, how we can make it better and how we might be able to alleviate some of those key points.

In the brief time that I've had the bill in front of my eyes and others have had the ability to review it, one that I see is schedule 1, the amendment of the Alcohol and Gaming Regulations and Public Protections Act, 1996, which essentially imposes an increase on spirits in the small craft spirit industry—and when I say “spirits,” Speaker, I mean alcohol—one of which resides right in my riding, in Amherstburg. It's called Wolfhead Distillery. They're brand new. They're a start-up distillery. If you've ever gone down Howard Avenue on your way to Amherstburg, you'll see them; they're right across the street from the quarry. They've got thousands of oak barrels on the premises there that they make. They previously dealt with wood pallets for the manufacturing sector, so they've got different segments. It's a really interesting building and business, but they've branched out to create this beautiful micro-distillery on that site. It was an industrial site that dealt with oak pallets. They're now making some of the best whisky and vodka that you could ever taste, right there in Amherstburg, Ontario.

Now, out of nowhere, after two years of consultation with this government—let's get this straight: This industry, a burgeoning industry in the province, has consulted with the province and has asked for some measure of parity similar to what craft brewers have experienced in terms of the taxation that is levied on the industry. After two years of consultation with this government and explaining the position that would position them for growth, this government has done an about-face and levied an enormous increase on their product, essentially spirits purchased from a distillery retail store. So if you walk into Wolfhead, into this beautiful restaurant/boutique distillery, those products that you will buy off the shelf will be taxed at 61.5% of the retail price, plus a 28-cent-to-38-cent-per-litre volume tax and an 8.93-cent environment tax for each non-refillable container. Tell me you're going to want to stay in business after being beat up like that.

1700

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Bait and switch.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Absolutely. It's enough to drive you to drink, but at these prices who can afford to

do that? Who will inevitably pay that price? Either they will have to pass that enormous increase in cost on to the consumer, which will make their product—I can't imagine that it will remain viable, given other products that are on the shelf. Or you close up shop. That isn't building Ontario up for everybody. That is breaking down small enterprising businesses that are playing an integral role in our local regional economies.

It's another indication of a government that has not been willing—maybe has given all the right signals and played all the right tunes and made all the right gestures over at least the last two years with the craft distillery industry, but yet when it comes time to actually put something on paper to give them some certainty, this massive tax increase comes out of nowhere.

There are certainly more schedules in here that are contentious. I have some serious reservations about schedule 16. My colleague the member from Windsor–Tecumseh hit the nail on the head when it comes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act and ultimately allowing companies to escape mandatory inspections because of a new recognition through an accredited health and safety system. I get the system; I understand it. I'm aware of systems that exist. They are currently voluntary systems. They exist in other jurisdictions. But to use the carrot in that approach—said another way: To eliminate health and safety inspections as the incentive to implement a rigorous health and safety program in your place of work is well beyond what any reasonable person would think. I would suggest we could do it a whole host of other ways, but that's it.

Speaker, I thank you very much for the time, and I thank my colleagues for their mindful eyes on the clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I never had a chance to speak to this bill and now, my first and only chance will be because they've put a time allocation motion forward.

I would like to read into the record a few comments that I have received. This comment comes from a journeyman electrician in my riding. I will call him "JM." He's a 309A construction and maintenance electrician with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, better known as IBEW, Local 1687, and it goes:

"I oppose section 17 of omnibus Bill 70, Building Ontario Up for Everyone Act, as a result of the Dean report completed by Tony Dean and the support the governing Ontario Liberal Party has given to this flawed report. And, I may add, very conveniently hidden in a budget measures bill with an ironic title that would most certainly not build up any skilled trade worker of Ontario with a certificate of qualification and subsequently put the citizens of Ontario and their safety at risk. Stripping the skilled trades of the ability to govern ourselves and to allow an entity, the Ontario Labour Relations Board, that does not place public safety above all else, unlike the Ontario College of Trades, when deciding which scope of practice in a trade, or trades, can be done by unskilled

and untrained workers, harming not only trade workers' livelihoods but also members of the public's safety. A truly sad day.

"As a skilled tradesperson and a proud card-carrying union member who has completed a 309A construction and maintenance electrical apprenticeship and received my Red Seal designation in the construction and maintenance electrical field. I have completed over 9,000 hours of on-the-job training, as well as attending three terms of trade school, for a total of 28 weeks of in-class training, in order to be able to write the final licensing exam to receive my 309A construction and maintenance electrical ticket. Allowing section 17 of Bill 70 to stand as it is would ultimately negate the hard work I have diligently put forth in obtaining my construction and maintenance electrical certificate of qualification."

He goes on to say:

"To allow unskilled workers, often paid considerably less than a journeyperson, or even an apprentice of any trade to perform certain 'menial' aspects of that trade, would not only undermine the training involved in becoming a member of a skilled trade, but also, I believe, would undermine public safety. However, the largest group affected are the families of the hard-working skilled tradespeople ..."

He goes on to say:

"I"—J.M.—"am against section 17 of Bill 70, that has passed first reading at Queen's Park. I implore you to vote against this bill and to have section 17 removed and sent to committee to allow proper debate and public scrutiny of the impact of these amendments. Section 17 of Bill 70 is based off the erroneous report completed by a man, that has been lobbied by the want of an unskilled workforce and for cheap labour to ensure that profits are high, safety standards are low and training is minimal. I hope that you will stand as a voice of reason in Queen's Park against section 17 of Bill 70.

"Keep the skilled trades intact and continue to allow us to govern our trades, in our best interest, by allowing the College of Trades to achieve what it was adopted for: trades governing trades, with the ability to self-regulate and a continued ability to enforce legislation by means of fines and the possibility of future discipline when an unskilled, unqualified worker is caught illegally doing the work of a skilled tradesperson.

"Heed the skilled trades voice and stand up to have section 17 of Bill 70 removed and sent to committee before it is too late."

I wanted to read his letter into the record not necessarily because I agree with everything that he said, but I agree with the fact that this part of the bill needs to be taken out. A budget bill should not change the way that we deal with trades. The two of them are not related. This person had to be very much on the ball to realize that in an omnibus bill that has hundreds of pages, there were those two little sections—sections 16 and 17—that had nothing to do with anything.

I would like to also read into the record, in the minute or so that I have left:

“Whereas schedule 16 of Bill 70, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes, will, if passed, amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) to establish a new system of so-called accreditation of qualifying employers which will be used to exempt those employers’ workplaces from inspection by occupational health and safety inspectors of the Ontario Ministry of Labour; and

“Whereas finding new and creative excuses to exempt workplaces from health and safety inspections does not in any way contribute to making Ontario workplaces safer for workers, and should not therefore have any place on the agenda of the Ministry of Labour (MOL) or the Chief Prevention Officer (CPO); and

“Whereas the significant, consequential and regressive changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) are opposed by occupational health and safety experts, trade unions and allied injured worker groups;

“Therefore be it resolved that the delegates of the 2016 Trades Conference of CUPE Ontario, gathered in Niagara Falls on November 25, 2016, and representing workers from all sectors and all regions of Ontario, unanimously call upon the government of Ontario, Premier Kathleen Wynne and Minister of Labour Kevin Flynn to scrap schedule 16 of Bill 70 before this legislation is called for third and final reading in the provincial Legislature.”

Unfortunately, the little bit of time I had for this bill is coming to a close. It is wrong to bring forward an omnibus bill that is focused on the budget, brought forward by the Ministry of Finance, that will change forever the way we keep people safe.

1710

I have been here for a little over nine years; there have been over nine deaths of workers in my riding alone. This is not the time to take a step back from safety. We need to continue to be vigilant. Those two schedules in this bill, 16 and 17, have to go.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I certainly appreciate the very short period of time that I have to speak to Bill 70, the Building Ontario Up for Everyone Act. Basically, it’s building Ontario up for everyone unless you are a worker in this province, or someone who uses hydro in this province—or really, basically, just about anybody in this province, unless you’re a Liberal member of the government.

Yesterday, I had about two minutes to speak to this bill—two minutes—and now we have the government bringing forward time allocations. To those out there at home or those who might read the Hansard later, time allocation means the government doesn’t want to talk about something anymore, and they’re restricting the voices of not only the duly elected members in the House but the voices of the people of Ontario.

I think it’s interesting. The member from Etobicoke Centre spoke before me and he said that we are all elected to provide results quickly and expeditiously. Yet

we had the Deputy Premier stand up yesterday in answer to a question and she said, “We do not make up legislation on the fly without analysis or to score cheap political points.” So I’m wondering which it is: Do we move things through here quickly and expeditiously or do we not make things up on the fly? Because that’s what the government has done. They’ve made things up on the fly and now they’re jamming through legislation that is going to very seriously affect the workers in this province.

I want to point out that there are two schedules in this bill that are incredibly problematic—and saying “problematic” is understating it. Schedule 16 directly relates to the health and safety of the people of this province when they are at work. Schedule 17 talks about the College of Trades, but when you boil it down, it’s also about health and safety. We, the NDP, have tabled a reasoned amendment asking that schedules 16 and 17 be removed from this bill because they have no place in a finance bill, a budget bill. They are very serious issues that should have the proper amount of time to be discussed and debated, and for people to come forward—not just those in the Legislature, but others—to share their concerns. Unfortunately, the government side does not think it’s important to hear from the people who are affected by schedules 16 and 17.

Specifically to 17, we need to make sure that when people are in the workplace, the people who are trained to do the work are doing the work, not just for their own safety but for the safety of those who are going to benefit from their work.

I’m going to talk about schedule 16—I only have four minutes left. Schedule 16 is incredibly scary—I’m going to say “scary”—not just to me but to people across the province. The OFL, OPSEU and now CUPE has joined—those are unions that have joined the chorus to say, “We need to slow down on this and look at what this is going to do to the workers of this province.”

What we’re doing is taking away oversight around health and safety. The government wants to remove oversight. They want to remove the ability for there to be health and safety inspections in the workplace. In fact, an email from somebody in the ministry actually said they want to “reduce the burden of unnecessary processes such as routine inspections.” Can you imagine that? To think that routine inspections, which are meant to keep the people of this province safe and alive while at work, are considered a burden by this Liberal government.

I’d also like to read something from a Ministry of Labour inspector. He says, “Ministry of Labour inspectors have written thousands of orders to contraventions. Thousands of health and safety contraventions to which orders are written by health and safety inspectors on proactive field visits. Thousands of violations. Thousands of contraventions. Thousands of orders.” Yet this government wants to take away the oversight of the Ministry of Labour inspectors who go in and find these issues and bring them up and have them corrected before somebody is hurt or before somebody dies.

As the member from Windsor–Tecumseh pointed out, in Windsor alone since April, since the Day of Mourning, there have been four deaths. We have a government that stood here and supported—and I applaud him for his private member’s bill stating that the flags at all government buildings, whether municipal or provincial, should be lowered for the Day of Mourning to recognize those hurt or killed on the job.

But it’s not enough for the government side to support lowering a flag. They actually have to support the workers and make sure that there’s legislation in place that protects them. What they’re doing is taking away that protection, and by doing time allocation, they’re taking away the voice of the people in this province.

They’ve now put in place that you have to table amendments by Friday. For anybody who is watching this or is going to read it in the Hansard later: It’s now Tuesday. It’s Tuesday, and we’re giving until Friday to table amendments. By next week, they’ll have pushed it through committee and already made it law, “they” being the government—certainly not this side of the House.

In the two minutes I have left, I just wanted to point out that this year, 2016—September 2016—the Minister of Labour marched in a parade with labour leaders and workers, here in Toronto, for the Labour Day parade—a day that honours the workers of Ontario. Little more than two months later, the same minister—and it was unprecedented to have the Minister of Labour march in a Labour Day parade. That tells you a lot—that they’ve never had a Minister of Labour march before with them.

Two months later, that same minister is helping his government, the Wynne Liberal government, shut down debate, shut out the voices of labour leaders and workers, and push through legislation that removes independent oversight of health and safety in the workplace, putting thousands of people at risk. Workers across this province are now at more risk of being seriously injured on the job or dying.

To the Minister of Labour, who had the honour—and it is an honour when you have labour leaders and workers ask you to join them in a Labour Day parade honouring the work that they do on behalf of all of us and that benefits all of us. It’s an honour when they ask you to march in their parade. It’s not enough to show up and march in the parade and pose for pictures; you actually have to protect the people who had asked you to march with them. You have to protect the workers from all across this province.

Schedule 16 and schedule 17 of this omnibus bill, Bill 70, should not even be in Bill 70, but what that does is basically say that it’s more important for the Minister of Labour to have his photo ops than actually support the people that he marched with on Labour Day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Not debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Not debate; sorry. Further debate? All right.

Ms. MacCharles has moved government notice of motion number 5. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I have received a deferral slip. “To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly: Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government notice of motion number 5 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, November 30, 2016.”

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Orders of the day? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Bill Mauro: Speaker, I believe you will find we have unanimous consent to revert back to motions, to put forward a motion without notice regarding Bill 41, An Act to amend various Acts in the interests of patient-centred care.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I believe we have unanimous consent. Is it the pleasure of the House? It is. Agreed.

1720

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Bill Mauro: I move that the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet from 3 p.m. until completion on Wednesday, November 30, 2016, for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 41; and

That at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 30, 2016, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Thursday, December 1, 2016; and

That in the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Mauro has moved that the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Dispense? Agreed.

Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

MODERNIZING ONTARIO'S MUNICIPAL
LEGISLATION ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA MODERNISATION
DE LA LÉGISLATION MUNICIPALE
ONTARIENNE

Mr. Mauro moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 68, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to municipalities / Projet de loi 68, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les municipalités.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Minister Mauro, I turn it back to you.

Hon. Bill Mauro: Speaker, I'd like to let you know that I'll be sharing my time today with the member for Northumberland–Quinte West. I want to thank him ahead of time for his work on the file. We're pleased to have the opportunity today to discuss Bill 68, the Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act.

On November 16, I introduced important changes that we are proposing to modernize municipal legislation in Ontario. Our proposed package of reforms would, if passed, amend the Municipal Act, the City of Toronto Act, the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, as well as certain other acts to reflect the current needs of our municipalities and the people that they serve.

As many in this House may know, my ministry is mandated to review two of these pieces of legislation, the Municipal Act and the City of Toronto Act, within five years of the previous review. Additionally, we also included the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act in our review, which has not been updated substantially since 1983. From this review, we have introduced a robust package of reforms to ensure that these three pieces of legislation work well together.

These reforms are the result of extensive consultation with both our municipal partners as well as the public. I'd like to thank everyone who offered recommendations on how to modernize the suite of municipal legislation covered by the bill. I'd particularly like to thank the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and partner municipal associations across the province for their input. I'm confident this legislation is a reflection of that advice, as we all strive together to make local government more transparent, accountable and effective for communities in all parts of our great province.

As you know, Speaker, the Municipal Act sets out many of the roles, responsibilities and powers of Ontario's municipalities. The City of Toronto Act sets out a similar framework specifically for the city of Toronto, while also reflecting its status as Ontario's largest municipality. The Municipal Conflict of Interest Act sets out financial conflict-of-interest rules for municipal council members and for members of local boards.

Municipalities really are the level of government closest to the people. They provide essential front-line services like public transit and recreation facilities, and deal with local issues like fixing roads and collecting property taxes. Our communities need to be strong and vibrant places where people can live, work and raise their families. That means Ontario's municipalities need to be open, accountable and financially sustainable, and they need to use and have in place the powers to make that happen in a way that respects local responsibilities and circumstances and meets local needs.

Over the past year and a half, we asked Ontarians for their input on how to achieve this goal. I want to acknowledge the work of the previous minister, the member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, and I want to thank him for his leadership and carriage of this file during his very successful tenure in this position.

Under his leadership, my ministry conducted consultations across the province for the municipal legislation review between June and October of last year, with municipalities, stakeholders and the public at large. The review focused on three main themes: accountability and transparency, municipal financial sustainability, and responsive and flexible local government.

During the review, we asked how these important pieces of legislation could be improved, and Ontarians responded. We received more than 350 submissions that identified areas where we could improve and suggested solutions. Almost half of these were from members of the public.

From all accounts, we heard the legislative framework for municipal governance is working well, but that there was room for improvement. We considered this input carefully, and the reforms we are proposing take into account what we heard.

Speaker, let me highlight some of the key proposed changes that we are considering.

One of the key priorities outlined in my mandate letter from the Premier includes working with our municipal partners to support accountability and transparency, and ensuring that they have the powers they need to be flexible and responsive to the needs of their residents.

This was a main priority for our review as well. We asked the public what we could be doing better to improve accountability and openness in local government. We asked local governments how to improve the current accountability framework, while ensuring that these improvements take local circumstances into account. Our review asked for input on codes of conduct, on accountability officers, on open meetings and on conflicts of interest.

Municipalities are responsible for determining the process for complaints about codes of conduct, and many of the rules for enforcing them. The Municipal Act currently gives municipalities the option to adopt a code of conduct for members of council and local boards.

In our review, we asked Ontarians whether their municipality had a code of conduct and if it was working effectively. We learned that while many large municipal-

ities have a code of conduct, many medium-sized or small municipalities do not.

In order to provide greater consistency in the level of accountability and integrity across Ontario's governments, we are proposing to require codes of conduct in all municipalities. I'm confident that our proposed approach strikes a strong balance between municipal autonomy and the need to have some consistent guiding principles across the province.

To ensure that codes of conduct are enforced more effectively, we are also proposing to make changes related to local integrity commissioners. Municipal representatives are expected to perform their roles with integrity and meet the highest standards of conduct. When citizens, members of council and local boards feel that these standards have not been met, it is important that they have the opportunity to voice their concerns. Our proposed changes focus on improving access to integrity commissioners, to ensure that these concerns are addressed. Municipalities would be required to provide access to an integrity commissioner to investigate complaints and provide advice to municipal councillors and information to the public.

At the same time, we don't want to create an undue burden on municipalities and elected officials, as there are many small municipalities out there. Municipalities will have the option of pooling resources with another municipality, to share an integrity commissioner if needed, or arranging for an integrity commissioner on a fee-for-service basis.

1730

We're also proposing to give integrity commissioners broader powers to give them more flexibility. These changes would, if passed, give them an expanded role, including to investigate complaints; provide advice to members of council and educational information to the public, municipality and members of council; and to initiate investigations related to municipal conflicts of interest and the municipality's code of conduct.

Another change that we are proposing would provide better clarity for members of council, local boards and the public on the definition of "meeting." Right now, I'm not sure what the best way to describe it is. It's pretty much impossible to describe, and it has left municipal officials, I would say, in a very tenuous and uncomfortable position on many occasions.

If passed, the term "meeting" would be amended so open meeting rules would apply when a quorum of members is present and they discuss or otherwise deal with a matter in a way that materially advances the business or decision-making of the relevant municipal body. This would provide greater clarity and help ensure that a simple coffee chat between two councillors is not considered a meeting requiring public scrutiny.

Speaker, this part was important to me. Many of us in the chamber today have a municipal background, and I think it's important that we, as best we are able, provide some clarity on this issue so as not to put municipally elected people in these very difficult circumstances from time to time.

Municipalities and certain local boards would also be able to allow for more ways for members to participate in meetings. We're proposing to provide municipalities and certain local boards with authority to allow members to participate electronically in meetings that are open to the public, for example, via teleconferencing and videoconferencing, rather than requiring them to attend in person. However, in order to help ensure transparency, electronic participants could not be included in the number of members required for a quorum.

If passed, this change would allow municipalities and local boards to provide for more inclusive participation in council, local board and committee meetings. It would also help make meetings more accessible for members. I'm sure there are a number of people who are elected municipally in Ontario who, from time to time, find they have to travel great distances to attend meetings, and I believe this would be helpful for them as well.

Speaker, I think everyone in this House would agree that we need to find ways to encourage more women to participate in local government. Currently, women comprise 26% of councillors across Canada and 16% of all mayors. As you know, the member from Kitchener Centre—and she just walked into the chamber, our good friend Daiene Vernile—recently received unanimous second reading support for her private member's bill, Bill 46, Municipal Statute Law Amendment Act (Councillor Pregnancy and Parental Leave), an act which aims to ensure that women and parents are entitled to take time off for pregnancy or parental leave without fear of being removed from elected office. I think it's a great opportunity for us to highlight this work by this member.

I'm pleased to incorporate the member from Kitchener Centre's bill into Bill 68. I had a good conversation with the member. I asked her how she intended to proceed with her private member's bill, if she would like to see it considered for incorporation into this municipal package of amendments, and she was more than happy to see that occur. She sees this as the quickest way to expedite her private member's bill. I thank her for her foresight in bringing that private member's bill forward to begin with, and I thank her for her foresight in allowing us to incorporate it in this municipal package. Hopefully, upon passage, we will have in place one less, I would say, structural impediment, should this pass, for women making a decision on whether or not they want to put their names forward for elected office at a local level.

If passed, the bill we are proposing today would ensure offices of members of council would not become vacant because of an absence related to pregnancy or parental leave for 20 consecutive weeks or less. Accommodating parents at the local level sends a strong message that municipal politics can be family-friendly.

Another review theme focused on supporting strong and financially sustainable local governments. I believe our government has worked very hard to ensure municipalities have access to the resources they need to build the strong, vibrant communities that people deserve, no matter where you call home, because whether you live in

the north, like me in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, or in the GTHA, no matter where you call home, your community is, quite frankly, the centre of your universe. It's where you raise your family. It's where you have backyard barbecues with neighbours in the summer. It's where the local hockey rink or community centre is the hub of activity. It's where you rely on safe roads or modern transit systems to get to and from work.

Since 2003, this government has worked hard to reverse the downloading costs of services that drain vital resources from municipal budgets. That led to worsening infrastructure deficits across the province. I remember very clearly being elected in 2003 for my first term. When we were first elected to government in 2003, we identified three deficits that we had assumed, in our opinion. One was obvious, a financial deficit; another was a services deficit; third was an infrastructure deficit. We've been working very hard to address that since being elected in 2003 to government.

It was not a good partnership between the province and municipalities at that time. I had served six years on municipal council in Thunder Bay and have first-hand knowledge of that relationship. It was not good. I say again in here, as I've said many times, I think it is the reason that many people made a decision to leave their home communities, run provincially and try to find a better way to represent their municipalities at the provincial level. Instead of a partnership, the previous government fostered an adversarial relationship with local governments. We've done much to undo the damage.

We've uploaded many services and costs back to the province. We want to continue building Ontario's municipalities up, so during our review, we invited input on topics including how existing municipal financial powers can be used more effectively; whether municipalities have the powers they need to plan for, prioritize and fund infrastructure and public services; and what barriers municipalities face in achieving long-term financial sustainability.

Municipal financial sustainability is important for the health of the province and it's important for this government. Municipalities provide a range of vital services to Ontarians, including maintaining and expanding public infrastructure such as roads, bridges, water systems and local public transit systems. To deliver on these services, municipalities need to manage their finances effectively.

We consulted on this at length with our municipal partners. While local governments have a number of options when deciding how to pay for services and projects, we heard that they would like additional powers and resources to pay for these services and strengthen their communities.

I want to be clear: Our government respects our partnership with Ontario's municipalities and respects the elected officials who work hard each and every day to build better communities for the people they serve. We worked hard to rebuild trust after the previous government pushed its problems onto local governments.

As a former municipal politician, I remember those days. That is why, when we work on legislation that affects municipal governments, we do it in partnership, as equals, in order to achieve a common goal that is good governance and strong, fiscally sustainable communities across Ontario.

I'm now going to turn the floor over to my hard-working PA, the member for Northumberland–Quinte West, who played a valued role in this legislation, including attending and leading many of the consultations across the province. But before I do that, I'm going to highlight just a little bit the municipal sustainability piece. If I could leave those following this debate on television back in their ridings—there are several numbers that I could leave with them, but one would be simply this: When we came to government, the sum total of financial assistance that was flowing to the municipal sector in the province of Ontario was about \$1.1 billion. Today, that number has increased to \$3.8 billion, a combination of the OMPF, the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund, the uploads—and when I say “uploads,” and I'm speaking to people in all the municipalities across Ontario, I'm talking about taking back costs out of your municipal property tax base that were downloaded into the municipal property tax base by the previous government. We were left with that legacy when we came here in 2003.

That downloaded cost—I don't think we can overstate the importance of the work that we've done. In individual municipalities across this province, the total cost of what we have uploaded to them might represent anywhere from between 5% or 8% to maybe as much as 13% of their total tax base, especially in the smaller municipalities that had bridges and roads, those costs, downloaded into their municipal property tax base.

1740

Can you imagine being a city the size of Timmins? I remember, not that long ago, driving in from the airport into the municipality of Timmins, and the fellow telling me on the ride in—and it's a long ride from the airport—that most of that road, which was in very rough shape—it was 10 or 20 kilometres long or longer—had been downloaded to a town the size of 50,000 people or so, into the municipal property tax base, by the previous government.

That speaks to some of the work that we're trying to do. I know that my parliamentary assistant is going to speak to more of that in his speech.

I thank you for your time, and I look forward to the debate on second reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I will now seek further debate from the member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for his leadership on this proposed legislation. It has been a bit of a long haul, but at the end of the day, we're here and I'm hopeful that we'll give

this really serious consideration as we move forward. And I thank him for trusting me to work with our municipal partners across the province, as well as members of the public, as we conduct the reviews of the municipal legislation framework. It was fun, in a way, for me because I was able to reconnect with a lot of colleagues in the municipal sector, but also with different other groups right across the province.

The minister was highlighting a number of issues that this piece of legislation tries to address to make the life of municipalities a little bit easier. I'm going to carry on with that thought in mind.

One of those areas is the prudent investor standard, that we try to make it easier for municipalities to invest. Currently, a municipality can only invest their funds in a list of eligible investments. We kind of put them in a straitjacket. The proposed changes, if passed, will provide eligible municipalities the option of investing according to prudent investor standards, just like any other investors. Having this broader investment power will allow eligible municipalities to invest in any security in a way that a prudent investor would do, like you and—well, not necessarily you and I, Speaker, as I'm not sure I'm an investor. I depend on somebody to do some investing for me.

They will have the flexibility to build a diversified portfolio of investments and better adapt to their investments to meet their local risk and return objectives. This is something that municipalities had asked us to consider. As a responsible level of government, we agreed that municipalities should have these added powers. As a former mayor, I know that the best path to building better communities by all of these levels of government is by working together. We can get so much accomplished.

Another example of how this government is listening to and working with municipalities is around tax sale timing. I know, as a reeve and then mayor of the municipality of Brighton, that we sometimes had difficulty collecting property taxes, and foreclosure was always an issue. In our review, we also took a closer look at the length of time it took before a municipality can start a tax sale, and are proposing changes that would allow municipalities to use a tax sale more effectively.

The changes we are proposing would provide municipalities with the option to expedite a tax sale of a corporate property that has forfeited to the province to help return these properties back into productive use more quickly. One of the proposed changes would also reduce the time that property taxes have to be owing before a municipality can start a tax sale from three years to two years. I know the minister has heard from communities in the north that three years is too long and that often properties become derelict and lose value, lowering the amount that municipalities stand to recoup. I know that municipalities are very appreciative of this proposed change.

Based on our conversations with municipalities over the past year, we are proposing a number of changes to

generally improve property tax collection and administration. For example, the proposed changes will broaden the range of fees and charges that could be added to the tax roll, to help municipalities with the collection.

Considering these financial proposals as a package, this legislation, if passed, would provide eligible local governments with the ability to broaden their investment powers and give them the potential for better returns to help finance local infrastructure and front-line services to the public. These measures could have a direct impact on the quality of life in communities right across the province.

We also heard during our review that some municipalities would like additional authority to raise revenues beyond the property tax base. Our government has a strong record of working with municipalities to ensure that they're able to provide the services their communities need. As the minister mentioned earlier, as a result of provincial uploads and historic infrastructure investments by this government, support to municipalities has increased considerably over the past decade.

In 2017 alone, municipalities are benefiting from over \$4 billion in ongoing support through the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund or, as we call it, OMPF; provincial uploads and other provincial initiatives—an increase of \$2.9 billion from the level provided in 2003. This represents 13% of all municipal tax revenues in the province. In some communities, particularly small, rural and remote areas, like the areas I represent, provincial support is equal to almost 50% of the municipal budget.

We also appreciate that many municipalities are facing challenges in dealing with infrastructure needs and accommodating growth, and we have recently responded by increasing the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund to \$300 million per year by 2018-19 to support needed projects in small, rural and northern communities. I would want to add that when the fund was first initiated, it was \$100 million, so it's now going to be increased threefold. I would add that once that fund comes to full fruition in 2018-19, \$200 million will be formula-based, so municipalities will be guaranteed a transfer of funds, regardless of their circumstances. That's something, frankly, that municipalities were asking for. They wanted a predictable level of funding that they can count on from year to year.

We are encouraging our municipality partners to have local public discussions about what they need to be fiscally sustainable moving forward. We will continue this conversation and hope to hear, broadly speaking, some agreements from municipalities on these issues. At this time, the government is not considering expanding municipal taxation authority in the legislation, but rather will continue to work more broadly to improve municipal fiscal sustainability.

The final theme of our review focused on ensuring local governments have the power and the flexibility they need to be creative and responsive in providing services to their communities. In our review, we considered

municipal service improvements and the challenges or barriers to achieve them. That takes us to the role of community councils, how municipalities are responding to climate change and representation at the regional government level.

We are proposing an amendment that would, if passed, affirm a municipality's power to establish and determine the composition of a community council. As you know, the former government, through legislation and with no local consultation, forcibly amalgamated many communities across Ontario. I was a member of that particular class when that happened. We had to rush home and try to form alliances with our neighbours.

With the stroke of a pen, many autonomous historic communities across the province were eliminated and forced to merge into larger entities. Brighton township, the municipality where I was proud to serve on council—as councillor, deputy reeve and reeve—is off the map today.

1750

By affirming municipalities' ability to establish and support the mandate of community councils, this legislation, if passed, will promote restoring power over local decision-making back to the local communities that may have been amalgamated. The proposed amendment in this legislation affirms that municipalities may establish community councils and determine their composition. The amendment states explicitly that a municipality may create community councils, determine the composition of community councils and assign community councils the function of providing advice and recommendations to council, including on budget matters.

Community councils will be used as a tool to increase local input in the municipal decision-making process. Jurisdictions in Ontario that adopted community councils, like the city of Toronto, the city of Sudbury and others, appear to have increased local input into the municipal decision-making process.

Speaker, as you know, climate change is one of the most significant changes of our time. Its impacts are already being felt in communities across the province. We've seen an increase in the number of extreme weather events, like flooding and tornadoes, more frequent heat waves and more severe episodes of freezing rain. And I think, Speaker, you would agree that just this past summer we had one of the warmest summers in southern Ontario—

Ms. Daiene Vernile: And fall, as well.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: And fall. Now here we are, at the end of November, and frankly, I was out for a walk this morning without boots and goshes.

These events can pose serious and costly threats to public safety and infrastructure. So a key part of meeting our climate change goals will include supporting municipal leaders in making changes in the local level. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that as I talk to my local municipalities—I have eight and one county—that they're all

already quite engaged on dealing with climate change, doing their part.

We know that local governments need to have the power and flexibility to respond to these challenges that their communities are facing. The changes we are proposing focus on better positioning municipalities to do this effectively. We are proposing to give municipalities the clarity they need to pass bylaws related to climate change.

Local governments will be clear in their ability to provide for or participate in long-term planning for local energy use, and they would have the option to require green standards in the construction of new buildings in certain circumstances. If passed, municipalities would also be required to adopt a policy detailing how they would protect and enhance their local tree canopy and natural vegetation cover.

I would just add to that that the Highway of Heroes, and the planting of some 117,000 trees between Trenton and the city of Toronto to recognize every fallen soldier going back through all the wars in Canada, is a huge step that will help climate change, as well.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: That's a lot of trees.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's 117,000.

In our review of the municipal legislation, we also asked how we could improve local representation. We asked Ontarians if their current regional council compositions were responsive to their communities' needs, including changes in population growth. As a result of the review—and we did have a lot of input—we are proposing that regional municipalities be required to review the number of council members representing their lower-tier municipalities at least once following every second municipal election. This measure would ensure that regional councils are required to periodically turn their minds to the composition of their own council. They will be able to keep the existing composition or change it, but they will be required to consider the issues and vote on them at the regional and lower-tier levels. This will start after the 2018 municipal election. As someone who comes from an area that has an upper-tier level of government, I know that our municipalities appreciate this change to strengthen democratic representation at the local level.

We have already taken steps, through the vehicle of the Building Ontario Up for Everyone Act, to move forward on a related change coming out of our review. In that bill, we are proposing a requirement that all heads of regional council, except for Oxford county, be directly elected starting in the 2018 municipal election.

While the principle of democratic representation is important to us, at the same time, we appreciate the unique needs of municipalities, including counties, across this province. Counties are required to have the flexibility to determine how the heads of council are selected. In cases where it is appropriate, the province encourages counties to consider directly electing heads of council and whether a review of their composition is appropriate.

In order to facilitate municipal participation in community hubs, we're also proposing changes to help municipalities use small business incubator powers. If passed, the proposed changes would help communities establish and operate these important public spaces.

Speaker, I want to talk about parental leave. That's because my good seatmate is still here tonight. I know that we're looking at the clock, but I've got to get this in.

As the minister referred to in his remarks, I want to revisit the topic of parental leave. I think that it's important that we all acknowledge the importance that women play in our local governments. If someone sits on city council, they shouldn't have to worry about losing their seat during their pregnancy or if they want to take parental leave. It's an issue that not only affects the councillors, but their families as well. My colleague the MPP from Kitchener Centre, my seatmate who looks after me every day, brought this issue to light in her recent private member's bill, and we have incorporated it in the proposed changes that we are speaking about here today.

I want to congratulate Councillor Kelly Galloway-Sealock, a city councillor in Kitchener. She just had her third boy, and all is fine and great, so we congratulate her.

We are proposing that all municipalities have a policy on pregnancy and parental leave for council members.

Speaker, I know you gave me the option, but I'll just finish this. The offices of members of council will not become vacant due to an absence related to pregnancy or parental leave for 20 consecutive weeks or less. I believe that this is a step in the right direction for not only giving our municipal officials the time they need to raise their new families, but allowing them to do so without losing their seat.

Speaker, I'm going to call it there. Thank you very much for allowing the time.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank all speakers this afternoon. It is now 6 o'clock. This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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 / Greffier: Todd Decker

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: 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–Cookville | 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 | |
| Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB) | Ottawa–Vanier | |
| 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 | |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|--|---|---|
| Gates, Wayne (NDP) | Niagara Falls | |
| Gélinas, France (NDP) | Nickel Belt | |
| Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB) | Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord | Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines |
| Gretzky, Lisa (NDP) | Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest | |
| Hardeman, Ernie (PC) | Oxford | |
| Harris, Michael (PC) | Kitchener–Conestoga | |
| Hatfield, Percy (NDP) | Windsor–Tecumseh | |
| Hillier, Randy (PC) | Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington | |
| Hoggarth, Ann (LIB) | Barrie | |
| Horwath, Andrea (NDP) | Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre | Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario |
| Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB) | St. Paul's | Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée |
| 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) | York Centre / York-Centre | |
| Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB) | 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) | Carleton–Mississippi Mills | |
| MacLeod, Lisa (PC) | Nepean–Carleton | |
| Malhi, Harinder (LIB) | Brampton–Springdale | |
| Mangat, Amrit (LIB) | Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud | |
| Mantha, Michael (NDP) | Algoma–Manitoulin | |
| Martins, Cristina (LIB) | Davenport | |
| Martow, Gila (PC) | Thornhill | |
| Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB) | London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord | 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 de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique |
| Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB) | Thunder Bay–Atikokan | Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales |
| McDonell, Jim (PC) | Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry | |
| McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB) | Cambridge | Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts |
| McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB) | Burlington | 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) | Lambton–Kent–Middlesex | |
| Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB) | Etobicoke–Lakeshore | |
| Miller, Norm (PC) | Parry Sound–Muskoka | |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|--|---|--|
| Miller, Paul (NDP) | Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek | Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB) | Richmond Hill | Minister of Research, 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 Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement |
| Natyshak, Taras (NDP) | Essex | |
| Nicholls, Rick (PC) | Chatham-Kent–Essex | Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Oosterhoff, Sam (PC) | Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook | |
| Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) | Sault Ste. Marie | Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels |
| Pettapiece, Randy (PC) | Perth–Wellington | |
| Potts, Arthur (LIB) | Beaches–East York | |
| Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) | Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord | |
| Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) | Northumberland–Quinte West | |
| Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB) | Guelph | 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 de parti reconnu |
| 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 |

**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
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Ann Hoggarth
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 McDonnell, 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 Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle
Bob Delaney, Randy Hillier
Michael Mantha, Arthur Potts
Shafiq Qaadri, 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