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Thursday 2 March 2017

Jeudi 2 mars 2017

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Todd Decker

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Thursday 2 March 2017

Jeudi 2 mars 2017

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BURDEN REDUCTION ACT, 2017
LOI DE 2017 SUR L'ALLÈGEMENT
DU FARDEAU RÉGLEMENTAIRE

Mr. Duguid moved third 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): Minister Duguid.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I am pleased to be here today to introduce the third reading of Bill 27, the Burden Reduction Act. For the record, Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my very able parliamentary assistant, the MPP for Davenport.

I'd like to thank my parliamentary assistant, all members from all parties who served on the committee—I know there was some very good discussion during the committee sessions. In particular, I want to highlight the fantastic work that the member for Davenport has done, shepherding this bill through. She's done a fantastic job doing that. We'll hear from her later on some of the specifics of the bill, because I think she knows this bill even better than I do. I think I can say that pretty safely. There are a lot of pieces to this bill, and she knows pretty much every nook and cranny of it.

The burden reduction bill, if passed, will help Ontario ministries to cut unnecessary red tape and create savings and benefits for both government and for business. Reducing and streamlining unnecessary red tape and making Ontario one of the easiest places in North America to do business is a key priority of our government. In particular, in a fiercely competitive global economy, it's very important that Ontario be seen as a friendly place for investment and growth. Indeed, if you look at our growth numbers over the last little while, we're succeeding very well indeed.

This bill proposes to make more than 150 amendments to more than 50 statutes from 11 ministries. As I said, my parliamentary assistant will speak to some of the specifics of the bill in a while.

The Burden Reduction Act would be the first of annual burden reduction bills. This annual process will provide ministries with a regular way to identify and cut unnecessary red tape. It is, I know—and sometimes the opposition will call it an omnibus bill, and that's kind of what it is. There are sometimes criticisms of omnibus bills, because you do put a lot into it together. But really, it's the only way for us, together, to tackle regulatory burden on a systematic basis every single year—at least once a year—coming forward with this, where we can put all the ideas that, frankly, can come from all sides of the House, our business community at large and through our many processes, and to be able to get them through the Legislature on a timely basis. It's one thing to identify a good idea; it's another thing to get it through the Legislature and, at times, change legislation and regulations to actually make it happen.

It sometimes can be frustrating when you know something's the right thing to do, but you don't have the vehicle to make the changes legislatively. So this is a vehicle that I think all parties can take advantage of. We're always going to be open, when it comes to reducing regulatory burden, to ideas from both sides of the House.

I don't want to take credit for this idea, even though it's something we came up with as a government, because the idea actually came from the CFIB—one of many ideas that we've worked with the CFIB on. We have a very good relationship with the CFIB, and continue to. They, of course, are one of the primary spokespeople for small and medium-sized businesses in the province. We'll continue to work with them as we make Ontario a leader in reducing regulatory burden.

The last burden reduction bill was passed in 2010. Since 2011, burden reduction initiatives have saved Ontario businesses a total of \$122 million and, just as importantly, 5.4 million hours of work time. That's a new measurement that we didn't use in the past but that we're using now on a systematic basis. Again, that's a measurement we're using at the request and behest of the CFIB, as we continue to work together to bring down regulatory burden in this province. That goal that we've met surpasses the province's goal that was set some time ago to reduce business costs by \$100 million by 2017. This Burden Reduction Act will continue to reduce the cost of doing business in Ontario. Eleven partner ministries have participated in this effort, which is important. It is a government-wide initiative. We expect that the additional savings of this bill, if passed, would be about \$31 million for businesses, perhaps even more than that.

I want to share some of the changes, just to give a flavour of some of the things in the bill, with the members and those that are watching this morning. One of the areas that—and this is just a common-sense provision that just makes sense. Provincial inspectors currently have to meet face-to-face with business owners, under the Consumer Protection Act, to request information. So when they're investigating something, they have to go to the business, which is time and effort. They need to see the business owner face-to-face, which takes up the business owner's time. If passed, this act will let inspectors make a simple phone call or write an email, which, I think, makes an inordinate amount of sense.

Another area that I really like in this bill is the provision on superload vehicle permits. Right now, if you're a trucker with a heavy load, you need a police escort. If passed, the act will allow other qualified officials to provide that escort instead. Many of us have heard from folks—in the Sarnia area, in particular, where you have fabricators of very heavy equipment—that this is a costly burden to them and something that will save them dollars as well.

An area that there was some discussion on at committee was the industrial exception. Keeping the industrial exception helps businesses avoid costs of, some would say, up to \$196 million per year. This is critical for Ontario manufacturers as they strive to be competitive in a fiercely competitive global economy. The industrial exemption also maintains good jobs for technicians, which are good middle-income jobs. That's important for our economy, to ensure that we maintain and protect those good middle-income jobs.

We know that the business community supports these changes. In fact, Plamen Petkov, the Ontario vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business had this to say: "The Ontario government continues to demonstrate that it is committed to reducing the regulatory burden on small business in the province. By amending several existing acts, the Burden Reduction Act lays the groundwork for achieving real and measurable regulatory relief." It's not just the CFIB that supports these changes. The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association, the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association and, of course, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce all support Bill 27 and all have had some input into the bill—which leads me to wonder why the opposition seemed not to be so supportive of manufacturing when it comes to this bill.

0910

Maintaining the industrial exemption has been one of the top asks from our manufacturers, if not the top ask of our manufacturers, during this process. But when members of the PC Party had an opportunity to support this legislation, rather than stand up for manufacturers in the province, they abstained altogether. I'm hoping that they'll see the light by third reading and come on board to support it, but that is yet to be seen.

That's not that unusual for the PC Party. When it comes to the big investments and the partnerships that

we've made with manufacturers in our business support programs, we have invested \$2 billion with Ontario manufacturers. That's unlocked \$18 billion of private sector investment in our manufacturing sector, and it's helped to support over 80,000 manufacturing jobs. Unfortunately, the PC Party doesn't support any of those investments, so it's not that surprising that they wouldn't stand up for manufacturers at committee. But we're hoping that by third reading—and maybe the critic will let us know—they'll support the bill and they'll indeed stand with us, with the manufacturing sector.

The NDP's position on this is to displace qualified technicians at manufacturing facilities who have been working on equipment for decades. I don't think it makes sense to do that. There's just no evidence, or very little evidence, that would suggest this would be at all beneficial. These are good middle-income jobs, and we intend to protect them through these measures. But again, I'm not surprised that the NDP would not be supporting the manufacturing sector because we all know that they have a plan in place to whack the manufacturing sector with increases to corporate taxes, something that we will refuse to do.

Right now, we have one opposition party that doesn't stand up for manufacturing in the province and another one that, even worse, is actively working against them. I'm hoping that by the time third reading comes along, my opposition colleagues will see the light on this bill and recognize it's an important bill to support. Indeed, that may well happen in the interchange that we have over the next little while.

I want to speak a little bit about our efforts to reduce regulatory burden, including our efforts with this bill. I want to leave about 10 minutes for my parliamentary assistant. I see I'm already running into my 10 minutes' time, so I've gotten a little bit carried away here.

Our Open for Business strategy has reduced or eliminated 80,000 regulatory burdens since 2008. That's a 17% reduction in regulatory burden. It's something we're very, very proud of. We've saved about \$122 million through 26 projects, as identified in our 2016 Burden Reduction Report that came out not too long ago.

I would speak to our Red Tape Challenge, Madam Chair, but I'm going to run out of time. Our Red Tape Challenge started with the auto parts sector. I want to give credit to Flavio Volpe and the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association for their participation in that. We have identified at least 63 opportunities to reduce regulatory burden in the auto parts sector. Food processing is coming next—I know the Minister of Agriculture and Food will be very interested in that—then financial services, followed by the mining sector.

I'm confident that with this bill and the other initiatives we're taking, including our modernization committee that's helping us streamline our decision-making process in reducing regulatory burden through government, we are leading not only the country; we are a global leader when it comes to reducing regulatory burden, something we're very, very proud of.

At the same time, we believe there's still more work to do. That's why these bills, on an annual basis, are very, very important: Because there are still good ideas coming forward. We're going to work relentlessly with our business community. We'll take in the considerations that come forward from the parties opposite to help reduce regulatory burden. We will fulfill our goal and I believe our destiny to make Ontario the easiest place in the world in which to invest and do business.

I'll now pass it over to my—it goes over there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I am honoured to rise for third reading to debate Bill 27 and to follow the Minister of Economic Development.

I think everyone is pleased to see this government bring forward a bill aimed at cutting red tape in the province of Ontario. I've said many times, and many other members have said, that Ontario has hundreds of thousands of regulations on the books, and our businesses are burdened with over \$14 billion in costs every year as a result of this government's red tape. So a burden reduction act is obviously very prudent and timely. But unfortunately, what the government actually brought forward in Bill 27 is a drop in the bucket.

Madam Speaker, as our party and I outlined during second reading, we will be supporting this bill, because even a drop in the bucket is better than nothing. But I'm disappointed by how unambitious the government has been with burden and red-tape reduction. According to the ministry's own numbers, this bill will only save businesses in Ontario—all businesses—a total of \$31.5 million. When you spread that out across all the companies in Ontario, it's really nothing. In fact, it's a 0.2% annual reduction.

Speaker, when you read this legislation and you look at the numbers, it's clear that this is a bill intended more for government housekeeping than for the benefit of the private sector and our economy. While we do need to regularly clarify and modernize our laws and regulations with housekeeping-type bills, it's a shabby practice this government has of dressing up omnibus housekeeping bills under titles that make them sound like some great good is being done for the people or economy of the province.

I would really like to illustrate how inadequate this bill is by painting a picture of what our companies are up against these days. Over the last few months, I've been visiting manufacturing facilities and speaking with business owners and entrepreneurs across Ontario. I'd like to take this opportunity to relay what I've heard and seen during this manufacturing tour, because I suspect that many government members have not taken the time or the opportunity to have a real look at what is going on in Ontario.

The manufacturing we have here today is almost exclusively advanced manufacturing. It's all that's left. These manufacturers are producing innovative products

better than anybody elsewhere. They are building things that we need in this province, ensuring we get quality products made ethically and which create jobs here instead of in China or America. Manufacturing offers indiscriminate opportunities for meaningful work and a good living.

If you walk into a manufacturing plant today, you will find people from every walk of life. You will find managers who are hard-working first-generation Canadians who didn't have formal education but who have made their way up the ranks and can now provide a good life and better opportunity for their children. You will find scientists, MBAs and engineers alongside skilled tradespeople. You will find women doing everything from driving forklifts to working in management. You will find second- and third-generation owners, and employees who aren't just co-workers, but friends and neighbours. You will find people who take pride in building something here in Ontario that is better than what you'll find anywhere else in the world. You will find innovators and creators, people developing the most eco-friendly technologies available.

This government loves to talk about innovation, but seems to only recognize the sort of innovation that is theoretical and comes out of labs where everyone wears a white coat. There is no recognition of applied research and development, of that front-line innovation that happens when people refine and modernize the processes and products they actually engage with every day.

Most of all, what you will find when you visit an Ontario manufacturer today is people working hard and struggling to keep their plants open, even when they know it makes financial sense to move their operation, but because they care about their employees and their community, they are fighting to remain here in Ontario. These are companies who have, by and large, cut their management and staffing to the bone. They have made serious investments to make their operations as energy-efficient and environmentally friendly as possible. In fact, many are leaders in developing new technologies to help other companies the world over become more efficient and sustainable.

They have done everything they can to keep their businesses viable in Ontario, but this Liberal government, far from offering relief, keeps creating roadblocks for them. They keep stacking the deck with new challenges that hand their competitors the competitive advantage. Businesses keep getting thrown Liberal curveballs, giving no measure of stability or predictability to Ontario's economy.

0920

Cap-and-trade and the high cost of hydro are certainly big issues for businesses, but the cost of regulatory compliance is also taking a heavy toll. Time, as well as money, is a precious resource, especially for small and medium-sized businesses. No one can remember a time when more resources had to be poured into keeping the government happy.

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised. This government and this Premier have made it clear that they're not

interested in helping manufacturers, and that despite the tremendous role this sector has and continues to play, it has no place in Ontario's future. In fact, I believe Premier Wynne and this Liberal government see the private sector, and manufacturing in particular, as sunset industries.

Their agenda is one of big government—more intrusion and more interference—and a belief that government knows best.

While service jobs and tech jobs are great, the Premier is setting up a false choice when she says it has to be either these jobs or manufacturing jobs. We can and should have both in Ontario. We must have both to create a strong and growing middle class in this province.

When the Premier says we can't have traditional manufacturing or that manufacturing is being "sunset" in Ontario, it may in fact be true, but only as a result of the policies of this Liberal government.

If the best that this government can do to alleviate the burden on business is to reduce regulatory costs by 0.2%, especially when they're facing record high hydro rates and the massive cost of cap-and-trade, then I think it is clear that this is a government not interested in true economic development and growth. I will venture even further and say I don't see the evidence that this government is interested in sustainable economic development.

I visited one manufacturer who wanted to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars in new machinery to increase productivity and decrease their environmental impact, which sounds exactly like what this government would want them to do. But it turns out that Liberal policies tell a very different story. This Liberal government, which claims to promote advanced manufacturing and green technology, held the process up, forced this family-run business to gamble with significant sums of money, and refused to give them answers about the approval process, preventing them from bringing this machinery into operation for almost three years.

The ministry and the TSSA just didn't have the internal systems in place to accommodate this innovation, so it wasn't clear how regulations should be applied. The result was a company being asked to lay out a lot of money to procure a machine that the government couldn't tell them whether they would be able to use or not.

Speaker, this is a story that we continue to hear at almost every manufacturing facility that we visit.

When this is the reality of how this government deals with innovative and green technologies, why should anyone believe that this Premier has a real plan for sustainable economic development? Why should anyone believe that this government is serious about getting regulation out of business or fostering innovation?

This government was very proud that this omnibus bill was making over 150 amendments to 11 ministries, but it's time we start talking about quality, not just quantity, when it comes to red tape, because this bill does not make the sort of comprehensive changes that would have a real impact on the private sector's red-tape burden.

This is a bill that fixes a lot of little things. It updates things that should have been updated many, many years

ago—in fact, far in advance of red tape and over-burdensome regulations costing Ontario's economy \$14 billion. That's why it's making a small step, as I said in the beginning, of saving businesses the very small amount of \$31 million.

We will be supporting it, based on that premise, but I would encourage the government to go a heck of a lot further. Start getting government out of the way of business, free up the free market and allow entrepreneurs, job creators and businesses to create jobs and focus on growing their businesses in the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's a pleasure to rise this morning and speak once again to Bill 27, the Burden Reduction Act, which is essentially a fulfillment of the government's obligation under previous trading agreements and obligations through other measures. It is an omnibus bill, with 17 schedules that affect various ministries. The majority of the mechanisms and content in the bill are left to regulation. It is miniscule in its scope in terms of actually lessening the burden on businesses and communities in Ontario. It does very little to address the whole picture in our communities.

We know some of the economic struggles that exist; one of them is certainly the skyrocketing cost of hydro and the need for businesses in our communities to deal with that. They cannot escape the use of hydro in the province. Despite doing everything that this government has asked—conserving and implementing new measures, even going as far as throttling production to match the peak demand and off-peak demand cycles that the government has arbitrarily imposed—they still are being crushed when performing their businesses and trying to make a dollar out there.

It seems as though this government has come to some final realization. We are anticipating—waiting with bated breath—the Premier's announcement today on how she will finally address the skyrocketing cost that's existed under the Liberal government. We hear that it's going to be an extension over 25 years of some of the financing for some of the private contracts that they've highlighted and contracted out. That's simply kicking the can down the road. That's leaving a debt to future generations. That is not dealing with the systemic issues of generation, privatization, distribution and the good stewardship of what used to be a really viable and healthy public service.

But to the bill—New Democrats aren't afraid to call this what it is: It's window dressing. We aren't scared of empty phrases like "burden reduction." Anyone who reads the scope of this bill understands that, again, the parameters of the changes are miniscule and don't do anything.

However, there are two what we would call, and what members would understand in here to be, poison pills built into this bill. Those poison pills open up the sale and privatization of Ontario Place. Just down the road from here lies a wonderful public space that had been in operation for years, that provided entertainment and

cultural activities for families across the province: Ontario Place, a wonderful lakefront setting that has been bought and paid for by taxpayers in this province. Speaker, if you're in the real estate market and you're looking for good value for money as an investment, lakefront property is always a spot that you can be assured isn't going to depreciate in value, for the simple fact that they're not building any more lakefront property.

What this government has done through schedule 16 of this bill is allow Ontario Place Corp. to "dispose of land, buildings and structures, or any interest in land, buildings and structures, by sale, lease or otherwise," subject to the approval of the government. This is another clear cash grab on the part of a desperate government that is searching for revenue in every corner that it can. Whether it's the sale of Hydro One, the sale of Ontario Place, the potential sale and privatization of the LCBO, the privatization—or, they would say, the modernization—of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., these guys are broke and looking for every dollar they can to funnel into, hopefully, public services, but we won't hold our breath.

We know that many of their initiatives have failed. I'll highlight one where the competency of the government when it comes to economic development has to be called into question. Just a couple of weeks ago, in my riding of Essex, a story emerged highlighting an investment made by the government in 2014, a \$3-million investment into a private canning facility in my riding, Thomas Canning.

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The details of the \$3-million grant are really impossible to find. We don't know what the parameters of that grant were or are because they refuse to share it with us. We know that at some point in time, Thomas Canning was identified as a potentially good investment to increase tomato processing in southwestern Ontario, and at that time, when Heinz was shuttering its operation in Leamington, it made sense.

What you would expect and what you would hope is if the government is embarking on economic development initiatives with private sector businesses, there would be some concrete accountability and transparency measures built into that. Well, lo and behold, two years later, there has been \$4 million worth of tomatoes left rotting in the field because Thomas Canning can't or hasn't fulfilled its contracts with those growers. So not only has the province delivered \$3 million to a private company to hopefully increase their capacity; they haven't, and we've lost good, quality food that rotted on the vines.

That's a shame, when people are hungry in this province—just the nature of wasting food. How is that possible? Yet that's the type of scrutiny and transparency that this government attaches to its economic development policies.

If this is a continuation of that, it doesn't breed much confidence in myself or our party that they have the best interests of our partners in the private sector, or our taxpayers who are ultimately paying the price of these types of initiatives, at heart.

There's more than simply their failures of initiating good economic development policy to be highlighted. The bill contains within it what we all know in this place as a massive political flip-flop. In this House, we've all become aware of the important role that the professional engineers of Ontario play in Ontario. They are our fail-safe. They are the ones who are independent and provide the scrutiny on infrastructure projects and mechanical engineering projects. They are the professionals that tell us how things work, how things should work and why, if they're not done correctly, they won't work. We rely on them. They are professionals.

We acknowledge that so much that the Liberal government—and I want to remind the Liberal government that the designation "professional engineer" actually means something. They are our professionals. But what the government has done is, within the context of Bill 27, they've removed the industrial exception. What that means is that no longer will that fail-safe need to be put into place to scrutinize projects around the province. Companies will no longer need to have that third critical eye on different initiatives.

Engineers have raised the flag on this, not only on its impact on productivity and quality, but on public safety. If you can imagine that a company is contracted to build a bridge and isn't required to have third-party, independent validation of the drawings or the processes through professional engineers, that's going to call into question the reliability of that bridge, and that's as simple as it is.

They are eliminating this requirement with the hope that it's going to save money. Yes, you know what? Maybe if you don't have to pay engineers to provide their expertise on certain critical jobs, yes, that might save you some money within the project. But ultimately, when that fails and people are harmed, how much does that cost? Isn't it reasonable to put in every fail-safe mechanism that we know exists, that is proven to ensure the protection, the safety and the value for money, that we can? They've turned their back on the professional engineers of Ontario, and that's another reason that New Democrats will not be supporting this bill. We stand proud to ensure that we protect public safety and put it as paramount. Ultimately, that is our role here in whatever we do. It should be our foremost thought. Sure, it's good public policy, and sure, it might be politically expedient, but does this ensure the protection of the people of our province? That's what our number one goal is. I see it as that. Evidently, it's not a priority for the government.

Speaker, again, the bill is an omnibus bill. It's a housekeeping bill. The majority of the content in here is so minuscule that for the government to claim that it's actually lessening red tape or regulatory burden on businesses is just laughable. When businesses in this province set up and they make their economic case and all of a sudden they are hit with massive increases in hydro rates, there's something wrong here. The government has a real opportunity to address the exodus of good-paying manufacturing jobs, good-paying agricultural jobs and those in processing. They have an opportunity to do that, but this is tinkering around the edges. As far as I see, it provides

no confidence in our business community that they are actually serious about supporting economic growth in Ontario.

I'll tell you what they could do. They could use this opportunity to work diligently with our business community to knock down those energy costs and provide stability.

Interjection: We are.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: They say they are, Speaker, but their word is as good as mud these days. All you have to do is open up your local newspaper or read an editorial or read the comments section. Nobody believes them. It could be because we've heard it all before. We have heard that these contracts were going to provide good value for money. We have heard that putting in smart meters was going to reduce consumption. We have heard that we were going to get a 15% reduction in auto insurance. It's called a stretch goal—again, laughable.

Speaker, what they really could do is work with our communities, work with our municipal leadership who need and who have identified where investments can be made in all measures, but certainly in support through municipal initiatives, through infrastructure projects on the ground, not simply pet projects that are politically expedient. But there is nothing like that in this bill. There is nothing that facilitates that or streamlines that process. There is no single window, as exists in Michigan and Ohio, where businesses who want to set up walk in and can deal with one single regulatory mechanism.

Mr. James J. Bradley: How about Michigan?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, in Michigan. You walk in, you open it up, and you talk to a dedicated representative who will guide you through the process and make that process of opening up a business so easy and so supportive of compliance that you've got businesses popping up each and every day—let alone a very competitive electricity rate. They forget that that's the jurisdiction with which we are competing. There's so much that they could do, but I guess they go for what's politically expedient rather than what is necessary and what actually takes a little bit of hard work. But they have had 14 years to do that. You would ask, and it's fair to ask, "What took you so long?" or "Why, at this point, is this as far as you can go?" Again, it's a shame.

Speaker, we have an opportunity, as I see it, in the manufacturing sector, and given the climate of trade in North America and international trade and the uncertainty that has unfolded, it would be great if this government came out strong and loud with some plan, a strategy, a strategy that we have called on for decades around manufacturing. Where is our provincial manufacturing strategy that actually streamlines and highlights what this government is able to do and can do and is ready to do to facilitate new manufacturing in the country? It's an ad hoc process that lends no continuity and certainty to businesses that are looking to expand or to even start anew in this province.

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There is one aspect that this government could have potentially infused into this massive omnibus bill. What

about a strategy around agriculture production, so that we don't get into these types of issues where \$4 million worth of tomatoes are rotting in the field? What about if we actually had a strategy that supported growers, supported farmers' markets, supported domestic production and domestic processing? Why not?

Interjection: That would be great.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Wouldn't that be great?

Imagine if this government took agriculture production in the province seriously and formed a standing committee on agriculture and rural affairs, where an enormous amount of value is left unlocked, simply because we grow it and get it out of the province. Why not add value to those products and sell it?

More and more people are wanting to know not only where their food comes from but what's in it and who made it. They want to know it was John and Sally from down the road, who grow their tomatoes in a holistic—in an organic way. They want to support their local industries. That's where the market is going.

This government doesn't see those opportunities because it's too blinded by ideology and, again, political expediency, blinded by what they need to do to stay alive and to survive, rather than what they need to do to ensure that Ontario thrives.

That all rhymes. If you caught that, that was almost a poem, and it was really good.

Mr. John Fraser: I like holistic tomatoes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: That was wrong. I didn't mean holistic. I mean eating organically. I apologize.

Mr. Randy Hillier: John is a big consumer of holistic tomatoes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: But you get what I'm saying here, Speaker. You understand what I'm saying.

Specifically in agriculture production, we had the unfortunate event of Heinz leaving its business in Leamington, and leaving hundreds of workers without a job, after over a hundred years of operation in Leamington. That left our community reeling, and the uncertainty and the anxiety was palpable. However, a new company came in to operate in that facility, and they have contracted out with French's ketchup.

Why is that an important story? Well, Speaker, if you look at what has ensued after that—French's has contracted and has committed to using 100% Ontario-grown tomatoes for their products. Their sales exploded because, again, people want to know where their food is coming from.

These are opportunities that exist in our economy right now. This is where we would like to see the government focus any initiatives that go towards supporting and bolstering our economy. But they're missing the mark. Again, every day that goes by, we see businesses fleeing our communities, and leaving communities wondering how they're going to survive.

I think I have made the case here that there's a lot to be desired from this bill, and a lot that is obviously left out that could have presented an opportunity. But also, in a sense, it's another indication of this government's

desperate need to find money wherever it can by selling publicly owned resources and publicly owned facilities like Ontario Place for—who knows? To pay down the enormous debt that has accrued over the 14 years? To try to buy back some good faith in the communities that have struggled under their tenure? We don't know. But we know that if it's the Liberal government that's at the helm, most likely we're heading in the wrong direction.

I thank you very much for your time, Speaker.

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

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I'm pleased to rise as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Growth. I want to start off by thanking the minister for his remarks and for being such a champion in cutting red tape.

I know from my constituents in Davenport and from my own career in business how important it is to have a modern, streamlined and efficient business climate. It's what helps to attract new businesses to Ontario and helps those that are already here to get products and services to consumers more efficiently and create more opportunity to invest in jobs and growth. This bill is full of measures to reduce unnecessary red tape. Each measure looked at on its own may not be earth-shattering, but looking at this package of up to \$31 million in cost savings and approximately \$200 million in cost avoidance—to me, that's quite impressive.

That being said, I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the burden reduction initiatives that are contained in this bill. We have taken a holistic approach across government to find efficiencies for businesses and other stakeholders. As the minister pointed out, we are doing that while also protecting environmental and health and safety standards. We know that some regulations are, of course essential, and in areas like our agri-food sector, regulations can even be a competitive edge. So it is important to understand what we are talking about. Cutting red tape is not about deregulating; it's about improving interactions between business and government to ensure we achieve our regulatory goals in the least costly and most efficient manner possible.

The following are some of the key changes this bill would enact. Retaining the industrial exception in the Professional Engineers Act would allow businesses to have work performed on their own equipment by qualified technicians rather than professional engineers. This is not the government turning their backs on professional engineers. The proposed industrial exception would continue to protect worker health and safety, provide greater certainty in the sector and avoid unnecessary costs, resulting in an estimated savings up to approximately \$200 million per year for the manufacturing sector.

You know, Madam Speaker, it is absolutely shocking to me that, when this measure came up to a named vote in committee, the PC Party didn't support it. It's one thing to rise in the House and talk about the importance of manufacturing and of reducing red tape; it's another thing to stand up and take action. In terms of supporting

manufacturers and reducing red tape, the PC Party is all talk and no action. I strongly encourage them to support this bill on final reading because there is so much in here to cut red tape.

On that note, I'd like to highlight some more measures contained in this bill.

Repealing the outdated Bulk Sales Act that was established over 100 years ago: Creditors now have access to a number of more effective ways to protect their interests, and the old legislation is expensive to administer. Ontario would join all other Canadian jurisdictions in eliminating the statutory requirement.

This bill would enable the incorporation of recognized standards for international business dealings into Ontario's law. It would modernize our rules for commercial arbitration, making Ontario a more attractive jurisdiction for resolving cross-border disputes.

The proposed amendments to the courts of justice and justice of the peace act would help the court system function more efficiently and effectively. For example, the process for making court rules and provincial offences would be simplified, providing flexibility to address changes in technology.

Other measures in this bill will propose minor changes and administrative updates to four acts in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry that enable electronic communications between the ministry and their clients. These outdated rules have impacts on government and business, so making these changes saves us all time and money.

The Ministry of Labour has also made changes to cut red tape, amending the Protecting Child Performers Act with regard to overnight travel expenses, the number of hours a child performer may work in a day and rules relating to breaks and requirements for individualized adult supervision. All of these proposed changes are intended to align the act with current industry practices while still maintaining child performer safety.

The schedule also amends the Registered Human Resources Professionals Act to provide the authority for the Human Resources Professionals Association to regulate its members who conduct workplace investigations.

I'll now take a minute to highlight some changes at the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. The bill proposes minor changes that would make it possible for more business activities to move to the Environmental Activity and Sector Registry, the online self-registration system available for low-risk activities, reducing the number of face-to-face meetings required in compliance checks. Instead, inspectors would be able to request information through calls or emails when appropriate, improving service delivery and cutting costs associated with compliances.

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The Ministry of Government and Consumer Services will also see red tape reductions proposed through measures such as modernizing the Business Corporations Act and amending the Business Regulation Reform Act.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport will also see red tape reductions, changing the Ontario Place

Corporation Act to better support the province's vision for Ontario Place as a year-round, vibrant waterfront destination. The proposed amendments simply lower the cost and complexity of agreements, so that third-party partners can invest in Ontario Place.

Madam Speaker, the New Democrats are constantly standing in the way of this, but they need to understand the importance of allowing government to work at the speed of business. Had they attended the multiple offerings to the briefings for this bill, they would understand that clearly. Yes, the proposed amendment would allow for third-party investors, but we have been clear that our government has not and will not be considering the sale of this historic jewel in the province.

Amending the Highway Traffic Act will allow for non-police escorts to ensure the safe movement of oversized and overweight loads that require traffic control. This was a key ask we heard from our business community in southwestern Ontario, who needs to move large goods to domestic and international markets. I'm pleased to say this bill would make that easier to do.

Madam Speaker, the amendments in this act are intended to reduce regulatory burdens to save businesses time and money. However, it seems that the PCs don't either want to support us in cutting red tape or they just don't care enough about the Ontario economy to support a Liberal government bill. Their members not only abstained from voting on one or two amendments; the fact of the matter is they didn't support this whole bill, a bill that contains amendments that would save up to \$200 million for the manufacturing sector, and up to an additional \$31 million for the broader Ontario community.

We urge the opposition and third party to think about the impact these measures would have on fostering a more competitive business climate in Ontario, and vote in favour of this bill later today.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, it's been a pleasure listening to the debate this morning on Bill 27, the Burden Reduction Act. Most of the people speaking this morning have been speaking about the big picture of red tape and the burden it imposes on society. I'd like to refocus the debate a little bit and talk about how the big picture of red tape impacts the little guy, the individual. What does the little guy see about the big picture of red tape?

To illustrate this, I want to speak about a gentleman named Mr. Simourd. Mr. Simourd purchased a waterfront building lot on Farren Lake in Lanark county four years ago. It was a four-acre waterfront, recognized, registered, residential building lot. He has done four site-plan agreements so far, each one done by a professional planner; each one understood to incorporate all the requirements of the provincial policy statement on land use. Each one was denied, then reformed, revised and denied once again.

He has also undertaken three costly environmental assessments on this property, each one done by a professional consulting engineer, at great cost. He has done

two biodiversity studies to look for gray ratsnakes, loggerhead shrikes, five-toed skinks and any other endangered species. They have not found any.

I want to just put this out, as well: There are no provincially significant wetlands on this property. There are no areas of natural and scientific importance. It's a recognized residential building lot. It's been four years and he hasn't got a shovel in the ground. He hasn't got permission yet. That same four-acre lot here in Toronto would support 32 single detached homes on 50-foot lots. And I can tell you, it wouldn't take four years in Toronto to get approval for 32 homes.

But there were not only the four site plans, the three environmental assessments and the two biodiversities; he also spent three days at an OMB hearing just a couple of weeks ago—lawyers on each side—for a single-family retirement home in rural Ontario. He has now spent more money in the approval process than he did for his lot. He has spent more money on professional planners, on consultants, on regulations than he did for his building lot. Isn't this astonishing? That's what red tape actually looks like for the little guy, for Mr. Simourd.

I want to extrapolate that somewhat, Speaker, because it's not just a cost for Mr. Simourd, at the end of the day, it is a cost for all of us. I'll just reference—I know some people in this House don't like the Fraser Institute, but they do a professional job measuring, and objectively measuring, and quantifying economic performance.

The Fraser Institute put out an analysis of Ontario's economic performance earlier this year. It's quite clear that rural Ontario has underperformed in all categories as compared to our urban counterparts. Urban Ontario has recovered from the recession in 2008. However, Ontario's rural economy still has less employment today than we did in 2008. Urban Ontario has recovered; rural Ontario has not.

Everybody is aware about rural school closures that are under way. In my riding alone, 40 elementary schools were slated for closure. That's an astonishing number: 40 rural schools—elementary—in my riding. Much of that can be viewed in the lack of economic performance, the red tape that this province imposes on rural Ontario, on Mr. Simourd and so many others like Mr. Simourd. We cannot have an Ontario that is prosperous if rural Ontario is stagnant.

I ask all members in this House: We all know that we are here to represent the constituents in our ridings, but we also have an obligation to hear those representations and understand how the various perspectives impact people. The decisions being made—and I'm glad to see that we have members of the cabinet here, because this message is really for the executive of the province, how their decisions that are focused on urban Ontario are impacting, harming and hurting rural Ontario.

Speaker, we talked about this burden reduction, and let's be objective about this: 150 amendments to a regulatory regime that has 400,000 is not a substantial impact. It's an improvement, without a doubt. To see some amendments that will possibly save up to \$30 million,

that's an improvement. But when compared to the cost of near \$15 billion—that's what the regulatory cost is in Ontario—\$30 million really is miniscule.

Again, it's in the right direction, but I would hope it wasn't a burden for the government to come up with 150 improvements out of 400,000. I have confidence in saying that there are quality people on the other side of the aisle here who could find a few more amendments than 150 out of those 400,000 regulatory improvements.

But I'll just, again, take it back to Mr. Simourd, rural Ontario and the provincial policy statement, and so many others. As I was going through that list—the environmental assessments, the biodiversity assessments, the site plans—we can go back to a provincial law that imposes that condition on the municipality. With the provincial policy statement, the Endangered Species Act, the source water protection act, we can go back and see that the genesis of all these things is provincial law. I'm asking members of the government to seriously reflect and look at how these provincial laws are hurting people in rural Ontario, how they're contributing to the loss of our rural schools, because we know that if people can't build, if we can't grow, if we can't develop in rural Ontario, we can't have schools that are full. It's just a fact. We understand that.

What we have to understand is what we can do about it. Do we have the political will, do we have the resolve, do we have that courage to actually listen to the other side and fix the problems? However noble, however well-intended, however righteous those regulations might be, do we have the political will to look at the impact and make the changes necessary so that everybody in Ontario can be prosperous, everybody in Ontario can grow, and all our communities can have a school?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to the order of the House dated February 21, 2017, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Duguid has moved third reading of Bill 27, An Act to reduce the regulatory burden on business, to enact various new Acts and to make other amendments and repeals. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I hear a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion, 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.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Orders of the day. I recognize the Minister of Economic Development and Growth.

Hon. Brad Duguid: No further business, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will recess until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1003 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to welcome important guests from the great riding of Oxford who are here today to share their expertise on the aggregate act at the committee this afternoon. In the gallery, from the township of Zorra, are Mayor Margaret Lupton, Councillor Marie Keasey and the CAO, Don MacLeod. Welcome to Queen's Park. Thank you for coming.

Mr. Han Dong: Joining us this morning in the members' gallery—she's not here yet, but she will be—is Dr. Sara Diamond, president and vice-chancellor, and Ms. Carole Beaulieu, vice-president at OCAD University. OCAD celebrates its 140th anniversary this year as the largest and most comprehensive art, design and digital media university in Canada, and it's in Trinity-Spadina. I want to welcome them. They're joining us in the gallery right now.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I would like to take a moment to recognize Gérald and Fernande Beaudry, Jean Beaudry's in-laws, who are seated in the gallery this morning. They own and operate one of Ontario's 52,000 family farms, which is located in the great northern town of Verner.

In fact, I am honoured to inform this House that the Beaudrys are celebrating 75 years as farmers in this beautiful province. It is the hard work that farmers like the Beaudry family put in each and every day that powers this province's vibrant agri-food sector. Gérald and Fernande, welcome to Queen's Park today.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Our page captain today is from Guelph, McGowan Weddig. He has some guests here today: his mother, Sarah Thomson, and grandparents, Karen and Terry Thomson. Welcome.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It is my pleasure to introduce the members of the Boswin Robotics Team, SeaLevel, winners of the FLL provincial champions award. They will be going to the Arkansas Razorback Open to compete against 72 teams. The members are Emma Zhang, Michelle Zhou, Kevin Feng, Sharujan Mutu, Andrew Tang, Ryan Ma and Eddy Ji. Please join me in welcoming them to the Ontario Legislature.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: We have with us today about 50 representatives comprised of elected presidents, directors and managers of the Growmark system of Ontario. From my own riding is the president of the board for Lucknow District Co-op, Dave Gibson; the general manager of the Huron Bay Co-operative, Jeff Hurst, who is accompanied by his wife, Ann; and David and Marion Kuntz.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to welcome Carolyn Ferns, Alana Powell, Nayung Cho and Lena Forte from the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, advocates joining me today for my private member's bill. Welcome.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'd like to welcome to the gallery today Jeff Garrah from Kingston and the Islands. Thank you and welcome.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to welcome to the members' gallery today Damon Lee from Toronto-

Dominion Bank Financial Group, Darcy Kimmett from the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law, and Andrew Vittas from Queen's University industrial relations. Welcome. I'm so glad to see you three.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I'm going to say it in both French and English.

Aujourd'hui, jour pour jour il y a 20 ans, le 2 mars 1997, on se mobilisait pour sauver l'Hôpital Montfort, que le gouvernement progressiste-conservateur voulait fermer. On a chanté Notre place. Je dis merci à tous ceux qui se sont mobilisés pour sauver l'Hôpital Montfort. Merci beaucoup.

I would like to say thank you to all those who participated to save Montfort 20 years ago. Merci.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): An interesting introduction.

Mr. Jim Wilson: In the gallery visiting us today is the father of page Nolan Campbell, Mr. Trent Campbell.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm pleased to introduce the guests of page captain Quinn LeFort: his mother, Sherri Hutt, and his father, Jean-Guy LeFort. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Good morning, Speaker. This might be them coming in right now. We have students from Gandasetiagon Public School. We call it Gandy public school in Pickering. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Laurie Scott: From the Sunderland Co-operative in my riding, I'd like to welcome Blain Thompson to the Legislature.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: It gives me great pleasure to welcome Carolyn Ferns, who is with the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, and also Alana Powell, who is here from Ryerson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to introduce in the House Mr. John Sobey, vice-president of the Ottawa Professional Fire Fighters Association, on behalf of the Ottawa caucus. Welcome, John, to our Legislature.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I would like to also introduce two constituents from the great riding of Parkdale-High Park: Janet Riggs and Judy Riggs. Welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. The Premier acknowledged this morning that she made a mistake. At least six times, she used the word "mistake" or "mistakes." We know the cost of the mistake is \$42 billion. The Premier just signed off on \$42 billion in interest payments alone to pay for this government's mistakes.

Mr. Speaker, whether you pay today or whether you pay tomorrow, eventually the Liberals are going to go back to raising rates. Hydro bills may go down temporarily, but eventually ratepayers are going have to pay this

back. The question is, how long and how soon is that going to be?

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, the reason the people on this side of the House are standing and cheering is that the people of Ontario who pay for electricity are going to see a 25% reduction by this summer. That's why they're cheering.

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: And—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Time's up.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Okay. Time's up. That's all I needed to say.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Your decision to continue while I'm standing is making me decide whether or not I'm going to move to warnings. I might have to do that anyway. So if I warn somebody, it's because you've been warned that you could be warned.

Interjection.

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

Start the clock. My message has been sent. I will be insistent.

Supplementary. Leader.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, rehearsed applause for a \$42-billion mistake—\$42 billion in interest that Ontario ratepayers are going to pay.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell is warned.

Anyone else? It could end up being a long list or a short list. Your choice.

Finish, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, \$42 billion to make up for a mistake—\$42 billion in interest payments—and the incredible thing is, this government is proceeding tomorrow with more of these bad green energy contracts. You would think they would learn. Paying more to pay for these bad contracts—and they're proceeding tomorrow.

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My question is: Given that you've said this morning six times you made a colossal mistake, are you still going to proceed tomorrow with these additional bad contracts for generation we do not need? When does it stop?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Speaker, let's just get the facts on the table. What we're talking about is spreading the costs of the investments that have been made as a result of neglect that was in the system from all governments—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron-Bruce is warned. Any more proof needed? I'll give it.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: For 50 years, investments were not made. All governments, Liberal, NDP and Conservative, have to answer for that. We're talking about spreading those costs over 30 years, and over those 30 years we're talking about a \$25-billion cost. I don't know where the member got \$42 billion. It's \$25 billion over 30 years so that people across those 30 years will share the costs of those investments that had to be made.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: This scheme does nothing to end the unmitigated disaster of the Green Energy Act. It doesn't touch the generators. The taxpayers will pay in the end.

Why does this scheme do nothing to end the bad contracts—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change is warned.

I'll do this all question period, and I may choose to go to naming. It's time.

Please finish.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, why is there nothing being done about the Green Energy Act and the bad contracts? Is the reason that the government is still proceeding with more of these contracts, is the reason they're not touching any of these old bad contracts—is it because of the \$1.3 million in donations to the Ontario Liberal Party from companies that benefited from these bad contracts?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here's what we're doing. We're putting in place relief for everyone, because what we have all heard is that everyone across the province—whether you live in the north or the south, whether you live in urban or rural Ontario—everyone has seen electricity prices go up too far, too fast. That, on average, 25% reduction will be for everyone.

We also heard that people who live in some of the more rural or remote areas—

Interjection.

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

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —are paying distribution costs that are exponentially higher than people who live in denser areas, so we are providing relief for those people as well. For people who live on low incomes, we're expanding the Ontario Electricity Support Program to help them. We're making structural change, sustainable change, because people need relief right now, and that's what we're delivering.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. This scheme is simply robbing Peter to pay Paul, but in this case, both Peter and Paul are taxpayers. Paul may pay less next month, but Peter will be paying—hear this—\$1.83 billion a year and \$42 billion in interest for

decades to come because of the mistakes of this government.

Is this scheme about making all of Ontario pay more in interest payments simply to save this government politically in the short term? Is this about their own self-interest? It absolutely is.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The changes that we're bringing in which will spread the costs of assets and investments that have been made that were absolutely necessary to upgrade the electricity system—we are going to spread those over a 30-year period. That will be about \$25 billion over the 30 years. Again, we need to deal with the numbers that are real, and that is the number.

We're doing this because people need relief right now. The investments that have been made were necessary. Having clean energy is necessary. Having clean air is necessary. We are not backing away from those decisions.

But what we are saying is that people need to pay now, but they also need to pay into the future. There needs to be a sharing of those costs over a longer period of time. That's fair, and that's why our plan is being brought forward.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: This is simply another Liberal shell game. We saw it in the fall with Liberal hydro plan number 17, where they just shifted the clean energy rebate with the HST. This is again simply another shell game. It's a shift. This government is not getting at the root causes.

I will ask again, why does this government not—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Agriculture is warned.

Finish, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: I understand why the government doesn't want to hear this: It's not in their self-interest. But the reality is, they're not looking at these bad contracts. They're still proceeding tomorrow with more bad contracts. When you have this massive surplus, when we're giving it away to our competitors in the United States, I can't understand why they're going ahead tomorrow with more bad contracts.

The Premier said this morning she made a mistake. She's making more mistakes tomorrow. How can you really be remorseful when you're going to do the same thing tomorrow? Do the right thing. Stop signing these bad deals and actually help ratepayers. That's what we need to do.

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Really helping ratepayers is exactly what we're doing. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I will be very honest with everyone in this House and in Ontario. We looked at everything. We looked—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We looked at every possibility. Mr. Speaker, you know, the notion of re-negotiating contracts was something that we absolutely looked at. The reality is, there are hundreds of contracts. To renegotiate every one of those, first of all, would be incredibly expensive and, secondly, would take an enormous amount of time.

Finally, as someone—an academic—said to me, “Why don’t you just legislate the cancellation of those contracts?” That would put a chill on doing business with Ontario for decades to come. The reality is, we were not going to go down that path.

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: I had hoped that in this Liberal hydro announcement, they would have at least said—okay, maybe they don’t have the courage to look at these bad contracts because they’re their friends; they’re their donors. But I at least would have hoped they would say on Friday, tomorrow, that they’re not going to sign more. They’re still proceeding.

Okay, so the government doesn’t want to look at the bad contracts. They don’t want to take on their friends; I get that. But will they at least rein in the executive salaries? There’s nothing this morning about these offensive executive salaries. We pay sometimes 10 times the amount in hydro salaries for executives that other provinces do.

If you’re not going to look at the bad contracts, can you at least look at these \$4-million salaries? Can you at least have some empathy for ratepayers that can’t pay their hydro bills?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, we are reducing rates by 25% for every ratepayer in this province. I don’t know why the Leader of the Opposition can’t hear that, so let me say it again: 25% for every ratepayer in this province. Our plan provides fast, substantial, widespread and long-lasting relief.

I know the PCs are struggling to agree with one another on their own schemes. On their biggest idea, of ripping up those energy contracts, let me be clear: This will lead to increased rates, lawsuits and penalties. Even the Leader of the Opposition’s own energy critic knows this. Yesterday, what did he say on radio in Ottawa? “It’s going to come at a huge cost to taxpayers and we’re”—

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

Interjections.

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

To the minister: I stand, you sit.

New question.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. The Premier has a very bad record of saying one thing to Ontarians and doing the exact opposite in reality. She promised to lower auto insurance rates by 15% before an election. But after she got re-elected, guess what? That turned out to be a stretch goal.

1050

How can the Premier expect Ontarians to believe anything that this government says when they promised to do the right thing before—

Interjections.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: How can the people of Ontario expect to believe anything this Premier says when this Premier and this government say one thing before—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister responsible for seniors’ affairs is warned.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: How can the Premier expect Ontarians to believe anything that this government has to say when they promise to do the right thing before an election, but then they break that promise right after they get re-elected?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We said that we were going to reduce people’s electricity bills by 8%. That is happening. We have brought forward a plan to reduce people’s electricity bills by 25%. People will see those reductions by the summer. We’ve said further that people who live in remote and rural areas will see a further reduction because they will see their distribution charges reduced. They will see those results.

It is extremely important to me that we recognize that this is about people’s needs. This is about the reality of electricity prices across the province. We’ve brought forward a plan that will give people relief in the immediate term, and that is more than I can say for the third party.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The Premier also promised not to sell off a vital public asset before an election, but guess what happened after the government got elected? We all know where we are right now. We know this government broke that promise.

Making promises to the people of Ontario and then breaking them once they’re re-elected does nothing more than make people cynical about the government. How can the Premier honestly believe, after so many broken promises, that the people will have any faith in what this government has to say?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I’m very pleased to rise and respond, because the first thing I get to say is that we are reducing rates for every ratepayer in this province by 25%.

Also, this is more than just a proposal; this is an actual structural change that’s going to see these rates continue to stay low for the next four years. We’re going to continue to bring forward a long-term energy plan that will continue to make sure that we take costs out of the system.

When you look at the NDP proposal and what they were talking about, their biggest idea is to re-buy Hydro One shares. That will not take one cent off of any of the bills. That's why—

Interjections.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: It doesn't take one cent off electricity bills. And it's not just us who are saying this; the Toronto Star editorial goes even further to say, "There's no evidence that keeping it public would make this particular problem any better."

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The reality is, this proposal doesn't do anything to address the mess in the hydro system, and Ontarians are right to be cynical about it. They know that, come June 8, 2018, if the Liberals win, the hydro rates will go right back up. That's what they know and that's what they expect to happen.

In fact, the Premier refuses to address the real issues. They're not going to stop the sell-off of Hydro One, they won't address the unfair time-of-use pricing, the bad contracts or the fact that we oversupply electricity and then pay foreign, private companies to purchase that oversupply.

This is a quick political fix to a problem the Premier ignored and her party ignored. They only care about it now because there's an election looming and the Premier has such bad polling numbers. That's the reality. Ontarians know that.

Will the Premier admit today that this plan will only end up costing ratepayers more in the long run?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I know the honourable member outlined quite a few points, but let us outline quite a few points.

First thing: The relief we're talking about will be substantial relief—25% right across the board for every ratepayer. For those who are living in rural parts of our province, in northern parts of the province—800,000 households—they'll see that number jump up between 40% and 50%. That is significant.

As I said, there are many things that we're doing. The important thing is that this relief will be lasting because it's built on real change—

Interjection.

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

Carry on.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: It's built on real change. It's not looking at making sure we might possibly be able to have a conversation in a few years down the road with some group that we may want to make up.

We're looking at plans. We're bringing forward relief. This 25% is coming, and it will help everyone in this province.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question again is to the Premier. Let's be honest here. Ontario families will not be fooled by this desperate—

Interjections.

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

Please put your question.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: We all know that, if the government is re-elected, we'll be right back here in this same mess with hydro bills so high that small businesses are shuttering their doors and families are forced to choose between heating their homes and putting food on the table.

The Premier has had 14 years in this government to fix the problem, and four years as a Premier to fix the systemic problems with the hydro system, but she hasn't done that and her party hasn't done that.

When will the Premier stop kicking the problem down the road and actually address the systemic problems with the hydro system and actually help Ontario families and businesses?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know, when families see their bills in the summer, they are going to see a reduction of, on average, 25%. I believe that that is going to make a huge difference to families across the province.

In addition to that, families who are living in more rural and remote areas, who have been paying exorbitant and exponentially high distribution charges, are going to see a further reduction. That is a structural change.

As well, what we've said is that there were some costs that were being borne by ratepayers that need actually to be borne by the whole group of Ontarians, by taxpayers. That's a structural change that we have made.

In addition, financing the payoff of those assets over 30 years: That's a structural change. Those were the structural issues that were driving costs. Structural change is exactly what we're delivering to Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, this is just a plan that doubles down on a bad plan and extends it for a long period of time. That's all it is.

The people who will be the happiest with this plan are the Premier's small group of well-connected friends. They're the ones who are going to be happy about this. The Premier is hoping this plan will help her Liberal Party, but she knows certainly this is going to help her banker friends.

It doesn't actually address the systemic problems with the hydro system and it doesn't actually permanently lower the bills. It just makes people cynical, and that's absolutely the wrong thing.

A short-term fix is not enough. A plan that doesn't make the real, concrete changes to address the systemic problems with our hydro system is nothing more than a desperate attempt from an unpopular government to cling on to power. That's all it is.

Will the Premier show Ontarians the respect they deserve, and actually come up with a real plan that addresses the real problems to permanently lower the cost of hydro in this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I know the honourable member mentioned our small group of friends. That small

group of friends is every single ratepayer in this province.

It's a 25% reduction that they are going to see in the very near future. It's not a bumper-sticker plan, like they brought forward, that talks about just a number they brought out of air that they could maybe work with if they can get this group put together.

We have substantial structural changes that we have brought forward. We are bringing forward significant changes to the RRRP. We are upgrading the OESP program.

In their plan, low-income individuals were on the last page, and they were told to sit and wait. We're not waiting to help low-income individuals. We're even creating a new affordability fund that low-income individuals can access on top of the HAP program, and it's going to help many, many people get out of the perpetual cycle of not being able to pay their bills.

1100

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The problem with the Liberals' hydro system is, they continue to sell off our public asset—they're selling off Hydro One. They continue with an unfair time-of-use fee. They're doubling down on bad contracts. They're paying private, foreign companies—they're paying them for the energy we overproduce. These are the problems, and guess what? None of these problems are being solved by this plan; none of these issues are being addressed by this government.

Ontarians can't trust this Premier with their hydro bills. They don't believe that stretching out the payments is in any way addressing the root cause of the problems.

Will the Premier show that she's serious about tackling the mess that her government and her leadership have created, and implement a plan that will develop a real solution to this problem and permanently lower the cost of hydro in this province? The people deserve that.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: So, we've done exactly that. We've made sure that rates are coming down by 25% for every single ratepayer in this province.

When it comes to those who are living in our rural remotes or even some of our smaller communities—that's 800,000 households—800,000 households will see even more than that. They'll see more than that. For those who have a hard time even paying their bills when it is a 25% reduction, we have now programs in place that will actually help them, and help more of them.

The one thing that we are also very proud of is making sure that we have a new on-reserve First Nations rate, Mr. Speaker, helping out 21,500 First Nations people across our province.

We will continue to listen to and work for the people of Ontario. That's why we have this 25% reduction plan.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Premier. Thanks to this morning's Liberal scheme, we

now know that Ontarians are going to be on the hook for another \$42 billion in brand new interest costs in Ontario. The Premier said this morning she can't even guarantee long-term relief for ratepayers. That's because they're pushing even more of these expensive FIT contracts onto the grid tomorrow. These are the same types of contracts that got us in this mess in the first place.

If you're spending \$42 billion of today's money to pay for yesterday's mistakes, how much more are we going have to pay for the mistakes that you're about to make tomorrow?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Obviously, the honourable member hasn't actually really looked at the plan, because he would then understand that what we're talking about is \$25 billion over 30 years. We're making sure that one generation does not pay for something that will be used by many generations. We're off-loading those costs and making sure that everyone will pay their fair share because we're making the system fair—a 25% reduction right across the board for every ratepayer.

I know he keeps talking about our FIT contracts and all of those bad contracts that he likes to frame. But I know that yesterday, when he was talking on CFRA's show in Ottawa, out of his mouth, Mr. Speaker, he said, "Ripping up these contracts would come at a huge cost to taxpayers." We agree. We are making sure that we have a fair system in place, one that is helping 25%—

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

Mr. Todd Smith: You know, on a radio interview a couple of weeks ago, the energy minister for the Liberals called London listeners "dumb." That's what he's done.

It's \$42 billion in new interest costs and the big power company friends who gave \$1.3 million to the government aren't going to be out of a dime. Sixty-four per cent of the costs in the electricity sector come from generators, and guess who's not going to be affected? Their Liberal friends. The generators are not going to be affected as a result of this scheme today. In fact, a bunch of them are getting new approvals for plans tomorrow to build more of these things.

Six times in her press availability, the Premier said that she made a mistake. But if you keep doing the same thing, it's not a mistake; it's negligence, and it has been negligence from this government for years now.

Will the government fix the underlying problem, or are we going to continue robbing Peter's grandkids to pay Paul's grandkids by 2030?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: It's actually this government that is making sure we look after Peter's grandparents and Paul's grandparents and their grandkids by reducing rates and eliminating coal. They forget about that. There are substantial reductions we have made to ensure that our children have clean air to breathe. That's something that they never worried about. They actually left the system in tatters. When they are talking about renewable energy, they completely forget about 42,000 jobs that were created in this sector. They forget about billions and

billions of dollars that were made in investing in this province.

Of course, we have now brought forward a plan that will make sure that we have an affordable system, that we have a clean system and we have a green system, something that is the envy of not only this country, but the world.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Catherine Fife: Over the last 14 years, Ontario has made so little progress for families who need and deserve quality child care. Currently there are only enough licensed spaces for one in five Ontario families. We know people in Ontario pay the highest child care fees in Canada. We know people in Ontario have the poorest access to quality care for their children. Experts in the field continue to say we do not even have a child care system in the province of Ontario.

By default, your government has left the creation of these spaces to the private market, Premier. Later today we will be debating my private member's bill, Bill 92, which will ensure that child care in Ontario is high quality, accessible and affordable.

My question is simple: Do you really believe that child care in Ontario should be delivered by for-profit operators?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The minister responsible for early years and child care.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I want to thank the member opposite for this question. I want to make sure, as we transform and really deliver the child care that Ontarians need in our province, that we are doing our best to help all Ontarians—all Ontarians—across the province. What that means, after consulting with thousands of Ontarians around the province, is that they want choice. They want choice and they want affordability. The forms that comes in is many different forms, not just one option.

So absolutely, when it comes to not-for-profit child care spaces, we understand how important that is. That's why our past capital investments have only gone to school-based not-for-profit child care spaces. We also understand that 77% of licensed child care centres that are out there are either non-profit or operated by First Nations. We want give parents in rural areas and remote areas choice when they don't have those options, and we want to make sure we're doing the right thing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: This minister was quoted today as saying she believes not-for-profit child care is ideological. Only this Liberal government could say that 30 years of research and study on child care is ideological. Those 30 years of research show that child care delivered by not-for-profit and public models offer greater quality of care than a market-driven approach. When you remove the profit motive, there is more funding for special-needs children and subsidies to improve access. It leads to lower fees for families. We could even

pay ECEs the salaries they deserve. We strongly believe that child care is a public service, not something that should be traded on the stock exchange.

Again, will the minister commit to supporting public not-for-profit child care, or does the minister believe that child care should be provided by for-profit companies where quality care is compromised?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Again, I want to thank the member opposite for this question.

I will tell you that transforming the way we deliver child care in this province is a priority. That's why the Premier created this space and made me the minister responsible for this: because we understand that families need support. We are doing our best to build the system up and do the right thing.

One of the things we did is, we went around the province and talked to thousands of families, either in person or online. Here's what they told us: They told us they needed access and they told us that they needed affordable care. We need to build that into the system. We need to give families in the north and in remote areas the options that they need. Sometimes some of these areas only have for-profit centres. We need to ensure that we're creating those spaces there. We also need to ensure that we're creating spaces and the support in urban areas. All Ontarians will be getting the child care that they need.

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

Interjections.

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

HYDRO RATES

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is to the Minister of Energy. I would first like to congratulate the Premier for listening to Ontarians, caring enough to act and make people's lives better. That's what leadership is.

1110

Mr. Speaker, over the course of many, many months, families and businesses in my riding of Davenport have expressed concern over the rising cost of hydro. They don't understand why hydro rates have gone up, and they're frustrated by the bills delivered to their door. People are worried about the price they're being asked to pay and the impact it is having on their household budgets. For some of them, it's reached a point where they are choosing between keeping the lights on and keeping food in the refrigerator. This is unacceptable. I know you'll agree that that's unacceptable.

North or south, rural or urban, this issue affects us all. While I know our government has already taken concrete steps to help, we all agree more is needed. Can the Minister of Energy tell us about what we're doing to ensure electricity prices are fairer for Ontario families and businesses?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I want to acknowledge the member for her important question and, of course, her

hard work in her constituency. I know, Mr. Speaker, that electricity is an essential part of our life.

Everywhere I was able to travel in this capacity over the last eight months, I heard from people worried about the price they pay for electricity. Over those past few months, I know the Premier, myself and many of our colleagues, MPPs, have made a point of connecting with those individuals. We've either gone to visit them or we've called them.

People want to know three things: First off, that substantial relief is on its way, and it is; second, that that relief will go to everyone, and it will; and third, that the relief will be lasting, because it is built on real change, that bills won't just jump back up in a couple of months or a couple of years. I was very pleased to join the Premier this morning in making that announcement. I will start doing so by making sure those bills come down as soon as possible.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I would like to thank the Minister of Energy for his response. I believe most of us are aware of today's announcement and are keen to learn more about what it means for families and businesses. I know that this is especially true for my constituents in Davenport.

Earlier this week, the NDP released their own proposal for addressing hydro costs. Ontarians are still waiting on the Conservatives to produce a realistic proposal to bring down rates. While we welcome new ideas on ways to help people struggling with energy rates, I believe it's important for Ontarians to understand the differences between these approaches. My question to the Minister of Energy is, can you provide more details on our plan and how it compares to the others?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: We're moving forward with the largest cut to electricity rates in Ontario's history. We are tripling the size of the cut we're making to people's electricity bills from 8% to an average of 25%. For those living in rural communities or with low incomes, the break will be even greater.

How does this compare to the opposition parties, Mr. Speaker? Right now, neither party has a credible approach to dealing with rising electricity costs. While our plan provides fast, substantial, widespread and long-lasting relief, the PCs are struggling to agree with one another on their own one-off schemes. Their biggest idea, ripping up energy contracts, will lead to increased rates, lawsuits and penalties. The other idea, halting the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One, won't take one cent off of electricity bills. Meanwhile, we're actually acting. We're reducing bills and we're helping people right across this province.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mrs. Gila Martow: I would say to the member from Davenport: start by stopping signing contracts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You will tell us who your question is directed to, and then make your comments.

Mrs. Gila Martow: My question is to the Minister of Energy. John and Virginia Fuda and their three children live in my riding of Thornhill. Unfortunately, John has recently had to switch jobs, resulting in a pay cut, and his wife Virginia is on a medical leave from work. John and Virginia are working hard, but their electricity bills are almost as much as their mortgage. Recently, their utility threatened to leave them in the dark. They were told that if they don't have the money by April 1, they could be disconnected. If they don't have the money for their prior electricity use by April 1, is this minister planning to play a vicious April Fool's joke on this family?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The one thing that is important to recognize is that that's why we acted, Mr. Speaker, bringing forward this 25% reduction and changing the OESP program to make sure that they actually get some help.

When it comes to possible disconnections, the OEB acted and said that there are not going to be disconnections until April 30. So they have an opportunity now to work with their local utility to make sure it doesn't happen. There are payment plan options in place. There are many things that the LDCs are doing to ensure that they're working with customers and helping customers make sure that they don't get disconnected, especially—and I would encourage my honourable colleague to tell them to talk to the LDC, because if there are health issues at risk, the LDC needs to know that. They will act to ensure that they can help in every way possible.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Niagara West–Glanbrook.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My question is to the Minister of Energy.

I know the Liberal Party really appreciated the \$1.3 million dollars they received from big, green energy companies before signing the preferential green energy contracts with them, but the people of Ontario in Niagara West–Glanbrook would really appreciate answers for a change.

Will the minister acknowledge that the Green Energy Act was a mistake, apologize for forcing industrial wind turbines on my constituents and ask the Premier to pay back the \$1.3 million the Liberals received from big, green energy companies?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I know the honourable member stands up—but let's talk about the jobs that were created by the green energy contracts: 42,000 in the sector that we are now doing by putting a wind turbine, coming from Tillsonburg, going to Hamilton, getting on a boat and going over to the UK, where they can build wind turbines over there. We have created a sector that is creating jobs in this province.

But when it comes to ripping up contracts, I know that that will cost billions of dollars. It will actually have penalties. It will actually make rates go up even more. That's why we're not doing that—and maybe they should talk amongst themselves because they seem to be arguing over that. Obviously, they don't have a plan. The only thing that we're hearing from them is that they want to

change their name from PC to “pro coal,” because that’s the only way that they’ll be able to figure out how they can lower rates. We are actually lowering rates by 25% for every single family right across this province.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. Jeff lives in Hamilton and is behind on his hydro bill. Had he listened to the Premier, Jeff might have thought he was now safe from winter disconnections. But Jeff pays his hydro bill to a private company that sub-meters his apartment building. The Minister of Energy said on Tuesday that the OEB’s winter disconnection ban included such companies, but yesterday the OEB said the exact opposite, stating in an email that “the OEB’s decision and order does not apply to unit sub-metering providers.”

Can the Premier explain what’s going on?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I’m pleased to stand and rise and answer that question—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton Mountain is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, I’m pleased to stay standing and rising to address this issue.

We are going to work with the OEB to address this, because we do recognize that this is something that needs to be addressed. When we talked about no winter disconnects right across the province, we meant everybody. So we’re going to continue to work with the OEB on this.

When it comes to where we have seen these issues arise, we recognize that some families, some individuals, were having a hard time paying their bills. That’s why today we’ve announced that we’re reducing all rates by 25%.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Paul Miller: Well, Speaker, Jeff allows ODSP to manage the payment of his bill, so he can handle it. But Jeff’s hydro bill has been going up so quickly over the last year that ODSP, through no fault of their own, can’t keep up. They pay a predetermined amount each month, based on Jeff’s typical hydro costs. But it hasn’t been enough because bills are going up so quickly. Each time they increase, the monthly payment falls behind. They’re still behind the curve, and arrears are spiralling. Jeff’s neighbours are in the same situation. Many in Hamilton are. Today’s announcement won’t help Jeff or his neighbours.

I’d like to announce today that I’m taking out a second mortgage on my house so my grandkids can pay their hydro bill. What will this government do to help people climb out from the hole that is being dug by this province and this Premier?

1120

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The plan that we announced today is actually going to help families and individuals

like the honourable member mentioned. The affordability fund, for example, will actually help these individuals get out of that perpetual cycle of always being behind because of many reasons.

Let’s say they have electric heat and they haven’t invested in insulation or upgrading their windows, because they haven’t had the necessary pocket money to do that. This affordability fund will allow them now to access those dollars, to making the necessary upgrades to their home. That way, they will see their bills lower even more by conserving, which then, on top of that, has a benefit for everyone across the province, just like the benefit that we announced today, Mr. Speaker. That 25% reduction that everyone will be getting across the province is something that we should all be proud of, because we’re helping every family in this province.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Recently, the opposition has been accusing our government of not paying attention to our forestry industry. All too often, we hear accusations from across the floor that we’re making lives harder for people in Ontario. Speaker, surely they are mistaken.

Can the minister please tell our government what we are doing to look out for the people who are working in Ontario’s forestry sector?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I’d like to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for her question. Making sure that we make life better for people across the province is a major priority of our government. Our government understands how important a strong forest products sector is to Ontario’s economy, the key job creator role it plays in over 260 communities across Ontario, and the 172,000 direct and indirect jobs it supports. It is why I am constantly engaged with members of the forestry sector.

Over the course of the last month, I’ve written to federal ministers about softwood lumber; I’ve travelled to Ottawa to meet with my provincial counterparts and the federal ministers. We’ve discussed challenges that the forest industry has been facing.

I am part of the Ontario-US trade negotiation committee, as well as the Federal-Provincial Task Force on Softwood Lumber, and just this morning, I met with our forestry industry to discuss challenges that they are facing, so I don’t know where the members opposite are getting their information from.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I thank the minister for her answer. I am very pleased to hear that as a government we are so engaged with the forestry industry.

The forest sector is extremely important for our province’s economy, including my own region of eastern Ontario. Forestry generates \$15.5 billion worth of economic activity annually, which is up from \$12.9 billion in 2013, and not, in fact, the \$11 billion that was claimed by the

Leader of the Opposition in his speech yesterday to the OFIA.

Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition gave many alternative facts yesterday during his speech, including—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Thank you. I've indicated previously I don't want those kinds of terms used in this House. Make it uplifting. I am going to ask the member to withdraw.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Then I'm going to ask her to stay focused on government policy.

Carry on.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister please clarify what exactly is going on in this case?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I would like to thank the member for her question, and she's quite right. Over the last five years, two new mills have opened, seven have restarted, and two are in various stages of expansion. Companies in Atikokan, Kenora and Timmins have made significant investments here in Ontario, creating jobs and supporting these restarts, expansions and creation of brand new, modern facilities, so, in fact, Ontario has a number of new mills.

We've launched the forestry growth program to help the sector to increase production capacity. The first recipient, Lavern Heideman and Sons Ltd., will be receiving \$4 million over five years, in support of a total investment of \$16.9 million. The support allows the company's fast-growing Eganville mill to expand business, increase efficiency by modernizing and purchasing new equipment, and maintain 90 existing jobs. That's the story of our forest sector: growth and job creation.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Energy. I received a copy of a bill from one of my constituents this past week who paid \$295 for electricity, but at the same time was charged over \$2,000 in global adjustment fees. The high global adjustment fee is directly related to their green energy policy, which is bankrupting Ontarians.

The government today is forcing the municipality of Dutton Dunwich to accept a wind farm, even though 84% of the population voted against it. This wind farm will add to the skyrocketing global adjustment fees all Ontarians are paying.

The minister has made a mistake. He's announced it previously. Will he announce another mistake today and cancel the Dutton Dunwich wind turbine farm?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to rise and talk about green energy and the importance of green energy in making sure that we have clean air to breathe. We haven't had a smog day in this province since 2014, and that's thanks to the investment that this government has made in green energy.

I know I've talked a lot about the 25% reduction when we're talking about residential families, but let's talk about that 25% reduction for those mom-and-pop shops on Main Street. They're part of the retail price plan. They're also going to see this reduction when it comes to the global adjustment. We're actually helping many of our small businesses right across the province.

On top of that, the one thing that the opposition hasn't talked about is the important and successful ICI program. We're making that even bigger, even greater, by lowering that threshold to 500 kilowatts, having thousands of more businesses qualify to save a third on their bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Sarnia-Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, Liz Clarke in my riding has been pushed to the brink by Kathleen Wynne's hydro prices. She can't afford this government's—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Referring to names is not permissible in the House, so let's get it right.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Minister, Liz Clarke has been pushed to the brink by the Premier's hydro prices. She can't afford this government's energy shell games anymore. Ms. Clarke, who is 83 years old, lives alone in her home in Courtright, Ontario, the only home she has known most of her life. She has no TV, no computer—only the basic necessities.

All winter long, she keeps the temperature in her home below 16 degrees Celsius, but Ms. Clarke has electric baseboard heating in rural Ontario, so she regularly sees hydro bills between \$500 and \$600. Ms. Clarke has emptied her savings to pay her bills, but she still finds herself hundreds of dollars in arrears, and now has nothing to put away for a rainy day.

Minister, what do you have to say to Ms. Clarke today? How is it acceptable in this day and age to treat seniors like this in Ontario?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I hope the honourable member tells this fine woman that her bills are going down 25% at a minimum. It's going to be going down more, because he mentioned she lives in a rural area, and depending on if she's an R1 or an R2 customer—with Hydro One, I'm assuming—those rates are going to go down even more.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll carry on. The member from Prince Edward-Hastings is warned.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: And she would obviously qualify for the OESP program, which has been enhanced.

But it's not just us now who is talking about the significant reductions that we've announced today. Let me quote Francesca Dobbyn, the executive director of the United Way of Bruce Grey: "This shows that the Premier's government is listening to people. With these positive changes, our rural community will now truly benefit from the low-cost power it produces."

I agree with her, and so will everyone in this province.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is to the Premier. Good morning, Premier.

Speaker, I'd like to tell you and the Premier about my constituent Ron. Ron contacted my office recently because he was under the impression that the Premier and her Liberal government were actually going to do something about his skyrocketing hydro bill before. So imagine his surprise come January 1 when he saw the promised temporary 8% rebate on his bill, but the bill was actually higher than it was the month before.

Why doesn't the Premier get that people like Ron—people from all over this province—can tell when she puts forward solutions that only address the Premier's sticky political situation and don't actually fix the mess that she has made in our hydro system?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

1130

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to rise and address the concern that the honourable member brings forward. Of course, it's great when we all can talk to our constituents and talk about the issues that are affecting them and the programs that are out there to help them. Knowing the honourable member, I'm sure he told them about many of the programs that we do have out there.

That 8% reduction did take effect January 1, but depending on how their bill structure was in place, that will change. As now we're moving forward, that would come into full effect.

But let's not forget, Mr. Speaker, 25% is what this individual will now see when he gets his bill, come summertime—a reduction of 25%. That is something that is very important. That is a significant reduction for people like Ron, and everyone like Ron across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Yesterday, it was immediate relief; now it's in the summertime.

It's not just people like Ron who are suffering under this government's political manoeuvres. The Greater Essex County District School Board saw hydro costs increase by \$50,000 in 2015 and \$431,000 in 2016.

How can the Premier honestly say to this school board that the plan she released today will actually keep their hydro costs down permanently? Speaker, doesn't she understand that people like Ron and school boards all across this province see this plan for what it actually is: a desperate party playing political games with a hydro system that they made a mess of in the first place?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: We had to clean up the mess that was left by previous parties when they were in power, never investing in the system, never investing in conservation, using cheap power with coal. We've made sure that we've made those investments.

When it comes to the substantial, structural changes that we have made by taking all of these social programs that we've talked about—we've taken that and pulled it off the rate base and now put that onto the tax base,

where it should be, and rightfully so. That will now see our rates reduced for all of those types of schools and arenas. Those will be a significant cost reduction for these organizations and these facilities as well.

In the announcement that we made today, when they finally read it all, they will see that there are reductions for every person and every business in this province.

WASTE DIVERSION

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Waste diversion in this province has been an issue under successive governments. Simply put, we're producing too much waste and we're not recycling enough.

In November 2015, the government took a leadership role by introducing the Waste-Free Ontario Act. Having listened to business and stakeholders, and with all parties voting on-side, the government is confident that the Waste-Free Ontario Act is the best path forward.

Yesterday, the Strategy for a Waste-Free Ontario was announced. The vision calls for a zero-waste future, where waste is seen as a resource and can be recovered and reused.

Speaker, could the minister please speak about the aims of the strategy and how this is going to benefit everyone in Ontario?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank all of the members who have supported this legislation. I also want to thank the member for Wellington-Halton Hills, who joined us yesterday for the launch and spoke quite eloquently about this as well. I want to thank the member for his support.

This is a fundamental shift. We're the first jurisdiction in the Americas to go to a circular, zero-waste economy. We will be at 80% waste-free by 2050. That is world-leading.

We're introducing a market mechanism called extended producer responsibility, which was asked for by industry, which makes them responsible for the end-life of the product, which means that more products will be developed to be durable and to last, to have zero waste and to be re-inputted into the economy.

This is the most innovative waste program in the Americas and follows in the leadership of my friend from St. Catharines, who introduced blue boxes to the world.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'd like to thank the minister for his answer and for showing great leadership on this issue. This strategy marks an exciting next step toward our zero-waste future. I know that this is very important to the constituents of Kitchener Centre. It's also important for the province in embracing a move toward a circular economy.

We know that these initiatives will improve resource efficiency and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. We also know that this new strategy is going to help increase productivity and create jobs. For every 1,000 tonnes of waste diverted from landfill, seven full-time jobs are

created. This new network is going to foster economic growth and help to reduce local government spending on waste management.

Speaker, could the minister please explain to this House how a producer responsibility framework is going to help support this?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Let me just go through some of the good news that follows from this. We're uploading \$117 million of costs from municipalities and municipal taxpayers, making Ontarians' lives in municipalities easier. We are going to create more jobs from this than most environmental initiatives we have. Every tonne that we reduce creates another job, because those become material inputs.

But Mr. Speaker, I'd very briefly like to take a few seconds to tell you a small story that tells the bigger picture. An innovation out of the University of Guelph created a coffee pod made out of the waste parts of coffee plants and a resin which was developed by a company called Club Coffee, which was bought by Loblaw's. This means that those plastic coffee pods that are filling our landfills and our oceans are no longer required, because these coffee pods go back to farmers' fields as compost, and help retain water and improve agricultural productivity. That's the circular economy. That's innovation.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Premier: During pre-budget hearings, Canada's iconic Maple Leaf Foods told the finance committee that their company's electricity bills skyrocketed 18% last year to \$19.7 million across all their Ontario plants. As a result, Maple Leaf calculated its potential electricity costs if it were to move to other jurisdictions; savings ranged from \$7.5 million to \$12.8 million a year. If they moved to Manitoba, a 65% savings on electricity; if they moved to Alberta, a 60% savings. Maple Leaf could move their 5,100 employees to New York state and save 47% on electricity. Canada's leading retailer of packaged meats could go to Michigan and save 39% on hydro.

Premier, the numbers don't lie. How can you argue with these figures?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Exactly: Numbers don't lie. That's why the reduction in the ICI program from one megawatt to 500 kilowatts is going to help Maple Leaf Foods exactly. They're going to save up to one third of their electricity costs, and that will ensure that they have money to again create jobs.

I know the Minister of Economic Development and Growth has been talking about how well our province has been doing with foreign investment and creating new jobs. I know they don't like hearing about that, but on this side of the House, we are doing everything to create a business climate that now has very affordable electricity rates.

When it comes to all people and all businesses in this province, we're reducing rates by 25%, and we're

making sure significant reductions are happening for businesses as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary, the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Energy. You made the mess; now you're only cleaning up a portion of it, and you want to be the hero. It doesn't work. Life is getting harder and harder under your Liberal government, as skyrocketing hydro bills are pushing hospitals and other public institutions deeper and deeper into debt.

Grey Bruce Health Services, in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, saw its hydro bill rise by \$350,000 a year, a 40% increase in just one year. Sadly, because of your disastrous energy schemes, Grey Bruce Health Services may have to make bold cuts, such as to close the operating room in the Meaford hospital, and other cuts to surgical services.

I want to know, Speaker: Will the minister guarantee here and now that your newest hydro shell game will prevent such dangerous cuts to patient services?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: As I've said throughout questions, residents are going to see their rates cut, and all other businesses and institutions are going to see rate cuts. That's something that we made sure as a government to look at all aspects of.

But I know the member from Bruce-Grey is talking about individuals in his riding often. I know Francesca Dobbyn, the executive director of the United Way there, has been a very vocal critic of the government. It's now great, when we come forward with this plan, that she's quoting: "The changes announced today, along with the changes already announced, along with the changes that are still coming will go a long way in addressing the affordability issue that people in this province are seeing."

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

The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington on a point of order.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, just on a point of order, to the Minister of Energy: Is today's hydro announcement not a contradiction to all those statements that we have a competitive energy price range in Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not a point of order.

CANADIAN BLACK CAUCUS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Children and Youth Services, on a point of order.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I just wanted to take a moment, on behalf of Gwyn Chapman and the Canadian Black Caucus, to invite all MPPs to rooms 228 and 230, between 11:30 and 2 o'clock today, to come out and meet some inspiring young kids.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

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

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, I just need to correct my record. When I said the new ICI threshold was 500 kilowatts, I meant to say 500 megawatts. I'd just like to correct my record.

VISITORS

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: I just want to take the opportunity to welcome my daughter Robin Buxton Potts, who is here in the House with her colleagues from OCAD University.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Haldimand–Norfolk has given notice of his dissatisfaction with an answer to his question given by the Minister of Energy concerning Maple Leaf Foods' energy comparisons. The matter will be debated Tuesday, March 7, at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the government notice of motion number 7 relating to the allocation of time on Bill 92, An Act to amend the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, 2014, and make related amendments to other statutes.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1142 to 1147.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members please take your seats.

On March 1, 2017, Mr. Naqvi moved government notice of motion number 7. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Fraser, John	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Murray, Glen R.
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Chiarelli, Bob	Kiwala, Sophie	Qadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Coteau, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	Leal, Jeff	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	MacCharles, Tracy	Takhar, Harinder S.
Del Duca, Steven	Malhi, Harinder	Thibeault, Glenn
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Vernile, Daiene
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Martins, Cristina	Wong, Soo
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Zimmer, David
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Carry on.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hatfield, Percy	Oosterhoff, Sam
Bailey, Robert	Hillier, Randy	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Bisson, Gilles	MacLaren, Jack	Singh, Jagmeet
Brown, Patrick	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Coe, Lorne	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
DiNovo, Cheri	McDonell, Jim	Vanhof, John
Fife, Catherine	McNaughton, Monte	Walker, Bill
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John
Gretzky, Lisa	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff
Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras	

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

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I recognize a point of order—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please be seated.

To bring clarity, I cannot interrupt a vote with a point of order. However, I will provide you with some clarity. The clarity was, when it was asked, "All those in favour," one of the members that initiated the continuation indicated that "we are in favour."

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When it was signalled to me that someone said, "Am I opposed?", I just said, "It's your choice."

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. Hang on. Order, please.

I will entertain the member from Timmins–James Bay in ensuring that this vote is done appropriately.

The member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, on numerous occasions as that was happening, I was yelling to the table and to you, "Is this opposed? Are we voting in opposition?" I got a nod from you, in the way that I understood it.

The second point I would make is, since when do New Democrats vote in favour of time allocation?

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: On that point of order—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We'll get this settled. Just relax. I'll come to everybody.

To the member's point: When you asked, I said yes. I normally do not participate in this process. You should not ask the Speaker how to vote. That is not the tradition of this place.

I will entertain the government House leader—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm coming to everybody.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, clearly there is a misunderstanding. I respectfully urge you that we do a new vote on this matter. This is a time allocation vote. I think we do understand where usually the opposition votes on time allocation matters. I think this was a misunderstanding. If there is a way, with the table's help, to redo the vote, I urge you to do that.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As I committed, I will defer to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, if he is in his chair. I have a concept, I have an idea, of how we can navigate this, but I'll defer to the member.

Mr. John Yakubuski: If the House leader's proposal is accepted, we have no reason to speak to the point of order, Speaker. We believe that that is the right thing to do. We appreciate their gesture.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are two ways in which we can handle this. I'll leave it to the House again, and I'll look to the House leaders and their leaders to give me the nod on that.

One would be a revote, or that I will interpret this and instruct the table to simply reverse the vote in which was—which is understood.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Agreed.

Mr. John Yakubuski: Agreed. Reverse the vote is fine.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Therefore, I will ask the Clerk to announce the count in the way in which I just described for the members.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 52; the nays are 38.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before I read the outcome, I would also reinforce this: Regardless of the emotional outburst that took place in my ruling, the Speaker does not participate in the vote. If I get asked one way or another, I do not make that comment. I was trying to be helpful when the member did express about opposition; I did shake my head. But I'm going to leave it at that to say that this was corrected, but don't ever think that the Speaker is responsible for anyone's vote in this House.

Therefore, the ayes being 52 and the nays being 38, I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

BURDEN REDUCTION ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR L'ALLÈGEMENT
DU FARDEAU RÉGLEMENTAIRE

Deferred vote on the motion for third 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 1155 to 1156.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members please take their seats.

Earlier today, Mr. Duguid moved third reading of Bill 27, An Act to reduce the regulatory burden on business, to enact various new Acts and to make other amendments and repeals.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Hardeman, Ernie	Moridi, Reza
Anderson, Granville	Hillier, Randy	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Hoggarth, Ann	Murray, Glen R.
Bailey, Robert	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Baker, Yvan	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Ballard, Chris	Jaczek, Helena	Oosterhoff, Sam
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Pettapiece, Randy
Bradley, James J.	Kiwala, Sophie	Potts, Arthur
Brown, Patrick	Kwinter, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chan, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	MacCharles, Tracy	Scott, Laurie
Coe, Lorne	MacLaren, Jack	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	MacLeod, Lisa	Takhar, Harinder S.
Coteau, Michael	Malhi, Harinder	Thibeault, Glenn
Crack, Grant	Mangat, Amrit	Thompson, Lisa M.
Damerla, Dipika	Martins, Cristina	Vernile, Daiene
Del Duca, Steven	Martow, Gila	Walker, Bill
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Wilson, Jim
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Mauro, Bill	Wong, Soo
Dhillon, Vic	McDonnell, Jim	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	McGarry, Kathryn	Yakubuski, John
Dong, Han	McMahon, Eleanor	Yurek, Jeff
Duguid, Brad	McNaughton, Monte	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milczyn, Peter Z.	
Fraser, John	Miller, Norm	

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Gretzky, Lisa	Singh, Jagmeet
DiNovo, Cheri	Hatfield, Percy	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Paul	Vanhof, John
Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 76; the nays are 14.

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 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1159 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm very pleased to be able to welcome to the gallery today, for Magna Carta Day, Dr. Carolyn Harris, who is the author of Magna Carta and Its

Gifts to Canada, and also a professor at the University of Toronto; and Leonard and Suzy Rodness, who helped bring the Magna Carta to Canada in its 800th year, and their son, Jared. It gives me great pleasure to have them here today to celebrate, once again, the Magna Carta.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

JAMES MONTGOMERY DOOHAN

Mr. Robert Bailey: March 3 is the birthday for a decorated Canadian, James Montgomery Doohan, familiar to many in this Legislature and across Ontario as Star Trek's Lieutenant Commander Montgomery Scott. "Scotty," known as the miracle worker, served on the USS Enterprise and could always be counted on to beam you up. As chief engineer, he saved the Enterprise on numerous occasions, whether it was from the Dyson sphere or from the Nexus. Although he spoke with a Scottish accent, he also helped create the Vulcan and Klingon languages used on the show.

Not only was Doohan a legend of the Federation; he was also a real-life hero as well. Like so many others of that generation, he fought in the Second World War. Growing up in Sarnia, he attended Sarnia Collegiate, where he excelled in math and science and enrolled in army cadets. At the beginning of the Second World War, he joined the Royal Canadian Artillery. Doohan landed at Juno Beach on D-Day and survived getting shot many times.

Mr. Speaker, James Montgomery Doohan served Canada honourably in our military. He passed away over a decade ago. Cheers to you, lad.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The dilithium crystals can't bear it any more.

OPIOID USE

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I rise today to commend some exceptional folks in my riding who have put forward their effort and their professionalism to raise awareness about the opioid crisis that is affecting not only my community but, I would imagine, those around the province. On February 28, Windsor and Essex county community health centre, the LaSalle police and the Erie St. Clair CCAC mental health and addiction nurses held their Not My Kid forum at the Vollmer Centre in LaSalle to discuss the increasing trends and threats to our community poised by opioid use among teenagers.

I want to recognize Al Gibson, who is a LaSalle police sergeant. Al has dedicated his career to working at the community level to inform young kids. He is an excellent representative for policing but he himself is shocked by the amount of arrests that are being made under youth mental health charges, under the Mental Health Act. It's directly correlated to this epidemic of opioid use.

We have to address it, we have to talk to our kids about the impact that these drugs have and we have to be

frank with them, Speaker, because, just like the forum stated, Not My Kid, we would all believe that there's no way that our kids could get into this. Well, this affects every person, no matter the geography, no matter the socio-economic status. It is pervasive, it's invasive, it's insidious, and we need to tackle it. But we need to talk to our kids to ensure that they have the information and that they are armed with the information. I appreciate their efforts.

EKUA ANDRIA WALCOTT

Mr. Han Dong: I rise today with a heavy heart and take this moment to pay tribute to a leader in Toronto's black community who passed away this past Monday. Ekua Andria Walcott was a passionate activist who devoted most of her life towards championing equality and justice for black Ontarians.

She believed strongly in the power of community engagement, and as the executive director of the Harriet Tubman Community Organization, she put this belief into action.

The HTOCO offers social and recreational programs for youth of all ages, particularly youth and women of African descent. She believed in our newcomers by offering support and educational training and tutoring. She was a true advocate and community builder in every sense of the word. Most recently, she spoke out on the distressing impacts that systemic racism was having on the community and offered her help to come up with solutions.

Ekua will be sincerely missed by all those whose lives she touched. I stand with my colleagues and all Ontarians today offering our deepest condolence to Ekua's family and friends.

MALNUTRITION

Mr. Jeff Yurek: March is recognized as Nutrition Month by the Dietitians of Canada. This year's slogan is, "Take the Fight Out of Food! Spot the Problem. Get the Facts. Seek Support."

The fact of the matter is, malnutrition is costly and often an unrecognized issue in Ontario's health system. Screening, assessment, prevention and treatment can save lives and precious health care dollars.

Malnutrition is a deficiency or imbalance of energy and nutrients, which can increase the risk of falls, infections, pressure ulcers and a decline in normal functional abilities. Some 45% of patients admitted to hospitals are malnourished patients. They often have an increased length of stay in hospital, which can cost an extra \$2,000 apiece. One in three seniors living in our communities are at nutritional risk and one in five long-term-care residents are malnourished. In order to correct the problem, we must support access to registered dietitians in primary care, home care, long-term-care homes, hospitals and public health units. We should continue

easy access to EatRight Ontario to support nutritional screening for all Ontarians.

We can bring awareness to this issue by being involved in a discussion and retweeting @DietitiansCAN and #foodismedicine.

March 15 is also marked this year as Dietitians Day. Mr. Speaker, I hope everyone will join me this month in raising awareness around malnutrition. I also take the opportunity to thank all the dietitians throughout Canada for all the hard work they do and their continued efforts in fighting and improving access to good food for all.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

Mr. Paul Miller: Two weeks ago, I was honoured to attend a celebration of the 120th anniversary of the international Women's Institute movement, which began in my hometown of Stoney Creek.

Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, born in St. George, Ontario, was one of the most important advocates for rural women in Canadian history. She co-founded the Women's Institute, the National Council of Women, the Victorian Order of Nurses and the YWCA in Canada.

Her infant son died in 1889 from contaminated unpasteurized milk. Blaming herself for not knowing the danger, she dedicated herself to domestic education for rural women to prevent future avoidable tragedies.

On February 19, 1897, she organized the first meeting of the Women's Institute in Stoney Creek. The Women's Institute was dedicated to promoting the education and personal growth of rural women.

The first Women's Institute constitution was drafted a few days later at the home of Janet and Erland Lee on Ridge Road in Stoney Creek. Erland Lee was a great supporter and promoter of the new organization. The home that he and Janet shared is today the Erland Lee museum. It is well worth a visit to learn about the international women's movement that was born in our province 120 years ago.

Thank you to the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario for hosting the celebration and on reaching this remarkable anniversary.

KINGSTON TRANSIT

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to meet with the manager of Kingston Transit, Jeremy DaCosta, and his team at Kingston Transit to discuss the very exciting developments taking place in my community.

Kingston Transit continues to grow and expand at an incredible pace, welcoming more new riders than ever before. In this past year, a grand total of 5.2 million riders boarded Kingston Transit buses, which is an 11.4% increase from 2015.

This success would not have been possible had it not been for the dedicated and wonderful staff at Kingston Transit as well as the city of Kingston. The team at Kingston Transit brought their efforts together to increase

accessibility for all Kingstontians, working with the city and community organizers to expand services and implement innovative initiatives like the employees' pass program, which offers employers access to discounted monthly adult passes. It also generates a monthly savings for each individual of between \$10.50 and \$23.25 for those who are participating.

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Kingston Transit has already secured 22 partnerships with various employers in our community, like Queen's University, Kingston General Hospital, Providence Care and STARTEK. The program is easy to set up and a great addition to any employer's package.

I hope that all members of this Legislature will encourage their transit providers to do a similar program as we've done in Kingston and the Islands.

DRAPEAU FRANCO-ONTARIEN

M^{me} Gila Martow: Le drapeau franco-ontarien fut déployé officiellement pour la première fois le 25 septembre 1975 à l'Université Laurentienne à Sudbury. Les deux créateurs du drapeau sont Gaétan Gervais, professeur d'histoire à l'Université Laurentienne, et Michel Dupuis, étudiant en sciences politiques de première année à la même université. Il fut officiellement adopté par l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario en 1977.

Le vert et le blanc symbolisent l'été et l'hiver de l'Ontario. La fleur du trille blanc à la droite est la fleur emblème officielle de la province de l'Ontario. La fleur de lys à la gauche est le rappel de l'appartenance au peuple canadien-français.

Le 29 juin 2001, le drapeau franco-ontarien reçoit le statut de symbole officiel de la province par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario.

Je suis très fière de porter cette broche avec le drapeau aujourd'hui, et j'ai hâte d'entendre les discours sur la motion qui reconnaît la chanson « Notre Place » aujourd'hui. Bon anniversaire à tout le monde. C'est une journée très importante pour tous les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes.

LAMP COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to congratulate LAMP Community Health Centre in the riding of Etobicoke-Lakeshore on their 40th anniversary.

It all began in the mid-1970s, when a group of dedicated people in the community led a grassroots movement to ensure that there was better integrated community-based health care in south Etobicoke.

Coming out of that, in 1976, the Lakeshore Area Multiservice Project Community Health Centre—or LAMP, as everybody calls it—was established. Over these past 40 years, not only has LAMP provided exceptional community-health-based services to our community; it has also engaged with our young people

and with seniors, providing a number of programs and opportunities to use these facilities to not just deal with doctors and nurses and health practitioners, but all the things that make for healthy living in our community.

As a life-long local resident, I, like tens of thousands of others, have benefited from their services over the years. LAMP is the heart of our Lakeshore community, and I want to thank the many hundreds of volunteers, staff and dedicated board members who have always made LAMP the centre of our community and who continue to provide exceptional services to south Etobicoke.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to share the results of my annual Oxford business survey. I want to thank all the businesses that took the time to respond and share their information with me.

Their message was clear. Despite all their hard work, Ontario businesses are struggling because of government red tape and the cost of doing business. Sadly, it's the same message I delivered to the government last year and the year before.

They reported that their hydro bills have doubled or tripled and that the majority of the cost is not the electricity they use but the global adjustment, regulatory charges and delivery charges. In some cases, the extra costs created by this government are over 90% of the hydro bill.

In just the last few months, it has also been announced that we are losing 1,000 jobs in Oxford. That makes it even more important that government listen to these businesses. As one business owner said, "Taxes, taxes, taxes—they need to stop increasing. I am at the tipping point. If they go up any more I will close the doors." Another said they are losing their business customers as companies move to the United States. Businesses need a government that will cut red tape and reduce the cost of doing business before it loses even more jobs. They need a government that will actually address the policies that have resulted in hydro costs tripling. Our business people and their employees work hard every day, and they deserve a government that will work for them and help them succeed.

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

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition signed here by a great number of my constituents and constituents from around the province.

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

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

"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; and

"Whereas the energy policies of this Liberal government ignored the advice of independent experts and government agencies, such as the Ontario Energy Board and the Independent Electricity System Operator, and resulted in Ontarians' electricity costs rising, despite lower natural gas costs and increased energy conservation in the province; and

"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; and

"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;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario 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."

I affix my signature to this petition as I agree with it 100%.

ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board is a provincial agency composed of unelected members unaccountable to Ontarians; and

"Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board has the power to unilaterally alter local development decisions made by municipalities and their communities; and

"Whereas the city of Toronto is the largest city in Ontario; and

"Whereas the city of Toronto has a planning department composed of professional planners, an extensive legal department and 44 full-time city councillors directly elected by its citizens; and

"Whereas Toronto's city council voted overwhelmingly in February 2012 to request an exemption from the Ontario Municipal Board's jurisdiction;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize the ability of the city of Toronto to handle its own urban planning and development; and

"Further, that the Ontario Municipal Board no longer have jurisdiction over the city of Toronto."

I couldn't agree more. I add my name to the thousands who have already signed this and give it to Luca to be delivered to the desk.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas electricity prices have increased and in too many cases have become unaffordable for Ontarians;

“Whereas Ontario is a prosperous province and people should never have to choose between hydro and other daily necessities;

“Whereas people want to know that hydro rate relief is on the way; that relief will go to everyone; and that relief will be lasting because it is built on significant change;

“Whereas the Ontario fair hydro plan would reduce hydro bills for residential consumers, small businesses and farms by an average of 25% as part of a significant system restructuring, with increases held to the rate of inflation for the next four years;

“Whereas the Ontario fair hydro plan would provide people with low incomes and those living in rural communities with even greater reductions to their electricity bills;

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

“Support the Ontario fair hydro plan and provide relief for Ontario electricity consumers as quickly as possible;

“Continue to ensure clean, reliable and affordable electricity is available for all Ontarians.”

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I affix my signature to it because this is the best thing since sliced bread, Madam Speaker, and I support it wholeheartedly.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Toby Barrett: This is an energy poverty petition directed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

“Whereas over half of Ontario residents’ power bills are delivery charges, regulatory charges and global adjustment;

“Whereas the implementation of cap-and-trade will drive the cost of electricity even higher and increase the cost of living in Ontario;

“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;

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

“To take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity in Ontario, including costs associated with power consumed, delivery charges, administrative charges, global adjustment, tax and any other charges on Ontario residents’ energy bills.”

I agree with the sentiment in the petition, and I affix my signature.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from the French River Nurse Practitioner–Led Clinic as well as the Capreol Nurse Practitioner–Led Clinic, signed by all of their team members. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government needs to strengthen primary care as the foundation of the health care system to achieve health system transformation goals of Patients First; and

“Whereas research shows that interprofessional primary health care delivers better outcomes for people and better value for money; and

“Whereas an investment in primary care will help address recruitment and retention challenges, build strong interprofessional primary care teams and ensure high-quality people-centred primary health care delivery in Ontario; and

“Whereas over 7,500 staff in over 400 community health centres, family health teams, aboriginal health access centres and nurse practitioner-led clinics are being paid below rates recommended in 2012 and as a result are facing challenges recruiting and retaining health providers, including nurse practitioners, dietitians, registered nurses, health promoters and managers;

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario “to invest in interprofessional primary health care teams with a commitment of \$130 million annualized, with an implementation plan over two years, to ensure interprofessional primary health care teams can effectively retain and recruit staff.”

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

HYDRO RATES

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas electricity prices have increased and in too many cases have become unaffordable for Ontarians;

“Whereas Ontario is a prosperous province and people should never have to choose between hydro and other daily necessities;

“Whereas people want to know that hydro rate relief is on the way; that relief will go to everyone; and that relief will be lasting because it is built on significant change;

“Whereas the Ontario fair hydro plan would reduce hydro bills for residential consumers, small businesses and farms by an average of 25% as part of a significant system restructuring, with increases held to the rate of inflation for the next four years;

“Whereas the Ontario fair hydro plan would provide people with low incomes and those living in rural communities with even greater reductions to their electricity bills;

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

“Support the Ontario fair hydro plan and provide relief for Ontario electricity consumers as quickly as possible;

“Continue to ensure clean, reliable and affordable electricity is available for all Ontarians.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition. I affix my name to it and send it with page Nolan.

LUNG HEALTH

Mr. Lorne Coe: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario ...

“Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, *Your Lungs, Your Life*, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

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

“To allow for deputations on MPP Ted McMeekin, MPP Jeff Yurek and MPP France Gélinas private member’s bill, Bill 71, Lung Health Act, 2016, which establishes a lung health advisory council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“As the bill has already been debated at committee in the bill’s original form, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, to expedite through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 71 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

Speaker, I agree with the content of this petition and gladly affix my signature to it.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It’s a petition to widen Highway 3 now, that reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Highway 3 from Windsor to Leamington has long been identified as dangerous and unable to meet growing traffic volumes; and

“Whereas the widening of this highway passed its environmental assessment in 2006; and

“Whereas the portion of this project from Windsor to west of the town of Essex has been completed, but the remainder of the project remains stalled; and

“Whereas there has been a recent announcement of plans to rebuild the roadway, culverts, lighting and signals along the portion of Highway 3 that has not yet been widened;

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

“To revisit plans to rebuild Highway 3 from Essex to Leamington and direct those funds to the timely completion of the already approved widening of this important roadway in Essex county.”

Speaker, we’ve been fighting it for 20 years, and we’re going to continue fighting it. I’ll sign the petition and send it to the Clerks’ desk via page Hailey.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have here a petition which I think the member from Essex would support.

“Support the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas electricity prices have increased and in too many cases have become unaffordable for Ontarians;

“Whereas Ontario is a prosperous province and people should never have to choose between hydro and other daily necessities;

“Whereas people want to know that hydro rate relief is on the way; that relief will go to everyone; and that relief will be lasting because it is built on significant change;

“Whereas the Ontario fair hydro plan would reduce hydro bills for residential consumers, small businesses and farms by an average of 25% as part of a significant system restructuring, with increases held to the rate of inflation for the next four years;

“Whereas the Ontario fair hydro plan would provide people with low incomes and those living in rural communities with even greater reductions to their electricity bills;

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

“Support the Ontario fair hydro plan and provide relief for Ontario electricity consumers as quickly as possible;

“Continue to ensure clean, reliable and affordable electricity is available for all Ontarians.”

I agree with the sentiment of this petition—

Interjection.

Mr. Arthur Potts: —and I believe the member from Caledon supports the petition. I will sign it, with all these other people who have signed this petition.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mrs. Dawn Graham from Val Therese in my riding for this petition. It reads as follows:

“Whereas quality care for the 78,000 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;

“We, the undersigned, 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 support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Mary to bring it to the Clerk.

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HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Fraser: An ode to the member from Essex.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas electricity prices have increased and in too many cases have become unaffordable for Ontarians;

“Whereas Ontario is a prosperous province and people should never have to choose between hydro and other daily necessities;

“Whereas people want to know that hydro rate relief is on the way; that relief will go to everyone; and that relief will be lasting because it is built on significant change;

“Whereas the Ontario fair hydro plan would reduce hydro bills for residential consumers, small businesses and farms by an average of 25% as part of a significant system restructuring, with increases held to the rate of inflation for the next four years;

“Whereas the Ontario fair hydro plan would provide people with low incomes and those living in rural communities with even greater reductions to their electricity bills;

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

“Support the Ontario fair hydro plan and provide relief for Ontario electricity consumers as quickly as possible;

“Continue to ensure clean, reliable and affordable electricity is available for all Ontarians.”

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time for petitions has expired. Before I call orders of the day, I want to remind the members that I do have the list from the Clerk of those members who were warned this morning. You know who you are. We’re going to have a fair, transparent debate this afternoon, but it has to be respectful.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

MAGNA CARTA DAY ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LE JOUR DE LA GRANDE CHARTE

Mrs. Munro moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 97, An Act to proclaim Magna Carta Day / Projet de loi 97, Loi proclamant le Jour de la Grande Charte.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: Eight hundred years later, why does it matter that a king agreed to meet his most influential barons on a field in England to sign a document he intended to tear up? It matters that circumstances prevented King John from tearing it up. It matters that those nobles made sure that the English population knew the principles contained in the document would provide a protection for rights and responsibilities for generations to follow; that those principles would come to all parts of the world, including America, France, the Commonwealth and, of course, Canada.

In preparing for today, I leaned rather heavily on a book written by Dr. Carolyn Harris, who has joined us here this afternoon, as I mentioned earlier in the introduction. This will be a brief history, but I would encourage all of you who find it interesting to read her book when you have the chance.

Let’s begin by a brief look at England in the 13th century. England was organized as a feudal system that provided a political, judicial and economic framework for the 13th century. The king was at the top of this secular pyramid. The barons were next, followed by the knights and the peasants. Each manor had its own court to settle disputes amongst the peasants. The landed nobility was expected to attend royal courts. Knights also served as jurors on county courts. This social structure created an engaged, experienced nobility whose working knowledge of common law was able to inform the creation of Magna Carta.

As time passed, there emerged conventions that the nobility eagerly sought to defend. These included the right to advise the king at council, govern their lands without interference and receive justice from their peers. Knights participated in the legislative process at a local level. It is into this relatively stable environment that Magna Carta was drawn up—and I stress “relatively stable environment.”

King John was the youngest son of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. As the youngest, he was cut out of the normal process of inheritance. He became known as Jean sans Terre—John Lackland.

Henry was determined to leave his youngest with land. He decided Ireland would be a better place for John to make his fortune and wield political influence. However, John failed to impress the Irish, with his youthful recklessness and lavish spending.

The barons, for their part, just wanted to protect the stability of England, to affirm existing laws and customs. By 1215, many of the barons realized they couldn’t trust John to keep his word and observe the customs of the realm. John was the first English king to accept terms drafted by his subjects, proving nobody—not even the king—was above the laws of the land.

As generations passed Magna Carta from one to the next, people understood the significance. It was read out

in churches, courts and anywhere to expand the importance and understanding of Magna Carta for everyone.

The bill we have before us asks the assembly to recognize June 15 as Magna Carta Day. The reason for that is simple: Magna Carta stands out as a unique example of men—and later women—working together for the greater good. While its rights were laid out as expectations to be followed by specific social groups, such as the barons and the knights, it was flexible enough to include commoners as time went on; it also recognized women.

However, it wasn't until the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 that there was a renewed interest in Magna Carta. This was accompanied by the development of constitutional monarchy as it exists today in the United Kingdom, in Canada and in 14 other members of the Commonwealth.

By the 18th century, Robert Walpole, the first Prime Minister of England, said, "Whatever are the rights of men in this age, were their rights in every age; for rights are independent of power."

It was about this time that Magna Carta crossed the Atlantic. As the British established colonies in North America, they brought their political and legal institutions with them. One needs only to look at our parliamentary system that has served our country for the last 150 years. Not only did they bring the formal institutions that we all know so well; they also brought the ideas codified in Magna Carta.

Shaping the discourse of Canada's Confederation and the American Revolution, the reach of this document extended into Europe, with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen emerging from the French Revolution.

In particular, English Canada inherited the political and legal framework of England. While politically and culturally the Magna Carta took on a different role in Canada than it did in America—which I will get to in a moment—it provided the basis for the rule of law tradition, where everybody is subject to the laws of the land. While Canada's path to independence was more gradual and tamer than the United States', Magna Carta continued to play a role. The principles found in Magna Carta informed the Bill of Rights and, later, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in this country.

In 1763, following the Royal Proclamation, many British troops withdrew and went back home. But this withdrawal had possibly unintended consequences. It resulted in an increased scrutiny on the taxation of the colonists, who were not represented in the British Parliament. The funds collected were no longer being spent in their defence from the French, but rather flowing directly back to Britain. An increasing number of these colonists came to believe that their rights guaranteed to them by Magna Carta were being violated. And this takes us to the American Revolution.

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At the time of the American Revolution, Americans were familiar with Magna Carta. Edward Coke wrote his

Institutes of the Lawes of England during this time in which England was establishing the 13 colonies. It became a standard legal text both at home and abroad.

Coke lent his legal expertise in the drafting of the charter to the Virginia Company in 1606. This in turn created a precedent for subsequent colonies and charters. This charter granted the colonists the same rights as those enjoyed by those in England, including those as granted in Magna Carta.

As time went on, more colonies followed the template from Virginia. Edward Coke's interpretation of Magna Carta all but became a law of its own. His commentaries were treated as inalienable rights, and laws which contradicted Magna Carta were declared invalid.

When the United States was formed, it adopted the Declaration of Independence on the 4th of July. The authors of this document were very familiar with Magna Carta and Edward Coke's commentaries. It was further enveloped into the basis of the United States when their interpretation of the document was written into their Constitution, which no future piece of legislation could supersede.

While today there may be Canadians who do not know what the Magna Carta is, I think we can all agree that we know what it means to live under its influence. The concept of equality before the law is a Canadian value. In a world overwhelmed by political instability, corruption and war, the stability of Magna Carta shines brightly. As nations define human rights in their own jurisdictions, Magna Carta informs that process locally and at the international level.

Magna Carta has been interpreted by many throughout its long history. It has had an influence on millions of people.

The basic principles have not changed, the first one being that no one is above the law. The second one is that the right to due process is at the very foundation of Magna Carta. Third is the right to trial by peers.

I think that it's really interesting to look at the way in which this has gone on for all the generations that have passed. I think that today, as I mentioned, with the various countries in the world today that are seized by political instability, corruption, and war, it makes the message of Magna Carta all that more important.

I began by asking, 800 years later, why does it matter? Well, I think from this brief overview, you can appreciate, as I do, that we are very fortunate that John got together with his barons, even if he didn't want to sign the document. He thought he would be able to tear it up. We are the beneficiaries of those decisions that were made 800 years ago.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Good try, Speaker. We'll settle on Windsor–Tecumseh.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): No, Windsor–Tecumseh. My apologies. Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you very much for the honour to speak to this very important bill this afternoon.

When it comes to Bill 97, let me put it this way: We in this chamber are here because we are able to stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. Somebody else had to lead the way. Somebody else had to draft the laws and the procedures that enable us to be here, taking part in this debate. We are here because of established and accepted rules and traditions, and these rules and traditions are protected by law. These laws have their own beginnings.

Speaker, when you trace the lineage, the genesis of parliamentary tradition, it goes back to the contents and the intentions written within the Magna Carta and its many revisions. There was a feudal system, as you know, that dates to 1066, but with the Magna Carta came the limit on the king's ability to levy a tax without the consent of the royal council, which evolved into what we know today as the parliamentary system.

That's one of the reasons why this bill is so important. I wish to compliment Mrs. Munro for bringing it back for our consideration.

Speaker, I'd also like to congratulate the member from York-Simcoe as now holding the record for the longest-serving woman in Ontario's parliamentary history.

Applause.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Her bill, the Magna Carta Day Act, is important because we can't forget from whence we came. Our parliamentary history and our traditions form the basis of the rules we must follow in a civilized society so that we do what we do here in an orderly fashion. Oh, sure, we may test those rules from time to time during question period, as we did again today. We may walk on the edge of parliamentary debate, from time to time, using language that is not so parliamentary, but we have a rule for that and we're asked to withdraw.

Speaker, the Magna Carta was the recipe for all of this. No, not everything that we do here was set in stone 802 years ago, but the Great Charter is one of the most important documents in political history. As I'm sure you have, I've heard it described as England's greatest export. It's the greatest constitutional document of all time. It's the foundation of the freedoms we enjoy today, and it came about, as we heard, by a mediated settlement. The Archbishop of Canterbury was the referee, and on one side, you had a very unpopular king by the name of John, and on the other, the land barons, landowners with whom he was feuding and at war with over how much money he wanted from them. They had this neutral site at Runnymede, near Windsor.

Now, how appropriate is that, Speaker? Here I am, representing Windsor, Ontario, and talking about Windsor in England dating back to, what, 802 years ago, to the year 1215.

Like many negotiated contracts, it didn't bring everlasting peace. But it set the foundation for what would become the basis for the protection of our civil rights, our civil liberties. It greatly influenced how the founding fathers in America constructed their Constitution and their Bill of Rights. The legal rights we enjoy today flow from the Magna Carta. You can't just throw someone in

jail, for example, without cause. You can't keep them there without a charge being laid against them. You can't levy taxes without the proper authoritative process.

The Great Charter united England, eventually. It created the need for a functioning government. I think it's fair to say the Magna Carta gave birth to morality. The philosopher Edmund Burke compared the freedoms inherited from the Magna Carta to those achieved in the revolution in France, inherited freedoms compared to abstract rights achieved through violent means. In his opinion, and I'm sure we agree, only the former could be achieved and enforced. The Great Charter was the first time that a document was forced onto a king of England by his subjects, with the objective of protecting their privileges and limiting his powers.

Now, Speaker, in the interests of parliamentary tradition, I'll bring your attention to this fine cravat, this fine tie. This tie was given to me by my friend from Windsor West, when she toured the Parliament buildings in England. This is the official parliamentary tie of the British Parliament, and I thought today I should wear it as we discuss this important bill—

Applause.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you very much—because we are here because of the British parliamentary system, and we are here because of the Magna Carta.

I want to again thank the member from York-Simcoe for once again bringing this bill back, because of the importance that it brings to all of us in this chamber and in generations to follow.

1350

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: What an incredible honour for me, to be our province's Attorney General and be able to speak about the Magna Carta. I want to start by first thanking the member from York-Simcoe for bringing this bill forward. It's a great opportunity for all of us, especially our pages, to learn about Magna Carta and the impact of that document on our democracy and our legal system. I want to also thank the member from York-Simcoe for making sure that I stayed in the House a little later today, so I can have the chance to speak on it. I thank her for that, because it's a great opportunity.

Speaker, as has been said before, this is a foundational document of our rules and democratic institutions, and there is so very much modelled on it. The Magna Carta has been described as the greatest constitutional document of all time, the foundation of the freedom of the individual against the arbitrary authority of the despot. The concept that the king was subject to the rule of law and the idea that fundamental freedoms could be encapsulated in a written charter continue to form the foundation of our parliamentary democracy today.

In 2015, the Magna Carta came to Canada. There was an amazing exhibit that travelled across the country. In my hometown of Ottawa, at the Museum of History, I had the great opportunity to see the Magna Carta, to read about it and to learn about it. It was amazing. There's a

fantastic website by the Museum of History, that is still up and running, called magnacartacanada.ca. There's lots of great information and a lot of essays. I encourage you to please go and visit. I take it some guests are here who are getting excited that I'm mentioning this. It has a good little history.

I just want to mention very quickly the key principles of Magna Carta, because it's so important to remember:

—nobody is above the law of the land, the basis of equal justice at all levels of society;

—habeas corpus is the freedom from unlawful detention without cause or evidence;

—trial by jury is another principle: rules to settle disputes between barons and the crown established trial by a jury of one's peers; and

—women's rights also made it into the Magna Carta, back in 1215. A widow could not be forced to marry and give up her property. That was a major first step in women's rights.

The companion document to the Magna Carta, which is the Charter of the Forest, also enshrines universal human rights, key rights and protections for the common man, and protection of the commoners, which sets clear limits to privatization and the importance of stewardship for shared resources.

This document, if you think about our times, clearly was so ahead of its time. It set the foundation on which we still very much build our democracy. I am really excited that we're celebrating the Magna Carta here today. I hope, and I'm confident, that all members will support this bill by the member from York-Simcoe, because this document is very much who we are as Ontarians and Canadians. On the celebration of the sesquicentennial of Canada and Canada's Confederation, there is no better or more fitting tribute than celebrating the Magna Carta.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: Our local village of Langton took on a special significance in 2015 as much of the world celebrated the 800th anniversary of the most important historical contribution to our way of life. The Magna Carta was designed by our local village's namesake, Stephen Langton. Langton was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1207 to 1228. He played an important role in the declaration of the original document. With the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, celebrations were held across the globe.

Also, in my local village of Langton, a special mass was held at Sacred Heart Church on June 14, 2015, at 10:30 a.m., with Bishop John Sherlock officiating. Following the mass, I had an opportunity to study what is a very impressive stained glass window in this church down in my riding, in Haldimand-Norfolk. It depicts Archbishop Langton presenting the Magna Carta document to King John. This window in Ontario is one of only two, as I understand, in North America depicting what occurred. The church opened the same year as the Magna Carta celebrated its 750th anniversary.

Prior to King John affixing his seal to Magna Carta, the monarch had absolute power, as we would know, in his role as head of the church. Archbishop Langton fought for the rights of ordinary people and limits on the monarch's ability to overrule the law. He was successful in having these principles incorporated in Magna Carta.

The document introduced, as we've heard, much of what we enjoy in democratic countries today: equal justice for all, freedom from unlawful detention, the right to trial by jury and the rule of law for all, as explained by Ontario's Attorney General just a few minutes ago.

The principles of Magna Carta are inculcated within the British common law system and are reflected in our Canadian Constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I would point out that, regrettably, Pierre Trudeau neglected one thing when he didn't include property rights in the Canadian charter. Since the introduction of my legislation in 1995 and the subsequent standing committee hearings in this Legislature, I've continued to push, as have others, for the restoration of property rights to the province of Ontario.

We very much appreciate this private member's bill from MPP Julia Munro, again, to proclaim June 15 each year as Magna Carta Day in Ontario. I truly understand what Archbishop Langton accomplished. Really, to understand that, we need to examine the circumstances of the day. Even 800 years later, those blessed with the freedoms of democracy have much to thank him for.

King John had just lost a battle. He needed money. He needed to launch campaigns to reclaim lost land. To raise money, he increased taxes. He levied new taxes, taxes that included an income tax, an import-export tax, a tax on widows who wished to remain single, taxes on inherited property and estate taxes. A series of bad harvests had resulted in a high demand for food and increased inflation. The barons revolted, and the country was on the brink of a civil war.

Earlier, Langton had been appointed Archbishop of Canterbury—this was prior to the Church of England, and Roman Catholicism was the predominant religion. King John refused to accept the appointment. He wanted to influence the head of the church. When neither the king nor the pope backed down, the pope excommunicated the king and forbade the church's sacraments in England. Langton was exiled from England. and many of the country's bishops accompanied him.

With the unrest at home worsening, the king did allow Langton to return to England in 1213. As we know, or may know, Langton had a significant role in preventing uprisings, in part by convincing the king to sign the original 1215 version of Magna Carta.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's always a pleasure to stand and always a pleasure to learn something here and to have a bit of a history lesson.

I want to take a bit of an issue, though, before I begin, with my friend from Haldimand-Norfolk and my friend

from Windsor–Tecumseh, who mentioned the archbishop being the one who was really the drafter of this document, Magna Carta, the Great Charter. But that archbishop would say, in reaction to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, that morality did not start with the Magna Carta; that it actually went back a lot further than that—perhaps, he would say, to the Ten Commandments or even earlier.

1400

I just wanted to situate this a little bit and say that in Asia, in China, in the Middle East, for our indigenous peoples, there were documents written, documents that describe democracy and describe the rule of law. Actually, if you speak to any Jewish scholar of the Torah, you will have a long conversation on your hands about where the rule of law began.

Having said that, it's terrific that we're looking at a seminal document for our Western democracy. There's no question about it. There's no question about the importance of this.

I was also thrilled to find out it was signed at Runnymede. So if there are any students from Runnymede Collegiate out there, or Runnymede public school in my riding, you should know that your school has a special name and a special etiology. This was the name of the place where the Magna Carta was signed, and that's exciting.

I also want to say that something that sometimes gets eclipsed in this discussion is that the divine right of kings didn't just go away on its own. In fact, the barons chased King John around and captured him, and this came out of an uprising of the people. There was genuine anger and genuine mobilization.

When we look at despots—not mentioning any names—that might be in office in today's world, this is again a good lesson: Organize, organize, organize; mobilize, mobilize, mobilize, because that's the way you get something done.

Also, a shout-out to our parliamentary system. I was lucky enough to sit where Madam Speaker is sitting now as the Deputy Speaker, and also very fortunate to go to the mother ship, Westminster, and to take the course in parliamentary procedure that so many have had the fortune of taking around the world.

There, I wasn't as lucky as my friend from Windsor–Tecumseh. I didn't come back with a tie. I did, however, buy a bottle of Scotch with the Speaker's insignia on it, and forgot that I only had carry-on luggage, so it was confiscated at the airport. That bites. Anybody who finds themselves in Westminster, please pick up a bottle of Scotch for me. I'll pay you back.

I also want to say something about the author of this bill. We've heard wonderful things from around the House. Hopefully, this time, it doesn't die in committee. Hopefully, this time, it gets through committee and gets passed into law.

I want to also give her a real shout-out for being a woman who's been here for 22 years.

Applause.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Yes—not the oldest woman to sit here, but the woman who has sat here for the longest time.

Really, when you look at our own democratic system, there's another point to be made there too. She's the only woman who has sat here that long, and yet—I was trying to count today—I think there are at least six men who have been here that long. That says something to me about the experience of women in this place. So, Girls Government: There's some work to do in democracy here, and how we elect women and how many women we elect, and then what happens to them after they're elected and how we treat them here, so that they can stay as long as Ms. Munro, the member from York–Simcoe, has.

Something else you don't know about her: She loves dogs. She is a breeder of standard poodles. We have many conversations about how much we love our dogs. She's passionate about everything she does.

Kudos, Ms. Munro, for your achievements here and for everything you stand for, and for bringing this forward today.

Just a few final words; I haven't covered nearly anything that I had down here.

Absolutely, the Great Charter, the charter of the great liberties, put in place some foundational notions into what we see as good government. When you look at this last American election, when we saw someone who got three million more votes not be elected than someone who got three million less, I think we can take a little pride in our parliamentary system here in Canada and how it has evolved.

Even though we wish we had proportional representation here and that it was more democratic, it's still exemplary in terms of many governments in the world.

So, kudos to us. Kudos to the parliamentary system. I can't think of a better one. I won't quote Winston Churchill yet again—you know, it stinks, except for all the others.

Kudos to Ms. Munro for bringing this bill back again.

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

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join this debate. Let me thank the member from York–Simcoe for bringing forward a bill that makes us think a little bit, because I think we take a lot for granted, certainly in the province of Ontario and in Canada, with the parliamentary democracy that we've inherited from people who went before us, who fought very hard to preserve this.

Like many people in this room, I came from a different place. I was born in England. I lived in England until I was 11. I'll tell you, the English take their history very, very seriously. As an English child, you get this stuff drummed into you. I remember coming to Canada and I remember watching young Canadian people who knew more about British history and more about American history than they knew about Canadian history. I think we've corrected that. I think we've moved a long way.

But I think what we're talking about when we talk about the Magna Carta—as much as it points out a turning point, a watershed moment in the history of democracy, it also points out its flaws and its imperfections. Even though it was signed in 1215, they were still talking about it in 1297. You had a pope interfere, you had more wars and you ended up with a nine-year-old king, I think, at the end of it all.

But it did start something off. It started off what we enjoy today: the rules that we abide by in this House, the way we treat each other, the role of the government, the role of the opposition. Really, it all stems back.

When you think about it, even the way things have changed since then, I'm not sure the barons were much better than this unpopular king. For the ordinary person, it was who was going to be the boss and who was going to be in charge. But ensconced in there somewhere was a way for the little guy to somehow start to grab hold of his or her own destiny.

I think we owe an awful lot to the people along the way who have made sure that we have moved from the Magna Carta to the system of government we have today. I think, into the future, the system we pass on to our young people is really, really important. This allows us to talk about this, and for that, I thank the member from York–Simcoe. I plan to support this bill, obviously.

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

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Magna Carta is the main exposition of the ancient liberties of the English-speaking peoples. The Magna Carta was signed in 1215, but since that time, those rights have always needed protection and affirmation. Ever-expanding governments have eaten away at our liberties. They have created a nanny state and a Byzantine system of regulation. Modern governments systemically undermine the ancient protections of property, parliamentary independence and free speech in the name of social justice and other misguided causes.

Magna Carta was the first statute to forbid arbitrary seizure and to guarantee due process of law. But we need to remember that Magna Carta was neither revolutionary nor innovative. We should think of Magna Carta as a living document. It affirmed and restated rights that were already ancient. At the centre of these rights is the primacy of the individual person over the state and the collective.

Magna Carta inspired later charters, including the 1217 Charter of the Forest, which set precedents for the appropriate management of shared resources, and the 1258 Provisions of Oxford, which lead to the development of Parliament.

Parliament has since evolved in the greatest political achievement of mankind. Our strength as a country comes from the common adherence to our parliamentary monarchy. It comes from trust in a legal system based on common sense and the sanctity of contract. It comes from our inherited British tradition of ordered liberty under the rule of law.

Magna Carta is at the foundation of all those things, and so I am pleased to support the bill to make June 15 Magna Carta Day.

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

1410

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I can say what a privilege it is to stand up and speak in favour of this bill that has been brought forward by the member from York–Simcoe. I really want to congratulate the member from York–Simcoe for bringing it forward. When I heard that she was bringing it forward, I very much wanted to speak to it and did reach out to her to congratulate her on it.

I just want to say that my support is going to be unreserved, for all of the reasons that so many of the members in this House have spoken so eloquently about. The full name, Magna Carta Libertatum, which is Latin for Great Charter of Liberties, gives us, I think, a very good idea of what the charter is about. It is, of course, foundational to our values as Canadians, the idea that all men and women are inherently equal.

What is really nice about this debate, and many of the debates in this Legislature, is some of the thought-provoking ideas that come forth from other members. I do want to compliment the member from Parkdale for raising a very important issue. Without in any way taking away the greatness, the importance and the need to celebrate the Magna Carta, I think she raised a very important idea, which is that good ideas, thoughtful ideas and intelligent ideas have independently come up in many different cultures at different times. I think it's important for us to recognize, even as we celebrate some of our own culture or our own history, that histories around the world and people around the world may have come up with very similar ideas. I just want to thank you for raising that notion.

I also understand where the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills is coming from when he says that perhaps it was not revolutionary. To me, it was revolutionary. When you think about the fact that 800 years ago, you come up with a notion that everybody is equal in front of the law, or no one is above the law, particularly when kings had divine right. But I also understand where he is coming from when he suggests that perhaps some of these ideas of all men and women being equal are inherent and self-evident.

There is so much in this to discuss and celebrate, but I'm very mindful of the fact that many people on our side of the Legislature want to speak to it. Initially, there were three of us, then five of us wanted to speak to it, then one person couldn't speak to it because of timing, so it just goes to show the groundswell of support this idea has across all parties in this Legislature.

Once again, thank you so much to the member from York–Simcoe. Thank you to all the members for their thought-provoking debate. I will be unreservedly supporting this motion.

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It is a great honour to be able to stand today and speak to this bill that has been brought forward by the honourable member. I have a great deal of respect for my colleague and for all of the work that she's done over her years in this place. As the member from Parkdale–High Park has mentioned, the importance of women in this place of democracy, in this temple of democracy that we stand in today—so much of that was facilitated by the signing of the Great Charter, the Magna Carta.

I wanted to speak to this because I had a very personal experience, actually—sort of a revelation, if you will—connected to the Magna Carta. I had the opportunity to visit my brother in England two years ago, in the spring of 2015, which marked the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta. While I was touring England, I had the opportunity to visit Salisbury Cathedral, which is often known for having the tallest spire in England. At Salisbury Cathedral they have an original copy, one of the four remaining original copies, of the Magna Carta. So I had the opportunity to stand within a couple of feet of this document that has so revolutionized democracy, not only in the Western world, but that has been really taken as a model and built upon across the world.

It was a great honour to stand there, and as I stood there and marvelled at the foresight and at what that charter stood for—the rule of law, individual liberty, personal responsibility and opportunity—I was impressed with the duty that is concurrent on all of us today. At the time I was 17, and yet I stood there and thought about the men and women who, some 70 years earlier, had crossed the ocean from Canada, hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of them, to fight against the Nazi tyranny and, 100 years earlier, to fight against the rise of dictatorship in the First World War. I realized the importance of that document in initiating those brave men and women to go across to fight for these rights. That's something that we can never take for granted here today in 2017.

The rights that were enumerated then, 802 years ago now, are as valuable today as they were then, and we can never forget them. As I stand today in this Legislature, this House of deliberation, where we deliberate very weighty matters, matters that have a great deal of importance to people not only in Ontario but across the world—as we impact, really, our nation and our world—I want to thank the member for bringing forward such a meaningful piece of legislation that will enact a day of remembrance when we can all stand and remember not only what that signifies, what freedoms it signifies, but the sacrifices that have been made to maintain those freedoms.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Did you say, “Mr. Speaker”?

Interjection: Madam.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Sorry, Madam Speaker. Thank you. I want to commend my friend who brought this forward.

I just want to try to get maybe a little less of a Eurocentric perspective on this, because this was a battle between aristocrats and the crown. This wasn't the great emancipation of everyone. Women took 700 years to get the vote in most of the Western world. And there are a lot of other traditions.

I always remember, in Manitoba Louis Riel was probably one of the first political leaders to actually take the concepts of the Magna Carta in Canada and apply them to a large population when he introduced in his Métis provisional government in Manitoba—the Manitoba provisional government—the first, really, Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Canada, which really extended many of the ideas and concepts into law long before government did. We will remember that the crown, in the person of Sir John A. Macdonald and his government, quickly put down and crushed that democracy when it was trying to join our Confederation.

I would also point out to my friend from Carleton–Mississippi Mills—who said something I found, to put it politely, peculiar, that social justice is a misguided idea—well, I always thought that one of the by-products or one of the evolved states is that social justice is very much the full realization of the Magna Carta. This default to property rights is interesting, too, because indigenous people have had an incredibly beautiful and wonderful view of human rights as being part of the rights of all species and the rights of all of us to have a healthy planet, which are sometimes in conflict with the idea of property rights. As a matter of fact, we have a long history in Ontario of indemnifying corporations to be able to do rather nasty things on their property and not have to live with the responsibility of it. It's often indigenous peoples whose health and fundamental human rights have been compromised in the protection of the property rights of corporations.

Some of the interpretations are whether you saw women as equals and human beings, whether they got to exercise rights. I spent most of my early life, as a gay person, without the right to marry, without protections of employment, without the right to be a parent because governments, some of them up until not long ago in this House, passed votes that limited or prevented me from being a parent. As a matter of fact, it was only late in life that those things came. So, many of the concepts of the Magna Carta are there.

I'm hoping that we have a more enlightened view, that the idea of the right of our children's grandchildren is enshrined in the idea of seven generations' decision-making. If we actually had future generations, and intergenerational equity, as a right, we would be bound to make very different decisions about our environment. You only have to look at Grassy Narrows and some of the very current issues where we see the legacy of decisions such that if we had embraced this idea that everything in nature was our relations, if we had only made decisions for our grandchildren's grandchildren, if we had respected the indigenous cultures and were a little less Eurocentric and a little bit more about nature as the

ecosystem on which we depend and are a part of and need to celebrate, and less about the commodification of everything in nature as a product or a commodity or the exercise of the ability to garner capital and profit—which I am not opposed to, having run businesses and things like that.

1420

But I would just say, while this is an important foundation and I celebrate this and will support it, I think we need to have a little humility about the relative perspectives of how this has been interpreted.

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

I return back to the member from York–Simcoe to wrap up.

Mrs. Julia Munro: It's certainly a pleasure for me to have had the opportunity to listen to a wide divergence of ideas that the Magna Carta discussion has sparked amongst the members here.

Before I go to that, I would just like to pay particular attention—I introduced at the beginning Leonard, Suzy and Jared Rodness. They are the people who are responsible for the Magna Carta coming to Canada and being on display. The Attorney General made reference to the document being on display in Ottawa. Of course, Ottawa was only one of its locations as it travelled around, but it is these people who need your recognition of their initiative to provide Canadians across the country with an opportunity to view one of the few remaining documents that date back to that time. Remember, everything had to be written out, so it didn't have the opportunity to be printed or anything like that. But thanks to the Rodness family and their leadership, we had that opportunity in this country.

Applause.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Yes, please do. Thank you very much.

I would also, in 30 seconds, thank all of you, because I started keeping a list, and there were so many, I thought that if I just read out all of your names, it will be time up. But I believe that we've used this afternoon's time in a manner that, frankly, is wanting on a number of levels. We could do this kind of thing again, and I think it would serve us as much as it did those 800 years ago.

Thank you so much for participating in today's debate.

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

HYMNE FRANCO-ONTARIEN FRANCO-ONTARIAN ANTHEM

M. Grant Crack: Je propose que, de l'avis de cette Assemblée, la chanson « Notre Place », écrite par Paul Demers et François Dubé, soit reconnue comme l'hymne officiel des francophones de l'Ontario; et que cet hymne devienne une célébration de la contribution des Franco-Ontariennes et Franco-Ontariens de tous horizons à la province.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Crack has moved private member's notice of motion number 42.

Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

M. Grant Crack: Merci, madame la Présidente.

Chers collègues, mesdames et messieurs, quelle fierté aujourd'hui pour moi de célébrer une composante importante et symbolique de la culture franco-ontarienne. Je veux parler aujourd'hui d'une chanson qui a une très grande portée pour notre communauté franco-ontarienne et qui fait partie de notre patrimoine culturel.

Plus tôt cette semaine, j'ai déposé une motion visant à honorer la grande contribution de Paul Demers et de François Dubé, avec nous aujourd'hui, à notre francophonie ontarienne de par leur chanson « Notre Place ». Au fil des années, cette composition est devenue la chanson thème de tous les Franco-Ontariennes et Franco-Ontariens. Cette chanson parle de prendre notre place et nous rappelle que nous, les Franco-Ontariens, faisons partie intégrante de la province de l'Ontario.

La chanson « Notre Place » a été composée en 1989 alors que la Loi sur les services en français voyait le jour. C'était un grand moment. Imaginez-vous : enfin, les Franco-Ontariens avaient un mécanisme pour faire reconnaître leur droit à recevoir des services en français en Ontario.

Pour célébrer cette victoire, MM. Demers et Dubé ont créé un hymne rassembleur pour toute notre communauté.

Dans cette chanson, on dit :

Pour mettre les accents là où il le faut
Faut se lever, il faut célébrer
Notre place
Aujourd'hui pour demain
Notre place
Pour un avenir meilleur
Notre place
Oui donnons-nous la main
Notre place
Ça vient du fond du coeur.

Cette chanson, tout comme la Loi 8, a marqué une nouvelle période pour notre communauté et a permis de renforcer la culture franco-ontarienne contemporaine. Cette chanson a permis à la communauté de se rallier autour d'un point commun. Elle a soulevé les foules et a servi de levier pour les mouvements historiques comme celui qui a permis de sauver l'Hôpital Montfort. Cette chanson est maintenant chantée dans les rassemblements culturels, dans les écoles et est devenue un des points communs que se partagent les francophones de l'Ontario, peu importe où ils se trouvent.

Elle en a inspiré d'autres. Je suis fier que Jean-Pierre Perreault et Brian St-Pierre aient aussi composé une chanson pour les Franco-Ontariens, « Mon beau drapeau », qu'on entend aussi souvent un peu partout.

Aujourd'hui, il n'y a pas de doute, nous sommes encore plus fiers d'être franco-ontariens, et quelle fierté de voir que notre francophonie, notre place, c'est celle de francophones qui viennent aussi de partout dans le monde.

En 2016, comme il y a 400 ans, lorsque Samuel de Champlain mit pied sur terre en Ontario, « Notre place / Ça vient du fond du cœur ». Cette place, elle est l'objet aujourd'hui d'une grande reconnaissance tant chez nos frères et sœurs québécois—et je suis québécois, je suis né à Sherbrooke—et acadiens que chez nos proches amis français européens, africains et asiatiques. Cette place, elle est moderne, ouverte sur le monde et également soucieuse du bien-être de sa population comme des populations d'ailleurs. Et d'ailleurs, depuis l'automne dernier, l'Ontario a sa place à la table de la Francophonie internationale : une reconnaissance internationale pour la francophonie ontarienne.

Mais ce n'est pas tout. On sait que 70 % de l'immigration francophone hors du Québec se fait en Ontario, et nous sommes en train de regarder comment mieux intégrer ces nouveaux arrivants qui se retrouvent de plus en plus ici dans la région du grand Toronto.

L'an dernier, la première ministre Wynne présentait les excuses du gouvernement par rapport au règlement 17 qui a affecté tellement de Franco-Ontariens au début du siècle dernier. Nous avons aussi un commissaire aux services en français qui est maintenant indépendant. Nous avons des régions et des organismes désignés par la Loi sur les services en français partout en province. Nous aurons même un monument dédié aux Franco-Ontariens à Queen's Park dès 2018.

Bref, nous en avons fait du chemin depuis ces 30 dernières années et à chaque étape, la chanson « Notre Place » nous a accompagnés. Je lisais dans un article de Radio-Canada récemment une citation de l'ancien président de l'AFO, un de mes amis, M. Denis Vaillancourt. Denis affirmait ceci : « C'est la chanson qui m'a toujours inspiré et quand je dis aux gens : “Faites le réflexe franco”, et bien ça veut dire : “Prends ta place”, et Paul le chantait haut et fort... »

Les Franco-Ontariens sont un peuple fort et résilient. Ses victoires successives n'ont jamais signifié la fin du combat, et il faut continuer. Tel est le message dans « Notre Place ». Nous sommes 612 000. Nous sommes là pour rester et nous allons continuer à contribuer à la province de l'Ontario avec notre langue, notre histoire, notre culture et notre savoir-faire.

1430

Malheureusement, Paul Demers nous a quittés en 2016. C'est une grande perte pour notre communauté. Néanmoins, l'héritage qu'il laisse pour les Franco-Ontariens nous marquera pour toujours. Je suis, d'ailleurs, très honoré de la présence ici de l'épouse de M. Demers, Sylvie, ainsi que de François Dubé, coauteur de la chanson « Notre Place. » Bienvenue. Merci d'être ici avec nous aujourd'hui. Ça nous fait chaud au cœur de vous avoir ici.

Notre motion reconnaît « Notre Place » comme l'hymne officiel des francophones de l'Ontario. L'idée

fait son chemin depuis longtemps. J'espère que les raisons que je vous ai données aujourd'hui vous ont convaincus que « Notre Place » est notre hymne.

Ce projet a été initié, madame la Présidente, par la Fondation de l'Hôpital Montfort, en plus d'être soutenu par l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario et l'Association des professionnels de la chanson et de la musique. J'aimerais d'ailleurs en profiter pour remercier tous les représentants de ce cet organisme qui sont ici aujourd'hui avec nous pour ce grand moment.

Je sais que ce projet trouvera aussi du soutien parmi plusieurs associations dans ma circonscription de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, mais aussi partout en province. Au cours des prochains mois, j'invite les gens de notre communauté à communiquer avec nous pour nous faire savoir ce que « Notre Place » représente, et alors que nous célébrons le 150^e anniversaire du pays et de l'Ontario, j'espère que tout le monde continuera de célébrer la force de notre communauté en chantant haut et fort « Notre Place ».

Merci, chers amis. Je vais chanter.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm very proud to rise today to speak to this motion on behalf of my residents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

First of all, I would like to say that I support the motion to celebrate the contributions of Ontario's francophone community to this great province and our great country. I'm disappointed that, unfortunately, I will be away during the vote as I must attend an important school closure meeting tonight.

I can appreciate the underlying meaning behind the song as francophones in Ontario try to preserve their language.

In the late 1800s, the main language in my home county of Glengarry was Gaelic, brought over from Scotland by the early settlers. The disappearance of Gaelic is a major blow to our Scottish heritage, and I support the actions of the Ontario francophones to maintain this critical aspect of their heritage.

Ontario has much to be proud of from all its ethnic groups. They all joined together to leave a serious mark not only on our history, but on that of the world. The francophones are a proud and major contributor to that.

We came together as a nation to stop American aggression in the War of 1812. I would think that without the crucial early role by Canada and all its cultural groups in 1914 and 1939, the world might be a very different place today.

Speaker, I'd like to talk of my experiences of growing up in Glengarry county, next to the province of Quebec. Many of my friends and neighbours were francophones who had moved into the area from Quebec, buying farms and joining the local community. We played hockey together, attended and supported the same church in Glen Nevis and we supported the same corner stores in North Lancaster and in Dalhousie, Quebec. We socialized together in the Quebec hotels.

As a result, not only is our county a product of the Scottish and francophone cultures—I'm proud of that—but my family is as well, and I am proud of that.

We celebrate our Celtic culture and its music, which is a combination of the music of France, Scotland and Ireland. The ties are strong in Glengarry, and highlight the strength of our history and appreciate the popular attire that can be found around the county and proudly worn with the caption, "Glengarry My Home."

Tonight, I will be attending a meeting to deal with the closure of many schools in eastern Ontario. An interesting fact has come to be very obvious to me throughout this discussion: As you look at the schools, those offering French and French-language immersion education are either full or over capacity. The board is just realizing now that the vast majority of residents of eastern Ontario are demanding that their child receive French-language education.

Studies show that children generally do much better when they learn two languages. I believe that they should look at eastern Ontario to ensure that these two proud languages remain strong and vibrant, and spread the movement across the province.

I believe that it is important to protect our heritage and our language, and that certainly includes the francophone language and culture. It is becoming clear that it is very important for the success of our country, as well as our children and our future. Merci.

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

M. Michael Mantha: Sylvie, François, nos amis qui nous rejoignent aujourd'hui: bonjour. J'espère de partager aujourd'hui un discours à l'intention de rendre hommage à M. Paul Demers.

Paul est né en 1956 dans la région de l'Outaouais au Québec, une région qui partage une frontière avec l'Ontario. Mais c'est notre province qu'il a choisie comme maison. Il est devenu un musicien fier de ses racines francophones, promouvant la culture francophone avec sa musique. Il est devenu un fils adopté de la communauté franco-ontarienne.

En 1989, Paul a composé son grand classique intitulé « Notre Place » avec l'entrée en vigueur de la Loi 8. Cette nouvelle loi garantissait à tous les francophones vivant en Ontario le droit de recevoir des services de la part des ministères et organismes du gouvernement de la province dans leur propre langue maternelle. Paul était amoureux de la langue française et, durant toute sa vie, resta un grand porte-parole et défenseur de nos droits.

Paul avait toujours été intéressé à la musique et aux arts. Il jouait de la guitare, l'instrument qui l'accompagna durant toute sa carrière à travers tous ses spectacles. À l'âge de 22 ans, il faisait déjà parti du groupe Purlaine avec Sylvain Lavoie, Richard de Grandmont et Michel Loiselle.

En 1981, encore dans sa vingtaine, Paul fut diagnostiqué avec la maladie de Hodgkin, un cancer lymphatique. Pour certains, ce genre de drame met fin à une carrière, aussi prometteuse qu'elle soit. Pour

d'autres, c'est une source de motivation. Les éternels optimistes comme Paul n'y voient qu'une source d'inspiration.

Paul s'en tira. Il resta cependant au repos pendant plusieurs années, alors que son public s'ennuyait de lui. Son dynamisme sur scène était dans la mémoire de tous. Malgré son jeune âge, il avait déjà marqué l'imaginaire de son public.

L'entrée en vigueur de la Loi 8 marque une étape importante pour la communauté francophone qui est désormais franchie. Dans l'excitation des choses, un ami proche de Paul, François Dubé, l'approche pour lui parler de cette nouvelle loi. Il savait que de nombreux artistes, politiciens, hommes d'affaires et autres allaient tous se réunir pour célébrer l'accomplissement. Une mosaïque de la culture francophone de l'Ontario serait là pour célébrer le passage de la Loi 8, et l'évènement allait être diffusé à travers le pays.

François expliqua que le producteur de l'évènement, un Québécois, ne connaissait pas la communauté franco-ontarienne et voulait jouer une chanson dont tous ceux assemblés cette soirée-là allaient toujours se souvenir. La chanson composée par Paul Demers et François Dubé, intitulée « Notre Place », est devenue une source d'inspiration pour les Franco-Ontariens et elle fut utilisée pour des jours d'actions et de rassemblements qui suivirent.

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La première fois que Paul et François ont joué cette chanson devant une foule à Toronto, les mots ont résonné dans le coeur des Franco-Ontariens, un moment fort en émotions. Entouré d'un public francophone qui acclamait son grand retour sur scène, Paul rendit hommage à tous les francophones de notre province avec un hymne qui soulignait notre contribution passée et future. « Notre Place » est devenue un symbole de la victoire et de l'accomplissement des francophones en Ontario.

Durant la bataille pour réclamer la survie de l'Hôpital Montfort à Ottawa, le seul hôpital administré en français à l'ouest du Québec, plus de 10 000 Franco-Ontariens se sont rassemblés au parc Lansdowne pour protester la fermeture. Le chant, « Notre Place », de Paul et François, était le chant de rassemblement du public qui s'était rassemblé cette journée-là. Grâce à leurs efforts, nous avons une communauté francophone en Ontario plus forte que jamais.

Aujourd'hui, une école du Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est porte le nom Notre-Place. La nouvelle génération de jeunes Franco-Ontariens va se souvenir de l'impact de cette chanson, du progrès de nos valeurs et du long combat pour finalement avoir nos droits respectés dans notre province. Ils vont aussi se souvenir de Paul Demers et de François Dubé.

Quelques années plus tard, Paul affronta un second cancer. Il en sortit vainqueur encore une fois. Dans les années qui suivirent, Paul joua plusieurs genres et styles de musique tels que la musique cajun, le rock, le blues et la musique avec des tons irlandais. Il voyagea à travers les États-Unis, ainsi que la France, durant ses tournées

mondiales. C'était un homme de grand talent qui faisait rayonner la culture franco-ontarienne au pays et à l'étranger comme chez nous.

En collaboration avec le groupe CANO, qui rassemble des musiciens et les aide avec la promotion de leur musique, Paul a œuvré à créer l'APCM en 1990, une association de professionnels de la chanson et de la musique franco-canadienne. Paul était un membre fondateur et ancien président de cette merveilleuse association.

La musique de Paul a aidé à donner confiance aux Franco-Ontariens, qui avaient été sous-représentés pendant longtemps. Paul leur a donné une voix. C'était un homme avec une passion incomparable au sujet de la langue française. Il avait comme objectif de défendre et promouvoir la culture francophone par l'entremise des arts et en s'exprimant avec sa musique.

En 2011, Paul lança son dernier album, intitulé « Encore une fois ». Cet album fut une collaboration avec plusieurs autres artistes : Damien Robitaille, Tricia Foster, Shawn Sasyniuk, Olivier Fairfield et Daniel Boivin.

La 42^e Nuit sur l'étang à Sudbury a rendu hommage au chanteur franco-ontarien Paul Demers à l'auditorium Fraser de l'Université Laurentienne. Ce fut le dernier spectacle pour Paul : un rassemblement de francophones de partout au Canada, tous ensemble ce jour-là pour écouter la musique de Paul une dernière fois et remercier leur héros qui leur a toujours parlé directement à travers sa musique.

Tristement, l'année passée, Paul fut diagnostiqué avec un nouveau cancer. Cette fois-ci, c'était aux poumons. Il resta positif et préférait profiter du temps qui lui restait. Il voulait composer une dernière chanson, en utilisant sa guitare électrique, autour du thème de la mort.

Il nous a quitté beaucoup trop tôt, le 29 octobre 2016, à l'âge de 60 ans. Il aura vécu une vie remarquable, et nous, nous avons perdu un musicien et compositeur sans équivalent, sans mentionner un champion de la défense de la langue française. Il sera pour toujours dans l'histoire de la francophonie en Ontario. Sa chanson « Notre Place » nous rassemble et rappelle notre identité, et nous donne le goût de chanter. On se sent fier quand on l'entend.

Paul Demers est un champion des droits des francophones à l'extérieur du Québec. Notre culture et notre histoire ne seraient certainement pas pareilles sans la contribution de cet homme remarquable. Il aura su nous donner les mots pour exprimer notre fierté d'être francophone en terre d'Amérique, d'être francophone à l'extérieur du Québec, d'être francophone en Ontario. Ce n'est pas parce que notre histoire ne date pas d'hier qu'elle n'est pas à risque de disparaître. On l'a conservée par nos droits que l'on a lentement acquis, mais il faut qu'on reste vigilant.

Je suis très fier de pouvoir adresser cette Assemblée dans ma langue maternelle aujourd'hui, et je suis très fier d'avoir pu souligner l'histoire d'un illustre Franco-

Ontarien qui a inspiré notre communauté et qui a aidé à la reconnaissance de notre place dans cette province.

De la part de M. Demers, un héros de la communauté francophone, ses mots dans sa chanson « Notre Place » :

Pour ne plus avoir
Notre langue dans nos poches
Je vais chanter
Je vais chanter

Que tu viennes
De Pointe-aux-Roches ou Orléans
Je vais chanter
Je vais chanter

Pour mettre les accents là où il le faut
Faut se lever, il faut célébrer
Notre place
Aujourd'hui pour demain

Notre place
Pour un avenir meilleur
Notre place
Oui donnons-nous la main
Notre place
Ça vient du fond du coeur
Du fond du coeur

Que tu viennes de Lafontaine
Ou de North Bay
Je vais chanter
Je vais chanter

Afin de pouvoir nous rapprocher
D'ici jusqu'à Fauquier
Je vais chanter
Je vais chanter

Notre place
Pour un avenir meilleur
Notre place
Oui donnons-nous la main
Notre place
Ça vient du fond du coeur
Du fond du coeur

Sylvie, François, d'un p'tit gars de Gogama, j'espère que j'ai donné hommage à notre grand héros de la communauté francophone. Merci beaucoup.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Merci.

I recognize the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and minister responsible for francophone affairs.

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Je vais dire à mon collègue : une très belle allocution. Merci, Michael.

Écoutez : cette motion est très importante pour moi à plusieurs niveaux. D'abord, pour son importance politique pour la communauté franco-ontarienne, et, comme j'ai expliqué un peu plus tôt à certains de mes

collègues, il y a deux semaines j'ai eu la chance d'être assise à la même table que le tout premier ministre des Affaires francophones, M. Bernard Grandmaître. C'était au gala Bernard Grandmaître de l'ACFO d'Ottawa.

Notre conversation nous a menés naturellement sur la création de la Loi 8, la Loi sur les services en français, qui fut remplie d'obstacles pour M. Grandmaître. Je vais vous dire que c'était vraiment fascinant, un récit politique qui était fascinant et, croyez-moi, avec plusieurs, plusieurs petites notes.

Quand il a décrit le moment où, enfin, la loi est passée en Chambre, j'aurais aimé que vous soyez là pour l'entendre. C'était pour lui, mais aussi pour nous, Franco-Ontariens, le début d'une nouvelle ère de droits et de représentation politique.

Ça montre l'importance de cette chanson pour nous, Franco-Ontariens. Elle nous a accompagnés depuis la création de la Loi sur les services en français. C'était effectivement la chanson de ralliement lors de la bataille pour sauver l'Hôpital Montfort, et aujourd'hui on célèbre 20 ans. Le 2 mars 1997 était la journée officielle de ce beau rassemblement.

C'est devenu, cette chanson, un phare pour plusieurs communautés de la province. C'est la chanson que tous les artistes aussi ont entonnée en chœur à la fin du spectacle de Contact ontariois cette année.

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Il y a beaucoup d'exemples—et je sais qu'on en a fait référence dans les dernières minutes, madame la Présidente—qui ont été soulevés. Cette chanson est aussi un rappel du grand artiste qu'était Paul Demers. Nous voulons lui rendre hommage aujourd'hui par le fait même.

D'ailleurs, j'ai eu la chance de rencontrer M. Paul Demers et sa conjointe, Sylvie, à l'inauguration de l'école Notre-Place dans notre communauté d'Ottawa-Orléans, il y a quelque temps. Quelle fierté. Quelle fierté de voir les mots de Paul résonner dans un établissement pour nos jeunes francophones. C'était vraiment pour moi un honneur d'être présente lors de cette inauguration de cette école. J'ai eu la chance de rencontrer Paul. J'ai eu la chance de le féliciter de son travail qu'il a fait.

Comme on a mentionné, malheureusement, M. Demers n'est plus avec nous. Mais je voudrais saluer la présence de madame qui est ici, et aussi de M. François Dubé, qui est avec nous cet après-midi, le coauteur de cette belle chanson.

Parce qu'il faut le dire, cette chanson est devenu davantage qu'un élément rassembleur. C'est un hymne célébrant toutes nos victoires au cours des 30 dernières années, et, je l'espère, un hymne qui sera entonné par les générations de demain.

En terminant, j'aimerais reconnaître encore une fois la présence de plusieurs représentants—je sais qu'on l'a soulevé—qui sont ici aujourd'hui : Sylvie et François. Merci d'être ici. Merci du fond du cœur de vous être déplacés avec nous cet après-midi. J'aimerais aussi remercier la Fondation de l'Hôpital Montfort, qui a initié le projet, avec l'appui de l'AFO et de l'APCM. Merci

beaucoup. On chante, et on continuera de chanter « Notre Place ». Merci.

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

M. Victor Fedeli: La première ligne de « Notre Place » fait référence au poème « Gens d'ici » de Jean Marc Dalpé. Il parle de personnes gardant leur langue dans leurs poches, des francophones se cachant à la vue en choisissant de ne pas parler en français.

Ce manque de sécurité ou de confiance entraîne l'assimilation et finalement la disparition de l'un des groupes fondateurs de l'Ontario. C'est une grande peur pour chaque génération de francophones, que ce patrimoine fier et tenace ne survive pas au siècle prochain.

La chanson « Notre Place » avise que les francophones ne garderont pas leur langue dans leurs poches. Ils seront entendus. Ils mettront des accents là où ils appartiennent et ils célébreront avec d'autres qui chanteront avec eux.

Après que la province de l'Ontario a garanti les services provinciaux dans les deux langues officielles en 1989, Paul Demers a écrit cette chanson pour encourager les francophones de tout l'Ontario à demander leurs services en français avec confiance et fierté.

La chanson parle de cinq villes, une de chaque région : nord, sud, est, ouest, et au cœur même de l'Ontario, ma ville natale de North Bay. Avec la population francophone étant la plus élevée à l'extérieur du Québec, plus d'un demi-million de francophones en Ontario ont chanté « Notre Place » chaque fois qu'ils se réunissaient, pour réaffirmer leur langue, leur culture, leurs symboles, leurs histoires et leurs héros. Un tel héros, de North Bay, est le cocréateur du drapeau franco-ontarien, Michel Dupuis.

J'encourage toutes les municipalités à célébrer le Jour des Franco-Ontariens en levant le drapeau franco-ontarien le 25 septembre, comme nous le faisons à North Bay. Pendant que le drapeau se lève, j'encourage qu'on chante « Notre Place » afin que tous les francophones sachent qu'ils font partie d'une communauté valorisée dans toute la province.

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

L'hon. Eleanor McMahon: Aujourd'hui, il me fait un grand plaisir et je suis fière de pouvoir me lever en Chambre pour soutenir avec mes collègues cette motion, qui est importante pour la communauté francophone de l'Ontario.

D'ailleurs, j'aimerais saluer et faire la bienvenue à nos invités, surtout à M^{me} Demers qui est ici. Bienvenue ici. On est très fier de vous avoir et de vous accueillir ici dans la Chambre aujourd'hui. Merci d'être venus.

Madame la Présidente, c'est très important, surtout pour la communauté francophone de l'Ontario, mais aussi pour moi-même comme ministre de la Culture de l'Ontario et pour notre gouvernement aussi. Du côté personnel, cette fierté est due, entre autres, à mon histoire personnelle. Vous savez peut-être, madame la Présidente,

que j'ai grandi à Windsor, une région où on compte une petite mais forte communauté franco-ontarienne, fière de son histoire et de sa culture. J'ai également étudié en France à l'Université de Nantes. Ça fait 30 ans, mais quand même, je suis fière et très heureuse de pouvoir communiquer en français dans la Chambre.

J'aimerais aussi préciser que Windsor, c'est là où a vu le jour la toute première école française en Ontario, en 1786, dans le sud-ouest de l'Ontario à la Pointe-de-Montréal, aujourd'hui le quartier Sandwich à Windsor.

En tant que ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport, je peux vous dire que la dualité linguistique est essentielle pour moi. La culture francophone est tellement riche et vient contribuer à notre formidable bagage culturel en Ontario. Le français, ça fait partie de ce que nous sommes en Ontario. Donc, je suis, dans ma capacité de parler français, très fière de mon bilinguisme, qui est un don très important pour moi.

C'est à travers la culture que nous faisons rayonner nos communautés, et aujourd'hui, avec la chanson « Notre Place », nous pouvons véhiculer un message fort aux générations futures franco-ontariennes qui chanteront la chanson haut et fort. Cette chanson est devenue davantage qu'un élément rassembleur pour les Franco-Ontariens. C'est un hymne célébrant toutes nos victoires au cours des 30 dernières années.

D'ailleurs, madame la Présidente, j'ai tellement de beaux souvenirs de M. Grandmaître. J'ai travaillé sur la colline parlementaire, et je connaissais M. Grandmaître, qui était un grand homme dans la francophonie en Ontario. Je suis fière de lui. On est tous fier, je pense, de notre ancien collègue.

Finalement, j'espère que cette chanson, cet hymne de l'Ontario et des Franco-Ontariens, sera entonnée par les générations de demain.

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

M^{me} Gila Martow: Je suis très heureuse aujourd'hui de me lever pour supporter la motion qui reconnaît la chanson « Notre Place », et pour que cet hymne devienne une célébration de la contribution faite par les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes dans toute la province.

Cette chanson a été chantée pour la première fois sur scène à Toronto le 19 novembre 1989, a été écrite par Paul Demers avec le musicien François Dubé, et est devenue l'hymne officiel des francophones en Ontario.

Je suis sûre que je n'ai pas votre permission de chanter, alors je vais lire la chanson « Notre Place » :

Pour ne plus avoir
Notre langue dans nos poches
Je vais chanter
Je vais chanter

Que tu viennes
De Pointe-aux-Roches ou Orléans
Je vais chanter
Je vais chanter

Pour mettre les accents là où il le faut
Faut se lever, il faut célébrer
Notre place
Aujourd'hui pour demain

Notre place
Pour un avenir meilleur
Notre place
Oui donnons-nous la main
Notre place
Ça vient du fond du coeur
Du fond du coeur

Que tu viennes de Lafontaine
Ou de North Bay
Je vais chanter
Je vais chanter

Afin de pouvoir nous rapprocher
D'ici jusqu'à Fauquier
Je vais chanter
Je vais chanter

1500

Demers a écrit « Notre place » pour marquer l'adoption de l'acte sur les services en langue française, un acte qui garantit au Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes le droit d'obtenir des services fournis par le gouvernement provincial en français dans certaines zones désignées.

J'ai grandi au Québec et je comprends la fierté des communautés francophones envers leur langue et encore davantage leur héritage. Mes parents, deux anglophones, ont fait l'effort de bien apprendre le français, même si leur langue maternelle était le yiddish. Ils ont fait plus que simplement encourager leurs enfants à parler français : ils nous ont poussés à apprécier la culture québécoise et plus que tout, sa joie de vivre.

Je me rappelle quand j'ai assisté à un festival français canadien quand j'étais enfant. J'étais captivée par une danse traditionnelle franco-canadienne où les danseurs devaient sautiller de part et d'autre d'un balai tout en portant des jupes très colorées.

J'adorais également être dans un restaurant de Montréal quand, à l'occasion de l'anniversaire de quelqu'un à une table de francophones, les gens chantaient, « Gens du pays, c'est votre tour, de vous laisser parler d'amour ». C'est l'hymne non officiel du Québec, de Gilles Vigneault.

L'amour exprimé dans la chanson était brillant pour moi, car il n'était pas seulement l'amour pour le garçon ou la fille dont on célébrait l'anniversaire, mais aussi l'amour pour les chansons populaires françaises, d'où provenaient ces paroles.

Malheureusement, l'artiste Paul Demers, l'un des auteurs de la chanson « Notre Place », est décédé il y a quelques mois à l'âge de seulement 60 ans. La communauté francophone est en deuil et je suis confiante que le passage de cette motion fournira un peu de soulagement.

J'ai hâte de chanter « Notre Place » à la prochaine levée du drapeau ainsi que pendant d'autres événements francophones.

En tant que porte-parole des communautés francophones pour le groupe des conservateurs, je me joins aux Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes pour dire : continuons à prendre notre place, votre place, c'est notre place à tous. Aussi, je veux dire que je suis très fière de porter la broche du drapeau franco-ontarien aujourd'hui. C'est vert et blanc avec les deux fleurs : la fleur de lys et la fleur du trille. Merci beaucoup, madame la Présidente, et j'espère qu'on peut chanter ensemble aujourd'hui et tout le temps.

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

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: C'est avec grand plaisir et beaucoup d'émotion que je me lève aujourd'hui pour appuyer la démarche de mon collègue de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell pour faire déclarer la célèbre chanson « Notre Place » de Paul Demers et François Dubé l'hymne officiel des Franco-Ontariens.

La chanson commence en disant qu'il ne faut pas avoir notre langue dans nos poches, et, madame la Présidente, j'aimerais vous expliquer pourquoi un hymne est essentiel pour la communauté franco-ontarienne et pourquoi « Notre Place » est l'hymne parfait pour la communauté franco-ontarienne.

Toutes les communautés ont besoin de personnes qui leur donnent leur voix, qui leur permettent de s'exprimer complètement. Il nous faut des artistes pour célébrer nos institutions, comme l'Hôpital Montfort et toutes les institutions dont beaucoup sont dans mon comté d'Ottawa–Vanier.

Il nous faut des artistes pour célébrer nos moments importants, comme la Loi 8. Il nous faut des artistes pour créer des produits culturels dans lesquels on se reconnaît, qui sont accessibles à tous et à toutes, qui permettent aux enfants et aux jeunes générations de s'identifier à leur communauté et d'en être fiers, et qui permettent aux nouveaux arrivants de s'intégrer et de vouloir faire partie d'une communauté.

« Notre Place » a tous les attributs d'un hymne qu'on veut garder. Pour les Franco-Ontariens, il faut choisir chaque jour de parler et de vivre en français. On a besoin d'un hymne pour nous rassembler et pour nous donner le courage de continuer de le faire.

L'hymne « Notre Place » a cinq caractéristiques qui en font l'hymne parfait pour la communauté franco-ontarienne.

D'abord, c'est un hymne rassembleur. Il invite tout le monde, de Pointe-aux-Roches à Orléans, de Lafontaine à North Bay et à Fauquier, à chanter ensemble. Il nous invite aussi à nous donner la main. C'est donc un hymne qui, par sa définition et par son texte, est rassembleur.

C'est aussi un texte et une chanson qui est porteur d'optimisme et qui offre une vision positive de la communauté. C'est une communauté qui vise l'avenir. La chanson nous invite à considérer notre avenir comme

un avenir meilleur et à travailler aujourd'hui pour demain.

Troisièmement, c'est un hymne dont le message est toujours présent. C'est un hymne qui nous amène à ne pas avoir la langue dans nos poches, à nous lever pour célébrer, et à nous donner la main—des actions qu'on doit continuer de faire chaque jour.

C'est évidemment un thème et un hymne qui célèbre la fierté de la communauté et sa contribution, sa présence en Ontario par le passé et pour l'avenir.

Finalement, c'est un thème qui est idéal parce qu'il se chante très bien et il nous invite tous à entonner la chanson, un hymne nécessaire pour la communauté qui a besoin de célébrer sa langue constamment.

Mes enfants ont chanté « Notre Place » à l'école et dans des rassemblements. J'ai chanté « Notre Place » lors des journées de célébration de la francophonie. Mes voisins ont chanté « Notre Place », et nous voulons que tous et toutes continuent de chanter « Notre Place » pour honorer, célébrer et soutenir la communauté franco-ontarienne.

I want to say that I am so delighted that all members of the House will support this motion, "Notre Place," because it shows that we are all there to support the contribution of the francophone community to Ontario.

Alors, je dis tout cela—tout mon amour pour la francophonie, mon amour pour Ottawa–Vanier, le berceau de cette initiative, souvent—du fond du cœur. Merci beaucoup.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I will return back to the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell to wrap up.

M. Grant Crack: Je veux remercier tous les députés qui ont parlé sur cette motion aujourd'hui.

J'espère de tout cœur que tout le monde appuiera notre motion aujourd'hui. Pour moi, montrer l'importance de notre communauté francophone ici à Queen's Park est très, très important.

En tant que francophile, je peux vous dire que je suis particulièrement fier aujourd'hui. Il y a évidemment beaucoup de fiers francophones dans ma circonscription de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, et je sais qu'ils seront heureux de voir la reconnaissance que nous leur apportons avec cette motion. Je pense aussi à mes trois enfants, qui sont complètement bilingues. Je sais qu'ils sont heureux de voir que leur province leur rend hommage aujourd'hui, mais aussi demain, car c'est l'avenir de notre communauté que nous voulons voir rayonner chaque jour.

En terminant, je veux aussi remercier tout le monde qui est ici aujourd'hui. J'espère que je ne manquerai personne.

Sylvie Demers, l'épouse : merci beaucoup de votre présence.

François Dubé, vous êtes un homme incroyable aussi. J'encourage tout le monde d'aller voir sur YouTube un vieux vidéo de Paul et François quand ils ont chanté « Notre Place ». C'est incroyable, et ça me donne des frissons aussi.

Christine, de l'Hôpital Montfort, merci pour vos mots aujourd'hui. Je suis un peu nerveux des fois, spécifiquement en français, mais elle m'a dit, « Restez calme, Grant. » Alors, merci beaucoup pour ça.

Le commissaire était ici tantôt : M. François Boileau.

À Jean Lemay, un conseiller scolaire de ma région de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, Constance et Rémi, et aux autres qui sont ici : merci beaucoup. Si j'ai manqué quelqu'un, je m'excuse. Je suis fier de vous représenter ici à Queen's Park, avec tous mes collègues ici. Merci à tous.

1510

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

CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS
AMENDMENT ACT (NOT-FOR-PROFIT
CORPORATIONS), 2017

LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA GARDE D'ENFANTS
ET LA PETITE ENFANCE
(ORGANISATIONS SANS BUT LUCRATIF)

Ms. Fife moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 98, An Act to amend the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 to limit funding of child care and early years programs and services to not-for-profit corporations / Projet de loi 98, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance en vue de restreindre le financement des programmes et services pour la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance aux organisations sans but lucratif.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to begin by welcoming Councillor Janet Davis, a long-time health care advocate, to Queen's Park.

Eight years ago, I sat in this gallery and I watched as Andrea Horwath, who at the time was not the leader, made an impassioned plea to the Liberal government of the day to focus funding on the not-for-profit sector. She urged the government to push back against big-box corporate child care businesses who were lobbying to expand their market share into Ontario.

I was here with the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, and I am privileged to be here today to stand in my place and to once again raise the issue and the importance of investing any new funding exclusively in the not-for-profit model of child care.

I will focus today on the main argument, which is quality. I will also address almost 30 years of research and evidence which directly link the quality of early learning and care to the not-for-profit model—30 years of research that, in 2017, should not be ignored as it was in 2008. I will also address the importance and connection between access and affordability.

Why is this legislation important? The government has promised to add 100,000 child care spaces, and because Ontario does not have a comprehensive system of early learning and care, there is an opportunity to design a system with quality at the centre, minus a profit agenda which will compromise access and affordability.

The minister will tell you that we need commercial operators in rural and northern communities, that that's all the choice they have. She forgets to mention that it is this government's fault that it is their only choice in those communities. We need to change that.

She will also fail to mention that commercial operators have accelerated their expansion in the GTA, in Vaughan, in Markham, in Brampton and in Mississauga. They are charging exorbitant rates, they are delivering poor-quality care, but families have no choice in those communities, because this government has no plan and has failed families and children on child care for too long.

On quality: This minister and this government knows this well, because of the number of formal complaints that the ministry has received about nutrition, about safety, about supervision and, yes, even critical incident reports about excessive discipline of children in these for-profit centres. This knowledge needs to inform policy.

These commercial operators are businesses. They care about money. They see an opportunity with this government to expand. They want to grow, in the absence of the courage to build a system of care with children at the centre. I will tell you, Madam Speaker, that there is a lot of money on the table, and they see opportunity with this government.

I have one message for the minister: The parents in Ontario are not interested in poor-quality care. They want the best, and their children deserve the best.

We need to have some context. We are in exactly the same place we were in over a decade ago, with only one out of five families having access to licensed child care. In 2008, just under 20% of families had access to licensed child care. In 2017, that statistic has not significantly changed.

Affordability is a dream for families, and across the province, our families are paying the highest child care prices across the country. In fact, in Ontario, they pay, on average, \$150 more per month. The average monthly fee for a preschooler aged three to five in Toronto is over \$1,000; in Markham, over \$1,000; in Ottawa, \$1,000; in Vaughan, over \$1,000.

Another reason why this legislation is needed is, in January 2012—and this is a significant change from the 2008 bill—the government moved the responsibility of child care under the Ministry of Education. This is significant and hopefully not symbolic. We do not farm out the delivery of public education to the private sector. We should clearly indicate that the early learning and care of our most vulnerable citizens—our children—should be recognized as a public good, not a service-for-purchase agreement with a built-in profit quota. We

wouldn't dream of expanding our school system through private businesses and neither should we rely on for-profit corporations to care for our youngest and most vulnerable children.

On quality, research and evidence should matter. Research dating from 1986, the first report from Martha Friendly at the time: *Daycare for Profit: Where Does the Money Go?* Well, we do know where the money doesn't go, Madam Speaker. It doesn't go to materials; it doesn't go to ECE training; it doesn't even go to nutrition.

Doherty, Friendly, Forer, 2002: *Child Care by Default or Design?* In Ontario, it has been by default. These researchers showed that the lower-quality ratings of for-profit child care centres were not only a matter of access to financial resources, but due to some of their fundamental practices. For-profit corporations typically hire higher proportions of untrained staff and pay them lower wages. This results in higher staff turnover and lower morale, which affects quality.

Cleveland, Hyatt, Japel and Krashinsky—*An Economic Perspective on the Current and Future Role of Nonprofit Provision of Early Learning and Child Care Services in Canada*: “Strong patterns of non-profit superiority in producing quality child care services across all data studied.”

And of course, Charles Pascal, otherwise known as “He who shall not be named” these days, essentially did propose a not-for-profit, hybrid universal system of care with the seamless day.

The Childcare Resource and Research Unit has been invaluable, and they have been tracking the data—data that should inform legislation. Research says that public and non-profit child care provides a higher quality of child care than for-profits do. Often, staff in the not-for-profit child care centres are more well-trained; their wages are higher; their working conditions are better; they have access to professional development; morale is higher; turnover is lower; they are better at complying with regulations; they have more favourable child-to-staff ratios; and they reinvest in their programs, instead of making the most money for their shareholders. Virtually all available research shows that being a for-profit operation is a key factor linked to lower quality. This matters, Madam Speaker.

All of this research leads to a simple conclusion: In the pursuit of profit, for-profit commercial child care corporations are more likely to cut costs when it comes to staffing, supplies and equipment. And so we have the evidence—evidence that should guide policy and legislation. We have the qualitative research. The voices of parents in this province have been loud and clear on this issue.

I will share my personal experience. I started my career as an activist when I became a parent of Aidan. Orde Street daycare, a not-for-profit child care centre here in Toronto, was an eye-opening experience—the cost of it—but I was willing to pay the cost because these great people, these early childhood educators, were taking care of my son. What more important job is there?

If I couldn't do it, I want qualified people to do that work as well. But when I moved to Kitchener-Waterloo, it was all business, all the time. There was only one place I could find child care. They had a sales pitch, a little peek-a-boo option so I could come to Toronto, go on the computer and I could look into that infant care room and I could literally see that there was a different ECE every single day with my son. So I was paying to actually see how unhappy my child was, so I left the workforce, like many women across Ontario, because they do not have options. We can do better in Ontario, and we must do better.

It's worth noting that we are so far behind. Every dollar that is invested in child care on a go-forward position needs to go to improving access, to ensuring quality and addressing affordability, something that this government has said they care about, but they will not build that system if it goes to the profits of commercial operators instead of increased spaces, instead of increased quality.

1520

In Toronto alone, there are approximately 17,000 children on a waiting list for affordable child care. If this government moved forward with the intention and purpose to design a system focused on a not-for-profit delivery model, and if you don't embed profits for commercial child care businesses into the system, there will be more money for subsidies to improve access for our poorest families in the province of Ontario. If you don't focus on the for-profit model, we can reduce fees and invest in a special-needs strategy for our youngest children.

Our child care system is not inclusive in the province of Ontario. We can create more spaces if you don't focus on the for-profit model, and we can finally address the early childhood educators' remuneration in a real way. The city of Toronto has made a principled decision to invest in quality by investing only in the not-for-profit model. We believe strongly that the province should follow.

I will mention that what this bill cannot do is address the need for sustainable funding because it's a private member's bill. This bill cannot impact the leadership on capital costs, which are a huge issue across the province. This bill can't address special-needs funding so every child can access quality settings, because I can't direct where the province sends their money. But what this bill can do is signal to the not-for-profit operators across the province that you are serious about truly creating a quality system of child care across the province of Ontario. I certainly can't make this government follow through on their \$3 promised increase to early childhood educators' salaries, which they did not follow through on.

To the early childhood educators in the province of Ontario, I see you as more than helping hands and smiling faces. I see you as some of the most important teachers in society. We know that your jobs help shape the potential of our society. We thank you for caring for our most vulnerable children, growing our future leaders, our economy and, essentially, addressing the fight for equality in Ontario.

What I would urge the government to do—plead, even—is signal today that you are serious about creating a system of care in the province of Ontario. You have a certain amount of money on the table that you have promised. That money, every single dollar, needs to go to quality child care, not to the profit margins of operators. We need to finally create a truly inclusive and universal system of care in the province of Ontario. This bill is the first step to that. It is all I can do today; I would do more. Please support Bill 98 and support quality, not-for-profit child care in the province of Ontario.

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

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I am pleased to speak today to Bill 98, put forth by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

I think we all can agree that it's important for Ontario families to have access to high-quality child care. I think we can all agree that child care provides kids with important foundational tools to support their long-term success. And I think we can all agree that parents and caregivers deserve to have child care options that meet the needs of their families. That's why the Premier had the vision to ask me to be the minister responsible for early years and child care, because she felt we needed to put a lens and focus on early years and child care, and transform the system and what we are doing in this province.

I had the pleasure of visiting cities and towns across Ontario this winter where we engaged in public consultations about our early years and child care strategy—our plan. We heard from parents, caregivers, early years and child care providers, employers, municipalities, school boards, experts and the public. It was an unbelievable experience. We engaged face to face with more than 2,000 people and we received more than 6,000 survey submissions online. We were thorough, and we did our best to talk to the parents, caregivers and families out there about their needs and challenges. That's a lot of people, Speaker, and a lot of valuable input for our renewed framework. We wanted to hear from families on the ground about their experiences. We wanted them to inform us about what they wanted.

I have to tell you, it has helped us. It has helped us to better understand what families need from Ontario's child care and early years system, and it will guide our work as we fulfill our commitment to developing a renewed child care and early years framework and our expansion plan to create 100,000 new licensed child care spaces, which will include subsidies over the next five years. No question, it's ambitious, but no question, it's absolutely the right thing to do.

Here's what we heard: What we heard during our consultations was that access and affordability are the top issues for most parents and caregivers. We need to increase access to licensed child care spaces, not decrease it. We need to give families more options for child care, not fewer. We need to do this in an expeditious manner.

In some rural or remote communities in Ontario, for some of these families, non-profit child care is just not an

option that is available for them. I visited some of these remote areas during our consultations, and I saw it for myself. I toured centres where I met with hard-working early childhood educators and happy, healthy kids who are benefiting from high-quality programs. And in areas experiencing high growth, the demand for child care is so great that many families rely on the existing services in their communities—many of which are absolutely for-profit organizations.

The government flows funding to municipalities who, in turn, decide how to best to distribute those funds to meet the needs of their communities. If we suddenly tell them that they must put those funds only toward one sector and limit the choices, there may be adverse effects, because after all, families have said that they want more spaces. They want them now, as quickly as possible. Are we working on building a support system and a foundation that will do the best for our children and families in the future? Absolutely. Will it take more than a few months? Absolutely.

So what are we going to do? How are we going to make sure that we deliver those things that our families need today, tomorrow and in the future? Let me tell you: Our plan takes all of those pieces into account, and we will be delivering today, tomorrow and in the future.

By limiting what we are doing when it comes to for-profit care, it could result in higher fees for parents or, even worse, the centres could close. Those much needed spaces would disappear, and families would be out there struggling with fewer choices. That goes against everything that the thousands of parents and families whom I talked to said. They are the ones who are giving me the advice to do what I need to get done.

It goes against our government's commitment to provide more quality, affordable licensed child care, and it would put parents and children in a desperate situation—unacceptable. After meeting with so many Ontario families, I cannot in good faith support this bill, a bill which would mean higher costs for parents and fewer spaces for children.

We know that there is a need for for-profit child care centres, but we also recognize the importance of supporting our non-profit licensees, and our record proves that. That's why our regulatory and funding policy guidelines have prioritized funding for not-for-profit organizations. I can guarantee you that some of the representatives who are here today know that. Certainly some of the people who were in this House earlier on today and listening to the conversation know that.

That's why as of 2015, 77% of all Ontario child care centres were non-profit or operated by First Nations. That's why past capital investments have only gone to school-based, not-for-profit child care centres: because we know how important not-for-profit centres are.

Parents recognize that we have quality child care in Ontario, but we have to make it easier for them to find a licensed space, not harder. I hope the member from Kitchener–Waterloo recognizes this as well. It is about freedom of choice. Who we leave our child with at the end—

Mr. Paul Miller: That's a joke.

1530

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek knows better than to shout, and he's not even sitting in his chair.

The other piece is, there is a list—

Mr. Arthur Potts: Stop the clock.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay, I'll stop the clock. The member knows there is a list of those who were warned this morning. You know who you are.

Mr. Paul Miller: No, I wasn't on the list.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Well, you could be on it. It's never too late. You're now being warned.

I'm going to return to the minister.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Parents recognize we have child care in Ontario, but we have to make it easier for them to find a licensed space, not harder. I hope the member for Kitchener–Waterloo understands and recognizes this.

Parents need help with child care now. Child care is a personal choice. Who you leave your child with at the beginning of the day is a choice that parents alone should make. Government should not decide where that child is going to go and under what circumstances. We want to ensure that we are providing parents with all the options that give them peace of mind. They need to know that their kids are safe and that they're in a healthy learning environment. We're going to ensure that that happens.

We're modernizing child care in Ontario. We're building a system that is focused on access, affordability, quality and responsiveness. Those are our four pillars. They have been there for months. We decided on those four pillars after consulting with our sector experts. We came up with that, not the member opposite.

To do this, we need to work with Ontario families and the sector on next steps. That includes making sure that families have access to high-quality child care no matter where they live. Ontarians live in the north. They live in rural areas. They live in urban areas. They live in remote areas. One solution, one size fits all, does not necessarily meet the needs of all Ontarians. We are going to come up with a made-in-Ontario solution that seeks to ensure that all families get what they need.

This bill would be detrimental to the needs and daily lives of too many Ontario families. I have spoken to them; I understand what they need. It would restrict the options available to parents and kids. It would reduce access to the high-quality licensed child care that our youngest learners deserve. Bottom line, this bill is narrow in focus and over-simplified. The situation out there is complicated and challenging, and so it takes some time and effort to get it right—not a quick solution, not something that makes some sectors happy but doesn't try to meet the needs of all Ontarians. It takes away a parent's right to choose, to have access and to give children the best possible start in life.

Speaker, our government is investing in the future of Ontario children and a better future for our province.

That's why we are looking at this system as a whole. We will continue to modernize and transform child care in Ontario for healthy child development today and a stronger future tomorrow.

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

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I would like to begin by pointing out an important fact: A bill very similar to this one was introduced almost 10 years ago by the third party. That bill was defeated. Why are we having this same discussion again?

Parents know best when it comes to raising their own children. This bill limits funding for child care to not-for-profit corporations, but this is not the only form of child care. Some parents would prefer a tax credit to help support child care by a family member at home. Some may prefer child care facilities, and these may be either public or private. The role of government is to assert, defend and increase liberty, not to restrict it. Accordingly, I urge you all to oppose this bill.

I would like to add a few words, that I applaud the minister for her position. She is right. We need to give the private caregivers acknowledgment for doing a great job, and I would like take this moment to speak about a constituent of mine, Dalia Sakr, who runs a private daycare centre in Kanata in the high-tech sector. She employs six to eight early childhood educators. She is doing a great job of offering high-quality daycare. She has happy parents, happy kids and happy employees. Dalia Sakr is doing a great job.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Let me start by saying thank you to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

To the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, New Democrats will keep bringing in child care bills demanding public support for child care until we get child care and public support for child care, because there's a simple, simple morality behind this: Without child care that's accessible and affordable—and that means, quite frankly, universal and almost free—there is no real women's equality. Let's start from there.

To my friend the minister—and I listened intently to what she had to say—freedom of choice: absolutely. But what this bill is talking about is exactly that: freedom of choice. We currently have private, for-profit child care. We just don't have enough spaces in not-for-profit child care, so women who want that don't have freedom of choice.

Private child care will always continue, just like private schools continue in the educational system, but for sure we support our public educational system. Those who want to opt out, opt out. What we are talking about is the ability to go to work, the ability to have quality education for your child from the beginning—from the beginning. That's what we are talking about here.

I wanted to talk about two aspects of this bill and why it's so important. Number one, of course, is child care, but the second aspect of this is privatization itself. Now,

I've run businesses—and kudos to those who do—but I can tell you that it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out how private business and for-profit business works. If it's going to be competitive in pricing, their costs of doing business—whatever your rent is, in the case of child care, and your labour costs, and then there is profit on top of that. So if you are going to be competitive in price, something's got to give: It's either the labour costs or it's the quality of what you are offering in terms of where that child is and what that child is being offered, to factor in the profit cost. There's a reason that the American health care system is the most expensive in the world, just about: It's for-profit.

Our Auditor General brought in a brilliant report, kudos to her. She proved that this government has wasted \$8 billion on private-public partnerships where they could have saved that.

It stands to reason that you are going to either cut down on labour costs—and that's what we are seeing, by the way. That radical socialist organization, the CFIB, has pointed out that 17.3% more is paid to public servants. Guess what? That's a good thing. It's a good thing when people make a living wage and can pay their rent and feed themselves and feed their children. That's a good thing.

And guess what? They pay more taxes too, because as Quebec has shown, if you have affordable child care—yes, it costs more money upfront if it's public, but guess what? After a while, just like investing in business, Madam Speaker, you put the money in, it takes a while and then you get the returns. It's the same with public services like child care and education and health care. You put the money in—yes, it's a lot of money and yes, it takes some time, but guess what? It will pay for itself and more than that in the long term. That's what Quebec has proven, that's what social democratic countries have proven and that's what we would like to see proven right here in Ontario.

The minister also made the point that, well, there are no options in some rural and other areas. Please, give me a break. Would she say the same for schools, for doctors? Would she say the same for health care? Of course she wouldn't. The answer is, if there are no resources there, make sure that they get there. That's the answer: Make sure that they get there. That's what this money should be going for: Make sure that they get there, make sure that it's quality and make sure that the people working in those centres are paid a living and a decent wage, with benefits, because they're not all, right now; I can tell you that they are not.

1540

Again, there was a comparison: union, \$23.18 an hour, and that's only about 16% of the field; \$16 an hour for non-union. There is where some of the profit is coming: right off the backs of the workers. That's where some of the profit is coming, no doubt about it.

I can tell you, in downtown Toronto, how some child cares are being operated as basically a real estate flipping business, because of the cost of real estate in downtown

Toronto. If you can pay your mortgage by running a child care centre out of it, you can make a significant profit just on the real estate and the return on the real estate alone. You fix up the house, you hire some workers—again, not at a living wage—you look after some kids for a while, you sell the house at a profit, and you make a profit on child care as well. You double-dip, in fact.

Is that really where our public assets should go? Should we put billions of dollars—\$1 billion to \$3 billion—out there and see that some of that goes to profits to, essentially, people who own property, profits to those who pay their staff too little to live on, and of course profits to those also who don't uphold the laws and don't provide quality child care? That's where our money, our tax dollars, will go if we don't make sure it goes to non-profit.

Boy, oh boy. You know, I've been fighting for child care for 70 or 80 years now, I think. When I was a teenager, I remember going in marches, demanding free, universal, accessible child care for women. It was one of the earliest feminist demands: control over our own bodies, equal pay—we're still fighting on those two fronts, too, by the way—and accessible child care, because it's so critical for equality and it's so critical for our children.

How can women escape poverty if they can't work? If you're paying \$2,000—and that's cheap in Toronto—for two children in child care, look at the salary you have to make to even make it worthwhile to go to work.

Conservatives and Liberals talk about the value of work; we do too. The value of work—let's make it possible to work, for women. It's not possible now.

To my friend from Carlton–Mississippi Mills, who in an earlier debate this afternoon described social justice as a misguided concept: Well, we in the New Democratic Party actually happen to feel that social justice isn't a misguided concept. It's the concept that should charge everything we do in this place, and certainly where our children are concerned and where women's rights are concerned.

I'm going to leave some time on the clock because I know others want to speak to this bill.

Suffice it to say that privatization doesn't work in providing social services. Surely this government has learned that by now. We won't even get into the hydro fiasco.

Second of all, child care is critical. It is as important as university; it is as important as our public school system. We see the necessity to fund our public school system—not enough, mind you—another conversation for another day—but we fund it, and we get that it needs to be kept public.

Please do the same with this. Please do not waste our precious dollars on profit. Let's let it go to the children.

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: I am delighted to have an opportunity to speak to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo on this debate, but more importantly, to support our

minister and the comments that she had, which were absolutely spot-on.

I'm absolutely shocked and surprised that the member from Kitchener–Waterloo would come forward with a bill like this. She has 24 licensed, for-profit daycares in her own riding. I'm just wondering what that conversation would look like with each one of those, when I tell them that she's been here denigrating the quality of education in those daycare settings, denigrating the fact that they're there—and the workers across this province in the daycare setting. This is a party that promises or purports to support precarious workers in the province. Yet if you went forward with the thinking on this, for something in the order of one third of all licensed daycare centres, those workers would not be entitled to the wage enhancement grant which they get through our ministry. So they would be taking away wages from licensed daycares all over the place. It would be absolutely inappropriate for us to go forward with this.

I have to ask, what has this party got against profits and the private sector? The reality is, this morning they voted against a burden reduction bill. Can you believe this? Taking red tape off the table—and they voted against it. This NDP party is the not-diminishing-paperwork party. It's really, really unfortunate that you don't understand—how are you going to pay for all of these extra services, all this extra money that you want to put in the system, if you destroy the private sector in the process?

I'm glad to recognize Councillor Davis, who is here too. She has played a role within city hall in protecting daycares. She brought a motion very similar to the one I brought in my private member's bill to stop daycare wait-list fees. I am focused on this issue, but what I'm focusing on is assisting young entrepreneurs in my community who want to open licensed daycare spots. I met with Blue Bell and we're helping them negotiate the maze. I'm helping the Kingston Road Montessori school with putting in 25 spaces there.

There are opportunities where we have to unleash the entrepreneurial spirit in this province and allow those people to provide the kinds of options that parents—this doesn't denigrate the non-profit sector. I do a lot of work with Community Centre 55, which is a non-profit in my community that has something in the order of 150 children under its daycare heading and that, during the summer, puts about 1,000 kids into camp. They do great work. But so do those dedicated early childhood educators who want to build up a business, who want to create a nest egg for them and their family by hiring people in our community.

So I'll be voting against this bill. This takes away options and is not in the best interests of Ontario children.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I appreciate the opportunity to add a few comments to today's debate. This act amends the Child Care and Early Years Act to limit the funding

of child care and early years programs and services to not-for-profit corporations. I find that to be something that is very problematic for me, the fact that you are going to restrict the choice of parents in making choices for the care of their children—and particularly looking at some of the individual areas like Montessori and various other programs that are for-profit and that, at the same time, provide service and choice for families.

We all understand how important child care is. Everybody in the House, I think, agrees with that. Our children do deserve the best quality care. I appreciate the opportunity to debate this bill in the assembly today because talking about child care is obviously very important. While there may be improvements to be made to the status quo, I do not think that this bill presents the answer that many parents are looking for.

Our families deserve more choices, not fewer. Parents deserve to choose from every possible option in order to make sure that their kids get the best care suited to their needs. Parents should not be restricted to a single, fixed system. Every family is different and the government needs to respect that. From institutional care to Montessori education, from the local, non-profit to the in-home provider, choices are valuable for parents.

I want to just give one quick example of the importance of choice. In this particular case, the family recognized the value of the in-home experience for the child. But as the child grew, and the children were that much more capable and mobile, they made a decision to go to a daycare that provided a better program for the older baby. Those are just simple examples of the kinds of things that we're talking about.

Government does not need to say that there is only one choice, because that would mean there was no choice. While well-intended, the bill could actually result in less space available for children. Limiting government funding to not-for-profit corporations limits choice. Between busy schedules, fostering a work-life balance, hydro rates that are out of control and working hard to make ends meet, we do not need to be making things harder for families than it already has become. I believe that we must enable parents with the tools they need to make the best decisions possible for their family. No two families are the same.

1550

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I want to raise a couple of things. I have to give a shout-out to the minister. Clearly, she is passionate about this issue, and I'm pleased to see that because, frankly, Speaker—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I remember warning the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. There is no cross-talk. I already mentioned it very clearly. A number of you on that side, the third party, have been warned. Okay? It's never too late to be named.

I'm going to return to the member from Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: As I was saying, the minister is clearly interested and engaged in this file. I'm pleased to see that because, I must tell you, in the winter session when we were back in our ridings, I was dealing with three different operators who were trying to open facilities. To be blunt, they were having a terrible time dealing with the ministry in terms of not getting a response and not having the visits that needed to happen in order for the approvals to go through.

To be fair, it sounds like you really want to make a difference on this file. I would suggest to you that you could start on the process that operators have to go through during the licensing. You know, 25% of the child care spaces in Ontario, as you well know, are independent, and they are licensed. That licensing process is rightfully very onerous, as it should be. I have two kids. I get it. I've been there.

What I want to see is a process that has transparency and consistency, because in the case of two of the examples that were happening in my own community, they already had licensed child care facilities and this was just a second location. It was incredible, the difference, as they described how challenging it was to open that second facility, when the first one was fairly process-oriented. They had an initial visit from one of the staff from the ministry. They said, "Yes, the site would be appropriate. You have to do this, this and this. You have to supply this information, and you're good to go."

Instead, what's happening now is a process where they say, "Submit online"—really goofy example. The architect operates in Apple; the application can only be accepted in DOS. Anyway, the point is that the computers wouldn't even talk to each other, and it took three weeks for someone to actually figure out what the problem was. That's three weeks where people in my community, families in my communities, didn't have those spaces available.

So, absolutely do we need to have more additional spaces available, more choices available? For sure. But what we also need is to ensure that the process is clear so that people who want to go into that business can actually have consistency in the approach. I have to tell you, I have been here almost 10 years now, believe it or not, and I have never dealt with three separate applications over the course of four months before.

There has been a change. We all know that the application process has changed. I would suggest to you that the change has not been a positive one. I think it's important to remember that 25% of the spots that we have available in the province of Ontario are by licensed operators, licensed operators who have very specific restrictions. That's a good thing. But let's not push them out or delay those openings.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise and to speak about this bill that has been put forward by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and the NDP caucus. She is proposing that we amend the Child Care and Early

Years Act to limit funding of child care and early years programs and services to only not-for-profit corporations. I just want to weigh in, as the new critic for children, youth and families for the PC caucus, that we do have for-profit centres in all our ridings. We also have for-profit long-term care in our ridings. In fact, when I worked in an optometry clinic, you wouldn't get me to show up for work too many days if it was completely not-for-profit.

Many of these for-profit daycare operators, certainly the ones that I've met with in my riding—it's not some faraway landlord or owner of a big corporation. This is the person who unlocks the door in the morning, locks the door at night and is there in person, working and trying to develop a career, a business, and is really passionate. All the women that I have met—I haven't met any men actually—were very passionate about the children.

I wanted to mention that, because this is mostly women. By cutting out the for-profit daycare centres, we are actually hurting women in our communities, because the ones that I have met with are owners, and it's their friends who work with them.

They have told me that they also had issues with the government, in terms of being told they need bigger windows for more daylight because of all kinds of new regulations, and then somebody comes in to inspect after they spent \$10,000 putting in bigger windows in the wall, and they're told, "Now you need blinds, because people can look in and see the children."

There is obviously a lot of work to be done, and we want to see practical decision-making. Nobody wants to see unnecessary red tape. Yes, we all want to ensure that the kids are safe and happy in our communities.

I think that the best way to have great daycare in our communities is to have the parents involved. By having the parents sit in traffic and take forever to get home and to pick up the kids from daycare, they don't have time to come early and see what's actually going on.

The parents have to have good-paying jobs to pay for good-quality daycare—I think that's a big challenge here in Ontario—and the parents have to have some money left after paying their electricity bills to pay for daycare. What we are seeing with the government isn't a structural change in electricity; what we are seeing is a mortgage put on Ontario—a second mortgage and maybe even a third mortgage down the road.

Let's focus on what's good, and what's good is choice.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Listen, we have to get this very clear: Making sure that public dollars go towards not-for-profit or public daycare systems does not stop people from choosing to spend more on private daycares, if they want to.

What we are saying is that public dollars shouldn't go to for-profit systems. That's not a good use of our public dollars. That's not a very efficient use or a very just use

of the dollars that we put together as a society. What we should be doing is ensuring that there is affordable daycare.

Now we've heard from speakers who have talked about the importance of this issue, and I can only add my voice to it. I don't presume to know any more than the speakers who spoke before me. But if we want to address poverty, we know that one of the direct issues that impacts poverty, particularly when it impacts women, is the access to daycare—not just access to daycare, but high-quality and affordable daycare.

Now the good member from Kitchener–Waterloo is addressing a key issue here. If we want to build quality daycares, we know there is evidence and there has been research that quality daycare is daycare that's provided either publicly or not-for-profit. Now the logic is very sound. If you don't have to use a portion of the revenue towards profit, you can put more of that resource towards making sure that the daycare is actually high-quality. If you don't have to cut corners or cut costs to make a profit, you can reinvest everything that's earned to make sure that the daycare is high-quality. That just makes sense.

The member wants to see that, moving forward in this province, any new daycare centres, any new daycare spots that are opened, should be publicly funded. That's just the right thing to do. It's something that we should all support and it would be a clear step forward to ensuring that we actually believe in this principle.

We can look around this world and see other developed nations that have actually got this right. We have Finland, a Nordic nation that clearly has made daycare a priority. It built up a society around making sure that everyone can have access to good education and public education and have access to affordable daycare.

It shouldn't depend on whether or not you can get a high-paying job or not. It shouldn't be that only the people who can afford it can get high-quality daycare. It should be that everyone has the right to have access to affordable daycare. That's what this bill is trying to do: take us towards that principle.

I gave an example of Nordic countries. In Finland, people can have access to some of the highest-quality daycare in the world for something like \$1,000 a year. People would dream of that here in Canada, dream of that here in Ontario. But we can achieve that. In a country as wealthy as ours, there shouldn't be the levels of inequality that we see, and having affordable public daycare, or not-for-profit daycare, would be a step in the right direction.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'll return to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo to wrap up.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I will tell you that I had very low expectations for the debate today. Once again, those expectations were met and superseded.

I will say to the member for Beaches–East York, please read the legislation before you speak to it, because

the 24 private operators in my riding would not be affected by this. It's a go-forward position. It's the \$1 billion to \$3.7 billion that's on the table. Commercial operators want to come to the trough. They want to come here. Clearly, you have left the door wide open. I was just trying to help this government avoid another scandal, quite honestly.

I also want to say that it is the provincial government's responsibility to deliver a child care system which is based on quality. I presented 30 years of evidence and research. How you can look the other way in 2017 and invest in a system that will not better the children and the families and the economy of this province defies all logic.

I have seen many things in this place, which I am now referring to as the twilight zone, because when the minister responsible for this portfolio stands in her place and says, "In good faith, I cannot support quality child care"—it is 2017. Women should be supporting women in the province of Ontario. Child care matters.

What I will say is that we will continue to push this government to maintain quality in the system. The best way to do that is to invest in the not-for-profit system, keep the profit out of the system, and ensure that children and families are at the centre of every piece of legislation in this House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

MAGNA CARTA DAY ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LE JOUR DE LA GRANDE CHARTE

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will deal first with ballot item number 34, standing in the name of Mrs. Munro.

Mrs. Munro has moved second reading of Bill 97, An Act to proclaim Magna Carta Day.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I hear "carried."

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mrs. Munro, which committee?

Mrs. Julia Munro: Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Legislative Assembly. Carried? Carried. Congratulations.

HYMNE FRANCO-ONTARIEN FRANCO-ONTARIAN ANTHEM

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Crack has moved private member's notice of motion number 42.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried." Oui.

Motion agreed to.

CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS
AMENDMENT ACT (NOT-FOR-PROFIT
CORPORATIONS), 2017

LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA GARDE D'ENFANTS
ET LA PETITE ENFANCE
(ORGANISATIONS SANS BUT LUCRATIF)

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Fife has moved second reading of Bill 98, An Act to amend the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 to limit funding of child care and early years programs and services to not-for-profit corporations.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear—okay.

All those in favour of the motion, please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion, please say “nay.”

I hear a nay. I believe the nays have it.

Now that we have five members—I declare the motion—

Interjection: Carried.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): No, lost.

This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1604 to 1609.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Members, please take your seats.

Ms. Fife has moved second reading of Bill 98, An Act to amend the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to limit funding of child care and early years programs and services to not-for-profit corporations. All those in favour please rise and remain standing to be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Bisson, Gilles	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Jagmeet
DiNovo, Cheri	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Miller, Paul	Taylor, Monique
French, Jennifer K.	Natyshak, Taras	Vanthof, John

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Anderson, Granville	Dickson, Joe	Martow, Gila
Bailey, Robert	Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn
Baker, Yvan	Duguid, Brad	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Ballard, Chris	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Hoskins, Eric	Munro, Julia
Coe, Lorne	Hunter, Mitzie	Murray, Glen R.
Coteau, Michael	Jones, Sylvia	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Oosterhoff, Sam
Damerla, Dipika	MacLaren, Jack	Pettapiece, Randy
Delaney, Bob	Malhi, Harinder	Potts, Arthur
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Mangat, Amrit	Qaadri, Shafiq
Dhillon, Vic	Martins, Cristina	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 12; the nays are 35.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SCHOOL BOARDS COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING AMENDMENT ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA NÉGOCIATION
COLLECTIVE DANS LES CONSEILS
SCOLAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 28, 2017, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 92, An Act to amend the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, 2014 and make related amendments to other statutes / Projet de loi 92, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2014 sur la négociation collective dans les conseils scolaires et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to the order of the House from earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. Hunter has moved second reading of Bill 92, An Act to amend the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, 2014 and make related amendments to other statutes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear a no.

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I have been handed—that “pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on second reading of Bill 92 be deferred until deferred votes on Monday, March 6, 2017.”

Second reading vote deferred.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'AIDE
MÉDICALE À MOURIR

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 1, 2017, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 84, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to medical assistance in dying / Projet de loi 84, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'aide médicale à mourir.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to mention that I'm rising today to speak on Bill 84, the Medical Assistance in Dying Statute Law Amendment Act. Unfortunately, the acronym, as it were, is MAID. Sometimes I wonder if we need to be a little more careful.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order.

Mrs. Gila Martow: It's no problem, Madam Speaker. I've been here three years and I'm quite used to all the goings-on.

It kind of bothered me that it came out to be the letters M-A-I-D, MAID, but it's a serious topic that we're debating, it's a difficult topic that we're debating. Sometimes we get to talk about pleasant topics. Today, we were debating whether or not a francophone folk song should be the official folk song. It was a motion, so I don't know how enforceable that is. But we had a fun time here today practising our French, and with many visitors. Now, here it is, the end of the day. It's a tough topic, I think, for all of us, because we don't like to think about death if we don't have to. Unfortunately, it is part of life.

This bill—we had no choice. It had to come forward. We have to make the necessary changes because, after all, back in February 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the Criminal Code prohibiting assistance in dying. Basically, it means that we're forced to address the necessary changes in our legislation and to make sure that we are in line with the Supreme Court of Canada and all the implications that that entails.

The court's view was that assistance in dying should be granted to “a competent adult person who (1) clearly consents to the termination of life and (2) has a grievous and irremediable medical condition (including an illness, disease or disability) that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition.”

The Supreme Court of Canada also stated, “It is for Parliament and the provincial legislatures to respond, should they so choose, by enacting legislation consistent with the constitutional parameters set out in these reasons.” Of course, that's with good reason. As such, assisted dying became legal in Canada last June 6.

Today, Ontario is continuing to debate Bill 84. We have to recognize that many people in our communities have many serious concerns with this piece of legislation. But basically, Bill 84 is providing clarity and legal protections for health care professionals and organizations that provide access to medical-assistance-in-dying services in Ontario in accordance with the federal legislation, Bill C-14.

A doctor or nurse practitioner who provides medical-assistance-in-dying services would have to notify the coroner with the necessary information to determine whether or not an investigation into the death is necessary. Basically, what that means, Mr. Speaker, is—and I apologize for those watching at home, but Madam Speaker got replaced with a Mr. Speaker; I don't want to look too foolish—basically, it means that there shouldn't be a coroner's examination if it's an assisted death, and that doctors and nurse practitioners who are involved are protected by the law unless there's alleged negligence.

Again, I would just bring up that here in Canada we don't have capital punishment, and we do read often in our newspapers and on the news on TV or radio about cases in the States, where they do still practise capital

punishment, and the person did not die a swift and easy death. I think I'm joined by everybody here today in being somewhat horrified when we hear of that—I think it's usually by injection—that it doesn't always work the way it's supposed to.

What I would say, as somebody who used to work a bit in the health care world, is that human beings are all different, and the doctors don't really find out how different we are until they try to do a treatment or something on us. Not everybody reacts the way that's expected. We certainly see that with many types of medications and treatments, or even just taking something over the counter like cold medication: Some people are awake all night when they take a certain antihistamine, NyQuil or what have you, and other people are immediately practically comatose. We can certainly understand that, yes, age is a factor, weight, general health, all these kind of things, but inherently, we're all quite different and we really don't know how we're going to react to anything of a medical nature until it's upon us.

I think that that's part of the trepidation with assisted death: that we can't always assume things go the way we want. We have to ensure that whoever is practising—I wouldn't necessarily call this health care, but it is health care—is well trained and that there are no issues with the dosages and the calculations of those dosages.

Obviously, death certificates for medical assistance in dying don't need to be signed by the coroner, unless there is some kind of investigation.

I just want to mention a few areas of concern in our communities, because, really, that's what we're here for: to give, yes, our opinion, to do research and to get involved in the debate, but we're also here on behalf of our constituents and different groups in the province who have concerns and come to us with their concerns. I'm really happy to be here today to be a bit of their voice.

1620

First of all, some of you may have heard about a young Ontario man who is interested in having the assisted dying procedure because he suffers from mental illness. That was a big concern for me when I heard of this. It was just a week or two ago. His name is Adam Maier-Clayton. I'm just going to read to you a few of his quotes: “There is no cure for what I have.... With modern science we don't understand mechanically what is going on inside my brain.” He wants the government to make doctor-assisted death available to mentally ill people like him. He's appealing to the federal government first. He feels he's exhausted all treatment options.

Obviously, this is of grave concern for advocates for mental health treatments, because anybody who knows somebody who is suffering on an emotional level knows that that suffering can have physical consequences. We certainly would want to have our health care dollars focused on getting people treatment for mental health concerns and not to be giving up at such a young age. I actually find it quite heartbreaking that he feels that he wants to give up because the pain is so debilitating.

His father is supporting him in this because his father believes that there isn't treatment available for him. I

think I am joined by most people in the province in saying that we wish him well and we wish that somebody could offer some solutions and some treatments for, obviously, his pain. How much of it is emotional and physical doesn't really matter, because the pain is actually the same.

I was visited a couple of weeks ago—Dr. Nisha Fernandes lives in my riding, and she came to my constituency office on February 13. I'm not going to lie to you, Mr. Speaker: She was very emotional and does not want us to be practising—again, it's a medical term, usually, that when we practise health care, we're helping people get better. But, again, death is part of life. She's very concerned, as are many of her colleagues, with the fact that they feel that this government is forcing them, if they don't want to practise assisted dying, to effectively refer—they call it effective referral. They want to be protected from having to refer. Some of the options out there are to possibly have centres in different regions of the province, where doctors who do want to practise assisted dying techniques are available, and nurse practitioners—I'm sorry if I keep saying doctors—as well. This way, people aren't going to say to their family doctor and ask for a referral—that these centres are very well known.

I think it's really important that we ensure that there's great public education and understanding and that the public feels that they are consulted and that they are being supported by their elected officials in Ontario.

I have a letter here from Elisabeth Sulistio. She's one of my constituents, and she's writing to express her deep concern regarding conscience rights. What I would just say in terms of conscience rights—and I mentioned this when I did questions and comments on this exact same bill, just this week—is that, who becomes a doctor, a nurse practitioner, or a nurse's aide in our province, in our country and across the world? It's people who have so much feeling and emotion and empathy. If we could measure empathy, if it was tangible, they would measure very, very high, for the most part. The ones who don't quickly find out, I hope, that this isn't the profession for them, and perhaps find something else to do, whether by their choice or by the patient's choice, in the province.

Empathy: What does that mean exactly, Mr. Speaker? As I've mentioned before, as the wife of a physician, as the mother of a physician, I can tell you what type of people go into health care, because I live with them. I'm sorry if I'm repeating myself to the people who are here, but the population of this room does change, as well as the people tuning in.

My husband, I learned very early on—we've been married 31 years—doesn't kill spiders, doesn't kill flies. He catches flies. It doesn't matter how long it takes him. He works very hard at it, and he's quite good at it, I have to say. It's quite a talent. He carries spiders out of the house, as well as his cup-and-hand technique for flies. I learned very quickly once my children could talk that I was going to be in big trouble if I killed flies or spiders in the house. I could get away with the odd bug or two.

My son was no different. He had incredible empathy, even as a young child. If another child was hurt, he actually cried more than the child who was hurt. Obviously, it's not physical pain. He felt the pain if he saw the child was hurt. He would even wake up the next day, and the first thing he would say to me was, "We have to call and see how the boy who got hurt in the playground is and if he's okay."

So these are the people in our community who are taking care of us when we're sick. Sometimes they feel disrespected by the government, certainly in terms of their contract negotiations. I can tell you that doctors do not work a 9-to-5 job with breaks and lunches. They are getting phone calls from colleagues, from emergency rooms, from their staff, from their patients, from their patients' relatives. They don't get paid for all that time that they spend doing emails and phone calls.

They have to spend their own money doing continuing education. They don't have sick days. They don't have pensions. Really, they don't feel that they have the best of the world, working for the government. They feel they have the worst of both worlds: that they're treated like government employees for the tough parts, which is not really having a say in how you practise all the time or where you practise, and they feel that they have the worst of being a small business person, having to make payroll, having to hire employees, finding out their employees need to take time off from work for personal reasons or family reasons and having to deal with that. It's hard to run a business. On top of practising medicine and keeping up with all of the new treatments and techniques, they also have to run a small business.

So I think that if the doctors in our communities are telling us that they have concerns with this piece of legislation, the minimum we can do is really hear out their concerns, sit down with them and have the dialogue. Other provinces such as Alberta, and other jurisdictions in Europe, have dealt with this type of legislation without having effective referrals. Alberta has an email and a phone number that you call. You don't have to go through your doctor. Doctors aren't forced to refer to doctors who practise assisted dying. So I have to wonder why we are doing this to our health care practitioners, to make them feel so uncomfortable and possibly even feeling like their beliefs—and I'm not going to say religious beliefs. That's included in it as well, but a lot of the time, what I'm saying is it's their strong emotional beliefs, that it's not something that they want to do.

They shouldn't be poked in the eye by this government, which I think is how some of them are feeling. They feel that there's a bit of a war going on right now with the government and some of the health care practitioners. This is what some of the doctors are saying to me: "Why is the government doing this when other jurisdictions don't feel it necessary to do this?" It could be oversight; I hope it's oversight. I hope it isn't something intentional on the government's part in terms of making it difficult for the doctors or making it uncomfortable for the doctors.

I do have a few more minutes, and I will mention a few more names of people who wrote to me. John Ferrari, who mentions—and it's interesting, some of the subject lines of their emails. His was "Hippocratic Oath." Obviously, doctors take a Hippocratic oath to make people better, and some of them take that—maybe you could say it's literally, or maybe you could even argue it's too literally. But it's a very strong decision that they make to take care of people and make them better.

1630

I have Alexander Oraziotti—maybe it's a relative of the former member here—whose subject said, "Remove Unfair Barriers to Access for Assisted Dying." He wants to ensure "that access to medical assistance in dying is fair and consistent across the province."

Tina Abarquez says that the "'effective referral protocol' ... is just wrong!"

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that it's very important to us in the Legislature to think of all the sometimes unintended consequences of decisions that we make here. I think that we have enough experienced people to know that there have been times where legislation has been changed, or even small changes were made, and there were grave, unintended consequences to that. It cost people their livelihood. It can be very detrimental. It's not small things in our communities. I hope that we are considering possible consequences.

We certainly wouldn't want the doctors who score the highest on that, as I say, empathy scale—we certainly wouldn't want those doctors leaving our province for other jurisdictions and being left with the ones who aren't at the top of the empathy wheel. We want empathetic doctors—I guess the lay term is "bedside manner"—who really care. It's not just a job.

We all have experiences with physicians who went above and beyond. In a way, maybe we take it for granted, and we shouldn't. My own late mother was in palliative care at Sunnybrook. I actually asked her the question, "If there was a pill you could take, would you take it?" And she said no. She said, "As long as my pain can be managed reasonably well"—she was able to cope.

I've visited hospices, as have many people here. Just last year, I visited the Kensington Hospice with our leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and our critic from Elgin-Middlesex-London—our critic for health. The people who work in these centres are just—

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Incredible.

Mrs. Gila Martow: "Incredible" is one word—absolutely incredible. They just really make your heart expand. That's all I can say.

I'm glad to weigh in, and I really hope that we're going to get this right, because I think it's a very, very important piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): I thank the member from Thornhill.

For questions and comments, I now move to the member from Kitchener-Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I think the member from Thornhill—I heard her comments yesterday when we

were in the House on Bill 84—has highlighted the tension that exists in the medical profession. I myself have received concerns from constituents, from Kitchener-Waterloo folks. Some of them stray around the ethical dilemmas that they feel like the profession will experience. Some are deeply religious and feel that the direction is 100% wrong.

But I would like to relay one of the conversations I had with a doctor. I was speaking at a faith and politics event. She said that, originally, she really did feel like this was going in the right direction, but she found the legislation to be too permissive, too vague and not essentially protecting those people in the province of Ontario who deserve our protection, who are vulnerable for whatever reasons. She did highlight those with severe disabilities who are not always in control of their environment or their life, quite honestly.

Then I spoke with a nurse practitioner who, of course, felt that helping someone, an individual, with their permission, who could clearly articulate what their wishes were, was indeed an act of compassion. So I think that highlights the great divide, if you will, on medically assisted dying.

The legislation needs to be very clear around protecting those people who are vulnerable. I think, as came out in the debate yesterday, we also are going to have to build some supports for the people who are on the front line doing this kind of work, because there will be fallout for it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): I thank the honourable member from Kitchener-Waterloo. For further questions and comments, I now turn to the Minister of Housing, also responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Hon. Chris Ballard: Just a few comments. It's the first time I've had an opportunity to stand and speak to Bill 84. I was here yesterday and heard comments from the member from Thornhill—certainly well-thought-out, well-reasoned concerns that she would have around this bill. I can say that in my riding, I heard early on concerns from people, from constituents who were worried that this type of legislation wouldn't be put in place in Ontario and are now relieved to see that we're moving down that road.

From my reading of this bill, the legislation, Bill 84, really does help to ensure that safe and consistent approach to physician-assisted dying. We do have an obligation to our professional health care workers and institutions with regard to striking that balance. It's my belief that this new legislation helps to ensure a safe and consistent approach to physician-assisted dying. Health care professionals and those who assist them are protected from civil liability. The providers and facilities that provide medical assistance in dying have their privacy protected.

I know the issue that has been raised about conscientious objection. Our approach has always been to support the provision of medical assistance in dying in a way that balances those rights of patients and health care providers

and respects the currently established laws and policies. But it certainly is an issue—and I understand—that is loaded and deserves this great debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I thank the Minister of Housing. I now turn to the honourable member from Niagara West–Glanbrook. Two minutes.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's good to be able to stand and speak to this important piece of legislation. Bill 84 is a piece of legislation that I've had a lot of correspondence cross my desk on, from constituents in my riding who are either supportive or concerned about the direction this piece of legislation speaks to.

I have, perhaps, the unique opportunity—because I actually worked very closely on C-14, the federal legislation that implemented the decision of the Supreme Court in January 2015. I had the opportunity to work on that last year when I was working for a federal member of Parliament in Ottawa, which was a unique opportunity to see how the federal government decided to make its decisions when it came to these issues.

I wanted to speak very briefly to the preamble to C-14, which was passed earlier in 2016. In that preamble, it says, “Whereas robust safeguards, reflecting the irrevocable nature of ending a life, are essential to prevent errors and abuse in the provision of medical assistance in dying;

“Whereas it is important to affirm the inherent and equal value of every person's life and to avoid encouraging negative perceptions of the quality of life of persons who are elderly, ill or disabled...”

Mr. Speaker, we can't forget in this discussion around medical assistance in dying the importance of maintaining the inherent dignity in every person. That means, as we have this discussion, as we move forward with the implementation of Bill 84, that we make sure we speak to people. We just had Bell Let's Talk Day. Let's talk to people about the importance of mental health. Let's talk to people about the importance of having conversations around end-of-life issues.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I thank the honourable member from Niagara West–Glanbrook. For further questions and comments, I now turn to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to take this opportunity to comment on the member from Thornhill and her comments on Bill 84, Medical Assistance in Dying Statute Law Amendment Act. I listened intently to her this afternoon. I always like listening to the member from Thornhill because, on many issues, she brings it to a personal level. She did a good job of explaining some of the trepidations that people have with this issue.

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What I found particularly poignant is she that talked about her mother and how she had asked her mother near the end of her life if she would take this step. I think the question that this bill brings up is, do we allow that choice or not? That's the essential part of this bill. There have to be safeguards, this has to be taken with utmost care, but that's the essential question of this bill.

From my personal perspective, in my family we've had long discussions about this because my wife comes from Holland, where they have—maybe not exactly this, but they have had this type of legislation on the books for a long time. So she is much less reluctant to support this than perhaps I would be. It just shows that there are many viewpoints. But we have to be very cognizant of our role here because people in this House have never been in that position where they have to make that decision for themselves. We are talking in the third person here so we really have to be careful how we do this and make sure that everyone who needs protection is protected, but everyone who needs a choice has that choice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I thank the honourable member from Timiskaming–Cochrane. I now turn to the MPP for Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to thank everyone who weighed in. The member from Kitchener–Waterloo said that we have to ensure that we get this right and that there isn't fallout from such a serious topic.

The minister responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy said that we have to strike that right balance. Of course he's correct that we need to ensure that the doctors and nurse practitioners are protected, but also that their conscience rights are protected, and that the patient's wishes and rights are protected as well.

My new member from Niagara West–Glanbrook spoke about the inherent dignity of human beings and respect for each other, and that's another reason why, with this type of legislation, we really need to consult the medical community—including the nursing community; I consider them part of the medical community. We need to consult with all the different groups who have concerns and make sure that we can find that proper balance between everyone's desires.

Of course, the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane mentioned that his wife came from Holland and feels a lot more comfortable with this entire topic. I think that that is part of the difficulty, that people do feel uncomfortable. I would ask everybody to have those discussions in terms of having a living will and what to do if you become incapacitated. By not talking about death, you're not actually doing yourself or your family or friends any favours. Have those discussions, ensure you have your living will, and that people have copies of it and that you have it in a safe place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been more than six and one half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

I recognize the honourable Minister for the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We wish to continue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It's my honour to join in the debate. This debate is, as many members have indicated, something that touches many people in a very personal manner. It is something that's quite sensitive in nature and it's also something that has the potential to be polarizing, so I hope to tread carefully in order to respect the sensitivities and make sure that this discussion is not one that is polarizing.

One of the things that's quite fascinating about our society is that one of the major guarantees in all of our lives is death. It's often quoted as a reality. It's something that, as a society, we are very ill-prepared for. We're very ill-prepared for the notion of loss and the idea of someone moving on, and that's partially why this discussion is so difficult. It's very clear, though, given the landmark Carter decision, which has also been referred to, that the province must address this issue.

I think some of the key issues that we need to look at and reflect on when we talk about how we can craft a piece of legislation that properly addresses the concerns, the two broad issues around it—the key rationale behind the court's decision to unanimously find that there should be an ability or that people should have access to medical assistance in dying was that choice was a key factor. Given the reality that people in a position where they make an informed decision—they are left with, really, two choices. One is to find some way to end their own lives, or to continue to suffer. That choice was referred to as a cruel choice, and the court then decided that it should not be a criminal offence to provide that assistance.

One of the key issues that comes up, or one of the factors that we have to look at, is the protection of those who are more vulnerable. With any piece of legislation, those who are marginalized or more vulnerable will be those who need a greater deal of protection to ensure that their decision-making is not compromised, or that their ability to make a decision is fully realized. That's why we need to be very particular about people who have more limitations or face more difficulties in expressing their consent or their desire. We certainly have to have protections in place to address that.

The other issue that comes up is that when people want to exercise this choice, there needs to be access to this choice. So we're left with two broad-speaking principles: access to exercise this ability to choose; and, secondly, ensuring that there's protection for those who make this choice.

Then there is an issue that has been discussed today, which is those who might object to it—if there's conscientious objection to this—on religious grounds or personal belief grounds, for medical practitioners who might not feel comfortable being able to provide this service. How do we negotiate or navigate that? So there are some serious issues we have to deal with. There are some serious concerns.

On the access issue, it raises concerns about, broadly speaking, how we deal with the end of life. One of the areas where we know we need a significant amount of

improvement, in general, is palliative care and hospice care. Far too many Ontarians can't find that care or find access to that care. The beds are not available, and people are left in a very difficult position where they can't live out their life in a manner that's dignified and comfortable.

When we're talking about this bill, we also have to look at the broader principles, the broader responsibility, around ensuring that people have a dignified manner in which they approach the end of their lives. With these services—hospice care, particularly, but palliative care in general—there is less access in rural communities. There is less access in different parts of the province, so we need to make sure that that access is also dealt with.

In terms of assistance, similarly, if we're already facing a lack of access to hospice care and palliative care, naturally we also will see that this same lack of access will flow to this particular procedure as well, so we need to ensure that we address access. That's a fundamental issue.

One of the ways we can address this access issue is a very simple and straightforward solution: funding. For the past number of years, we've seen that the government has cut funding to health care, and that has put us in a very difficult position. For the past four years, in particular, by freezing budgets it's been an effective cut to budgets, and we know that hospitals are quite crowded as a result.

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In my region, in Brampton, the Brampton Civic Hospital faces an extreme waiting time to be able to access emergency services. It's one of the regions where people are actually avoiding going to the hospital. They only go when it's absolutely necessary. We don't have the scenario where people are making use of the resource when they don't need to, people who are deemed to be lower threats or lower in terms of the severity of their illness or their condition. We only have people who are the appropriate level of seriousness actually going to the hospital, and still we see massive wait times.

That's a direct result of this government's cuts to services there. This is a broad issue of access to that health care service, access to the hospital, but it's a holistic problem. If we have a problem with accessing health care generally, then with this specific medical procedure there will also be concerns around access to this procedure.

Talking about medical assistance in dying means that we have to talk about our health care system broadly. This government needs to address this lack of funding that's resulted in this inability to access services. It has to be addressed.

In Brampton, we absolutely need to restore appropriate funding that's based on population growth and inflation so that people are funded, the region is appropriately funded, and we don't see the long waiting times, we don't see people in hallways and, with respect to Bill 84, so that people have the choice to access medical assistance in dying, if it is their choice. That's something that we need to see. It's something that troubles me. It troubles constituents.

It's not limited to Brampton. Across this province, we know that in regions from Windsor to Ottawa, hospitals are at a tipping point. They are filled to capacity. Many hospitals are over capacity and are functioning at a level which is not appropriate, so that they can't serve additional people coming in. I don't blame our health care providers or front-line service providers. This is directly a result of the government's lack of funding. So we need to make sure that the funding is there.

We also need to ensure that if we approach this in a holistic manner, we address the fact that we need access to health care generally. We need access to this service, we need access to end-of-life services.

We also know that many people choose to live in the comfort of their home. That would be their preferred place to spend the rest of their days. To do that, we need have a serious commitment to home care.

I know that people can share stories from across their ridings, but in Brampton in particular, I receive constituents' calls from Mississauga, from Malton, from across Brampton that people are struggling to get the home care they need. People who are in dire situations, people who are in difficult circumstances, but still are able to stay at home and want to remain at home, but they just need that extra support, are unable to access that support. They're unable to get the help they need so they can stay at home. That's why we need to look at how we can fix the broken home care system.

Home care is a fundamental element of our health care system. It's something that cannot be separated. It is absolutely important. It's often the most affordable way for us to provide service to people. As a province and as a health care provider, we need to look at how we can bolster the system. People shouldn't be waiting for months and months on end just to receive the home care. And people who get home care are often finding themselves in a position where they have such limited access that they can't actually live out their days in dignity. They can't actually have their needs met with the number of hours that they're receiving. That's a key issue that we need to address as well.

Finally, we've talked about the funding. We've talked about the access issues, the choice, and if people make that choice, they need to be able to access it. In addition, we need to look at the services that we provide for our health care providers themselves. The health care providers need to have access to resources to ensure that they're fully supported in awareness around these new changes. We're in new territory now. This is something that has not been legislated before. We need to make sure that health care providers, whether it's nurses, whether it's doctors, are provided with the resources and supports they need to ensure they can actually perform their responsibilities.

The problem is that the government has taken an approach to health care providers, all health care providers—whether it's the front-line doctors and nurses or other support staff who run our hospitals, there has been an approach taken by this government which has created

a conflict or a tension. We know that with nurses—we're constantly in communication with nurses who are indicating that there have been massive cuts to nursing positions. Specifically, we're talking about registered nurse positions, so RNs. These are the nurses that provide a level of care that is essential in our health care system. Over the past two years, we know that 1,500 nursing positions have been cut.

With doctors, there has been a climate that's been created that's quite antagonistic. There's been a pitched battle between the province and doctors. This pitched battle is creating sentiments that are not conducive to a healthy health care system. It's very similar to what we saw after Bill 115. Where you have the providers of a service in a position where they feel like the province is attacking them, it does not provide a healthy environment for our education system to flourish. Similarly, in our health care, when we see the antagonistic relationship created by the province toward our health care providers, it's not conducive to a good health care system.

If we now want to increase the responsibilities of those health care providers with this new legislation, which is important—we need to do so—we need to ensure that the climate is conducive to a strong health care system, and it's not going to be unless the government changes their position.

Doctors have been disrespected and they need to have their issues addressed. There have been funding cuts not only to hospitals broadly speaking and nurses specifically, but to doctors as well. So that needs to be addressed. We can't build a strong health care system without all the partners in that system feeling respected, receiving the adequate level of support and, at the end of the day, receiving the adequate level of funding. We can, though; I'm confident that we can turn the tide.

If we look at the Financial Accountability Officer and the report prepared by the office of the Financial Accountability Officer, in 2017 the office reported that the government may have to cut up to \$2.8 billion more from health care by 2019 to reach its own expenditure budget targets. If that's the direction that the government is going in, and that's what the Financial Accountability Officer is predicting, a cut of more than \$2.8 billion in the health care system is not going to help put us in the position we need to be in and is not going to allow us, as a province, to provide the type of health care that the people of this province deserve.

This is something that needs to be reversed. The government's decision on this, the government's direction on this, is not acceptable. It's not going to provide the health care that we need and it's not going to be able to provide the assistance that front-line health care providers need, nor will it help create the access that people need to this service.

What's our vision? As New Democrats, our vision with respect to the issue of medical assistance in dying is that we need to ensure excellent access to palliative care, to hospice care and to end-of-life care in every corner of Ontario. Regardless of the region, regardless of geog-

raphy, regardless of whether it's in rural communities or urban communities, everyone in Ontario should have the right to have access to these services. Our vision is that every Ontarian can live in comfort and dignity; and also, that should apply to every stage of their life. That's the type of vision for a health care system that works and for a health care system that involves beginning of life to end of life.

Looking at the bill, there are a number of areas that are addressed. The bill essentially amends six pieces of legislation. The areas that are addressed are the Coroners Act, to address the role of the provincial coroner with respect to this; the Excellent Care for All Act is also addressed; the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; as well as the Vital Statistics Act and workplace safety. These amendments were all necessary to be in line with the federal government's direction that they provided as a result of the court decision.

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One of the concerns with these six pieces of legislation that has come up is that some constituents have felt like the communication between the government and the public on this issue has not been as open and as accessible as they would have liked. They feel like their voices were not heard and that the concerns that people raised were not appropriately remedied or addressed. In terms of, broadly speaking, awareness, there isn't a lot of awareness of what's going on with respect to this piece of legislation, so the government needs to do more to provide some guidance and really work towards ensuring that people have their voices heard.

One of the issues that has come up time and time again is ensuring this equitable access—that people have fair access—and that it's equitable regardless of where they are.

The medical professionals, the health care providers, have talked about their concerns on how to provide this service to patients who request it and some more guidance with respect to provincial frameworks around what this looks like and how this will be implemented. Despite the fact that it has been a number of months since the federal government has legalized medical assistance in dying through legislation, we still don't have a very clear framework with respect to how this will actually move forward for health care providers.

In order to make sure that this is accessible, we need to look at how the process will flow, what the referrals will look like and who the service provider will be. Some of these questions have not been answered, so we need to make sure we have a broad consultation and ensure that we get input from all health care providers and look at a system that will actually allow this to come forward in a way that people can make sense of it and access it. Health care providers are still troubled by the fact that there is a lack of clarity.

It is, of course, a very difficult topic to talk about, and it's something that will require a great level of sensitivity, but it is something that we can certainly address, and it is something that we must address.

We live in a society where the realities are that there are people who find themselves in situations where this is a realistic choice that they must make. In their own minds, this is something that they have to decide, and we have to provide a way for people who make this choice, who take this decision, to have access to it, and make sure that that's done in a way that protects those who are vulnerable and ensures that people have access to it across the province.

Again, to summarize, in order to really address end-of-life care, we need to look at the broken health care system, broadly speaking. Until this government addresses the problems with the health care system which involve adequate funding, which involve not freezing budgets for hospitals, which involve not creating an antagonistic relationship with health care providers, not cutting nurses, who are some of the most essential service providers, particularly registered nurses, who are the ones who are receiving most of the cuts—until we ensure that people have access to hospitals and that there aren't extremely long waiting times in emergency rooms across this province, until we address the fact that there are a lack of beds and bed shortages from all areas of this province, we will not be able to provide a health care system that provides access to health care, broadly speaking, but specifically to the services we are talking to about in Bill 84.

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

Hon. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to stand for a second time to make some comments about Bill 84, and specifically on comments made by member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Bill 84 is an exceptionally important piece of legislation, and I have been listening over the past two days to all of the heartfelt considerations and issues that people raise. What I noticed is that so many of us bring to the table a personal story about end-of-life care, whether it be palliative care or other types of end-of-life care.

I can tell you, Speaker, I wanted to speak a little bit more—I only have a minute and 18 seconds left—around some of the issues that physicians and other health care providers might face who have some issues with providing that type of care. But hearing what I've heard from the third party member over the past few minutes, I just want to reiterate a few things.

Over the past decade, Ontario's health care system has improved significantly. We can look to organizations like the Fraser Institute and the Wait Time Alliance, which have consistently ranked Ontario as having some of the shortest wait times in Canada. I see that with my own eyes in my community, one of the fastest-growing communities in Canada. We have improved consistently the wait times in our hospitals, and we've done so creatively, without compromising care. I reject wholeheartedly the premise of the statement that we're not doing better.

Ontario is committed to a health care system that puts patients first. We can look to \$75 million more in the last budget for community-based hospice and palliative care.

I'm going to leave it there for now.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise to comment on my fellow Peel MPP's debate on Bill 84.

I think most of us understand that Bill 84 is putting in some protections. We're reacting and responding to what the federal government has directed us, as the provincial legislators, to do, and I'm good with that.

We like to think all of our regions are unique. Peel is a little unique. I hope, in all of this discussion surrounding medical assistance in dying, that we also don't lose track of our hospice model.

In Dufferin-Peel, Dufferin-Caledon, we happen to have two hospices. I say "two hospices." I don't mean two residential hospices. Hospice Dufferin does excellent work in terms of assisting families, assisting individuals, who are going through the grief process. They do not have a residential model. Of course, they'd love one, as we all would.

Bethell House, to the south, in Caledon, I believe—I could be corrected, but my understanding is, Bethell Hospice, in the beautiful community of Inglewood in Caledon, is in fact the only residential hospice in Peel region. Peel region, as you know, has a substantial population. They are doing incredible work.

I don't want to see a situation where we have to choose either/or. The hospice model has proven to be a very effective, very caring, very community-driven model.

I would urge anyone who has never seen or been involved with volunteers who participate in a hospice to step up and do that, because you will be enlightened, and it will be a positive experience.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thanks to the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton for taking us through the logistics of this bill. It is complicated, and it is layered, and many people have different perceptions of it.

But he was raising, I think, a very important issue, which is that there are some very real problems in the health care system as it stands today, and we have Auditor General report after Auditor General report to confirm it.

So when the minister responsible for housing takes exception to this, we have to push back on that, because the system has to be ready for this very complex issue.

A lot of end-of-life issues actually are now happening in home care. The hospice system is stressed. I know they have been lobbying the government for a number of years now for some additional resources.

Part of the issue, though, quite honestly, is that people are living longer, so the system has been slow to respond to that.

But when you look at the CCACs and the home care system—and this would be from the 2015 Auditor General's report; I could have gone to 2016—in home care, all three CCACs that the Auditor General reviewed

had wait-lists for personal support services, including up to 198 days.

The service that people receive depends upon where they live, so access became an issue, as the member pointed out. And there were still no provincial standards specifying the level of services that clients with similar needs should be entitled to. Some 65% of the initial home care assessments and 32% of the reassessments for chronic and complex clients were not conducted within the required time frames.

1710

So you have a very complex piece of legislation—a very stressful piece of legislation, a needed piece of legislation—and you have a home care and health care system which is also stressed. That can be problematic for a lot of people.

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

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I'm happy to stand here to reiterate that the importance of this bill is to allow and protect the dignity of all Ontarians, the people who will make the difficult choice and the people who want to be protected from this choice. It also protects medical practitioners and nurse practitioners who are willing to support their patients and the ones who do not. I think the bill is fair in protecting all the constituencies that are there.

It has to be read in the context of our constitutional obligations to our constituents, and also the protection of freedom of conscience that exists in the Constitution. In addition, I think it has to be read in the context of the significant investments that have been made for palliative care in Ontario, and that will continue to be made, because this bill is about making sure that Ontarians have choices. This, I think, is the primary message of this bill, and we'll continue to provide that.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return back to the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton to wrap up.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I want to thank all the members for contributing to the debate. Thank you for your thoughts and for your comments.

Again, I just want to finish off on this note: that we absolutely have a grave responsibility, a serious responsibility in front of us to address this matter in a thoughtful way. We can do that, but in order to do that, we also have to look at improving our health care system, broadly speaking. We need to ensure that our health care system has the capacity for people to access all forms of service, particularly when it comes to end-of-life service.

We've talked about this, but just to reiterate: We need to ensure that we have a system where people have access to home care, where people have access to palliative care and where people have access to hospices. To ensure that people have access to end-of-life services, we need to ensure that our health care system is not stretched, and as it stands, we know that hospitals are at capacity, that beds are filled across this province.

In my particular region, I want to reiterate that Brampton Civic Hospital is a hospital that is extremely

stretched. We know that constituents go to the hospital and have to wait hours after hours just to receive service and care.

The government needs to address this by making sure that the funding they provide for health care is proportional to the population, and based on increases in inflation. Without matching funding to inflation and population increases, we're going to see a lack of access. That's the reality. The government has to be serious about addressing this problem and stop the cuts to our health care system that have been going on for far too long.

I encourage the government to take the right steps, and we will build a health care system that can have access for all people, where all people can have access to it, and ensure that people have access to this very important decision for their end of life.

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

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I will be sharing my time with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

First, I want to just make sure that we recognize that there was a part of the 2016 budget—a 2.5% increase to the health care budget, which is greater than the rate of inflation. We are continuing to invest in health care, because it is part of responding adequately to the needs of all Ontarians.

But to come back to the bill that's in front of us, I'm rising tonight because it is important that we recognize the context of the bill, as well as the different constituencies that are being addressed by the bill—and, in my view, addressed fairly.

The context of the bill has been alluded to several times. I had the privilege over my career of speaking to and being involved in many decisions and litigations surrounding the right to end one's life. I was involved in the first Rodriguez decision, which was overturned by the Carter decision more recently.

The reason why the Carter decision was important is that the court recognized fundamentally that people should have some choices—difficult choices, but we should reflect the dignity of people in making choices about the end of their life.

They also recognized—and that was crucial in the decision—that we do not want, and we never want, anyone to be pressured into ending one's life prematurely. We know that we have to make sure we have the processes to protect people from being pressured, induced, pushed into a decision that is irrevocable.

The same difficulty of trying, on the one hand, to protect people from being pressured and pushed, and at the same time recognizing the ability and the difficult choice that some people, faced with incredible pain, want to make, is the same thing that occurred when Parliament addressed the issue last June.

I want to read a little bit, in a way, the constraints that Parliament imposed, because these constraints form part of where Ontario is leading.

The constraints mean that only people that are 18 years of age, that have a grievous and irremediable medical condition, and that have made a voluntary request for medical assistance and have given informed consent, can access that service.

A grievous and irremediable medical condition is a serious and incurable illness, disease or disability; an advanced state of irreversible decline in capability; and the suffering is immense.

I think that what is important here is that the constraints that are put on the Criminal Code, through the Criminal Code, are part of what will frame, a little bit, the way in which Ontario must proceed. We cannot go beyond this, but we cannot go below this. This is a right that is now being conferred to some people, to have access to making that decision in difficult circumstances. The bill proceeds from that. It proceeds from the fact that it's now the responsibility of Ontario to ensure that this choice is made in the best possible circumstances.

This bill does have several aspects. I want to emphasize this: It does provide for coroners to continue to have the ability to investigate deaths that would be suspicious, that would not comply with the limits of the Criminal Code.

Importantly, in the bill it does say that in two years we should review the protocol, because we know that many people think the restrictions in the Criminal Code are too restrictive or too limited. We are in uncharted territory, and we know that we have to continue to have this difficult conversation.

The second group that the bill speaks to is the people for whom it is not an option. For moral reasons, for religious reasons, some people don't want this option. We know that we continue to provide good palliative care in Ontario, and we'll continue to do that. These people are protected, because the power of the coroners ensures that there will be no pressure and no inducement to end a life prematurely.

The other group that is protected is the people that wish to make that difficult choice. They need to be protected to have access, to ensure that their descendants have life insurance or benefits under workers' compensation.

Finally, the last two groups of people that are protected in the legislation are the nurse practitioners and the doctors who choose to engage with and serve their patients. They are protected from liability, and their privacy is protected.

Similarly, we have to read this act in light of the protection for freedom of conscience that exists in our charter. No doctor and no nurse practitioner will ever be forced to do something that is against his or her conscience, in the context of the bill.

We know that some people have discomfort about this. It's about the operation and the *mise en œuvre* of the bill that this will be resolved. Many suggestions have been made, and we're certainly going to continue to look at this.

1720

I just want to close to say how important this bill is. It's our responsibility to respond to the changes in the law in a manner that will make it feasible, appropriate and protect people. This is the right thing to do for Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to speak to this bill because it has grave concern for me—not that I don't support it. But there's been a lot—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to stop the clock. I understand from the Clerk, Minister, that you've already spoken. That's what I've been instructed. All right.

I'm going to turn to the opposition. Questions and comments?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Madam Speaker, point of order: I have not spoken to this bill.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to turn to the member from Sarnia–Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a pleasure to rise and have a couple of minutes' comments on this bill.

I understand there are almost six different acts that are affected: the Coroners Act, the Excellent Care for All Act—I think the idea about this bill is it provides a summary to a number of health care professionals and those who would be engaged in this. Some of our thoughts on this in caucus are that obviously we want to support this bill. We'd like to see some amendments to it. We're certainly going to make those amendments when the time comes.

One of the specific concerns that we've heard, and I've heard back home as well, is that they believe that medical assistance in dying should be accessible for those who qualify and want it without any kind of forcing institutions or health care providers to act against their conscience or their beliefs. Ontario's regulations must ensure a balance between individual rights, including and recognizing conscience rights of health care practitioners and facilities, while also protecting those vulnerable individuals who could be resident there.

We believe that there is a path forward, as other provinces have done, to ensure that our health care system respects all perspectives on this issue.

We also respect the conscience rights of health care professionals. We believe there's a path forward, as other provinces have done, as I've already said, and we'd like to see that those—when we have the opportunity, if this bill passes eventually, when it goes to committee we'd like to make those kinds of amendments. We certainly look forward to interacting with our colleagues on the other two sides of the House as well. I look forward to the rest of debate.

I know it's a very emotional issue with a lot of people. We've got a very great hospice down in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton, St. Joseph's Hospice. They do a lot of great work. My sister volunteers there. A number of

friends of mine and relatives have used that facility and their families are very supportive of it. I support the type of work; and as a couple of other members said, we should all take advantage of working in those facilities and volunteering.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to get up late on a Thursday afternoon to talk about this bill.

My colleague France Gélinas had a chance to do her lead-off on this about a week ago. She noted, and I think my colleague from Ottawa–Vanier touched on this as well, the necessity for a range of investments in facilities to deal with this issue beyond what's in the piece of legislation before us today. There's no doubt, and the member from Sarnia–Lambton mentioned this, that having good hospice care is critical. People in the advanced stages of a terminal disease deserve, need—must have—appropriate caring, nurturing attention from health care professionals in the last weeks and months of their lives. That isn't the case where those facilities aren't available throughout Ontario. Again, when my colleague from Nickel Belt was discussing this, members from rural Ontario talked about the absence of those facilities in their ridings.

I don't care where you live in Ontario. Whether it's downtown Ottawa or northern Timiskaming, everyone deserves that dignity and that treatment.

We're talking about a very emotional and emotive bill, and I think that it has been good that the people in the House have dealt with it in a responsible, thoughtful way. In fact, it's critical. I'm very pleased that people have done that.

But I have to say, Speaker, beyond the bill and beyond the words and the structures here, there is going to be have to be investment in facilities, so that it isn't just a question of a procedure that's available, but of a system that gives people support in those last days of their lives so that they can be ended with dignity.

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The member from Toronto–Danforth is exactly right. The provision of services for medical assistance in dying is one option that the federal government, through the Supreme Court, has decided should be made available to Canadians. But it needs to sit alongside a suite of supports that are available to those Ontarians and Canadians who are reaching end-of-life.

Those investments and those other supports are so important to provide confidence to society that we are looking at this issue holistically, from the hard work that our front-line health care providers do to lessen the challenge and eliminate pain and suffering from those who are near or at end-of-life, to the commitment that we made last year, that we are following through:

—an additional \$75 million for hospices and palliative care;

—20 new hospices to be funded by this government;

—our investment of \$250 million in home and community care, providing hundreds of thousands of additional hours of home care to individuals across this province;

—the development of a dementia strategy that we are in the midst of right now;

—the creation of a palliative care network, which we have just announced the creation of recently.

These are aspects that are just as important as the—I would say—high-level, very articulate and sensitive discussion that we've had over the course of this afternoon, which I have very much appreciated being a part of and listening to.

I want to thank all members for certainly further educating me in terms of how we need to sensitively but with determination work together to ensure that we are providing this service in the best possible way to Ontarians.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to participate in the discussion this afternoon. I'm particularly pleased that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is taking the time to be here today from his busy schedule.

I come to this discussion from two perspectives: first and foremost, as a son who cared for both parents as they died from cancer. I saw the nurturing and caring care that was provided in both of their particular hospices.

But I also come to this discussion as the former chair of the health and social services committee at the region of Durham. Now, as the MPP, I'm having a number of constituents coming to me in my constituency office, and they want to talk particularly to me about the type of help that they can get, should they find themselves in that type of circumstance.

But they also talk about ensuring a balance between individual rights, including recognizing the conscience rights of health care practitioners and facilities and protecting vulnerable individuals. It's not only the individual constituents who are coming in, those who are seeking help and support the general direction of the legislation; it's also health care practitioners who are coming in to talk to me.

The type of discussion that we are having here today has been a valuable one and an instructive one, a continuum of what I'm hearing in my constituency office and also what I'm sure other members of this Legislature are hearing as well. It's a very difficult decision that we're going to have to make.

But I think this type of discussion that we're having today has been a very instructive one. It hasn't been partisan, which I welcome, because I think at the end of the day, the type of discussion we've had is going to arrive us at a point where we all want to be. Ultimately, we will make the right decision if we continue to follow that course.

1730

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return back to the member from Ottawa–Vanier to wrap up.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I want to recognize and thank the members from Dufferin–Caledon, Whitby–Oshawa and Toronto–Danforth and the Minister of Health for their comments. I think the last comments summarized a little bit where I was. I think it is very important that we address this with calm, with empathy and also in a dignified manner beyond the things that separate us. I think Ontarians deserve no less from us in this difficult bill, so I want to thank all for their good contributions this afternoon.

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's an honour to be able to stand and speak to this piece of legislation today. I spoke earlier about the Magna Carta. Earlier today, we addressed a piece of legislation that was put forward by the honourable member, and in that discussion, we talked about democracy and about the value of having a democratic system where we can have open and free debate under the rule of law. It's because of democracy that we can debate ideas such as this, and that is why we have this sort of deliberative body.

The subject of assisted suicide, the subject of medical assistance in dying, is a weighty one, but the floor of the Legislature was made to debate weighty subjects, to define how we live in our province, to seek out the objective truth and to legislate wisely.

I'm pleased to be able to stand to this motion because it's something that I'm very passionate about. I believe that we need to ensure we have a comprehensive system in place that respects the wishes of patients and that protects the most vulnerable in our society. Those at the end of life are often among the most vulnerable.

Earlier I mentioned the preamble to C-14, the medical-assistance-in-dying legislation that was put forward by the federal Liberal government last year. I spoke to the preamble, and I want to go back to that and mention a later aspect in that preamble. It's something we touched upon today in our debate:

“Whereas nothing in this act affects the guarantee of freedom of conscience and religion;...

“And whereas the government of Canada has committed to develop non-legislative measures that would support the improvement of a full range of options for end-of-life care, respect the personal convictions of health care providers and explore other situations—each having unique implications—in which a person may seek access to medical assistance in dying....”

The honourable member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton spoke at some length about palliative care. Quite frankly, this debate today has been eye-opening to me because I felt in my conversations with palliative care physicians, palliative care providers and those who are worried about being able to access palliative care at end of life that not only was there no consensus on palliative care in the provincial Legislature, but that there was no desire to come to a consensus on the need for palliative care in the provincial Legislature. I'm pleased to see that, through much of the discussion I have heard today, there does seem to be a desire to access these services.

I had the opportunity recently to tour McNally House in my riding, which is a hospice in Grimsby that provides excellent care to the people of Grimsby in end-of-life services regarding palliative care. Since 2008, McNally House Hospice has in a residential setting provided 24-hour, specialized palliative care, free of charge, to people living with a terminal illness, as well as those in their life circle.

I also had the opportunity to tour Bruyère in Ottawa and their palliative facilities there. While I was in Ottawa, I also toured the Roger Neilson House, which, as a pediatric palliative care facility, was more than moving. It was life-changing, because seeing the value of those children's lives and seeing the importance of care that not only their family but also those palliative care providers placed on these children was a beautiful thing to behold, and something that I'm excited to work with members in this House to improve.

Unfortunately, there is a large amount of needs within the palliative care system here in Ontario. This piece of legislation, a housekeeping bill that speaks to medical assistance in dying and governs the rules surrounding it, has brought to a focus, again, this need for palliative care.

I want to address a couple of issues. First of all, I think we've all spoken about the need for conscience protection, but I, too, need to go on the record as firmly being in favour of conscience protections and conscience rights. As we've seen, the preamble to the C-14 federal legislation argues very strongly for this. I'm disappointed that there are no explicit conscience protections provided in this legislation, quite frankly. I look forward to working with the PC Party to propose amendments that would recognize this and lay that out in a more explicit way.

In January 2016, the Canadian Cancer Society released a report on palliative care. This report found that there is a negligence towards palliative care in Ontario. Like I prefaced before, this is the reason why I was pleasantly surprised today to hear so many people stand up and speak about the need for palliative care, and why I'm optimistic that we can make progress on this.

But the reality is that the total amount of ministry funding that is used to provide palliative care services in Ontario is simply not known. The funding to hospitals, \$16.3 billion in the 2013-14 fiscal year, and long-term-care homes, \$3.4 billion in 2013-14, is not tracked specifically enough to isolate the amount spent on palliative care. Similarly, the total cost of drugs for palliative care patients is not tracked.

I know we can do better when it comes to providing palliative care, because I've had the opportunity to tour these places—Bruyère, McNally House, Roger Neilson House—seeing the contributions that they provide, with very limited resources but with enormous community involvement.

This is something that Ontarians are ready for, and I'm excited that the federal government announced in their election promises in 2015 that they were going to commit \$3 billion towards implementing palliative care. I think

that we would do well in the province of Ontario to take advantage of that funding and put it toward a palliative care strategy here in Ontario.

Many initiatives relating to palliative care services are under way across Canada at both the national and provincial levels. They cover a wide variety of issues, including the need for better physician communication with patients; the importance of patients developing an advance care plan outlining their end-of-life wishes; and improved integration of patient services so that people get the cost-effective care they need when they need it.

Unfortunately, palliative care services in Ontario have been developed in a very patchwork fashion, often being initiated by individuals who have had a passion for this area of care wherever they were located in the province. We need to make improvements, Madam Speaker. We can do better.

A strategic policy framework is not in place currently for a palliative care delivery system. We need to work on this. If we are truly providing choice in end-of-life care, that means we need to be providing home care choice, we need to be providing hospice choice, and we need to be providing intensive palliative care choice. Without that, assisted suicide or medical assistance in dying is not choice.

We need to ensure that the mix of services is reviewed to ensure patients' needs are being met cost-effectively. This patchwork that we have in our current system means that we're not always having the most effective allocation of resources. That means that some people's needs are not being met. That means some families have to worry about whether or not their loved one will be able to access palliative care services, whether at home or in a hospice in their community.

I admit I will have to do a quick google again to get these numbers straight, but I recently read, I believe, that the international standards for the amount of palliative care beds we should have per 100,000 people is supposed to be around seven. In Ontario, I believe we currently have around two palliative care beds per 100,000 people. There's obviously a huge need.

1740

In my riding of Niagara West—Glanbrook, and in the Niagara Peninsula, we have an enormous influx of retirees. The reality is that as we move into a demographic shift, as we see baby boomers entering that phase, we will need more access to palliative care than ever. We cannot have medical assistance in dying without alternatives, and the compassionate alternative to medical assistance in dying, I'm convinced, is palliative care.

I will champion this issue, and I invite all members in this Legislature to speak with me about this and see how we can work together for all Ontarians.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm very pleased to be part of the debate today on this important piece of legislation, Bill 84, the Medical Assistance in Dying Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016.

It is interesting to listen to the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook, because he had referenced the federal legislation in a previous comment that he had been part of. He talked at length about the palliative care system, and hospices as well.

I will tell you that in Waterloo region, when I've toured our hospice facilities, there's a definite feeling that the entire nature of hospice and palliative care is changing. There has been a shift in culture, if you will. But there have also been medical advances which leave people living longer, and sometimes that length of life is not based on quality.

I mentioned in a previous comment that it depends on who you talk to. It's so subjective, how people see this issue and what lens they see this issue through, be it a religious, be it an ethical, be it a medical lens. For those who genuinely see relieving the pain and suffering of individuals when it is their choice to do so—there are medical professionals who genuinely see this as an act of compassion—genuinely so. Then there are, of course, others in the medical field who really do struggle with their conscience, so they do need to be protected in this regard, going forward.

There is an immense amount of work for us to navigate through, and hopefully we can land in a place where we do in fact find that balance.

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

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook. I want to thank him for his interest and, obviously, his approach to this, and his caring and compassionate way of delivering his remarks.

I do want to let him know that when he's speaking of people in palliative care, there is not a need for consensus. We have consensus here. In last year's budget, when we announced the investment that we're going to make over the next three years in new hospice beds and new funding for hospice, it received applause from all sides of the House, and that was a great thing—twice. So there's agreement here.

In each of our communities, we have to work to help develop those things, because it's not just simply the government that's going to do that. We have to be there to provide and support, but hospices are community-based initiatives, and there are communities of practice. As individuals, we have to take responsibility for our end-of-life decisions, so we have to share with our loved ones what's important, what we want. We have to inform the system.

These are really big changes. This debate is really important. I'm glad he was at Bruyère and Roger Neilson House—great places. They are really wonderful places.

Any time he wants to talk to me about this, just come on across or we can set up a time. I'd be happy to share the report that we did last year. We had 16 consultations, over 350 people. I've been almost all over the province, talking to people in hospice and palliative care.

It's something we have to keep moving forward on. We're committed to doing that. I know that you and members on all sides of the House realize the imperative of improved palliative care. It's not just our effort, which is critical, but it's a community effort that's going to make it better.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm so pleased that the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook is fitting in with our caucus so well. It's hard to remind ourselves—the Minister of Health is here listening to a 19-year-old speak on a very important topic, and it's impressive. My children are about his age, and I think they are impressive, of course, but it is impressive when somebody of that age shows such maturity and such insight.

I want to just mention that it is length of life versus quality, which the member from Kitchener–Waterloo mentioned. That's so true. Too often, people don't realize that life is short, and it's not how long we're here; it's what we accomplish, what we experience, who loves us and who we love.

It's the end of a busy week, and we're all going to go back to our ridings. I know we're all getting emails from concerned people on many sides of the issue. I really hope, since the Minister of Health is here, that we are looking at what we can do to ensure that everybody's emotional needs and physical needs are being met with this piece of legislation.

There are many jurisdictions in the world where doctors feel that their conscience rights are not being trampled, if they are concerned about that, and I think we can look at all the consequences, look at what's being done elsewhere, and ensure that we are doing something, as the member from Ottawa South said, that is community-based, that we're really listening to those people in our communities. That's what we're here for. We're here to be their voice, to be their conscience, not just our own.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in this House, and today to make some comments on Bill 84, medical assistance in dying, and on the remarks by the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook.

Starting out, I'd just like to say that this is one of the best debates that we've had here in a while. It's an incredibly serious issue, and my one regret is that the people who were here for question period this morning aren't here now to see how this House can actually work. We have different viewpoints, we come from different places, but on certain issues—on all issues, but on many issues, partisanship and theatre get in the way. On issues like this, we can agree to disagree, but agree to try and make our province a better place.

To me, what this act and what this issue is about is dignity. It's about dignity throughout life. It's dignity in birth, dignity throughout your life and dignity at the end of your life. It's about choice and dignity.

It has been said many times today that it's not just this one choice. It's about palliative care. It's about long-term care. We need to ensure that we do everything we can together to make sure that everyone in this province who is in long-term care also has dignity. In this whole process, we all have to work together, and that should be the bedrock. It's about dignity, and it's the dignity to have a choice.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to thank all the members who spoke to this. I want to thank the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, the honourable member from Ottawa South, the honourable member from Thornhill and the honourable member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for speaking to this important issue, because it's an issue that is going to impact all of us. At one point, all our lives will end. Having the opportunity to end it in a way where we are surrounded by friends and family and having the opportunity to end it in a way where we're not forced into choosing medical assistance in dying, whether because of financial issues or concerns about being a burden on one's family—that should not be a consideration in when one dies.

I do want to touch very briefly on conscience protections, because we must be careful that Bill 84 will not force physicians with deeply held religious, moral or ethical beliefs about the sanctity of life to go against both their conscience and the Hippocratic oath. The Minister of Health mentioned that that is a federal issue, but I believe we need to ensure that we have it explicitly encapsulated in this legislation.

Section 2 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects freedom of conscience and religion, and it would do no harm to include it in this legislation, so that we have it explicitly encapsulated. What's the point of freedom of expression, freedom of belief, freedom of religion and freedom of morality, if we cannot express them through action or inaction without state intervention?

1750

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate this opportunity to get up and speak about this bill.

There's no question this is an extraordinarily personal and pressing issue for Canadians, for Ontarians. I had an opportunity a number of years ago, as I was going door to door, to talk to one of my constituents whose wife had died the year before. It was a very difficult conversation, because she had died very unpleasantly from cancer. She wanted to die earlier, and it had not been possible. So she had an extraordinarily painful end, and it clearly haunted him for a long time after. He could not understand why someone in such a profound state of suffering, who could not be helped with any other technology or practice that we had, could be left to suffer in that way.

We are dealing with a new reality, a reality that this has been recognized by the federal government. We, at the provincial level, have to put in place the systems that

allow those federal decisions to in fact be carried forward. More importantly, Speaker, we need to find a way to ensure that those who face an extraordinarily difficult or painful end are allowed to make a decision and have that decision come into effect to avoid that pain, as difficult as it may be, and end their lives early.

My colleague France Gélinas from Nickel Belt spoke to this earlier, and I was very moved by what she had to say. She gave a very thoughtful, broad-stroke look at the issue and how it needed to be handled. She was quite correct in saying that, as we go forward with this, we need to have in place the palliative care, the hospice care, the home care, so that people facing these extraordinarily painful times get the support, get the dignity that my colleague from Timiskaming referred to, get the support for a dignified end that, as a human, they deserve.

One of the concerns that my colleague from Nickel Belt raised was the polarization of this issue. It cannot be surprising in the end, but it is polarized. For those who face the reality of an extraordinarily painful end or the extraordinarily painful end of a family member or a close friend, there's no doubt in their minds that action has to be taken to deal with that pain. On the other side, there are those who, through deeply held beliefs, don't feel they can be part of that process. I don't find fault with them for that, if they express truly what's at the centre of their being. I have had, in the last few weeks, doctors come to see me in my office who are wrestling with this issue, who don't feel that they could, in good conscience, practise medicine in Ontario if they had to give a—the term is “referral,” but we, who are not medical people, think of a referral as, “Yes, you go over here and you can do that. We'll refer you over”—be part of the process of making things happen.

That polarized debate that we have here, my colleague from Nickel Belt felt, could have been managed much better than it was. She had looked at what happened in Quebec, where there was very extensive public consultation. A legislative committee travelled that province. In fact, it went to Europe to deal with the governments that were actually working with those decisions in place, came back and consulted with thousands in the province of Quebec. So when this matter was ultimately resolved in their Legislature, it was resolved on the basis of unanimity amongst all parties and all legislators, because they had gone through that process of discussion and thought that allowed them to apply themselves with a full understanding of the moral and practical issues before them. It's unfortunate that we haven't had that here in Ontario. It should have been fuller. There should have been the opportunity for more voices to be heard, for more public perspectives to be there—a critical piece, Speaker.

In this province, hospice care is provided unevenly. I commented on this earlier when I was making a comment in questions and comments. In some rural areas, there isn't the hospice care that people deserve so that they can die in the region, in the area and near the people who they are familiar with and who they love. But it was also

noted by the member from Nickel Belt that hospice care is not funded at the same level as hospital care, so many hospices have to fundraise to provide care. It doesn't make sense to me. People in the final days of their lives should not have to rely on organizations that may have difficulty, in fact, gathering the resources necessary to provide that support and care.

Again, we're responding in this Legislature to a decision—a wise decision—at the federal level, but it can't just be a question of permissions for medical professionals, decisions around life insurance, decisions around Workplace Safety and Insurance Board protocols. It also has to be a question of putting in place the programs and the resources, so that it isn't just cold words on paper, but real resources in the community—and not just in the urban communities; in all the communities of this province.

We need better home care. One of the things that I've heard from some medical professionals is that some people may decide to end their lives early not because their situation is hopeless, but because their life is very difficult. My guess is that that will be relatively rare—we have a very strong instinct to survive; it's profound in us—but to the extent that the home care services that people are provided with are inadequate to give people a sense of independence and comfort in their home, it may undermine a person's will to live.

I recently had an opportunity to meet with people in a seniors' building in my riding, and I had the folks from the community care access centre there, answering questions about home care and the other services the CCAC could put people in touch with. It was very clear, from the seniors who were there, that they found that the home care they were getting was not adequate to meet their personal needs living in their unit. The people from the CCAC were quite compassionate, but they said

simply, "You're getting older. The population is getting older. We have more people to go to, but our budgets remain essentially the same, so on a year-on-year basis, we decide what's most critical to be done and we spread the services over the population that asks for them."

Now, I understand the cold accounting logic of that, but in terms of the lives of those seniors and their ability, again, to live with dignity, it is totally inadequate. It may cause people to decide that this life is too difficult to continue living. I think we're all agreed that people should have the right to decide when they're going to go, when they're going to leave this world, but I think we're also fully agreed that no one should ever be in a position where this is pushed, where their ability to live is undermined.

So, Speaker, I say to you again that it's good to have this in place, good to have these laws changed, but in a much bigger way, there are concrete steps that need to be taken with resources and supports that have to be there, to fulfill what I think every person who is in this chamber would say is the right amount of support for someone to continue living, to help them to retain that will to live.

Speaker, this issue is not going to end with the debate that we have here in this chamber. Eventually, this debate will end; a bill will be passed. Hopefully, some advance will be made. But I say to you and to all who are here, we need to think in a much bigger way about how we deal with people in the last years, months, weeks and hours of their lives. I think it's incumbent on us—and all of us, at some point, will be there dealing with that. May it be a good end and not a grim end.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Seeing it's 6 p.m., I will be adjourning the House until Monday, March 6 at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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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 Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
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 Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels 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 Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	York–Simcoe 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	Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite enfance et de la Garde d'enfants
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP) Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Essex 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	
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	
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
Vacant	Sault Ste. Marie	

**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-président: Michael Mantha
Bob Delaney, Cheri DiNovo
Joe Dickson, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Michael Mantha
Peter Z. Milczyn, Arthur Potts
Todd Smith
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
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
Peter Z. Milczyn
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Granville Anderson
Granville Anderson, Yvan Baker
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Julia Munro
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
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Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Wayne Gates, Amrit Mangat
Cristina Martins, Sam Oosterhoff
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, Nathalie Des Rosiers
Michael Mantha, Jim McDonnell
Shafiq Qaadri, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
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**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
Joe Dickson, Sophie Kiwala
Harinder Malhi, Michael Mantha
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Vic Dhillon, Han Dong
John Fraser, Ernie Hardeman
Percy Hatfield, Randy Hillier
Monte Kwinter, Lisa MacLeod
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: Lou Rinaldi
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Grant Crack
Jennifer K. French, Jack MacLaren
Ted McMeekin, Lou Rinaldi
Mario Sergio, 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
Lorne Coe, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch