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of Ontario
Second Session, 41st Parliament

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 6 April 2017

Jeudi 6 avril 2017

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Todd Decker

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 6 April 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 6 avril 2017

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ANTI-RACISM ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 CONTRE LE RACISME

Mr. Coteau moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 114, An Act to provide for Anti-Racism Measures / Projet de loi 114, Loi prévoyant des mesures contre le racisme.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand here today. I will be sharing my time with the member from Brampton–Springdale.

I am so pleased to move second reading of Bill 114, An Act to provide for Anti-Racism Measures, which I'll be referring to by its short name, the Anti-Racism Act, 2017.

I want to start by acknowledging that we're gathered here today on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit and give thanks and recognition to the historical significance of the indigenous, Métis and Inuit people of this city, but also this region and this country.

I would also like to take a moment Mr. Speaker—Madam Speaker; there was a switch—just to recognize and acknowledge the guests here today. We have guests who have contributed so much to get to this point here today in regard to this bill.

Madam Speaker, I stand here today to talk to you about how we can make this province the best place to live and prosper and to be happy, not just for a privileged few, but for all Ontarians. We live in a multicultural province with a diverse and dynamic population. I believe it's one of the things that makes this province so beautiful. We acknowledge and celebrate peoples' individual differences, whether it's gender identity, sexual identity, disability or race. We have a productive and vibrant society where people are making strides in industry, arts, science and technology.

As we celebrate our 150th anniversary, we can see that today's Ontario is a land of diversity, innovation and opportunity. But as we reflect on that history and we look ahead to the next 150 years, we have to acknowledge entrenched barriers and inequities that prevent people from reaching their full potential. Despite all of the progress that we have made here in the province of Ontario, there

are many indigenous, black and racialized people who continue to face barriers every day because of systemic racism and the consequences of colonialism, slavery and residential schools.

I have seen this first-hand, how systemic racism affects racialized people across the province of Ontario. It means that racialized university graduates have harder times getting jobs than non-racialized counterparts, despite having the exact same credentials; that racialized children are more likely to end up in the child welfare system in comparison to the rest of the population; and that they are less likely to have the support needed to go from high school into post-secondary education.

Madam Speaker, members and colleagues, these examples point to a need for us to understand and deal with systemic racism, which is often caused by hidden institutional biases and policies, practices and processes that privilege or disadvantage people based on race.

Systemic racism can be unintentional, and it can be a result of doing things the way things have always been done, without considering how they impact particular groups differently. It's unacceptable.

In the past few months, I have risen in this House to talk about Black History Month and the contributions of black Canadians; the UN International Decade for People of African Descent; and the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

I think all of us have to be aware that the demographics in this province tell a story. By 2031, racialized people here in the province of Ontario will make up 40% of the population. Two fifths of the population is a large amount.

I said back then, when I spoke in the Legislature on these issues, that it's time for action, to build an Ontario that's safe and that's inclusive for everyone who lives here. It's our obligation to create a society where racial equity is the norm, so that everyone can participate and benefit from everything Ontario has to offer.

I want to remind everyone in this Legislature that our province is not immune to racism, and I believe that a shift has taken place. We're hearing more about racist incidents. People are more comfortably expressing their intolerance. I believe that if we don't address this, it's going to cost us, and I believe that in many ways, it already has cost us.

A recent report by CBC found that last year, there was a 600% jump in the use of racist language online. The top two areas for reported hate crime in the country are right here in Ontario, in Hamilton and in Thunder Bay. In fact—and this is an interesting piece that I think all mem-

bers should listen to—Ontario is home to seven of the top 10 cities for police-reported hate crime in the entire country. This gives us, per capita, the highest rate of police-reported hate crime of any province.

Of these hate crimes, black Canadians are the most targeted in Canada, and indigenous, Jewish and Muslim communities are among those who are frequently targeted. The Toronto Police Service's most recent hate crime report showed that 30% of hate crimes in 2016 were against our city's Jewish community.

Then there are the headlines we've seen recently, from bomb threats forcing evacuations at Jewish community centres, to violence against indigenous women and girls, to alt-right groups like the Soldiers of Odin in Hamilton holding rallies and marches against immigration.

Last month, a 16-year-old girl in the Niagara region had her home broken into and demolished, with the N-word written all over her bedroom wall, because she was dating one of the local high school students who was black. I called her father a couple of weeks ago and offered my support, and thanked him for taking such a strong stand—a public stand—against racism.

Madam Speaker, when I hear those stories, I think to myself that this is not the 1700s, the 1800s, the 1900s, the 1960s or the 1970s. This is 2017, and this is Canada.

One of the biggest challenges we have with racism in Canada is our collective inability to talk about it. It becomes so taboo that most won't address it. I would say that even in this Legislature, we don't talk often about racism and the impact of racism. Even saying the word "racism" makes people think of pre-1960s America, thinking about things like white hoods in the United States and the crimes that have been committed there, but we don't think about post-9/11 Islamophobia, present-day anti-Semitism, anti-indigenous racism or anti-black racism. When we look at racism as just violent hate crimes, it becomes a distant problem. But racism isn't just about hate crimes. It's subtle and it's very sophisticated. It's institutionalized and systemic and becomes normalized when we don't talk about it.

0910

Systemic racism, in fact, is much more common today than other overt forms of racism mentioned above. Systemic racism is how systems and institutions create and perpetuate racial inequities, often as a result of hidden biases in processes that privilege some groups and disadvantage others. Even if individuals and institutions aren't racist, systemic racism is perpetuated by assumptions and unconscious biases we have that contribute to racism. This can be a form of systemic racism that inadvertently creates unequal socio-economic outcomes for racialized people that are unfair and preventable.

Part of what makes these conversations so difficult is that when we acknowledge that there's a problem, we have to start looking at ourselves and admit that we have a role to play in ending it. The future of our economy and society depends on our ability to get over any discomforts we have with these conversations and to jump into finding solutions. That's why anti-racism work is so

important. It's different from other approaches because it acknowledges that systemic racism exists and actively confronts the unequal power dynamic between groups and the structures that sustain it.

Madam Speaker, I believe the future of our economy and our society depends on our ability to get over any discomfort we have with these conversations and jump right into finding solutions, and that's why our government created the Anti-Racism Directorate, the ARD, last year and the Premier gave me the mandate to tackle systemic racism, the kind of racism that is entrenched in our institutions and creates barriers for indigenous and racialized people.

On March 7 of this year, the government introduced A Better Way Forward, which is Ontario's three-year anti-racism strategic plan, which includes a key commitment to introduce anti-racism legislation. It outlines the concrete steps we're taking to target systemic racism by building an anti-racism approach into the way government develops policies, makes decisions and measures outcomes.

We spent last year developing the strategic plan, but this work has taken decades and decades to get here. I want to take a moment, Madam Speaker, just to thank and acknowledge the people who have been working on anti-racism work not for five or 10 years but for decades here in the province of Ontario, many of whom are joining us here today. I want to say thank you for the work that you've done. Often the work that they have done fell on deaf ears. To be here today in the Legislature, with the government, with the Legislature discussing this and moving forward with legislation, I think it's a very proud point for me personally and, I know, for many people joining us here today.

We pored over research and reports such as the Review on the Roots of Youth Violence report, the Stephen Lewis Report on Race Relations in Ontario, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report. Our process involved connecting with thousands of Ontarians who shared their views with us. We consulted with the public and impacted communities, and many anti-racism and racialized community groups called for the government to take action to address systemic racism.

Between June and December of last year, I travelled across the province and went to 10 public meetings, where thousands of Ontarians came forward to share their heartfelt stories with us about the devastating impacts of systemic racism and how racism has impacted them personally. While each individual's experience was different, their stories all confirmed that systemic racism is still having a devastating impact on people's lives across this province and country, and if we don't address it, I believe it's going to cost us even more. The call for anti-racism legislation to ensure the longevity and sustainability of the anti-racism work was a dominant theme throughout these meetings.

Colour of Poverty—Colour of Change, a coalition of groups serving the racialized community, shared the draft anti-racism bill with the Ontario government back in

October 2016. This was endorsed by numerous community partners, including the Anti-Black Racism Network, the National Council of Canadian Muslims and the Taibu community health network, to mention a few.

We knew that we had to take action to make Ontario a more inclusive and more just province. A Better Way Forward: Ontario's 3-Year Anti-Racism Strategic Plan includes an effort to reduce disparities in outcomes for indigenous and racialized people. We want to build a fair and inclusive Ontario where everyone can contribute equally to reach their full potential in this plan, and to change the narrative, to change the outcomes, to change people's perceptions of what racism means.

First, we're going to strengthen policy here in the province. We're going to do better research and evaluation by collecting better race-based disaggregated data—data that can be broken down so we can monitor the impact of policies and programs on different segments of the population. We're also establishing data standards for consistency. This will help us identify where change is needed to address disparities in outcomes. We'll also develop a method for applying an anti-racism perspective to decision-making at the early stages.

Secondly, a key component of the plan is the proposed legislation that we're discussing here today. If passed, this proposed legislation would ensure future sustainability and accountability of our work. We will also commit to being as transparent as possible and to share the progress of the initiatives and targets in this plan through an annual progress report.

Third, we will develop and lead targeted public education and awareness initiatives, which will focus on anti-black racism, anti-indigenous racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and other forms of racism against racialized groups.

Finally, we'll continue to work closely with indigenous and racialized communities, ministry partners and government institutions, because eliminating systemic racism cannot be done alone.

Our strategic plan has population-specific initiatives to address racism experienced by indigenous people, anti-black racism and systemic racism within Ontario's public service, as well as Islamophobia. We're going to use a whole-of-government approach, leveraging the work of other ministries. Once again, I just want to take a moment to thank the ministries that were involved in this process, because there were many ministries that stepped up and offered their help to look for ways to tackle systemic racism. We're hoping to make an impact on the disparities that we see in child welfare, in education and in the justice system.

As part of our commitment to address anti-black racism, we also introduced the Ontario Black Youth Action Plan, the single largest investment into ensuring the success and bright future of young black children here in this province, which I think is a milestone that we can all be proud of. The Ontario Black Youth Action Plan will help eliminate the disparities between black youth and non-black youth at home, in classrooms, in the

journey towards post-secondary education, in youth justice and in the workforce in Ontario.

The government is also taking responsibility and action to end anti-indigenous systemic racism and eliminate the barriers facing our indigenous communities. We're working with our indigenous partners to close gaps, remove barriers, support indigenous culture and work towards truth and reconciliation.

Since last year, we've come a long way, but there's no question in my mind that there is much work to be done. In the long term, we want to change people's hearts and minds and the inequitable outcomes for racialized people in this province. In the short term, we need to implement steps that will start the ball rolling.

Our government and our Premier are completely committed to this work. That's why we've developed the proposed anti-racism legislation. We recognize the critical work that the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario and the Human Rights Commission undertake under existing law. We wanted to recognize, however, that proactive anti-racism work needs a new foundation in law. The proposed legislation requires government to establish tools that will help address systemic racism.

0920

Bill 114, the proposed Anti-Racism Act, is a key component of our anti-racism strategy. If passed, the proposed legislation will give teeth to this three-year strategy and future strategies. It holds us, as government, accountable and ensures that anti-racism work will remain a priority for the government. It would solidify our commitment to identify and combat systemic racism and would make a very important contribution to our work to build an inclusive and equitable Ontario for all.

The proposed legislation would position Ontario as a leader in this country in the fight against systemic racism.

The purpose of the proposed legislation is to establish and maintain transparent and sustainable mechanisms to identify and eliminate systemic racism and advance racial equity in Ontario. If passed, it would enable and set a sustainable approach to anti-racism across government and a wide range of public sector organizations.

The proposed anti-racism legislation, if passed, would ensure the future long-term sustainability and accountability of the government's anti-racism work through the development of measurable targets, public reporting and mandating community engagement through renewable multi-year strategic plans. It would require the government to report publicly on the progress of its anti-racism work and remain accountable to the public.

The proposed legislation would also give the government the authority to mandate race-based data collection and the use of an anti-racism impact assessment framework across government and designated public sector organizations. This regulation-making authority allows government flexibility in implementation. We would consider evidence and consult with affected organizations before mandating race data collection and the use of an anti-racism impact assessment framework.

The proposed legislation would reinforce and increase awareness of the government's commitment to fight systemic racism and ensure that everyone in Ontario has the opportunity to reach their full potential and to participate equally in society.

The proposed Anti-Racism Act includes four main components: first, the establishment of the Anti-Racism Directorate; second, the requirement for government to maintain an anti-racism strategy; third, a requirement to develop race data standards; and finally, a requirement to develop an anti-racism impact assessment framework.

The Anti-Racism Directorate would be established to assist the minister in carrying out these duties. Establishing the Anti-Racism Directorate in the proposed legislation is important because it would provide a home for the anti-racism work to continue.

Madam Speaker, I want to take a moment to thank the dedicated staff from the Anti-Racism Directorate who are joining us here today in the gallery, the men and women who have been working for the last year to build this. Let's give them a big round of applause.

Applause.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I want to remind our visitors in the gallery and in the east gallery: We welcome our guests, but you're not allowed to participate in the debate, including clapping.

I return to the minister.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Madam Speaker, it's such a passionate issue, and people are so involved in this because it's such an important issue, but thank you for reminding us.

They've worked so hard over the last year—and I've seen it first-hand—to build the proposed legislation, the three-year strategic plan, to ensure that we as a government and members in this Legislature can move forward to create the Ontario that we envision. Thank you so much.

The government will be required to develop and publish an anti-racism strategy and set out initiatives to eliminate systemic racism and advance racial equity. The strategy would include targets and indicators to measure progress on the strategy, and it would be required to be published. To keep this work relevant, the strategy would be required to be reviewed at least every five years, at which time a new strategy would be issued, the existing strategy amended or continued.

It is important that stakeholders and community partners have input into our strategy as a government. The proposed legislation requires the minister responsible for anti-racism to consult on the development of the strategy and for the comprehensive review that must occur at least every five years. These consultations would occur with groups most impacted by systemic racism and others interested in the topic. Having an anti-racism strategy and reviewing it based on consultation will keep it current and responsive to people's needs.

The proposed legislation would enable the collection of personal information for the purpose of identifying and monitoring systemic racism and advancing racial equity. Given the sensitivity of race-related information, the proposed legislation also includes strong privacy protec-

tions to prevent the misuse of personal information at the same level as or a higher standard than current privacy laws such as the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. In addition, the proposed legislation provides an oversight role for the Information and Privacy Commissioner. These privacy rules would only apply if an organization is collecting personal information for the purposes of this proposed act.

The minister would be required to develop and publish data standards, subject to the Lieutenant Governor in Council's approval, to ensure that public sector organizations are collecting data with an aligned approach and to further specify how they must protect personal information. Additionally, the Information and Privacy Commissioner and the Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission would have to be consulted on the development of any potential amendments of the minister's data standards.

The LGIC would have regulation-making authority to mandate the collection of race-related data by government and public sector organizations for specific programs and services. These organizations would be required to collect data as outlined in the data standards. This regulation-making authority allows government flexibility on implementation.

We know that this will be a change to the operations of public sector organizations and we want to make sure that we have an opportunity to consult with affected organizations prior to requiring them to collect race data. Collecting this aggregated race data is especially important in areas where we anticipate gaps in outcomes for indigenous and racialized people as compared to the general public.

While we have indications that black and indigenous children have more interactions with child welfare, for example, we need data so that we can identify and address the issues through evidence-based decision-making. This is an important piece within the legislation. This information will help us better understand the impact of programs and policies on different segments of the population. It will help us to identify patterns of bias.

The minister would be required to develop and publish an action-oriented ARIA framework, subject to cabinet's approval, to be used in assessing, mitigating and preventing the potential adverse impact of policies and programs on racial equity. The ARIA would need to include information on processes for research and analysis, stakeholder consultations, and public reporting. Cabinet would have the regulation-making authority to mandate the use of the ARIA across government and entities for specified programs, services and functions.

We have looked at the successful impact of assessments in other jurisdictions. This framework would help us build an anti-racism approach into decision-making and plans, making it easier to prevent and remedy systemic racism.

In closing, this proposed legislation commits us to developing tools that will help us identify systemic barriers

and promote equitable outcomes through our policies and our programs. I believe that this proposed legislation, if passed, will go a long way towards eliminating systemic racism in the province. Systemic racism should not hold anyone back in this province from reaching their full potential and participating in society.

0930

We have an opportunity today to adopt proactive measures to eliminate systemic barriers that cause or help people to perpetuate systemic racism and the inequitable outcomes it creates. The proposed legislation will help us accomplish what we set out to do in our anti-racism strategic plan. If passed, the proposed legislation would ensure future sustainability and accountability for our work, which will make a tremendous difference to the lives of so many people here in the province.

I believe that all people deserve the best this province has to offer. We want to build a fair and more inclusive Ontario, where everyone can contribute equally and achieve their full potential.

I want to leave you with this last thought: We're all in this together. We have a chance now to make a real difference. By working together, we can build a province where race doesn't matter and doesn't limit anyone's social, economic and political opportunities. As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of this country in Ontario and the qualities and values that define us, let us—as a Legislature, as MPPs, as a government—make this year meaningful by taking a stand on racial equity and social inclusion, because that's who we are. I want to ensure that all the brightest minds in this province have the support they need to be competitive in today's market and to reach their potential.

It's time that we, as a Legislature, work together to boldly stand up for all people in this province, to build the economy and the society that we need for tomorrow. This piece of proposed legislation gives us the courage to bridge the gaps between the vision we have for our country as a beacon for multiculturalism and inclusion and the reality of intolerance faced by racialized people.

I want to ask all members to come together and pass this proposed piece of legislation. And I want to thank everyone for listening today.

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

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I'm honoured to be here today for the second reading of Bill 114, the proposed Anti-Racism Act, 2017. I want to start off by acknowledging that we are actually gathered here today on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit.

I want to commend Minister Coteau and the Anti-Racism Directorate for all the work they have done in the last year, leading to the introduction of Ontario's three-year anti-racism strategic plan, which includes a commitment to anti-racism legislation. This is a milestone that we can all be proud of. It marks a year of research, consultation and development, but it is just the beginning of a transformational effort towards eliminating systemic racism in Ontario.

I want to thank my colleague Minister Coteau for giving me the opportunity to participate in this exciting and meaningful work, which is also very near and dear to my heart. I represent the electoral district of Brampton–Springdale. The population of Brampton is 40% South Asian, and, being a racialized person myself, I understand the impacts of systemic racism first-hand. I see the need for change and that people are tired and frustrated of waiting for that change to happen. That change is starting with us, in our own backyard, as the minister said, with this proposed legislation. If passed, this legislation will help Ontario move forward sooner rather than later in changing the status quo and building a society characterized by racial equity and social inclusion. That's what we are all working towards. If passed, I am convinced that the proposed legislation will make a significant difference in the way we fight systemic racism in Ontario. It will give us the power and authority to support our ideas and our words with action.

Minister Coteau has given you the broad outline of the proposed legislation, and I will go into more detail. I would like to start off by reading parts of the preamble to the proposed legislation, as it provides context and sets out the objectives and intent of the legislation. The preamble reads:

“Everyone deserves to be treated with fairness, respect and dignity, and the government of Ontario is committed to eliminating systemic racism and advancing racial equity.

“Systemic racism is a persistent reality in Ontario, preventing many from fully participating in society and denying them equal rights, freedoms, respect and dignity.”

As the minister defined it, “Systemic racism is often caused by policies, practices and procedures that appear neutral but have the effect of disadvantaging racialized groups. It can be perpetuated by a failure to identify and monitor racial disparities and inequities and to take remedial action....

“Eliminating systemic racism and advancing racial equity supports the social, economic and cultural development of society as a whole, and everyone benefits when individuals and communities are no longer marginalized.”

Freedom, equality and fairness are the marks of a democratic society. We all want those things. We believe that, starting with government and being held accountable through legislation, we can achieve this.

There are four components to the proposed legislation, as Minister Coteau explained. These are maintaining an anti-racism strategy; collecting personal information, including race-based information; establishing an anti-racism impact assessment framework; and establishing the Anti-Racism Directorate in legislation.

Maintaining an anti-racism strategy: The proposed Anti-Racism Act requires the government of Ontario to develop and publish an anti-racism strategy that aims to eliminate systemic racism and advance racial equity, and outlines the requirements for what must be contained in

that strategy. The requirements in the proposed legislation, if passed, would include initiatives to eliminate systemic racism, including systemic barriers that contribute to inequitable racial outcomes; initiatives to advance racial equity; and targets and indicators to measure the effectiveness of the strategy. The initiatives contained in the strategy would have to target the people who are most adversely impacted by systemic racism, including the indigenous community, the black community and other racialized communities. This is a feature of the proposed Anti-Racism Act.

It provides for a long-term view that the racialization of communities can shift over time, but it recognizes that certain communities face particular barriers and inequitable outcomes due to their particular histories. The three-year anti-racism strategy fulfills part of that requirement. The targets and indicators required by the proposed legislation to make this strategy accountable would have to be established and published on an Ontario government website within 12 months of the proposed act coming into force, if passed.

Progress reports: To ensure accountability, there is a requirement in the proposed Anti-Racism Act for the minister to prepare and publish regular progress reports on the anti-racism strategy. The progress reports would have to include information related to the strategy's initiatives, targets and indicators. For A Better Way Forward, the first progress report would be required to be prepared 12 months after targets and indicators are published. Doing so provides public accountability through public reporting, and is in line with our government's open government principles.

A review of the anti-racism strategy: Another way of ensuring accountability in the proposed legislation is the requirement for a mandatory comprehensive review of the strategy every five years. Part of this review would require informing the public of the review and soliciting input, and undertaking consultations with community organizations, individuals, other levels of government and stakeholders. The requirement for consultations would ensure that individuals and representatives of the groups that are most adversely impacted by systemic racism are consulted.

The proposed legislation explicitly names indigenous and black communities, but it is not limited to these communities. After the comprehensive review is complete, the government could either amend the strategy, replace the strategy, or continue the existing strategy. The date from which the next strategy is established after this review would have to be clearly indicated.

Consultation on the anti-racism strategy: We are committed to consulting with members and representatives of communities that are most adversely impacted by systemic racism on a regular basis. The proposed legislation, if passed, would allow for consultation on the strategy from time to time, in between comprehensive reviews.

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The proposed legislation explicitly names indigenous communities but is not limited to these. It also includes

our Sikh community, our Jewish community, our Muslim community and racialized communities across Ontario.

Initiatives in this strategy could be amended as a result of these interim, unscheduled consultations, but not the targets or the indicators. This provides flexibility to add new initiatives or to amend or eliminate existing initiatives. However, the targets and indicators that are established must remain to ensure accountability.

Data standards: To address racial inequities, we need better race-based disaggregated data—data that can be broken down so that we can understand how systemic racism is impacting specific groups. The second part of the proposed legislation requires the establishment of data standards that relate to the collection of personal information for the purpose of eliminating systemic racism and advancing racial equity.

Establishing data standards helps to ensure that data is collected in line with consistent standards and provides a means for ensuring that detailed, privacy-related requirements are respected by public sector organizations. The minister would be required to establish data standards, subject to Lieutenant Governor in Council approval. The standards would set out requirements for the collection, use and management of personal information. LGIC approval would also be required for any amendment to the data standards. Privacy and human rights are fundamental principles in the standards, and it is important for us to ensure these two organizations are involved in the process.

I also want to take a moment to reiterate—and I know that Minister Coteau mentioned it—the rules to protect personal information in the proposed legislation are subjected to the same or higher standards than current laws, such as the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. There would be a requirement to consult with the Information and Privacy Commissioner and Chief Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission of Ontario to develop or amend the data standards.

The LGIC would have regulation-making authority to require or authorize public sector organizations, which includes ministries, to collect information for the purpose of eliminating systemic racism and advancing racial equity. These regulations specify particular public sector organizations and also particular programs and services or functions for which personal information would have to be collected. They would also specify which elements of the data standards are mandatory. This provides flexibility in the application of data standards.

One of the privacy protections outlined in the proposed legislation is that individuals being asked to provide personal information would not be withheld services if they refuse to provide that information.

The personal information collected under a regulation: In the proposed Anti-Racism Act, personal information is to be collected directly from the individual to whom the information relates. However, the data standards may set out criteria and requirements for when indirect collection

may occur: for example, if a police officer is collecting information about a member of the public.

When information is collected directly from an individual, there are a number of requirements in the proposed legislation that a public sector organization must provide to that individual, including that the information is being collected for the purpose of eliminating systemic racism and advancing racial equity, that the service or benefit will not be withheld if the individual refuses to provide the information requested, and the information of an employee of the public sector and organization that can answer any questions about the collection of personal information the individual may have.

While the data standards can set out criteria and requirements for when indirect collection of personal information can occur, the proposed legislation sets out notice of requirements. If a public sector organization indirectly collects information about individuals, they must post a notice on a website, indicating that personal information is being collected under the authority of this proposed act, if passed. The website notice must also indicate the types of information being collected and the manner in which the information is being collected, why the information is being collected and how it will be used, and the information of an employee of the public sector organization that can answer any questions about the collection of the personal information that the individual may have.

The personal information collected under the authority of this proposed legislation can only be used for data collection purposes of the proposed act, eliminating systemic racism and advancing racial equity. Additional limits on collection, use, security and retention of personal information are set out in the proposed legislation. As well, the data standards must provide for reporting on the use of the collected information and publication of it in a de-identified form. This disclosure will promote better identification and an understanding of systemic racism, a key goal of the proposed act.

Publishing data is about transparency and accountability to the public. Public sector organizations would not be allowed to collect more information than is reasonably necessary to meet the purpose of the proposed legislation, and would not be allowed to use personal information if other information would meet this purpose. They must de-identify personal information, as required by the data standards, and must keep personal information for the amount of time specified in the data standards, or at least one year after collection if no time is specified in the data standards.

Information and Privacy Commissioner review of practices: The proposed Anti-Racism Act, if passed, would give the Information and Privacy Commissioner an oversight role. The IPC would be authorized to review the practices of the public sector organization that is authorized or mandated to collect information. The purpose of the review would be to determine whether there has been unauthorized practice related to the collection, retention, use and disclosure, access or modification of personal

information, or there has been a contravention of this proposed act. The public sector organization would be required to co-operate with the IPC during their review, including producing information and records to the IPC.

If an individual wilfully fails to comply with the order to discontinue with a practice that has been deemed to contravene the proposed act or its regulations, or destroys the personal information that was collected under the practice, the person is considered guilty of an offence and, if convicted, could be fined up to \$100,000. The prosecution would require the consent of the Attorney General.

The IPC would also have the authority to make comments or recommendations on the privacy implications of anything under this proposed act, if passed. These comments, recommendations or other matters related to this proposed act would be included in the IPC's annual report.

The anti-racism impact assessment: The minister will also be required to develop and publish an anti-racism impact assessment framework, and the LGIC would be able to require its use by public sector organizations in respect of their programs and policies. This is the third component of the proposed legislation.

The intent of the ARIA framework is to assess the potential racial equity impacts and outcomes of policies and programs to prevent, mitigate or remedy inequitable impacts and outcomes. This includes both the development of new policies or programs and the evaluation of existing policies and programs.

In the proposed legislation, the framework would have to include the following elements: research and analysis, stakeholder and community partner consultations, and public notice and reporting. Public reporting would ensure accountability and sustainability.

The LGIC would have regulation-making authority to require public sector organizations to use all or part of the framework. The authority to mandate the use of the ARIA by government and designated organizations is critical. The regulations would specify particular public sector organizations and also particular policies or programs for which the framework must be used. This provides the government with flexibility in the application of the framework and is similar to the regulation-making authority for the data standards.

We know that this would be a change in operations, so the regulation-making approach allows the government flexibility to consult with affected organizations and target the policies and programs that may have the highest impact on racial inequity.

There's also a requirement for publication in the proposed legislation. Documents that would be required to be established under the proposed Anti-Racism Act would also be required to be published in order to be transparent and accountable to the public. These documents include the anti-racism strategy, every progress report on the strategy, the data standards and the anti-racism impact assessment.

The fourth and final component of the Anti-Racism Act maintains the existence of the Anti-Racism Directorate and requires the directorate to assist the minister in carrying out duties set out in the proposed act, if passed.

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The proposed legislation also sets out a requirement for an appropriate number of Ontario public service employees to carry out this anti-racism work. This sustains the government's commitment to anti-racism. Long-term sustainability of the ARD was one of the most pressing concerns raised by anti-racism community partners.

The proposed Anti-Racism Act would come into force on the day that it receives royal assent.

In summary, the provisions under the Anti-Racism Act create a sustained, comprehensive approach towards identifying, understanding and eliminating systemic racism in government and, by future regulation, a broad range of Ontario institutions, and advancing racial equity.

I truly believe that this proposed legislation, if passed by this Legislature, is a big step in the right direction and will truly help us combat systemic racism in this province. An equitable society where everyone contributes is good for all of us.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to rise and debate today. I'll have an opportunity to speak at greater length in a little bit, but I wanted to congratulate the minister for the work that he has been doing within the broader community of Ontario, but also the number of round tables that he did across the province with racialized communities and those who feel that they need to have an opportunity to speak out. He gave them that platform, and I congratulate him for that on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus.

Obviously this is becoming a bigger issue than probably it has in many years because we do see, from time to time—most of the time, in fact—online hate directed at one race or another. We see what's happening around the world. A genocide is happening in Syria, and we know that these difficult times create a lot of fear among people.

It is up to us as legislators, in my opinion, to stand up and to talk about the positive things that are happening not only in the world but right here at home in the province of Ontario. I've had the opportunity in a very fast-growing riding in the city of Ottawa to welcome many new Canadians to our country, but at the same time watching our community grow and thrive together. I firmly believe that our children love each other and want to play with one another regardless of how they look.

What happens in life is that we allow people to speak with hate. We hear it and we see it on Twitter, on Facebook. We see it in the news. It's up to us in this assembly to remember that we are here to break down those barriers. But we're also here to ensure that the next generation grows up still retaining that wonderful, open-minded heart that they have.

I often like to point out my own daughter's hockey team, as you all know, and the wonderful diversity there

and the way that those kids play together because they only see their similarities.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: As a New Democrat, I am honoured to stand and support this particular bill. It's something that this Legislature, actually, in the past has dealt with. We had a former—under the NDP government, had put a similar organization in place. Unfortunately, it was done away with sometime after.

I want to make this comment, because I think it's important that it be made. What we're doing today in regard to what we're creating is important. We need to have strategies and we have to have mechanisms in place where government does everything it can in order to beat back racism in all its forms.

All of us as individuals also have a responsibility. It happens to all of us as we're travelling around our neighbourhoods, families and coffee shops. We at times get people who say some very ungracious things in regard to new Canadians. I think it's incumbent upon all of us to beat that back when we see it.

It certainly happens with me. In fact, I had my staffer Kevin Modeste put together a document recently. Because of what's going on in Syria, there seems to be an uptake in the amount of people who say, "Why are they coming here, and they're getting everything and we get nothing?" You hear all of that rhetoric—I'll just leave it at that, but it's not the word I was going to use. I had a document made up that shows that new Canadians get no more than any other Canadians. In fact, they get less, and it's harder for them to establish themselves in this country than people recognize. If we as individuals don't push back, then it allows that lie to continue.

I've taken the document, and now every time I'm somewhere and somebody says, "Oh, the immigrants get more than us Canadians," I gladly send them an email with the document and say, "If you want to discuss, I'm more than prepared to discuss it with you," because, in fact, what's going on in Syria today is horrifying. Could you imagine that happening to your family?

If we can't open our borders to allow people to come to Canada who are in such a terrible situation, it's recalling from the past what we did to the Jews when they tried to come to this country back before the Second World War. We saw what happened to them.

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

Mr. Han Dong: Good morning, Madam Speaker. I'm very pleased to add my voice to the debate of this bill.

I've been listening this morning to the minister responsible for anti-racism in Ontario as well as my good colleague from Brampton–Springdale, and also my good friends across the floor from Nepean–Carleton and Timmins–James Bay. I have to tell you, this is a very heartwarming experience for me as a first-generation Canadian, coming here at the age of 13.

Systemic racism impacts us all. I've been invited to events and discussions organized by not just the black

community, but the indigenous community, the Chinese community, the Korean community, the Portuguese community—you name it—and I hear over and over again how we need to pull together and paddle in the same direction against the current of racism, especially in this very challenging time around the world.

This I see as an opportunity for us to become a model for the world. I realize that, if passed, this act will be the first of its kind in Canada. We're really saying loudly in action, to the rest of the country and the rest of the world, that systemic racism must be exposed and that we must, together, try—at least try—to find a solution to it.

I remember I was at a discussion—I think it was covered by a newspaper as well—where a Korean Canadian was mistaken for a Chinese Canadian and was a victim of racial slurs on the street in my riding, the Queen and Spadina area. This is not acceptable.

I am really pleased that we're discussing this bill today.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm really glad that I was able to be here to hear the leadoff speeches for Bill 114. It has been a very positive hour, to hear what the minister had in mind when he presented this bill.

I have to say that this bill, while it doesn't look very long, is in fact quite prescriptive and quite detailed. So kudos to the minister for actually bringing forward something that has a little bit of meat—

Mr. Bill Walker: Substance.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: —and substance.

I have two young children, teenagers now, and when I go home tonight and tell them what we were debating, they won't understand. They won't understand because kids don't see it. Kids don't participate in it. I guess I have great faith in our future generations.

I don't understand what happens when we have young people who literally are colour blind, do not understand and do not participate in these very hateful stories and actions that we're seeing around the world and in our own communities.

I acknowledge and appreciate the minister for bringing this forward. Frankly, I hope it is something that we will not have to have as our generations appreciate and understand and work forward. So congratulations, Minister.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'll return to the minister to wrap up this round of debate.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to thank all the members who spoke on this: of course the members from Brampton–Springdale, Nepean–Carleton, Trinity–Spadina, Timmins–James Bay and Dufferin–Caledon. I think I mentioned everyone.

I just want to say thank you so much, because there is a cost to standing still. There's a cost for us not to do anything. We're seeing the change that's taking place in this province, the change that's taken place over the last few decades. We have an Ontario where, by 2031, 40% of the population will be racialized, and if we don't put in place, I believe, the tools and processes that set the tone for that shift that's taking place, I think we could find

ourselves in a very bad place. We could continue to go down a pathway where we're seeing increases of racial intolerance here in the province of Ontario.

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As the minister responsible for children and youth services, I know that there are a lot of young people out there who are not reaching their full potential. There are a lot of men and women who are not reaching their full potential. Quite often, race does play a role in that reaching of someone's potential.

Can you imagine if we built an Ontario where we maximized all of our human capital and we positioned Ontario where we could actually position all people for success? This province would radically transform. Everything that we have in this province that we've all been fortunate to inherit, the bountifulness of our natural resources and our population—I think if we position ourselves right as a government here in Ontario, we'll continue over the next 150 years to build an Ontario that we can all be proud of, that affords the same opportunities to people in the future that many of us in the Legislature have been able to acquire.

Thank you so much for the support. I look forward to the continued debate.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the opportunity, on behalf of Patrick Brown and the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus, to debate Bill 114, An Act to provide for Anti-Racism Measures. I will be splitting my time with the member from Scarborough–Rouge River.

All that is required for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing. In the world today, we have seen many examples where good people have not taken action. As the minister has said, all that is required is for us to stay still, and in many cases, we cannot do that. It is up to us in this assembly to talk about the positiveness of diversity—not to extol fear among those we represent, but to look at the diversity and the positiveness of our growing communities and the communities, for example, that have been here for many decades, generations or centuries; in particular, our indigenous community and our black community.

I grew up in a small town, in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. You've all heard of it, and I'll tell you why: Viola Desmond walked into a movie theatre, the Roseland Theatre, in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. It was a long time before I was born. But my father, who coached this amazing hockey team—and you'll notice mostly everything I tell you is about hockey, because it has shaped my life. He had this amazing hockey team; I think they were Midget C. We had a small car. My dad used to drive this hockey team everywhere. As you would expect—and today is Tartan Day—New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, is quite a Scottish town. We also had a very prominent black community and a very prominent Mi'kmaq community. My dad's hockey team actually included the entire community. I got to know the kids from the Mi'kmaq community, and I got to know the kids from the black community. I don't know if it was by design, but it was quite separate when I

was growing up in the 1970s. My dad taught me all about acceptance, inclusion and commonality. When he died, they all were there for him, because he rose to the occasion of being better than the fear, the hate and the bigotry that was common at that time.

Why I want to talk about Viola Desmond is because there is a small plaque and monument to her in that town, and it's something that my father made sure that we saw. He would also teach us about Dr. Carrie Best, who was a big civil rights leader in Nova Scotia. We grew up understanding and respecting.

For many, they would say, "Lisa, you're from New Glasgow. You must be embarrassed." Yes, there might be some embarrassment, and there is a black mark and a stain from what happened at the Roseland Theatre. But at the same time, the people of Nova Scotia would eventually and rightfully understand that Viola Desmond was Rosa Parks before there was a Rosa Parks.

I would be remiss not to congratulate—and I know I'm talking a little bit about Nova Scotia—a very dear friend of mine in Nova Scotia. His name is Henderson Paris. He is a civil rights leader who has run, for close to 30 years, a race against racism. He is a runner. He actually, I believe, is running for the New Democrats in Nova Scotia in their upcoming election.

I've been able to watch these remarkable leaders, and I've watched them, at a very grassroots level, break down barriers. I think that's very important.

As I mentioned in my remarks a little bit earlier, I had the opportunity this year to be the trainer of my daughter's hockey team. Like my father's hockey team, it was diverse. The reason I am so passionate right now in this House is because those little girls—one's mother was a Vietnamese refugee, a boat person, who is now a prominent journalist inside the city of Ottawa. Others have come from different countries. Some have fled persecution in different parts of eastern Europe. Then we have three young girls on our team who are South Asian. They are the most visibly racialized. I want to tell this story because it speaks to why we need to do more to combat racism.

As we walked in a small town during a hockey tournament last month, the three little girls, who are racialized and South Asian, were yelled at. They were yelled at because they looked different, they were told to go home, and they were called the N-word. Everyone's blood boiled. Our kids don't see the differences in the colour of skin. They don't see the differences at all. They don't care about what the people's last names are on the back of the jersey. They know that they are a team, and they knew that they were responsible for one another. That level of responsibility was something that just warmed my heart.

But I will tell you, every single parent's blood boiled when that occurred. One of the mothers of our children said, "My young son, who's six years old, doesn't know what that word means, so please don't respond, and let's move on." It was her child who had been targeted, so we respected it.

When we talk about data, it's incredibly important that we report it, because I will tell you this: I have mosques, synagogues, gurdwaras, temples and Christian churches in my constituency. It will come as no surprise to anybody in this room—the hate, the bigotry, the anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim bigotry that occurred in the city of Ottawa in the month of November, when it didn't matter what type of religion you worshipped; you were under threat by vandalism and graffiti. Our community came together and said, "Enough is enough." All of our major religions got together at the synagogue, together saying that this is not our city.

Having said that, that week—and I'm going to tell you this: That week, there were a couple of places of worship that did not report the vandalism. They didn't want, in the same case as the mom, to scare the children of their congregations, and they didn't want to scare their elderly, that that happened in their place of worship.

I'll tell you, that week, one of the prominent places of worship that was targeted wasn't reported by their religious leader; it was reported by a member of the public. I know that, for example, in my constituency, they didn't report it to the police, but they let me know. Everyone here knows I'm very big on Twitter, so that's how it was alerted for that particular place.

But that's the reality we live in. It's the reality that we have to confront each and every single day in the province of Ontario. As I said, all that is required for evil to prevail is for good people to do nothing.

I know I'm short on time here today, Speaker, and I will pick up the next day we represent this, but I want to talk at greater length about the Day of Humanity, Inclusion and Acceptance that I recently held in my community, a very diverse, growing community. I had Denise Deby there, and she is from the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership. She provided us with a wonderful road map of where the city of Ottawa is going in terms of our diversity. I'm going to read some statistics, because I think it's important as we have this debate on acceptance and anti-racism.

Together, immigrants and second-generation individuals could represent nearly one in two people, or almost 50% of the population. Some 26% to 30% of the population will have neither English nor French as a mother tongue. And if you think about the founding of this country, the famous words of Sir John A. Macdonald were, "Let us be English or let us be French ... but above all let us be Canadians." Now, in Ottawa, we could add 70 different languages to that, to be Canadian.

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The proportion of the population with visible minority status could rise to 31% to 36%, and religious diversity is expected to increase. Speaker, 70% of newcomers to Canada are racialized. In my city, the nation's capital—every Canadian's second hometown, Ottawa—it's 23%, or 202,000 people, who were born outside of Canada. Of our nearly one million people in the nation's capital, nearly 20% belong to a visible minority or racialized group. That will grow to 36% by 2031. We have more

than 100 ethnicities with more than 70 languages spoken. I think that's an incredible testament to how welcoming and warm Canada is, but at the same time, it proves we must continue to battle systemic racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim bigotry, and all types of hate.

I just want to conclude, Speaker; I know you're about to cut me off. I just want to say that as Ontarians and as Canadians, we have a wonderful country, one to be very proud of. But there is always more work to be done. I'll look forward to picking up where I left off.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased that we have some wonderful people here today from CIJA. The Diller teens will be meeting with me as well as some other MPPs today. We have: Afek Katz, Almog Elimelech—melech is “king” in Hebrew—Amit Alon, Anna Karapetyan, Bar Baron, Idan Aharon, Ido Perkal, Itai Mizrahi, Ofir Ken-Li, Osher Tachan, Ron Malka, Rony Kaufman, Shalev Levi, Shay Levy, Shay Rommer, Shoval Green, Stav Vaknin, Tahel Dicapua, Yuval Abargil, Yuval Guetta, Yuval Shmuel; Raquel Binder, Richard Summers, Shir Spektorman, who are staff; and Madi Murariu, Marlee Mozeson and Cindy Osheroff, all CIJA staff. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I just want to add my voice to the member from Thornhill's. On behalf of Andrea Horwath and the New Democratic Party, I want to welcome the Diller Teen Fellows program from Israel today. They are students in grade 10 and 11 dedicated to excellence, pluralism, responsibility, partnership and peoplehood. They will be coming in very shortly. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: The page from my riding, Max Koh, is the page captain today, and his mother, Amy Ho, is in the Legislature. I want to welcome the page's mother to the Legislature.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I would like to welcome teachers and students from Donald A. Wilson Secondary School in Whitby. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Grant Crack: I have a special announcement today. I'd like to welcome the Speaker of the House here today—it's the Speaker's birthday, everybody. Let's ask everybody to give him a hand. If I could have a page come, and we could give him a card. Happy birthday.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. My wife asked me what I wanted for my birthday. I said an absolutely heckle-free question period.

The member from Nepean—Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Just another point of order, Speaker: Saturday is also the birthday of my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills, Ted Arnott.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Happy birthday.

Further introductions? The Minister of Housing.

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Speaker. Happy birthday.

I'm really delighted to welcome Rebecca Huang, a constituent from the great riding of Newmarket—Aurora. Welcome.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Our page captain today is Ayesha Basu from my riding of Oak Ridges—Markham. I would like to welcome her family to Queen's Park today: parents Sonia and Anin Basu, and a former page, her sister Rhea Basu. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Happy birthday, Speaker.

I want to join my colleagues the members from Thornhill and Parkdale—High Park in also welcoming the Diller Teen Fellows who are joining us here today at Queen's Park from Eilat, Israel, whom I will have the pleasure of meeting with later this afternoon. Welcome.

Hon. Bill Mauro: Speaker, happy birthday to the biggest Montreal Canadiens fan in the Legislature.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce, in the members' east gallery, visiting from Thunder Bay, my son, Dustin Mauro, who happens to be going to a Toronto Maple Leafs game tonight. We'll see how that all works out, but I welcome him.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'd like to welcome my good friends from Constance Lake who are here: Chief Allen and a number of members from the community. Welcome.

Hon. David Zimmer: I too would like to introduce visitors from Constance Lake First Nation: Chief Rick Allen, Councillor Norman Solomon, Councillor Robyn Bunting, and youth representative Austin Baxter. Thank you for travelling down.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Just an important announcement, Mr. Speaker: My colleague the member for Nepean—Carleton, Ms. MacLeod, has just been named by Catherine Clark on her list as one of #150GreatPeople in the Ottawa area.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Congratulations.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I just wanted to welcome two members of OPSEU corrections who are here visiting today: Rob Wilson and Ian Moroun.

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs on a point of order.

Hon. Jeff Leal: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Forty years ago, the Honourable Bill Newman, who was the Minister of Agriculture and Food in the administration of Premier William Davis, started the Foodland Ontario logo. I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear pins in recognition of the 40th anniversary of Foodland Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is seeking unanimous consent to wear the pins for the 40th anniversary. Do we agree? Agreed.

The leader of the third party on a point of order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I seek unanimous consent for the immediate second and third readings, and passage of, Bill 106, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 to extend rules governing rent increases to certain types of rental units, tabled by my colleague the member for Toronto–Danforth.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader of the third party is seeking unanimous consent for second and third readings. Do we agree? I heard a no.

ORAL QUESTIONS

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Minister of Finance. This government loves to paint a rosy picture about the state of Ontario's economy, but yesterday a report on CBC confirmed that Ontario has the second-worst economy for young people in the country.

Why are the Liberals failing Ontario's youth and the next generation? Why are they not giving young people hope and opportunity in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question. I recognize that all of us are concerned about ensuring that Ontario grows inclusively for all. We are outpacing the G7. We're leading the way in Canada. We outpaced the average of the United States. Growth in jobs in our economy has been over 100,000 annually—over 720,000 since the depths of the recession. These are important factors.

More importantly, we need to continue to invest in our young people. That's why we've invested heavily in skills and training. That's why we've taken more steps towards university and college and post-secondary; that's why we've put more into trades—all of which is helping our young people succeed. We recognize that youth unemployment has been a dramatic issue across the world, including the United States and other parts of Canada. We need to lower that unemployment rate for our young people. We need to foster experiential learning. I commend our Deputy Premier, who has taken extraordinary steps to do just that.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, I was hoping I'd get a response from the Minister of Finance about this report, which says that it's not just the world; Ontario is the second-worst in Canada in terms of young people and the economy. That's not a record you should be proud of. Whatever the government has been doing for 14 years, it's not working for young people.

The report, part of Generation Squeeze's Code Red campaign, noted that in recent years, full-time earnings have fallen for young people in Ontario by \$4,600. That's putting young people below the national average when it comes to income for full-time work. This is causing

young people to put off important milestones, according to the report.

Mr. Speaker, this is not encouraging for Ontario's youth. The second-worst economy for young Canadians is in the province of Ontario. What is this Minister of Finance going to do about that? Will he make sure young people are not let down in this province?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We all recognize that we need to invest in skills in our highly trained workforce to ensure that our young people are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow. The member opposite has oftentimes gone back to the glory days of assembly-line work, with smokestacks and the manufacturing of the past. We need to embrace the future. They may want to go back to coal; they want to go back to the days when people weren't as skilled and as trained for the necessary jobs of tomorrow.

We're doing that, Mr. Speaker. We're doing that through the work that is being done by all of the universities across Ontario, and the leadership taken by Kitchener-Waterloo, Toronto and Ottawa on new innovations and new techniques in agri-food processing and in clean tech—clean tech, which is a future for many young people that the member opposite actually does not agree with. We need to ensure that our young people are prepared for those future opportunities—

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Minister of Finance: I'm shaking my head at that response. It was absurd. We get a response on coal when we have a CBC report here, Generation Squeeze, talking about the fact that young people are struggling in Ontario more than almost anywhere else in Canada, where you've seen that full-time earnings have fallen by \$4,600 and where there are jobs available in Ontario that this government is not equipping young people for. The chamber of commerce report showed that we lose billions each year for jobs available in Ontario that young people aren't equipped for.

Rather than talk about coal or nothing related to the question, what I would appreciate is an answer from the Minister of Finance on this report that was published in the CBC that shows young people in Ontario are falling behind. What is the Minister of Finance going to do to make sure young people in Ontario aren't put last in Canada by this government?

Interjections.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Stop abandoning the young people.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There goes my birthday present.

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The fact is that youth employment actually rose by 7,500 in February 2017, and the youth unemployment rate actually went down by 1.7%. But more can be done. It's why we are trying to reduce the skills gap with a highly skilled workforce.

I've got to tell you, Mr. Speaker: The Employment Ontario network has now helped approximately one million Ontarians, many young people, since 2015-16, including 122,800 employees across Ontario. We're investing \$173 million in 2016-17 to offer a range of programs that support apprentices, employers and trained delivery agents. In April 2015, the government also invested \$55 million over three years to help the next generation of skilled tradespeople. As a result of the government's investments and support of the apprenticeship programs, new apprenticeship registrations have grown by 17,100 and more than 25,000 in 2015-16.

More needs to be done, Mr. Speaker. We are doing our utmost, and we put so in the budget—

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

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Minister of the Status of Women. Can I count on the minister's support for my bill requiring that judges be educated about how to properly handle sexual assault cases?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: It gives me great pleasure. I thank the member for her question. Sexual assault is a very, very serious issue that demands attention from all levels of government. I have to say, as the Attorney General has said before, that this is a non-partisan issue, Mr. Speaker. The Attorney General has made it clear that we are actively looking into what more can be done about sexual assault education for judges. The Chief Justice has reassured the Attorney General that the ongoing education of our judiciary is critically important to public confidence in the system. The court has provided education on issues related to sexual assault and violence against women for over 30 years. I also know that Ontario judges have access to the federal training programs offered by the National Judicial Institute and can directly benefit from these new supports.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'd like to go back to the Minister of the Status of Women, because I know she, in particular, must be aware of the importance of this kind of training.

There are still incredible stigmas attached to sexual assault. Sexual assault is chronically underreported in Canada, with about 90% of women never bringing their cases forward. Our judges should have the tools they need to treat these cases with the utmost sensitivity. I've spoken with many women's and victims' services organizations, and all of them support mandatory sexual assault law training.

This is a non-partisan issue. We must protect women from being revictimized, especially after having the

bravery to come forward about their experiences in the first place.

Since this Attorney General has not been clear where he stands on this issue, I'm wondering if I can count on the support of the Minister of the Status of Women to convince him of the importance and help move these changes forward?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Again, I thank the member for her question. I have to say, I think the Attorney General has made it very clear that we're actively looking into what more can be done about sexual assault education for judges. We are actively looking into what more can be done. As the member has mentioned and as we're saying, this is a non-partisan issue. I thank the member for her question, and we'll—thank you very much.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I want to hear.

Final supplementary?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister of the Status of Women was trying to answer my previous question, so I will go back to her again.

I want to share a story that Rona Ambrose shared in the federal Parliament. It's that of a Halifax taxi driver who was acquitted of sexual assault charges. The judge in question ruled that "clearly, a drunk can consent." We know that not to be true, as countless legal experts have torn that ruling to shreds.

We can't have such basic mistakes being made in our courts. Will this government mandate sexual assault training before Ontario has a case as egregious as the one in Nova Scotia?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Again, thank you very much for the supplementary. I have to say that this is a very important issue. I think that we all agree. I know a colleague here in the House, the member from Davenport, has also been and is a strong advocate for this. I want to say thank you, actually, to the member from Davenport for her interest in this very important area. As a member of this House, she has the right and the responsibility to raise important issues affecting her constituents, and we look forward to renewing—

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, come to order.

Finish, please.

1050

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I have to end by saying that I actually look forward—I think we all do look forward—to reviewing the bill once it is tabled in the Legislature, and the ongoing dialogue and debates—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It was, yesterday.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin-Caledon, come to order.

You have a wrap-up sentence, please.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Again I'll say that as a member of this House, as a woman, as a mother, I know

how this issue is sensitive and important, and I know that we can do more.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Acting Premier. The Premier said this week that reports of some residents in Toronto seeing their rents double are “unacceptable.” This morning I called for unanimous consent to pass a bill that would make this unacceptable practice illegal now.

The Premier’s Liberal government said no to stopping the unfair gouging right away. Why?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, thank you, Speaker, and happy birthday.

The Premier has been clear many, many times and the Minister of Housing has been clear that we are moving forward with a plan to address unfair increases in rental costs. She has made that clear. The NDP know that we have said that. We’re actually happy that we’re on the same page when it comes to helping families who are feeling the pinch of a rental market struggling to keep up with demand.

I can tell you that our plan will go further and do more than the NDP is proposing. The political games that are being played are not particularly helpful. We are looking forward to introducing a bill that will actually address a larger problem.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Once again, after 14 years of doing nothing, this Premier and her Minister of Housing have admitted that there’s a problem. This morning we did something very simple and we asked for the Premier’s Liberal government to close the 1991 rent control loophole today, to protect tenants from unscrupulous landlords. This should have been a no-brainer, Speaker.

Are the Liberals allowing more renters to be ripped off while we wait for their bill because they fear that supporting the bill currently before the House won’t give them enough political credit?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Housing.

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you to the leader of the third party for the question. Again, as the Premier has said and made clear many times, along with myself, we will be bringing forward a plan that addresses these unfair increases in rental costs—

Interjection: When?

Hon. Chris Ballard: As I’ve said time and time again in this House and outside this House, sooner rather than later.

Mr. Speaker, there is a whole host of things that we will be bringing forward. The plan of the third party is a one-issue-only idea. We have been looking at the RTA, the Residential Tenancies Act, since last June, so that we can bring forward a very robust change.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It is one issue: It’s the issue that people are getting double rent increases and they can’t afford them. That’s the issue, and there’s a simple

fix. Clearly, the Liberal government is playing partisan games with this issue. Sadly, it’s what Ontarians have come to expect from the Liberals.

What do the Liberals have to say? What do they have to say to those people who will see their rents double in the coming days, the coming weeks, while the Liberals drag their feet to score some political points before the next election?

Hon. Chris Ballard: It’s wonderful that the NDP have finally come to the table to talk about this. We’ve been working on this for many, many months. The rent control, the RTA: Since last June, we’ve been looking at this. So why don’t we just stop the games on the other side and move forward together? Let’s help Ontarians realize their dream of having an affordable place to call home. Politics has no place when it comes to finding people a good place to live.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Acting Premier. Look, the Premier and her minister have admitted that renters need help. Apparently they’ve been working on it for a year. Well, in the meantime, time has been ticking and people are losing their apartments because of economic evictions. But given the chance to do the right thing this morning, they said no. I guess they said no because there’s just not enough in it for them.

Will the Acting Premier tell us how many Ontarians are going to lose their apartments due to excessive rent increases while they wait for the Liberal government to do the right thing?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Housing.

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you to the leader of the third party for this continuing dialogue, because it allows me to be able to stand up—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Speaker. It allows me to remind the leader of the third party that we are going to do more than simple rent control. That is a key part of what we are bringing in: the expansion of rent control. But we have been studying a whole host of surrounding issues through the Residential Tenancies Act and we’ll be moving forward with some pretty significant changes in the near future.

We’ve said this time and again: I really wish the politics would stop on the other side. I really wish that the party opposite, the third party, would stop playing politics and really focus on making sure people have a good place—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, since the Premier and her party refuse to allow a bill to pass today that would protect renters and they seem unconcerned with the number of people that will be hurt waiting for the Liberals to finally do the right thing, will the Acting Premier at the very least tell renters that the Liberal bill,

when it eventually gets here, will in fact be retroactive and cover the folks receiving rent increases this week and next week and the week after that while they are busy looking out for their own political interests?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Speaker. You know—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Hang on. There. Minister?

Hon. Chris Ballard: What I want to talk about now is that looking at the whole Residential Tenancies Act since last June entailed us travelling across Canada, talking to landlords, talking to tenants about what needed to be changed. We will have a robust package of change that we'll bring forward, along with expanding rent controls. It's not as simple as just doing one. You have to do a whole bunch of them.

But while I'm at it, I can walk through a whole list of things that this government has done to ease the burden on renters and affordable housing. We've made secondary streets legislation. We've passed inclusionary zoning. We've frozen the municipal tax on rental properties. We've doubled the maximum refund for first-time home buyers. Mr. Speaker, we're collecting data. We're working with the federal government to get it done.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. The leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, when there is a crisis, the government has to act quickly, and there is a crisis in the rental housing market today in Ontario. But the Premier seems more concerned with doing what's best for the Liberal Party, as opposed to what's right for Ontarians. She refuses to tell people what she is going to do or when she's going to do it. But renters are suffering right now.

Instead of playing politics at the expense of hard-working Ontarians, will the Liberals commit today to retroactive legislation that will protect renters now facing huge increases and the loss of their homes?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Speaker. And I should say happy birthday as well.

Again, I'll go back to what the Deputy Premier started her comments with. The Premier has made it clear many times that we're moving forward with a plan to address unfair increases in rental costs. The NDP know that. The third party knows that. We appreciate that we're on the same page. We're delighted that they're on the same page with us.

1100

When it comes to helping families who are feeling the pinch of the rental market and who are struggling to keep

up—and a market that's struggling to keep up with demand—as we said at the outset, our plan will go further and do more than what the NDP is proposing. It's not the first time we've seen the NDP play political games on important issues like this.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Todd Smith: Speaker, good morning, and happy birthday.

My question is for the Deputy Premier this morning. Big trouble for a GTA employer: Kisko Freezies has more than 200 employees here in Toronto and saw their hydro bill go up \$100,000 last year—\$100,000. According to their president, they don't qualify for the government's hydro scheme. He said, "We get nothing back—we pay and pay."

Speaker, how many more jobs is this Liberal government going to chase out of Ontario before they do something for our job creators?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to rise and talk about our plan, the one that's actually going to help 500,000 small businesses and farms right across the province. Let's not forget, too, that the Minister of Economic Development and I were in Brampton just this morning talking about how another company is going to be saving 20%, or \$2 million, on their electricity bill. All of this is part of our Ontario fair hydro plan, a plan that is actually going to be put into effect by this summer to make sure that we can help everyone right across the province.

Unlike the party opposite, that has no plan—we heard that they once had a five-point plan and then a three-point plan. And now, Mr. Speaker, they have no plan—no plan for hydro; no plan for Ontario. We are the government that acts and helps businesses.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: Speaker, this is the government that has bungled this file like no other file that we have ever seen. And they have the audacity to stand here and expect us to clean it up for them. Their plan has so many holes in it, it's like Swiss cheese.

Speaker, Kisko Freezies creates jobs here in Ontario. They actually go out there and create jobs at their suppliers as well. They source their corrugated containers, their plastic and most of their supplies right here in Ontario. But their CEO told Global News this week that "more and more businesses are going to pack up and move to the United States...."

We know there is a coalition of concerned manufacturers in Ontario hanging on by a thread, so why doesn't your latest scheme help fix that for those employers here in Ontario?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to rise and talk about that specific company. They qualify now, Mr. Speaker, thanks to our program, because they actually have 600 kilowatts of power. We confirmed with Alectra,

their electric company, that they qualify for the ICI program.

So we have a plan that's helping businesses. They have no plan. They're too busy writing hockey policy and not worrying about the people of Ontario. We are worrying about the people of Ontario. We are making sure that we are addressing this issue and helping these businesses.

We're building infrastructure—the 427. The MPP from Vaughan, the Minister of Transportation, is working hard so that this business will see access to this. We're making sure that they got access to the ICI program.

They can keep talking about hockey policy. We'll keep working for the people of Ontario.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, for the second time in about a week, the Minister of Energy has defended outrageous salaries for hydro executives.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Who is this question to?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Sorry—to the Minister of Energy.

The CEO of the privatized Hydro One now makes six times the salary of his predecessor. The CEO of OPG made over \$2 million last year, even though the CEO of Hydro-Québec somehow makes do with less than a third of that.

But the Minister of Energy thinks it's okay for CEOs to extract these outrageous salaries from their customers. Is this why the minister thinks it's okay for private investors to drive up hydro bills so they can extract outrageous profits from the ratepayers of Ontario?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm pleased to rise and comment once again on recognizing that—yes, Mr. Speaker, we've all acknowledged that these are high salaries. But when it comes to OPG, the one individual that the honourable member mentioned is the individual who is actually running our nuclear facilities. We want to ensure that we have the best in the world to make sure that our nuclear facilities stay safe. We also want to ensure that our nuclear facilities in refurbishment right now at Darlington are on time and on budget. The work that our executive team at OPG is doing is keeping them ahead of schedule and under budget. That's fantastic news because all of those savings go back to ratepayers.

When we're talking about salaries, we're not even talking about a cent that would be on anybody's bills. We're looking at making sure that we're taking 25% off all bills, and we're going to do that, come summer.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Back to the Minister of Energy: The values of those who think these outrageous CEO salaries are acceptable are the same values of those who think it's acceptable to drive hydro bills up to the point where people have difficulty paying them. Ontario used to have a hydro system that reflected our public values, but the PCs and the Liberals have replaced this with a system based on different values: a system based on private profit, not public good.

Will the minister restore the public values of Ontario's hydro system and stop the sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The system that he's talking about, Mr. Speaker, when they were in power and when the Conservatives were in power—their system—they let it actually disintegrate. They let it fall apart. We had to invest \$50 billion—let me say that again, \$50 billion—to ensure that we have a reliable system. Now they want to go back to the way it was. It's like they want to be like the PCs and bring back coal.

We actually eliminated coal. That is like taking seven million cars off the road, investing—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, come to order.

Carry on.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: This government is not looking back. This government is looking forward. We're creating jobs. We're building Ontario up. We're lowering electricity bills for everyone. We won't look to the past, like our opposition parties.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Minister, one of the things that Ontarians really appreciate is the safe, clean, fresh and wholesome food that they can get at their local grocery stores across Ontario. They love the fact that they can go into a grocery store and be assured that you have local farmers producing food that is produced locally and provides jobs and that they can eat that local food.

I know that, recently, some people have said, “What more can we do to ensure that we not only invest in our local farmers”—like Gwillimdale Farms up there in Bradford—“and our local green grocers to make sure that Ontarians appreciate the locally grown cabbages, beets, potatoes and carrots and not always depend on foreign”—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for that question this morning. I've had the opportunity to tour the member's riding. What is always very impressive is the number of backyard gardens in many of the homes in the riding of Eglinton–Lawrence.

Buying and supporting local food creates jobs and supports economic growth in communities right across the province.

1110

All 107 members in this House should be extremely proud that we have 52,000 family farms in the province of Ontario. We produce more than 200 different foods and commodities that cater to the diversity of our population.

Mr. Speaker, since its inception with then-agriculture minister Bill Newman, the Foodland Ontario brand is

turning 40 this year and serves as our government's primary tool to inform Ontarians of the many local food options they have access to when buying their groceries and, increasingly, when eating out.

Foodland Ontario is one of the most recognized brands in the world today—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Hon. Jeff Leal: —so, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no, no. Supplementary.

Mr. Mike Colle: Yes, and I know that Foodland Ontario is celebrating its 40th year.

If you're talking about backyard gardens, you'll see that in my riding, what's being grown now in the backyards is garlic, because garlic is now selling for \$400 a bushel. Therefore, they see the opportunity to have that locally grown garlic replace that foreign garlic that is no good. So we've got to encourage local food.

I want to say that when I was in my local grocery store, Lady York, there was somebody complaining about cauliflower for 10 bucks. I said, "Forget the California cauliflower. You can buy a bag of Ontario potatoes for \$2.99." Those are Ontario potatoes.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: I appreciate the supplementary from the member from Eglinton–Lawrence. Perhaps we should have an emergency debate this afternoon on whether a tomato is a fruit or a vegetable.

I know that all of us here today are particularly proud of what's grown in Ontario, and Ontarians should take this opportunity to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Ontario Foodland rollout.

For my friend the member from St. Catharines, who's a high-tech guy, I also encourage everyone to join the conversation online using the #Foodland40 or #loveONTfoods hashtags and check in on the 40 ways to celebrate local food that will be featured throughout the year.

HYDRO CHARGES

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question this morning is to the energy minister. A very sad story from my riding: A constituent in the town of Glencoe lost their house to a fire on January 8 of this year. But what followed in February was salt in the wound: a hydro bill for delivery of absolutely no energy after the removal of the hydro meter in the amount of \$35.

But Speaker, what really set off alarm bells was the following month, when this constituent received yet another bill, this time for \$193.55, which stated that Hydro One read the meter on February 28, 2017. To be clear, Hydro One claimed to have read a meter that was not there and presented a bill on the basis of this fictitious reading.

Speaker, does the Liberal government think it's right to charge someone for hydro whose house was burned down and no longer exists?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: That is a problem that should—
Interjections.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: You've got to read a lot of meters to be paid \$4.5 million, I'll tell you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order. Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: As I was saying, that's awful for that family. I know it must be difficult for them to be going through that. One of the things that I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, is that they follow up with Hydro One, because Hydro One has been correcting those issues. That's the one thing that they've been doing—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Oh, yes, they can't go to the Ombudsman anymore, can they?

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

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: That's the one thing they have been doing, Mr. Speaker: enhancing their customer service. When you hear things like this, of course no one agrees with it. That's why Hydro One has been acting quickly to ensure that they can fix and correct issues like this.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the energy minister: The bill that followed the fake meter reading isn't just an issue for this constituent; it actually has costs for all taxpayers in Ontario as well. Through the Ontario Electricity Support Program, taxpayers were on the hook for almost \$100 on top of the almost \$200 the ratepayer was charged.

How can this Liberal government expect people to trust that energy prices are fair for families and businesses when people are being told that their distributor is reading a meter that no longer exists, executive salaries are through the roof, and the cost of cap-and-trade is hidden?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, we feel for that family and, of course, hope everything is working well for that family.

Again, as I'll say, Hydro One's new management team recognized in the past that their customer service needed improvement. The Ombudsman actually brought forward many recommendations that the Hydro One management team and Hydro One staff have been acting upon.

I again would encourage my friend opposite to have that family call Hydro One immediately. That is something that will be rectified as quickly as possible because it is one of the important things that Hydro One is doing. The team there is very proud to say that they're working to change that dynamic, and I would hope that he tells them to follow up on that.

LYME DISEASE

Ms. Sarah Campbell: My question is to the Acting Premier. After a 10-year tick host study conducted across Ontario revealed that Corkscrew Island, located 20 kilometres southwest of Kenora, has the highest infection

prevalence of Lyme disease ever reported in Canada, a research study last year determined that Lyme disease was found in eight species of ticks, with 41% testing positive for Lyme, a disease with no cure. This research is a bombshell for people living in the northwest. Despite its author sending a copy to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care last November, the government has not so much as even notified the public about it.

The people in Kenora and across the northwest are worried about contracting Lyme disease, and far too many are already suffering with this debilitating disease. Why is this government not acting on a health crisis that is greatly affecting northerners?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Lyme disease is a disease that is affecting many, many parts of this province and many Ontarians. It's an important issue and it's the reason why, in July of last year, Ontario launched the combatting Lyme disease through collaborative action plan, which is a 10-step education and awareness plan, partly to deal with this specific issue that has been referenced with regard to the north: to help Ontarians understand the risk that exists in many parts of this province, including in the north, but also the steps that they can take as individuals, as parents and as owners of animals as well, because this is a disease that affects humans and animals, and domesticated pets. But certainly when it comes to human infection, there are important measures that can and need to be taken to prevent as well as treat individuals who are infected.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: What we already know about chronic Lyme disease is that it is a horrific disease with the potential to affect every system in the body and that it can result in paralysis. We also know that the most effective prevention of Lyme disease, once a tick has been attached for more than 24 hours, is to quickly treat it within 72 hours after it's removed. The problem is that the government doesn't have a strategy in place to treat Lyme disease and not all physicians are versed in the best treatment options.

Nearly three years ago, in 2014, this House passed a motion from the member from Algoma-Manitoulin calling on the government to create a comprehensive and integrated Lyme disease strategy for Ontario, but it still hasn't happened.

Minister, the risk of Lyme disease is at potentially crisis levels in Kenora. When is this government going to develop not just an awareness plan but a concrete and robust strategy on Lyme disease to protect the people in the northwest and families all across this province?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

1120

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is true that the member from Algoma-Manitoulin has been

very vocal about this issue. We've had many conversations—I think, in a collaborative way. I'll be meeting with him and some stakeholders who are concerned about this issue in the coming weeks.

In addition to that action plan that I referenced—and there is federal action taking place as well, because this is an issue that doesn't just affect Ontario—last year we also created a Lyme disease stakeholder group to lead a review on existing Lyme disease issues. We are working with Public Health Ontario to update on all elements of Lyme disease—prevention as well as treatment, education and awareness, including of health care professionals.

I agree with the member opposite that this is a multi-faceted issue. The Minister of Climate Change reminded me that when it comes to the north, as well, climate change plays an aspect. We need to look at it in a multi-factorial way.

GRANDVIEW CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Mr. Granville Anderson: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

We know that this government has shown time and time again their commitment to supporting children across this great province. As the MPP for Durham, I am grateful that the government continues to support special needs so that children's centres like Grandview can help children and youth to succeed.

Two of Grandview's satellite locations are located in my riding of Durham: one in Port Perry, and the other in Bowmanville. The staff and families I have met are formidable, and I am extremely supportive of the important role they play in our community. But, despite all their great work, the families supported by Grandview are constrained by the amount of space available for treatment. There is an overwhelming need for an expansion of Grandview that brings all locations together under one roof.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can you please share what you'll be doing to make sure that Grandview has the space to expand their services and continue to do the great work that they're doing in support of our children?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to take a moment to thank the member for his question. As a former chair of a school board and with the work he has done around FASD and education, he's a strong advocate for the children in his community of Durham.

Mr. Speaker, since 2008-09, my ministry has invested over \$312 million of capital funding into children's treatment centres.

I want to take a moment to recognize the great work that Grandview is doing. I also know that many of my colleagues, including MPP Dickson and MPP MacCharles, recognize the important work that they do.

At my most recent visit to Grandview, I met with family, staff and children. They shared stories with me of the incredible growth that's taking place in their region

and the supports needed for the children at Grandview. They also stressed that there just wasn't enough space to deliver the types of services that children need. They wanted to do more, but they couldn't.

Grandview's capital request continues to be one of my top priorities, and a decision will be coming soon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you to the minister for sharing your experiences with the staff, children and families of Grandview. I would have to agree with you, it is truly a remarkable centre. They are doing great work to support young people in Ontario. As I mentioned earlier, Grandview has two satellite locations in my riding, and I see first-hand the great work being done by the staff to support young people in Durham.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can you tell us about your most recent visit to Grandview Children's Centre and share some of the incredible things they are doing to help young people to succeed?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Thank you again—and happy birthday, Mr. Speaker.

As soon as the Legislature recessed for winter break, I made it a priority to visit Grandview Children's Centre. It is truly a remarkable centre. The staff at Grandview do great work every day, and I'd like to thank them for their dedication to helping children. They help young people increase their ability to participate at home, at school, in the community, and they prepare them to achieve their goals for adulthood.

I value the services provided by Grandview and their continued commitment to providing support for children, youth and families.

Mr. Speaker, as a government, we want to make sure that we provide the types of supports that allow young people to reach their full potential, and that families are supported.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Jim Wilson: Since the Premier is in Collingwood today, I'm going to ask the Minister of Transportation about Highway 26.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member knows full well he's not supposed to make that kind of reference, and I would ask him not to do it again. Carry on.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Okay, Speaker. By not completing the five-laning of Highway 26 at the east end of Collingwood, the province is holding up job creation and economic development. If this section of highway was completed, the town could extend Sandford Fleming Drive to Highway 26, a move that would spur significant commercial development in the area.

This issue with the highway has been unresolved now for over a decade, and that's totally unacceptable. I've written the minister on several occasions about this matter, but apparently common courtesy has gone out the window, because I can't get a response.

This government has failed to do its job, so I ask: When will the minister commit to finishing this section

of Highway 26, and will he state when the work will take place?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member opposite for his question. I think he and I have chatted about this, perhaps informally. I'm aware of the challenges around Highway 26 in the Collingwood area. In fact, I've had the opportunity to meet with the mayor and with municipal staff in the past regarding this particular stretch of highway.

I know that MTO has also been working closely with the municipality, and I understand the challenge, but it's a challenge that goes beyond Collingwood. As that member may be aware, prior to 2003, for many, many years, there was chronic underinvestment in infrastructure in every corner of this province. That means that, since 2003—in particular, in the last four years—we are playing both catch-up and keep-up.

I'm happy to respond with additional information in the follow-up question, but I do appreciate the member's advocacy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: I thank the minister, but the history of this was that, during our last two years in office, we started the realignment of Highway 26. Within a month of coming into office in 2003, you took the bulldozers off the highway. They remained off the highway for over a decade.

Finally, when Donna Cansfield came along, mainly because she had a place up in Collingwood, she put the bulldozers back on. You got most of the realignment done, but you failed to do the section at the east end of Collingwood that goes into Collingwood. It doesn't look very nice for tourists coming into the gateway to the Georgian Triangle.

There are a number of jobs held up—some 70 jobs, with various businesses—that want to move forward. Their properties are frozen right now by your ministry. They can't move forward. It's a bit of an eyesore. The council and mayor, as you know—Mr. Speaker, to the minister—are at wits' end. There's a culvert or a bridge that is falling down. Your ministry said, "Get some boards in there to prop it up." It's going to cave in. Someone's going to get hurt. It's unfinished—

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

Interjections.

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

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for the follow-up question. As I mentioned in my first answer, I'm aware of the challenge. The ministry will continue to work with that community. I have an expectation that, not only in Collingwood but in every corner of Ontario, we will continue to make sure that shovels are in the ground, that they stay in the ground and that we can keep building.

But it is interesting to note, from the heckles coming on the other side of the House, that there are members on that side who have literally been talking to me for close to three years to demand that we spend more—ironically,

only in their ridings. Every single year for those three years, those members, including the one asking that question, have voted consistently against the budgets from this side of the House that are building this province up.

In just a few weeks, we're sure the Minister of Finance will stand up and deliver another budget that will dedicate billions towards highway construction and expansions. I sincerely hope that member and his team finally support our budgets to build his communities up, as well as ours.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Niagara West–Glanbrook will come to order.

Interjections.

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

New question. The member from—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I'm not going to entertain back-and-forths.

The member from Timmins–James Bay, new question.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, I was very surprised, on Friday, when I was up on the James Bay, to find out that we're going to be shutting down the Ornge air ambulance helicopter base in Moosonee this summer. As you know, there's new equipment that has been put in that base, as has been across this province. But for some reason, for the base in Moosonee, the only one that they're doing this way, they're going to be shutting down the base for two months this summer to take the helicopter away for maintenance. We're not doing that anywhere else in the province, where we shut down bases when we do the maintenance on helicopters.

Why are we shutting down Moosonee, and will you help us turn that around?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I greatly appreciate the member opposite raising this issue with me. I believe we had a similar situation a year ago, where there was the potential for a pause in the operations of an aspect of Ornge's work in Moosonee, but we were able—quite frankly, with co-operation and collaboration with the member opposite—to come up with a solution that resulted in seamless and continuous Ornge operation and another model to address that.

1130

So I'm not familiar with all of the details of what's being proposed for this summer. I appreciate the fact that the member has raised it with us here in the Legislature. I will pursue more information and see if there is an opportunity to look at the required maintenance in a different way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Supplementary to the minister: Last year, Minister, the issue was that it was new equipment and we had to train the pilots. Obviously, you've got to train them before they can fly them, so we made

accommodations in order to allow that to happen. Fair enough.

In this case, we're maintaining the helicopter. Every so many hours, we have to do routine maintenance to make sure that those machines are safe to fly, for both the pilots and the crew, along with patients. My point is, if we're not shutting down bases across Ontario—I'm not advocating that we should—why, then, are we allowing Ornge to shut down the Moosonee rotary wing base in order to maintain helicopters when we don't do that anywhere else in the province? Can you please look at it and turn this around?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Again, I appreciate the question. I know it is a different situation than it was last year—one was training; this is maintenance—but I referenced last year because I think that we were heading in a similar direction in terms of the potential or perceived disruption that would occur during that training period. I referenced it because I think that perhaps there might be an opportunity here.

I know that hospital officials have been consulted. I know that local officials have been consulted by Ornge with regard to this. I think we all agree that maintenance is certainly required. But I will look into this in more detail, speak to the member opposite and seek to provide the best possible solution that we can.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the Minister of Labour. One year ago today, first responders across Ontario celebrated as our government passed Bill 163, the Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act. Since then, I have heard from firefighters, paramedics and police officers from Kingston and the Islands who have benefited from this piece of legislation.

In my riding, I know this increased level of support and heightened advocacy for mental health has had a significant impact in the lives of our community's first responders and those who are closest to them. First responders help keep my community safe and are always there for us when we need them the most, and this legislation was a big step forward for Ontario to make sure that they get the help and resources they need right away.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What progress have we made this year since Bill 163 became law? And please give a round of applause for our first responders who are here with us today.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I want to thank the member for that very important question and her own personal involvement in this issue. We know that mental health in the workplace is an issue that demands the attention of everyone: employers, employees, unions and the government.

When we passed Bill 163 in the House a year ago, we knew it was going to do something to help people in this province, because it provides a sense of security for those first responders and for their families. It ensures faster access to WSIB treatment and resources.

Speaker, I'm proud to stand in the House today and tell you that as a result of the actions of this House, more than 600 first responders have already been helped by the legislation in one year alone. That's 600 men and women who have received quicker access to benefits and the services that they need to get better.

I visited with paramedics, Halton police and Oakville fire this morning. We should all be proud of what we did a year ago.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'd like to thank the minister for his answer. I'm thrilled to hear that this legislation has also helped so many people across Ontario. I think we can all be extremely proud that these efforts are felt in every single community across this province.

It's encouraging to know that individuals felt confident that they could come forward and that there would be help on the other end for them. I've spoken to Chief Charbonneau from the paramedics of Frontenac county about this, and he has been pleased with the measures that have been taken. It says a lot about the importance of eliminating the stigma around mental health and how our efforts in this area are working.

In the last year, first responders in my community have talked to me about the second part of Bill 163, which requires them to create PTSD prevention plans. I know they've been hard at work on these plans in my riding as well as across the province.

Can the minister please tell the House more about these efforts as the first responders in each of our communities are putting these plans together?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thanks again for that question from the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Unfortunately, the cure for PTSD continues to elude us, so we need to put a tremendous amount of effort into preventing PTSD in the first place.

When we passed the bill, we included in the legislation a requirement that all employers of first responders file their prevention plans with my ministry as of April 23 of this year. I'm looking forward to seeing those plans, seeing how we can highlight some of the best practices within those plans and sharing that information right throughout the province.

I want everyone to benefit from these plans, Speaker. I want everyone to submit the best plan they possibly could. That's why I'll be putting them online, posting them publicly. This is the next step in keeping our first responders in Ontario healthy and safe, giving them the dignity and the respect they deserve.

Thanks again to the House, particularly the member from Parkdale–High Park, for what she did to make us all work together on this.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is to the Minister of Housing. Under this government, the waiting list for affordable housing has grown by 45,000 families. Every day we hear from people who are having trouble afford-

ing a place to live, yet this government is allowing money that was supposed to go to social housing to be wasted and misused, despite the fact that I've pointed it out repeatedly.

Social housing money at the Housing Services Corp. has gone to luxury vacations, bottles of wine, fancy dinners and many, many trips to Europe. In 2014, a provincial appointee who was supposed to provide oversight resigned after it was revealed he was billing the HSC thousands of dollars every month through his consulting firm, as well as getting paid to be chair of the board.

If this government is on top of the housing file, can they explain how they have failed to fill this provincial appointment after two years?

Hon. Chris Ballard: Certainly, Ontario is answering the call to provide more affordable housing across the province. I want to touch on a couple of things. Since taking office, we've committed more than \$2.4 billion to affordable housing. I think the total now for housing in general is about \$5 billion that this government has put into housing across Ontario, and I know about \$1.4 billion of that has gone into housing in Toronto alone. This is quite a U-turn from the previous PC government that abandoned any responsibility to support municipalities with delivering housing, and downloaded it.

I can tell you, Speaker, those investments that this government has made have helped create over 20,000 affordable housing units and more than 275,000 repairs to social and affordable housing units. We're acting on this.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, back to the minister: I believe he missed the first question.

Every dollar that Housing Services Corp. gets is a public dollar that was intended to provide social housing. We've heard from housing providers across Ontario that they could have saved substantial amounts of money if they weren't forced to buy through the Housing Services Corp.

The city of Toronto found that they could have saved \$6.3 million in a single year if this government would allow them to purchase natural gas at the best price. That means that in the three years since I raised this issue, Toronto alone could have had approximately \$19 million more for social housing, enough to reopen 380 of the units that they boarded up because they're not fit to live in.

When Toronto Community Housing is closing an average of one unit a day, why does this government refuse to let them save millions by simply buying the same products for a cheaper price?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you to the member for that question. Again, I'll go back to what I said at the opening of my initial response: that Ontario is answering the call to provide more affordable housing across the province.

Speaker, we know that when people have a house, a home, they're healthier, able to pursue employment and better equipped to participate and contribute to their communities. So I'll go back and say that since 2003, this government has put \$5 billion into affordable housing. Some \$22 million has been provided to Oxford county, for example.

I can go on, Speaker, with a long list of things that we've done. For example, one of the most exciting things that we are able to announce is \$1.1 billion invested through cap-and-trade—

Interjections.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I couldn't hear the answer.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's strange how I get to hear you.

MEMBER FOR OAK RIDGES— MARKHAM

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order: the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you very much, Speaker. On a point of privilege, I would ask everyone to join me in recognizing my friend and colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services, Dr. Helena Jacek, for being the recipient of the 2017 Canadian Helen Keller Centre Award for her work in assisting Ontario's deaf and blind community.

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

The House recessed from 1142 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I'd like to introduce my guests making their way to the gallery. I'm happy to welcome Baljit Ghuman, Mrs. Jaswinder Ghuman, Mr. Harjit Singh, Mr. Warinder Singh, as well as Mr. Maninder Singh here today. They'll be joining me for my motion later on today. Thank you for coming.

Hon. Laura Albanese: I would like to welcome to Queen's Park Chaminade College high school from the great riding of York South-Weston. I know they will be in the gallery shortly.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HEARTH PLACE CANCER SUPPORT CENTRE

Mr. Lorne Coe: I rise today to highlight the work of the Hearth Place cancer centre situated in Oshawa. Hearth Place was the inspiration of Carolyn Alexander, who was diagnosed with terminal cancer and wanted to

create a centre that would address the emotional and mental health needs of families.

Established in 1997 as a drop-in centre in the comfort of a home-like atmosphere, Hearth Place Cancer Support Centre, situated in Oshawa, is committed to providing community support for people diagnosed with cancer and their families through individual and group support, a resource centre, wellness programs, and an ongoing lecture and discussion series.

Hearth Place is a support centre where cancer patients and their families can come and share their experiences, find resources and discover new ways to care for themselves and each other. Hearth Place also offers pediatric cancer family support, with programs for children and teens with cancer, their siblings, a monthly family support group, fun days and couples support.

This Saturday, I and many other Durham residents will gather in Ajax at a major fundraiser to support the work of this centre because, for 20 years, Hearth Place has provided a vital and caring service in an area where it's much needed.

I'd like to take this opportunity, Speaker, to thank all the staff and volunteers for the work that they've done in supporting families in need in the region of Durham.

SERVICE CLUBS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I thought he was going to make a statement about Ontario Shores and talk about my daughter, but that's a whole other story.

Mr. Speaker, I rise on an issue that all of us in this assembly have had issues with, and that is the difficulty that service groups are having to raise dollars. If you own a hall—you're the Italian club, the French club, the Legion, whatever it might be—it's getting more difficult as time goes on to be able to keep the doors open.

We have changed the rules in this province so that fundraising done by those clubs has to go to charity; it can't go to the maintenance of the hall. The difficulty is like the chicken-and-the-egg syndrome. You have groups, for example, like the Legion, who have a building that they have to maintain, but they need money to keep the doors open. If they keep the doors open, the club survives and supports the community.

But when you're not able to raise money in order to pay for your building, buy tables, fix windows, change the furnace, fix the roof, you're really—

Mr. Bill Walker: Accessibility.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And accessibility. It's a real problem. As a result, we're seeing community groups and organizations shut down across this province. We have seen, in the city of Timmins, the Moose Hall go down, we've seen the Oddfellows Hall go down, we've seen the Timmins Legion go down—all of which is indicative of the problem that we have.

I call on this assembly to do something, that we revisit the rules in order to give community service clubs the ability to fundraise in a way that allows them to maintain their buildings and that they're not always put into the

position of having to shut down because they don't have the money to invest in their buildings.

MARY FRASER

Mr. John Fraser: Today is a very, very special day. Today is my mom's birthday.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: She couldn't choose her son.

Mr. John Fraser: Yes, well, my long-suffering mother.

Applause.

Mr. John Fraser: There we go; we all know that.

My mom, Mary Fraser—Mary Joan Costie from Hamilton, so a proud Hamiltonian. It's her birthday today. I just want to thank her.

As a VON, she taught the prenatal course while she was pregnant with me, and she had the most difficult birth. She's such a great mom to all of us. I thank her for 13 years of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in my lunch—actually, 14 years, if you count kindergarten—Elevator Lady Cookies, oatmeal cookies; for being a nurse to the whole family and just being a loving mom.

We all have moms. We're all lucky we have them, but, Mom, I got the best mom. I just wanted you to know that and I wanted it in Hansard.

On behalf of Missy and Stephanie and Cara and I, we love you, happy birthday, and I hope I get home early enough to see you tonight.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A very, very special day today.

BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mr. Norm Miller: I rise in the House today to recognize an incredible opportunity that students in my riding get to experience this weekend. Forty students from Parry Sound High School and 17 from Bracebridge's St. Dominic Catholic Secondary School have travelled to Europe. On Sunday, they will recognize and commemorate the 100th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge. To me, this is an invaluable experience for these young people. While in school, children learn of the ultimate sacrifice that many young people, who were not much older than these students, had made in order to fight for and defend our country.

Sadly, as Canadians lose our surviving veterans, we are at risk of losing any proximity to Canada's efforts in the Great War as we now commemorate the 100th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge. However, when Canadian students have the chance to stand at the foot of the Vimy Ridge memorial and see the names of the 3,598 fallen Canadian soldiers, I know they will be truly immersed in our collective history, and the magnitude of wartime tragedy will be impressed upon them. The bravery, determination and pride that achieved an unprecedented victory at Vimy Ridge 100 years ago will be more real for them.

While only 4,000 Canadian students could attend these events, I know that the students will carry on the duty of remembrance to their peers and share their unforgettable

experience. I would like to thank all the volunteers who organized various fundraisers, as well as the chaperones and the teachers who made this trip possible for the students of Parry Sound High School and Muskoka's St. Dominic's Catholic high school in Bracebridge.

DEMENTIA

Mr. Wayne Gates: I would like to talk about an issue that is deeply affecting my riding, and that's the need for a dementia strategy that the province has promised. In Niagara, 9,460 people have been identified as living with dementia; in Ontario, over 200,000 people.

I wrote to the Minister of Finance about this issue of funding, but this issue is very important and I wanted to raise it in this House. Without proper funding for dementia services and front-line care, a strategy means nothing. It's heartbreaking when you go to a care facility and you see people who need these services, and they are alone and they can't get them.

I know the Retired Teachers of Ontario, branch 14, in Niagara also wrote to the minister about this. I'm happy to support their efforts. The government of Ontario can play a positive role in the lives of those suffering from dementia, but we can also play a role in helping the families. So often when a loved one suffers from dementia, it's the family who becomes their caregiver, and this can be very stressful.

Whether it is families caring for loved ones or persons suffering from dementia, this government needs to do more. I'm hoping my colleagues across the floor and beside me forget about party lines and join me in the fight against dementia in Niagara and in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure that the dementia strategy in Ontario has the power and the funding necessary to be successful. I hope the House will act quickly on this issue and make this a priority.

ABRIGO CENTRE

Mrs. Cristina Martins: The province of Ontario and my riding of Davenport are proud to have a dynamic and wide-reaching organization like Abrigo that does such important work, providing countless services to the people in our community who often need them most. Each year, Abrigo services over 6,400 individual clients. Of those, 792 are women who identify as experiencing some form of domestic abuse.

Abrigo started over a quarter century ago to help women facing this issue, and it continues to be a key piece of the important work they do. Abrigo also works with women and men to build their parenting skills; provides seniors with a light beam of peer support, allowing them to escape the darkness of isolation; and, finally, educates and raises awareness on gender issues with a diverse youth demographic.

1310

So you see, it's organizations like this that form the backbone of the diverse and prosperous communities across the province.

That's why I'm so proud of the \$136,000 grant the Ontario government recently awarded to Abrigo for the purchase and installation of a much-needed elevator to greatly increase accessibility to programs and services offered to seniors by Abrigo.

I welcome the seniors from Abrigo who will be joining me here this afternoon at Queen's Park. Bem-vindos.

TARTAN DAY

Mr. Bill Walker: Speaker, there are only a few members who will recall that on December 19, 1991, this Legislature approved a resolution from the former member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Bill Murdoch, to proclaim the sixth day of April as Tartan Day in Ontario.

They may also remember that the first Tartan Day anniversary was quite a celebration at Queen's Park, marked by the Lieutenant Governor being piped into this chamber by several pipe bands from around Ontario.

The fiery Scots never do anything halfway, and my colleague and former MPP from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound proved that, for he never forgot to wear his kilt in honour of April 6. In fact, today I know he didn't forget his kilt, which is really the Scottish battle garb, because I talked to him this morning and he assured me he was proudly clad and raring to go to cheer for the local Owen Sound Attack hockey team—albeit, he says, he really wanted to put on the Edmonton Oilers sweater but didn't have it; and the member from Ottawa West–Nepean will know all about that.

Speaker, the sixth day of April is of historical significance to our proud Scottish community because it marks the anniversary of the declaration of Scottish independence in 1320. It also marks their contribution to the best our province has to offer. They're right up there with the English, Irish, French and our First Nations, who, in the very early years of our nation's development, helped build Ontario into a place that we're proud to call home today.

My colleague Jim McDonell, the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, is one of the proudest Scots I have ever met. He and many of my constituents are honoured to celebrate all things Scottish.

Grey county, along with the surrounding counties of Bruce, Wellington and Dufferin, was settled by these industrious people, including Agnes Macphail, who was born near Chatsworth.

I want to thank all of my colleagues in the House for remembering to wear plaid today in celebration of Tartan Day, and for your efforts in keeping Ontario's Scottish bands, pipers, dancers, clans and all of its heritage alive.

CANADIAN CORPS

Mr. Bob Delaney: Canadian children have learned for generations about the contribution and sacrifice of the Canadian Corps in World War I. A century ago, after the Germans had repulsed two French assaults and one

British assault on Vimy Ridge, a strategic hill overlooking the Douai plain near Arras, the Canadian Corps won the first major Allied victory of the war. That victory established the Canadian Corps' reputation as the elite ground force of World War I.

Vimy Ridge was given in perpetuity to Canada by France. Canadian guides offer a special welcome to visitors from the land that 3,598 men of the Canadian Corps left behind forever.

The respectful silence at Vimy evokes the remembrance of those who, like me, have visited the immaculately tended Commonwealth War Graves site at Vimy Ridge. A visitor is drawn to thoughts not so much of battle, but of home. It is as though the collective presence of the spirits of the Canadians who stayed at Vimy longs to share thoughts of the Canada that their contribution helped build.

Learning this part of history is important to every Canadian, and so is finding the few hours during a lifetime to walk Vimy Ridge, and to know what the Royal Canadian Legion means when they say, "We will remember them."

FENWICK SCHOOL

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I rise today to express the indignation of Fenwick residents in my riding who are offended that Farr public school has been renamed Wellington Heights Public School to honour Arthur Wellesley, the first Duke of Wellington. This same duke was a documented racist who stated in the British House of Lords on August 1, 1833, "We do not wish Jews to come and settle here." He was also an integral part of the colonial British government that reneged on treaties with indigenous people.

Concerned residents of Fenwick acknowledge that the Duke of Wellington may have contributed to some worthy and unrelated causes, but it is inappropriate to perpetuate past attitudes that we recognize as oppressive, disrespectful and offensive today.

More than 200 parents and students gathered this past February to voice their desire to not have Fenwick's community associated with such disgraceful sentiments. I appreciate their concern, and I share their view, Mr. Speaker.

When the Minister of Education responded to the 2016 release of *The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*, she urged the chair of the District School Board of Niagara to address anything that could be offensive.

I've had many parents and students who are concerned with this name choice contact me, and I urge the government to follow up on its own words by asking the District School Board of Niagara to reconsider the use of the name Wellington Heights and either use the second-choice name or restart the naming process in accordance with the board's naming policy.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

COURTS OF JUSTICE AMENDMENT ACT (JUDICIAL SEXUAL ASSAULT EDUCATION), 2017

LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES TRIBUNAUX JUDICIAIRES (FORMATION DE LA MAGISTRATURE EN MATIÈRE D'AGRESSIONS SEXUELLES)

Ms. Martins moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 121, An Act to amend the Courts of Justice Act to require candidates for appointment as provincial judges to have completed education or training in the law of sexual assault / Projet de loi 121, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les tribunaux judiciaires afin d'exiger que les candidats à une nomination comme juge provincial suivent un programme d'éducation ou de formation sur le droit relatif aux agressions sexuelles.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mrs. Cristina Martins: The bill amends the Courts of Justice Act to require candidates for appointment as provincial judges to have completed education or training in the law of sexual assault that meets the criteria established by the Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee.

BRAISERY CHICKEN LTD. ACT, 2017

Mr. Milczyn moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr61, An Act to revive Braisery Chicken Ltd.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Laura Albanese: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Laura Albanese: I move that the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet from 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, April 12, Wednesday, April 26 and Wednesday, May 3, 2017, for

the purpose of public hearings on Bill 87, An Act to implement health measures and measures relating to seniors by enacting, amending or repealing various statutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration moves that the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet from 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

All in favour? Agreed? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

SCHOOL CLOSURES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support it, affix my name and send it with page Laura.

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LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Audrey and Stephen Comeau from Maretta Street in Sault Ste. Marie for sending me this petition, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas frail elderly patients needing long-term-care placement in homes within the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN) have been pressured to

move out of the hospital to await placement, or stay and pay hospital rates of approximately \$1,000 per day; and

“Whereas frail elderly patients needing long-term-care placement in Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie have been pressured to move to homes not of their choosing, or to ‘interim’ beds in facilities that don’t meet legislated standards for permanent long-term-care homes; and

“Whereas the practice of making patients remain in ‘interim’ beds is contrary to Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) policy which identifies ‘interim’ beds as intended to ‘ensure a continuous flow-through so that interim beds are constantly freed up for new applicants from hospitals’;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“—Ensure health system officials are using ‘interim’ beds as ‘flow-through,’ in accordance with fairness and as outlined in MOHLTC policy;

“—Ensure patients aren’t pressured with hospital rates and fulfill promises made to hundreds of nursing home residents who agreed to move temporarily with the promise that they would be relocated as soon as a bed in a home of their choosing became available.”

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

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly entitled “Update Ontario Fluoridation Legislation,” signed by a number of individuals, mostly from Mississauga and Brampton, and for which I thank dentist Lisa Bentley, whose practice is in Mississauga. It reads as follows:

“Whereas community water fluoridation is a safe, effective and scientifically proven means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

“Whereas recent experience in such Canadian cities as Dorval, Calgary and Windsor that have removed fluoride from drinking water has shown a dramatic increase in dental decay; and

“Whereas the continued use of fluoride in community drinking water is at risk in Ontario cities representing more than 10% of Ontario’s population, including the region of Peel; and

“Whereas the Ontario Legislature has twice voted unanimously in favour of the benefits of community water fluoridation, and the Ontario Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Municipal Affairs and Housing urge support for amending the Health Protection and Promotion Act and other applicable legislation to ensure community water fluoridation is mandatory and to remove provisions allowing Ontario municipalities to cease drinking water fluoridation, or fail to start drinking water fluoridation, from the Ontario Municipal Act;

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

“That the Premier of Ontario direct the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Health and Long-Term Care to introduce legislation amending the Health Protection and Promotion Act and make changes to other applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this petition and to send it down with Mississauga–Streetsville’s page, Ethan, to the Clerk.

HYDRO RATES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition and have affixed my signature to it as well.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Michael Mantha: A petition entitled “Fight for \$15 and Fairness.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

“—promote full-time, permanent work with adequate hours for all those who choose it;

“—ensure part-time, temporary, casual and contract workers receive the same pay and benefits as their full-time, permanent counterparts;

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

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

“—prevent employers from downloading their responsibilities for minimum standards onto temp agencies, subcontractors or workers themselves;

“—extend minimum protections to all workers by eliminating exemptions to the laws;

“—protect workers who stand up for their rights;

“—offer proactive enforcement of laws, supported by adequate public staffing and meaningful penalties for employers who violate the law;

“—make it easier for workers to join unions; and

“—ensure all workers are paid at least \$15 an hour.”

I agree with this petition and present it to page Kishan to bring down to the Clerks’ table.

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Granville Anderson: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

“—delivering public dental services in a cost-efficient way through publicly funded dental clinics such as public health units, community health centres and aboriginal health access centres to ensure primary oral health services are accessible to vulnerable people in Ontario.”

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and give it to page Nicholas.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario’s Drive Clean Program was implemented only as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and

“Whereas vehicle emissions have declined significantly from 1998 to” the current date “that they are no longer among the major domestic contributors of smog in Ontario; and

“Whereas the Auditor General specifically warned the government to delay implementation of the new Drive Clean test to ensure technical testing was completed and problems were resolved; and

“Whereas the new Drive Clean test has caused numerous false ‘fails,’ doubling the failure rate, which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees, thereby causing unwarranted economic hardship and stress;

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

“That the government of Ontario take immediate steps to eliminate the Drive Clean program.”

I support this petition, I affix my name to it and I will give it to page Taylor.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you, Speaker. You’ll know a lot about this.

“Nurses Know—Petition for Better Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas providing high-quality, universal, public health care is crucial for a fair and thriving Ontario; and

“Whereas years of underfunding have resulted in cuts to registered nurses (RNs) and hurt patient care; and

“Whereas, in 2015 alone, Ontario lost more than 1.5 million hours of RN care due to cuts; and

“Whereas procedures are being off-loaded into private clinics not subject to hospital legislation; and

“Whereas funded services are being cut from hospitals and are not being provided in the community; and

“Whereas cutting skilled care means patients suffer more complications, readmissions and death;

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

“Implement a moratorium on RN cuts;

“Commit to restoring hospital base operating funding to at least cover the costs of inflation and population growth;

“Create a fully-funded multi-year health human resources plan to bring Ontario’s ratio of registered nurses to population up to the national average;

“Ensure hospitals have enough resources to continue providing safe, quality and integrated care for clinical procedures and stop plans for moving such procedures into private, unaccountable clinics.”

I support this petition, and I will sign it and send it with page Nicholas.

ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE

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

“Whereas elevators are an important amenity for a resident of a high-rise residential building; and

“Whereas ensuring basic mobility and standards of living for residents remain top priority; and

“Whereas the unreasonable delay of repairs for elevator services across Ontario is a concern for all residents of high-rise buildings who experience constant breakdowns, mechanical failures and ‘out of service’ notices for unspecified amounts of time;

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

“Urge the Ontario government to require repairs to elevators be completed within a reasonable and prescribed time frame. We urge this government to address these concerns that are shared by residents of Trinity–Spadina,” Etobicoke–Lakeshore “and across Ontario.”

I support this, affix my signature to it and hand it to page Catherine.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have another petition. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“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 chiropractors, nurse practitioners,

dietitians, registered nurses, registered practical nurses, health promoters, occupational therapists, psychologists, pharmacists, respiratory therapists, chiropractors, physiotherapists, mental health and social workers, physician assistants, managers and administration;

“We, the undersigned, 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.”

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

REA AND WALTER ACT (TRUSS AND LIGHTWEIGHT CONSTRUCTION IDENTIFICATION), 2017

LOI REA ET WALTER DE 2017 SUR L’IDENTIFICATION DES COMPOSANTS STRUCTURAUX À OSSATURE LÉGÈRE

Mr. Pettapiece moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 105, An Act governing the identification of truss and lightweight construction in buildings / Projet de loi 105, Loi régissant l’identification des composants structuraux à ossature légère incorporés aux bâtiments.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: In introducing the Rea and Walter Act, I’m aware that it recalls a heartbreaking chapter in the history of our area. It’s also a painful chapter for firefighters across the province and beyond.

Six years ago, on March 17, 2011, fire engulfed a dollar store in downtown Listowel. That fire claimed the lives of two North Perth volunteer firefighters, Ken Rea and Ray Walter.

Ken Rea was 56. He was a board member for victim services of Perth county, and for 37 years, he was a volunteer firefighter, becoming deputy district chief at the Atwood station.

Ray Walter was 30. He was vice-president of the Kinsmen Club of Listowel and joined the volunteer fire department in 2008.

Ken and Ray were inside the dollar store as the fire spread. They were searching for possible victims; they were searching for the source of the fire. Suddenly, the roof collapsed, leaving Ken and Ray with no escape. Rescue was impossible.

I was in town that day with former member Tim Hudak. We saw the dark, black, heavy smoke. We heard rumours that someone was hurt or killed in the blaze.

My first thought was of my son, also a North Perth volunteer firefighter. You can imagine my concern. But

he was safe, taking phone calls pouring in to the Monkton station.

The memorial service was held a week later. It drew thousands of firefighters, paramedics and police officers from across Canada and the United States. It was a tremendous show of support for our community's devastating loss.

Investigations followed, and they revealed what firefighters did not know, what they could not have known, on that day: Initially undetected, the fire started behind some insulation and was degrading the lightweight wooden roof trusses. Collapse was inevitable.

This afternoon, I will explain how the Rea and Walter Act will give firefighters better information, which they can use to plan their attack in situations like this.

I intend to do three things: I'll describe truss and lightweight construction, or TLC, and why it matters; I'll explain how the bill uses a practical and proven way to identify TLC; and I'll show broad support for this bill.

Truss and lightweight construction, when exposed to fire, can pose serious risks to responding firefighters. The best way to minimize their risk is to maximize their information. Ultimately, that's what TLC identification is about and what this bill would do.

First, we need to understand truss and lightweight construction. TLC is increasingly commonplace as a building method. It refers to wood-frame building materials where the roof- or floor-supporting systems are constructed of lightweight, prefabricated materials. Wooden I-beams pose the same issue and are also addressed in our bill.

So what's the problem? The problem is not TLC. Modern homes use it, and many commercial and industrial buildings use it. These buildings are safe. The problem is what happens when lightweight construction is exposed to fire. While traditional floor joists burn in about 15 minutes, pre-engineered joists can take only about six minutes to burn—six minutes. They don't even have to be on fire to pose a danger. High heat can make the wood unstable by melting the glue that holds the joists together.

Suppose you're a firefighter arriving at the scene of a blaze. You probably arrived in about five minutes, as the average fire department response time is between four and six minutes. As an incident commander, you immediately face a critical decision: Do you advance to the building's roof or floor to fight the fire at its source, or do you fight it from other angles in other ways?

In many buildings, you might have the time and opportunity to advance, but if the building uses TLC, time might have run out. These joists are already beginning to burn. The roof or floor may already be on the brink of collapse, and you have no way to know.

Fire crews cannot be expected to know the construction type of every building every time they pull up to a fire. But there is a way: by identifying truss- and lightweight-constructed buildings, to get them better information. That's where the Rea and Walter Act comes in.

It brings me to my second point. Placarding, as set out in the bill, is a practical and proven way to identify truss-

and lightweight-constructed buildings. It's practical because it starts with something as simple as a sticker. The bill requires a round, reflective emblem with a white background and a red border to be displayed on buildings using TLC. There will be three types:

—“F” decals if only the floor of the building uses TLC;

—“R” decals if only the roof of the building uses TLC; and

—“FR” decals if both the floor and the roof of the building use TLC.

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These requirements are set out in the proposed amendments to both the building code, affecting new buildings, and the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, affecting existing buildings. They would apply to commercial and industrial buildings as well as multi-family dwellings of three or more units, other than townhouses.

To building owners and to building inspectors, the impact of such an emblem is negligible, but to firefighters, its impact is invaluable.

What about insurance rates? According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, they would be unaffected. We checked. We also checked into other jurisdictions that recognize the need to identify truss and lightweight construction. New Jersey, New York, Illinois and Florida have all passed state legislation to require it. It's my understanding that the three emblems, F, R and FR, are standardized and recognized across many jurisdictions. If they can do it, why can't we?

But you don't need to go to Florida to see examples of proven leadership on this issue. You just need to go to Perth-Wellington and to meet some of the people I'm privileged to represent. These emblems are already in use in the city of Stratford. Firefighter Mike Lukachko, who is here today, helped persuade the city council to pass a bylaw.

Other communities I represent, including the township of Perth East, the municipality of West Perth and the township of Perth South, have also passed bylaws. North Huron did too, and I want to thank the member from Huron-Bruce for allowing me to help install a decal at her constituency office.

The movement is growing, Madam Speaker, and it demonstrates my third and final point: Support for this initiative is clear and overwhelming. I have received dozens of supportive letters and emails from municipalities and fire departments. The township of Maple and its fire chief, Rick Richardson, who is here today, wrote, “I believe that making more fire department personnel aware of these risks will save lives for future firefighters.”

In Stratford, Chief John Paradis describes the bill as another tool in the tool box to identify potential hazards prior to sending firefighters inside a burning structure. Paradis adds that the city's efforts “are having a positive reception from business owners, who are more than happy to support the safety of their local firefighters.”

From the town of Erin, Fire Chief Dan Callaghan wrote, "This proposed bill will save lives of firefighters in the future ... Knowledge is protection."

South Stormont fire chief Gilles Crepeau wrote, "I am the chief of 100 volunteers, who fully support this bill."

And there are many more.

I have spoken to firefighters across the province. I have been to Carleton Place, Northumberland county, Windsor, Essex and Kenora. I have also talked to the Ontario fire marshal's office, the Ontario Building Officials Association, the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association and the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs. I have met with the Minister of Community Safety and her staff, and I appreciate their interest and advice.

But I must emphasize, the momentum to identify TLC did not begin yesterday and did not begin with me. It began years ago, thanks to the efforts of North Perth Fire Chief Ed Smith. In 2012, Chief Smith introduced a resolution to the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs. It petitioned the province that certain lightweight-constructed buildings should have a standard plaque. He was successful and continued to speak up. Many others did too.

Last June, I met with Mike Lukachko and fire chiefs Ed Smith of North Perth, Chris Harrow of the town of Minto, John Paradis of Stratford and Bill Hunter of Perth East and West Perth. They're also here today, and so are Neil Anderson, Stratford's deputy chief; Richard Anderson, chief with the town of St. Marys; and certainly many others. Thank you for coming today.

In September, the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs passed a resolution of support for our bill. I want to thank the O AFC, which represents the chief fire officers of the 449 municipal fire departments in Ontario, for their support. In particular, I want to thank Chief Harrow, who serves on the board of directors, for his leadership. To all of these people and many others I've missed, I want to thank you for your advice and your support.

To conclude, Madam Speaker, I say this: Throughout our province, we have dedicated professional firefighters and volunteer firefighters to keep us safe. Often they do that at considerable risk to their own safety. Again, to minimize their risk, we have to maximize their information. Our bill does just that. This issue is important enough to warrant a province-wide solution, not just a patchwork of local bylaws.

Finally, I want to recognize the Rea and Walter families. The Rea family is up there, and the Walter family is over here.

The Walter family: Ray's widow, Holly, is here; his father, Ron; his mother, Rosemary; his sister, Rachel; and Holly's partner, Andy, and her mother, Linda.

Louise Rea, Ken's widow, has also made the journey to Queen's Park to be with us today.

Thank you to each of you and to all the firefighters and municipal officials for making the trip to Queen's Park. As community leaders, your presence means so

much and you deserve our full support. I look forward to the debate this afternoon.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again, it's always a privilege and an honour to stand on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin, and to speak to my colleague's bill, Bill 105, the Rea and Walter Act.

Let me start by saying that this is a good bill. It's straightforward for what it is trying to accomplish. Keeping our Ontario firefighters safe is something that we can all agree on. In Algoma-Manitoulin, the firefighters across my riding are incredible, dedicated women and men who have always put the needs of their communities first. Our firefighters are out in their communities every week fighting house fires and saving lives.

What the member for Perth-Wellington is proposing is just basic common sense.

Not that long ago in Elliot Lake, we suffered a great tragedy with the Elliot Lake mall collapse. I had a high respect for firefighters before, but, along with our paramedics, the OPP, the mine-rescue people and the firefighters who are there, I take my hat off to you men and women. You do amazing, amazing work.

When our firefighters are going into a burning house, a crumbling building, a disaster, they're always at risk. It's an even greater risk when they don't have the full story of what type of building they are entering into and whether there is a high risk that it may collapse suddenly.

Tests conducted by the National Research Council of Canada have shown that there is a greater risk of structural failure during a fire when a building is built out of truss and lightweight material. A building can collapse during a fire in as little as six minutes. For firefighters, when seconds make the difference between a building collapsing and everyone making it out, having a sign for what type of building material was used could really help inform our firefighters in making the right call.

The bill that the MPP from Perth-Wellington is introducing can potentially save lives of firefighters. For that, I commend him for his work on this. Similar bylaws have been successfully implemented in Ontario at the municipal level in various regions in Perth as well as in the town of Stratford.

Giving firefighters the tools and knowledge to do their job, we can all agree, is key to creating safer communities and lowering the number of tragedies that follow from house fires. But not every community in Ontario has firefighters who are given the tools and funds to protect their residents from fire.

Last week, the Toronto Star came out with an investigative report on fire-related deaths on First Nations across Canada. Between 2010 and 2016, there have been over 44 fire-related deaths on First Nations in Ontario. Currently, if you're living on a First Nation, the chances of dying in a house fire are 10 times higher than in the rest of the country. This is unacceptable. There's no reason that this should be the reality for many of our First Nations communities.

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These fires are a crisis for many of our Ontario First Nations, especially in northern Ontario. While it's important that this bill that my colleague has proposed passes, we also need to make sure that our First Nations communities are given the resources they need to keep their communities safe from fire.

A year ago, the Pikangikum First Nation community lost six adults and three children to a house fire. Last week, Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, which represents 49 First Nations in northern Ontario, sent a letter to Ontario's chief coroner asking for an inquest that would examine the cause of these tragic fires. Our First Nations leaders have heard nothing but silence from this province. They are still waiting for a response from this government on this very issue.

If the federal government is not meeting their obligations to Ontario First Nations, the province has a role to play in holding them accountable. If the government committed to examining the causes of these deaths, we would have data on how to prevent these kinds of tragedies in the future. Fire safety is a real concern for these communities. Let's make sure that the voices of First Nations are heard.

It's good that we are proposing bills like this one today. It will help make our firefighters safer. But last year, when the Pikangikum First Nation could only respond to that tragic house fire with one fire truck, no water and their reserve fire chief as the only firefighter for that community—we've got problems. That's not just a safety risk for firefighters; that's a safety risk for the entire community.

I wanted to bring this to the attention of the House because Bill 105, proposed by the MPP from Perth-Wellington, is putting in new protections for our province's firefighters. It's a good initiative. But there are still a lot of issues across the province in northern Ontario First Nations that have been neglected by federal and provincial governments. I commend the member once again.

I tip my hat each and every day to the firefighters, men and women, across this province who are here today and across the country.

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

Mr. Han Dong: I'm always pleased to rise in this House and speak on behalf of the constituents of the great riding of Trinity-Spadina. I'm speaking in support of this great bill. I want to thank the member from Perth-Wellington for bringing this legislation forward.

First off, what happened in North Perth six years ago was a terrible tragedy. My condolences go out to the families and friends and the community. This bill brings forward a good opportunity for further discussion on the conditions our firefighters work in. They do a tremendous job every day in the face of life-threatening conditions, and, for that, we're in debt to them forever.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank them for the other work they do in our communities, which is

going out there, attending events and making sure the community is strengthened and welcoming, especially to those newcomers into our community.

In addition to analyzing what the proposed legislation is bringing forward, we would like to explore alternative approaches that could meet the intent of the bill, which is to give firefighters the information they need to keep them safe when responding to an incident.

Fire safety and protecting our dedicated firefighters is an important issue for everyone. Ontario is one of the leading jurisdictions in the world when it comes to fire safety and delivery of fire services. Ontario's firefighters are respected worldwide for the outstanding work they do in emergency response and fire safety education.

Enhanced fire codes and fire prevention awareness have changed the landscape for our province's firefighters. Between 1995 and 2015, the annual number of fires in Ontario, excluding federal and First Nation properties, dropped by almost 45%. There will always be years when the number of fires jumps. In 2015, for example, we experienced a year-over-year increase in fires. Overall, however, the number of fires, and fire-related deaths, is trending downward.

We want to see that trend continue, and must start to address the gaps in the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, to improve fire safety. The act is almost 20 years old, and has not been modernized to keep pace with advancements in technology and new challenges.

Some challenges, including training, standardized fire code inspections, dispatch and greater public information are contained in a number of coroners' inquests and, most recently, an inquest into house fires in Whitby and East Gwillimbury which took the lives of eight people.

This is why our government launched the Fire Safety Technical Table, in which the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services meets with fire chiefs, fire safety representatives and municipal representatives to examine current and emerging fire safety challenges and opportunities. The input and advice from this table will inform the ministry's recommendations to enhance fire safety in Ontario and help to ensure that our firefighters return home safe to their families.

We know from prior experience that the round table approach works. In early 2012, the fire marshal set up a technical advisory committee to recommend new initiatives to better protect residents in licensed retirement homes and care facilities. This committee included expert representation from the firefighter community, community stakeholders and owners and operators of retirement homes and care facilities. Aided by their excellent work, Ontario became the first province to make automatic sprinklers mandatory in these buildings.

We are looking for frank and open discussions, using the same evidence-based thinking that was part of the Technical Advisory Committee.

I'm very pleased to speak to this private member's bill, brought forward by my good friend across the floor. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm pleased to rise and speak in support of the Rea and Walter Act, a bill that aims to reduce the risk of firefighter injuries and deaths and to save lives.

I have the greatest respect for our firefighters, both volunteer and professional, and I extend a sincere thank you to those in the audience and those listening at home, and to every firefighter who has ever served in our community, and to their families, for your dedicated service.

Firefighters are our first responders, and they risk their own lives every day to keep our communities safe. Today it's our turn to ensure that we keep them safe, by passing Bill 105. The Rea and Walter Act would achieve this by ensuring that firefighters know when they're battling fires in buildings of lightweight construction framing. This includes lightweight truss roof assemblies and lightweight truss floor joists, all of which pose an added hazard of injuries and deaths, and whose use in home construction has become widespread.

Bill 105 would compel that such material, used in commercial and industrial buildings, as well as dwellings of three or more units other than a townhouse, be identified and visible to the firefighters, alerting them to the presence of volatile material that rapidly loses strength when exposed to fire.

In fact, structures using truss and lightweight framing can fail and collapse in as little as six minutes. Using a display emblem on those products is the kind of safety piece that could have prevented the deaths of Ken Rea and Ray Walter, two volunteer firefighters who lost their lives in 2011 when a roof they were on collapsed in a fire. I extend my sincere condolences to the family members joining us here in Queen's Park today, and thank them for their families' service.

Speaker, we can manage risk only if we can recognize the risk in a given scenario. We know that firefighters don't have the ability to accurately recognize lightweight construction hazards. This is why they've been asking for years that truss- and lightweight-constructed buildings be identified. This marker would help them better assess the risks, so they can decide how best to respond and fight the fire.

Bill 105 is based on the resolution and feedback presented by the fire chief of North Perth, Ed Smith, which the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, OAFIC, supported.

I commend my colleague Perth-Wellington MPP Randy Pettapiece for listening and responding to their call, and for all of his dedication and passion to make sure that this bill becomes a reality.

I'm privileged to know many firefighters, specifically, of course, in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who support this labelling system, as it will enhance their safety and operational effectiveness.

Firefighter safety should be the number one priority of any fire service organization. I encourage all of us to ensure speedy passage of Bill 105, and reduce the risk of death and injuries to firefighters in Ontario. I close by saying, once again, thank you for your dedicated service.

1400

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I too want to thank everybody who has come in today to take in the proceedings on Bill 105, An Act governing the identification of truss and lightweight construction in buildings.

I think I have shared this with the House before: My husband has been a professional firefighter for the city of Greater Sudbury and has fought many, many fires that have not gone right.

I can tell you that March 17, 2011, will be remembered for a long time in firefighters' families as the day that deputy district chief Rea and firefighter Walter lost their lives in North Perth at the Listowel Dollar Stop store fire. A delegation from Sudbury went down the following week, on March 24, 2011, to help the community do a last send-off to those two firefighters who lost their lives.

There was lots to be learned from this fire. When the fire department went in, they didn't know that there had been some roofing work done on the building at the time, earlier that day. They didn't know that the roofing work had sparked a blaze that burned undetected for upwards of 40 minutes before light smoke started to be seen. They didn't know that the fire, hidden from sight and hidden from their thermal-imaging camera, was behind insulation and behind the store's ceiling tiles, and had basically eaten away at the building's lightweight-engineered wooden roof trusses. They couldn't have known that the roof was only moments away from collapsing when they stepped inside, doing what they are trained to do: rescuing people, looking at how the fire started and putting it out.

There's lots of risk being firefighters, and we thank you, each and every one of you, for what you do, but if there is a way that we can make your work safer, then all of us in this chamber have a responsibility to do this.

I thank the member for bringing a bill forward that has the possibility to save lives. How could we not move ahead? I've listened to all sides and right now it looks like there is good support for this bill. I urge the government to move fast on the implementation of this bill. Asking that labelling be added to structures that use this lightweight material is something doable. It's something that some municipalities have taken upon themselves to do already. It is our responsibility as legislators to do this, the sooner the better, so that the families of deputy chief Rea and firefighter Walter are the last ones to have to go through the consequences of not knowing what kind of building material is there.

Don't get me wrong: There is a place for pre-building inspection and there is a place for pre-planning. I know that every fire department does this. I can tell you that in Sudbury they do this every week, where they go into each and every one of the buildings in town and they do pre-plans and they take notes and they prepare for the worst. But things could always go badly. If you have it there and it is labelled right there as you are about to

enter a building, it will make all the difference. It's something that the industry is willing to do. It is something that has been well-researched by my colleague to make sure that there is no downside to this. There is no pushback to this. This is a win-win, something that we can move on right here, right now, and that will protect the men and women who have chosen to protect us by becoming firefighters. I think we owe it to them to do the right thing.

One other piece of knowledge has come from this deadly fire, and it is that we now have fire—I forgot the name. We call them fire spotters, but I think there's a more technical term for them. If you're going to do roofing, if you're going to use a torch or if you're going to use any other sort of fire material close to a building, then there has to be somebody who comes every hour and does an inspection. There has to be somebody there for three hours after the work is done to see if a spark has started something somewhere that could lead to a fire.

Those were hard lessons for the family of deputy chief Rea and the family of firefighter Walter to learn. But those are hard lessons that have been learned throughout fire departments in Ontario, and that are now being implemented through the fire code.

I am deeply sorry for your loss. Today I can guarantee you that the NDP will vote in favour of such a bill and push the government to make it through third and final reading and royal assent.

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

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: It's my pleasure to rise in the House this afternoon to add some comments to Bill 105 on behalf of my constituents in the fine riding of Cambridge.

It's interesting that the member has chosen today to bring forward his private member's bill, and I know it was due to the numbering. But it's interesting and a very curious fact that this is the one-year anniversary of the PTSD legislation that was passed here in the House in order to really provide our first responders with the ability to have their trauma, due to circumstances, including this one, potentially, the one that the member is talking about—it's great that they're able to get the help that they need.

As we know, first responders, including firefighters, are twice as likely to suffer from PTSD from the cumulative effects that happen in their jobs. I worked very closely in my time as a critical care nurse with first responders. We were often the ones to accept the patients who came in through the door, usually accompanied by paramedics, but fire and police as well. I often thought about those situations that weren't addressed by us in the emergency department and the types of situations that firefighters, police officers and paramedics saw in the field. I can imagine, on that day in Listowel, how horrifying it was, not just for the residents but also for the first responders there. So I wanted to give my shout-out again to the first responders; as we often say, as we, the public, are running away from dangerous situations, they,

the first responders, are running into those burning buildings and running towards that danger in order to protect the public.

I could not be more supportive of this private member's bill, Bill 105, An Act governing the identification of truss and lightweight construction in buildings. I want to add my congratulations to the member opposite for bringing this important piece forward. I think we all around this House—you've heard already the comments in the House—believe that first responders do an incredible job. I had first-hand knowledge of it. I used to see and debrief, sometimes, with my first responder colleagues after a critical incident that happened in the community, and I just can't give more warm praise to the people, the men and women, who put themselves in danger because of this.

I also fully believe that this is an opportunity to be able to address some of the requirements that we need to add to further protect those men and women who do so much for our community.

If I could, Speaker, I wanted to just go over a little bit of the fire safety provisions in the building code. I think that the intent of this bill is directed towards keeping firefighters safe. As I said, I'm in full support of that. But looking at possible measures through the fire code and the Ontario fire marshal, I think this is a great opportunity, again, to talk about some of the provisions for fire safety that are in the building code.

The safety of all Ontarians is uppermost in our government's mind and, indeed, through all the members in this House. It's why Ontario's building code has the strongest fire safety requirements in Canada, and I think with this bill it will be strengthened even further.

1410

While the building code is not retroactive, it does have comprehensive fire safety standards for newly constructed buildings, and for buildings that are undergoing renovations or a change of use. The building code makes use of a combination of fire safety principles to protect the safety of Ontarians in the event of a fire. The principles are detection and warning; containing and suppression, such as sprinklers; and exiting, for example, a shorter travel to building exits, and making sure that a clearly identified fire exit is there.

The building code includes a range of measures for the prevention and control of fires in new multi-unit residential buildings, including:

- fire alarm and detection systems with notification to the fire department;
- a provision for firefighters' elevators;
- pressurized firefighters' elevators in high residential buildings;
- automatic sprinklers for multi-level basements;
- emergency lighting and power generation;
- provision for central alarm and control facilities to coordinate emergency responses;
- shorter travel distances to exits;
- fire separation between units and between units and corridors; and

—protection of exits from smoke infiltration.

In previous years, our government has brought in a number of building code amendments to address fire safety in buildings, including visual fire alarms in multi-unit buildings. That came in 2015. Mandatory sprinklers, signals to fire departments and increased voice communication in treatment and care facilities began in 2014. Smoke alarms with battery backup required in single-family and large residential buildings began in 2012, and fire sprinklers required in new multi-unit residential buildings above three storeys in height came in 2010. This is an ongoing process, and we're continuously updating the building code to improve those fire safety standards.

Our government has recently completed phase 1 of consultations on an updated building code. This consultation included several proposed changes that would enhance fire safety in houses and in large buildings. Not only will we consider the comments received to date, but I certainly feel that this bill is very, very timely with this consultation.

Speaker, I just really want to again thank the member from Perth–Wellington. I think this bill really has a lot of merit, and it's very timely that we bring this forward.

Lastly, I really want to talk about the families and the community that surrounded Ken Rea and Ray Walter. I go past Listowel fairly often to visit friends on Lake Huron, and I go past the building site. I remember going past just shortly after the fire and seeing some of the temporary memorials that were out there. I remember the day that those two were laid to rest and the incredible outpouring of warm remembrances from family, from government and from colleagues across the country.

We know that we want to ensure that all our firefighters in the province of Ontario remain safe and that no other family or community has to go through what this community did. Again, I just want to offer my support of this bill going forward.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm proud to rise today to speak to Bill 105, the Rea and Walter Act (Truss and Lightweight Construction Identification). I welcome the families, too, of the two firefighters. Certainly it's little consolation, but it just shows that it's the least we can do in this Legislature.

Speaker, in Ontario we depend on the brave work of emergency first responders who never know what awaits them just around the corner during the course of a day. This legislation proposed by my colleague from Perth–Wellington highlights just some of the dangers that are lurking around the corner as they respond to their communities' urgent needs.

We look around at the firemen who are out on different days in my community, whether it be in the middle of the winter—I remember when the King George Hotel burned down in Cornwall, in sub-20-below weather. The ice was everywhere. They were out for more than 12 hours working. This is the work that we expect our first

responders to respond to, regardless of what the conditions are.

I support this legislation and request that the government move quickly to put this into law. This certainly is low-hanging fruit, something that we can move on, something that doesn't need to be delayed, because these first responders are so important to our community.

As a resident of South Glengarry, we benefit from a skilled and dedicated volunteer first response team. These men and women get up each morning and retire to their beds at night not knowing if they will be called upon that day or that night to help out a neighbour, or a stranger, on the 401.

Speaker, I'd like to recount a number of instances in my own municipality where volunteers were asked to go over and above the call of duty to help out friends, neighbours and strangers.

All of the major transmission, oil and gas pipelines transverse my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, presenting a definite additional risk to the community. Late one evening in the fall of 1994, the main natural gas transmission pipeline servicing eastern Ontario ruptured in our township, releasing a large volume of volatile natural gas. To give some perspective: There's more energy in the pipeline than is produced in electricity in Canada—a huge amount of energy.

This was the first rupture of its kind in Ontario, before the days of emergency plans. Our firefighters were called out to block roads and to notify the community. The situation was considered so dangerous that the power grid was shut off in eastern Ontario and phone calls were considered too risky to make. They were worried that it might create a spark.

Shortly after the municipal amalgamations of 1998, we were hit by the great ice storm. Again, our first responders were called out. In fact, our inaugural council meeting of the township was almost cancelled due to the severe conditions.

Our firefighters were first on the scene, clearing roads and helping the community, leaving their own homes and families while they performed their duties. Speaker, this event lasted for over a month in our region: no power, trees blocking roads, trees falling on houses, and a huge amount of damage. The first responders were key in setting up emergency shelters and manning them, and helping their neighbours deal with the loss of electricity during the month of January. This meant pumping out basements; this meant helping the people in the community.

Any community that had a volunteer fire department, and in our newly amalgamated township, it wasn't them all—they had shelters. The ones that didn't have a fire department didn't have shelters. It just indicates the importance of these people who go out without worrying about what they're doing. They go out to help people and their neighbours.

Accidents on the 401: They are called out routinely for traffic direction. I know that the Minister of Transportation would say that they're not to be out there, but they're

the last resort. The OPP are out there and they have nobody else to call to help direct and control traffic, so they're called out. When I was mayor, we had a serious accident where we had to write off one of our trucks—a brand new, \$200,000 truck.

There was another accident on the 401 where a firefighter was severely injured and will likely never be able to work—at least to his full extent—again. It goes to some of the seriousness of the accidents that we have and the calls upon them.

In my own village of Williamstown, they twice have been called with defibrillators to save someone's life. It doesn't matter what function they're at, whether they're out in a charity helping out; they're just called out over and over again to help the community.

I think it's very important we look at this bill. It's low-hanging fruit. Let's just make it happen.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: Of course, I want to rise and support Bill 105, the Rea and Walter Act, introduced by my friend and colleague from Perth–Wellington—an excellent job on bringing forward an initiative, after tragic consequences in his riding, here to the Ontario Legislature to fix this problem.

Firefighters have been telling us right across the province since 2012 that unaddressed concerns over truss and lightweight construction have put them in danger when they do their vital work saving lives and stopping the spread of fires. In fact, it was the same year that the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs passed a resolution to petition the government on this very issue. As we see today on this side of the House, we heard their concern and have taken legislative action to fix this problem.

1420

We hear a lot from different professional organizations about the need for more instantaneous information, both to help them do their jobs better and to protect them in the workplace. We recognize that doctors and medical professionals need access to patient history and medications, police officers need records of past criminal activity, but we don't often think of our firefighters. The person kicking down the door of a burning home to come in and rescue you deserves as much information as we can provide them so that they can make informed decisions in the moment on the best way to protect you and, of course, themselves, and so they can choose the best method or route to get to you—something as quick and easy as putting a symbol in a visible place on a building that says basically, “Hey, be careful. The materials used to build this are going to degrade quickly during a fire.” That is what this bill does. It's a simple fix to an important issue. It gives firefighters the information they need to make the best possible decision in an emergency—decisions that could, on many occasions, spell the difference between life and death.

Certainly, this issue came close to home for people in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga as we all read about the tragic outcomes in nearby Listowel back in 2011,

when two North Perth volunteer firefighters perished when the roof of the Dollar Stop collapsed during a fire. Speaker, there's no doubt in my mind that we absolutely owe it to the memories of Ken Rea and Ray Walter and their families to take this small simple legislative step today that could prevent further tragedies for those who put themselves in harm's way for our protection. I want to thank the families who are here today and those visiting from those communities.

Of course, several municipalities, including the city of Stratford, recognized this problem and put in bylaws requiring buildings with truss and lightweight construction to display warning emblems.

While I commend our neighbours in Perth–Wellington for taking on this initiative, I feel strongly that we should not be leaving this up to the individual municipalities. Firefighters deserve this protection, not just in Perth county, but across the province.

When the solution is so easy, it is hard for me to see where opposition to this bill could come from. We should see these warning emblems province-wide. It's important. Tests done by the National Research Council of Canada have shown that structural failures in buildings that are built with truss or lightweight construction happen 35% to 60% faster than buildings constructed with solid wood joist assembly. When you hear that structural failure in a building can occur just six minutes after the fire starts, it brings it home that it is vital that firefighters have this information. Of course, there is no reason for us to expose first responders to this kind of risk when they have such an easy solution.

To close, I support the bill. I hope my colleagues from all sides of the House will see the sense in it and will also support it.

I thank my colleague from Perth—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. I will return to the member from Perth–Wellington to wrap up.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: What can I say? I am overwhelmed by the support I have received here today, and I want to thank all sides for their support. To the members from Algoma–Manitoulin, Trinity–Spadina, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Nickel Belt, Kitchener–Conestoga, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, and Cambridge: I want to thank you for your comments.

Speaker, I'm sure you know that as we go through life, there are some things where you just say, “Why didn't we do that? It's so simple.” When somebody gets killed at an intersection where there are no warning signs, no stop signs, “Why didn't we put a stop sign there? We should have done that”—you look back at things you should have done. I think this is something we can do.

I don't want to look back at another tragedy like this happening and say, “Gosh, we should have got this in legislation so these buildings could be identified.” It just happens like that. When a roof comes down on you or a floor gives way, you have no chance; you're gone. As we saw in this incident in Listowel, when the roof came down, there was no chance of rescue; it was over. I think

we all have to think about that when we look at legislation such as this.

Let's get it done. This is not a partisan thing. It's a common sense thing. It's simple. It's not expensive. But the rewards are great if we get it done.

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

Orders of the day.

SIKH MASSACRE

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should reaffirm our commitment to the values that we cherish—justice, human rights and fairness—and condemn all forms of communal violence, hatred, hostility, prejudice, racism and intolerance in India and anywhere else in the world, including the 1984 genocide perpetrated against the Sikhs throughout India. We call on all sides to embrace truth, justice and reconciliation.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Malhi has moved private member's notice of motion number 46. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I want to begin by thanking all of our guests who have joined us today, and I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge my colleague from Bramlea-Gore-Malton for all of the hard work that he has done towards the 1984 issue.

Today we recognize the human rights, social justice, reconciliation and healing of the events that took place in New Delhi and other cities across India in 1984. They turned their backs not only on the Sikhs, but every Hindu and Muslim family that risked their lives to shelter their Sikh neighbours.

The province of Ontario is a place where people see democracy as a way to recognize the past of our neighbours. The violence that took place in 1984 can only be described as genocide. While we can't change the events of 1984, we have an opportunity here today to clear the misconceptions that divide the community and the residents of Ontario.

Sikhism was founded in 1469 in Punjab, the land of five rivers in northern India, with the birth of Guru Nanak—"guru" meaning teacher and leader. Guru Nanak was the founder of Sikhism and was born to Mehta Kalu and Mata Tripta in the now-called Nankana Sahib, near Lahore. Guru Nanak said that people should be distinguished by what they did, rather than what they wore. Nanak continued to demonstrate a revolutionary spiritual streak. He argued that things like pilgrimages and rituals were of far less spiritual importance than internal changes to the soul.

The Sikh people are proud Canadians and Ontarians with origins as indigenous people of Punjab. For centuries they lived in Punjab, dating back to the time of their gurus. Prior to the British invasion, the Sikh people had their own nation-state, encompassing both east and west

Punjab and Kashmir. The establishment of the Sikh Empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh is commonly considered the zenith of Sikhism at a political level.

During this time the Sikh Empire came to include Kashmir, Ladakh and Peshawar. Hari Singh Nalwa, the commander-in-chief of the Sikh army along the north-west frontier, took the boundary of the Sikh Empire to the very mouth of the Khyber Pass. The empire's secular administration integrated innovative military, economic and governmental reforms.

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion founded during the 15th century in the Punjab by Guru Nanak and continued to progress with 10 successive Sikh gurus, the last being the teachings of the holy scripture of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The philosophy of Sikhism is covered in great detail in the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy text, and detailed guidance is given to followers on how to conduct their lives so that peace and salvation can be obtained. The holy text outlines the positive actions that one must take to progress in the evolution of the person. One must remember the creator at all times. It reminds the follower that the "Soul is but a part of the whole that is God, who is ever merciful," and that the follower must dedicate their life to all good causes—to help make this life more worthwhile.

Sikhs believe in the following values: equality, personal right, they believe that actions count, in living a family life, sharing and accepting God's will.

Sikhs have contributed immeasurably to the social fabric of Canada and of Ontario.

From the watershed moment when my father was first elected as the first turbaned Sikh member of Parliament, we've now come to a diverse representation of Sikhs here in Ontario, in all parties, and we have four federal Sikh ministers. Sikhs are active in all walks of life here in Canada, whether it be economics, business or politics.

I wanted to share a little bit of a brief history about Sikhism and Sikhs, but now I want to talk a little bit more about 1984.

The intentional and deliberate nature of the attacks on Sikh lives, properties and places of worship during 1984 makes them a crime of genocide, as defined in article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The article defines genocide as, "Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

"(a) Killing members of the group;

"(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

"(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

"(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

"(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

1430

The genocide convention is sometimes misinterpreted as requiring the intent to destroy in whole a nation. Some

genocides may fit that description, but most do not. Most are intended to destroy only a part of the group. The genocide convention specifically includes the intentional killing of a part of a group as a genocide. Those who shrink from applying the term “genocide” usually ignore the “in part.”

The ensuing destruction and loss of life, including the massacres in November 1984, marked one of the darkest chapters of the later 20th century for the Sikh community. Simply put, as recognized by many leading international human rights organizations, the 1984 genocide of Sikhs was a series of acts of genocide directed against Sikhs in India that had an effect on Sikhs around the world.

On November 4, 1984, Delhi police officials claimed to have arrested 1,809 people on charges of looting, rioting and arson. Despite the killings occurring throughout Delhi, no arrests had been made for murder. Within a few days, the police released all but around 60 of the people arrested.

In January 1985, the home minister claimed that 4,579 suspects were arrested in Delhi. India’s information minister stated that there had been a total of 30 convictions, and 14 police officers had been punished for dereliction of duty. And 642 of 707 criminal cases ended in acquittals or were cancelled because the state allegedly could not trace the accused.

Sikh mothers, fathers, sons and daughters across Punjab, Delhi and other parts of India were all roped into these events. They were burned, raped and killed in many fashions.

Today we have a victim here, Mrs. Ghuman, who was a victim of communal violence and lost her husband to communal violence.

I want to thank you for coming here today.

She had to struggle to raise her family on her own, to raise her two children without a husband. When I talked to her, she talked about her story, about not having support. “Nobody wanted to help you, in fear that if they helped you, they might be the next victim.”

I have another great story of an Ontarian, a Canadian. Balbir Singh, the son of a coir mat maker, was a resident of Trilokpuri. His father was killed by a mob. He escaped by wearing women’s clothes. Even now, Balbir is afraid to reveal that he is a Sikh. He is still scared of growing his hair long and wearing a turban.

He says, “I have nightmares about the way my father, Chautha Singh, and an uncle were lynched. I was just 14 then and living in Trilokpuri, where we made coir mats at home. When news came of Indira Gandhi’s murder and riots broke out, I remember my father saying that Delhi was the capital and violence would be contained soon. He said nobody would attack us since we were poor. When the mob came, the police assured us that they would not allow them to enter our area and told us to return home. For we saw an even larger mob approach us with crowbars and cans of kerosene. They started beating all the men and abused them. I, along with my mother and three brothers, hid in my uncle’s house.... My mother had dressed us all up as girls, and so we were spared.”

He saw his father die in front of his very eyes. Everybody was killed. They went to a neighbouring village, where a milkman gave them shelter.

This is just one of the stories and legacies of your fellow Canadians who are Sikhs living in Ontario.

This motion is one of both not forgetting but honouring, and also of recognizing and naming 1984 as a genocide. India’s interior minister, Rajnath Singh, in December 2014, described the events of 1984 and acknowledged them as a genocide, but several persons who had a role in the carnage are not yet punished.

This House has taken similar positions when it recognized past genocides, such as the Holocaust, the Holodomor and the Armenian genocides. I strongly urge all of my colleagues here today to support this motion about the genocide of Sikhs in 1984.

I stand in solidarity with the community and many Canadians across the country in seeking justice. When innocent lives are lost with no accountability or explanation, we have an obligation, as residents of Ontario, to ask why and to seek honest answers for our citizens.

As we gather to remember November 1984, I remind residents of Ontario and Canadians that remembrance is the tie that binds us to our past and guides each of us for the challenges of the future.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: Good afternoon, and welcome to all of our Sikh friends who are here for the debate this afternoon. We welcome you again. It seems like a rerun to some of us because we’ve been here and done this not that long ago.

It is a pleasure to rise and speak to the motion put forward by the member from Brampton–Springdale regarding the horrific events that took place in India in 1984, over those six days in particular.

This motion was brought forward in the last session by my good friend the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, from the third party. It is somewhat confusing why we’re being forced to vote on this measure yet again, given that it simply could have been passed a year ago. Of course, at that time, there were some members of the government benches who were unable or unwilling to cast a vote on the measure, either aye or nay, at that time.

Now we’re here, almost a year later, and we’re being forced to debate this motion once again—a year after it was the government members that led to its original defeat.

So, yes, I’m going to spend a couple of minutes talking about the procedure of this place because I think it’s important to understand. When we as legislators debate sticking the word “genocide” on something, we’d better mean it, because once you’ve done that, you’ve implied a lot.

I know the member opposite just mentioned it, but article 2 of the United Nations convention on genocide defines it as follows:

“Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

“(a) Killing members of the group;

“(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

“(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

“(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

“(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”

The keyword here is “intent”—and I think you’re about to hear many stories this afternoon of the atrocities that occurred during those six days in 1984. The second you’re willing to declare something as genocide, you’re implicitly stating not only that any of the above actions occurred, but that those who committed them intended to do so in a fashion where their intent, expressed or planned, was to destroy members of a specific group—and you’re going to hear a lot of those stories here this afternoon during the debate. Of course, we have recent examples of this, including events in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, Armenia, Germany and some of the other events and genocides that were mentioned by my counterpart opposite.

When we debate whether we’re going to express the opinion of the House on a matter which asserts that a state actor intentionally sought to destroy members of a specific group, we’re not passing a light or frivolous judgment. This is a very serious matter. The matter is far too serious to be handled by members of the House in that way—which returns me to my original point.

On June 2 of last year, we debated this very motion here in the House. It has been altered a bit, but it’s the same issue. I spoke to it, as did the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, of course, because it was his motion. The member for Beaches–East York spoke; the member for Oshawa; the member for Mississauga–Erindale spoke passionately about it; Parkdale–High Park; Mississauga–Brampton South. The member for Brampton West spoke very passionately about a very personal story, and I’m sure we’ll hear the same story, or one similar, this afternoon. The member for Thornhill spoke. And the former member from Niagara West–Glanbrook spoke on this issue and this motion brought forward by my friend from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. This side of the House supported the motion that day; the government, at the time, didn’t.

Now we have a government member—who I have so much respect for, as I do for all of the members of the Sikh community in the government, on their benches—presenting the motion to the House once again. This isn’t the first time since I’ve been here that I’ve had the opportunity to watch government members bring forward legislation or motions similar to those brought forward by opposition members, after having first voted down the opposition’s attempt to do the same thing. The continuation of this practice can only lead you to the conclusion that the government isn’t really interested in the substance of these matters, only in whether or not they can

take credit for them if they pass. That’s what I believe we have here, Madam Speaker.

1440

Before I go any further, I’d like to recognize two of the members from the government who debated the motion the last time it was before the House. I already have pointed them out. If members would like to review the transcript from that day—June 2, 2016—they’ll find that the remarks by the members from Mississauga–Erindale and Brampton West are considerable in their force, their conviction and the personal impacts on their lives. Both spoke with great passion about the connections that they have to the events of 1984. In keeping with the gravity of the motion before the House, I want to take the opportunity to commend those members for their comments on the previous debate that we had on this issue—because it shouldn’t be partisan.

That having been said, I want to highlight a couple of the comments made by members opposite a year ago, specifically the members from Beaches–East York and Mississauga–Brampton South, who very clearly communicated the government’s position at the time.

I quote the member from Beaches–East York: “I think that’s a debate that, at best, the federal government has to be having. If the member for Brampton–Gore–Malton is successful in his endeavours to become a representative at the federal level, he can bring that so they can then bring that to the international community.” That’s a direct quote from Hansard. Apparently, at the time, not only was it the government’s line to deny the motion and say how inappropriate it was for the motion to be dealt with provincially in this chamber; it was also to attack the motives for the sponsor of that very motion.

The member for Mississauga–Brampton South made similar comments in her statement to the House. Once again, I quote directly from Hansard, June 2, 2016: “Madam Speaker, despite what I said and how deeply sad I feel, in my opinion, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario is not the proper forum to bring this motion and debate it; the House of Commons may be. The issues of state complicity and genocide are legal concepts that beg for an evidentiary basis. The proper forum to debate these issues is a court of law, not the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.”

It’s amazing how much changes in a year. It’s remarkable how much changes in a year.

As I said, it’s important to speak to these procedural issues that arise from the substance of the motion currently before the House because it speaks to an issue that is far too common in the way that this Liberal government operates in Ontario. On substance, little separates the motion currently before the House from the motion which was brought forward last year by the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, which members opposite opposed last year. For this reason, I really do look forward to a substantive reason from members of the government for why the same motion could be voted down a year ago and should be voted for today.

Again, I want to show my ultimate respect in the sincere motion brought forward by my colleague who is sponsoring this motion here today. She's very sincere in doing this, the member from Brampton–Springdale. The Sikh members on the government bench as well: I commend them because they are sincere about this.

We've seen promises made by this government—empty promises that have been made by this government, particularly to the Sikh community. They promised that they would deal with the Sikh Motorcycle Club and bring in legislation that would grant them their wishes in Ontario, but it's another empty promise, Madam Speaker.

I just want to note, as well, that our leader, Patrick Brown, is a friend of the current Indian Prime Minister. He wanted me to note that the government of India has a clearly stated goal of development: Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas—“With everyone's support, India will develop,” regardless of caste, religion, gender, colour and language. Sikhs have reached the highest office in India, from the office of Prime Minister to the Supreme Court. The Prime Minister is working hard to remove poverty, create new jobs, and provide good health and food for all and affordable housing for all. We recognize the progress being made in India. Our leader just wanted to pass those messages along.

My own experience within the Sikh community has been entirely positive. For years now, I've attended Diwali celebrations and Vaisakhi celebrations. I look forward, in a couple of weeks' time, to walking in the Nagar Kirtans again here in downtown Toronto, ending up at Nathan Phillips Square, for what can only be described as an exciting, enjoyable ceremony and time of fellowship together with our friends in the Sikh community. My family has been welcomed into gurdwaras across the greater Toronto area over the past five years. We even had a Diwali celebration in a small community in my riding of Prince Edward–Hastings, in Bancroft, a couple of years ago with local Sikhs.

The reality is that the tragic events of 1984 brought many of my Sikh friends from across Ontario, and their families, here to Ontario. It was 33 years ago.

We've been twice forced into this debate.

Canadian Sikhs have made a substantial contribution to our communities across Ontario. They're essential to our country's future, as well. We see them as cabinet ministers. We see them as authors. We see them as doctors and teachers. But the legacy of what brought so many of their families to Ontario remains.

As to whether the events of 1984 are genocide, I believe India's current home minister, Rajnath Singh—and I know the member from Brampton–Springdale quoted him earlier—said it better than I could hope to: “It was not riot; it was genocide instead. Hundreds of innocent people were killed. The pain of the kin of riot victims cannot be compensated by even paying crores of rupees.”

The principles of Sikhism resonate with Ontarians: honesty, hard work and service to others.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am glad to stand in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario today in support of this motion and the Sikh community.

I would also like to welcome back to Queen's Park our friends, neighbours and leaders of Ontario's Sikh community.

Speaker, back in June, my colleague the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton introduced a motion which, I will remind us, stated: “That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should recognize the November 1984 state-organized violence perpetrated against the Sikhs throughout India as a genocide.” I appreciated then, as I do now, that my colleague is a tireless crusader against injustice, for which he continues to distinguish himself. I am very proud to be a member of the same caucus.

Back in June, I was very glad to speak in support of our Legislature recognizing the intent of the anti-Sikh violence that occurred in India in 1984, and denouncing all intolerance and violence across the globe that stems from hatred. I approached that debate, back in June, from a place of introduction. I was not familiar with the events of November 1984. I had to research and I had to learn, to understand the gravity of the history and the importance of the motion. I was proud to speak and support the Sikh community and Mr. Singh's motion. I was confused, to say the least, when this Legislature did not unanimously support it. In June, the government unanimously voted against it for reasons that seemed so empty and, quite frankly, political. It was truly astonishing that the government voted against the original motion introduced by my colleague the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. What was even more astonishing was their justification. Members of this Liberal government actually argued that not enough people had died to truly constitute a genocide, and they didn't want to in any way diminish how atrocious other genocides were by including this. It is unbelievable, and I am glad that the government has since realized the depth of that error.

At that time, this government argued that the Legislative Assembly isn't even the right forum to recognize a genocide. They said it wasn't the right place or the right court for having this discussion, but of course we know that is not the case. This assembly has recognized acts of genocide in this very chamber, including the Armenian genocide and Holodomor. This is exactly the right forum. This is where we discuss and debate issues that affect the people of Ontario, and that includes the thousands of Sikhs in Ontario. This is where we speak on behalf of our constituents and all Ontarians, and we should never, ever shy away from using this chamber to stand up against violence, hatred and intolerance.

1450

So I must disagree with the government's original argument, and I am relieved, frankly, to see that they have re-evaluated and repositioned themselves. It was less than a year ago that the Liberals unanimously voted

against the motion. However, here we are today and, as we often do, we have found a way forward, this time with all-party support, and we are again debating this important issue.

It's important that we have an official position as a province to ensure that we remember the thousands of victims who lost their lives during this genocide, and a formal resolution renews the call to bring the perpetrators to justice. We cannot change the horrific events of 1984, but as members of this Legislature we have an opportunity to represent the families of genocide victims and we have an opportunity to stand up for them.

Though the total number of victims is unconfirmed, between 2,800 and 8,000 people lost their lives during this massacre and thousands of others were affected by injuries, displacement and oppression. We are talking about mass murder and massive suffering. It's important that our voices in Ontario are heard.

There are a lot of voices which came together and inspired the creation of the original motion. In May 2000, a commission was appointed by the National Democratic Alliance government in India to investigate the violence and its causes. The one-man commission consisted of former Supreme Court of India Justice G.T. Nanavati. In the report, former Supreme Court of India Justice Nanavati stated that the killing of Sikhs in India in 1984 was planned and organized. Human rights organizations have also reported that the voters lists were used to identify and target Sikh businesses and homes, and that children were found beheaded in the aftermath of those horrendous days.

The words "planned" and "organized" are important. They distinguish this from being a random act of violence and acknowledge that there were systemic and concerted efforts to kill thousands of Sikhs in India.

New Democrats have always supported the right of all people to live in safety and practise their faith in peace, and that is why my colleague brought forward the original motion for debate. Today, we are acknowledging the systemic murder of thousands and calling for justice in their honour. By acknowledging that the violence against Sikhs in India in 1984 was, in fact, genocide, we are acknowledging that justice must be served.

In November, when we reflect on the anniversary of this genocide, it is also important to recognize the brave actions of many from other faith backgrounds and communities who provided protection and refuge to their Sikh brothers and sisters at great personal risk to themselves. It is a reminder that our shared humanity triumphs even in the face of tragedy.

I'd like to congratulate the Sikh community for their resilience and unified advocacy. You strengthen our province and make it better.

Thank you again to the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton for first bringing this important issue before the Legislature last June. I will be supporting this motion, as I did last year, and I hope that my colleagues from all parties in this Legislature will join me.

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

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to stand and speak on this very important issue. I'd like to begin by thanking the members of the Sikh community who are here in large numbers to witness this debate.

It is Sikh Heritage Month, and I would like to thank the Sikh Heritage Month celebration committee for raising Sikh flags all over our province, at city halls and, as well, a couple of days ago here at the Legislature.

Before I begin my remarks on this bill, I'd like to also take this time to condemn the atrocities in Syria. People were brutally killed; people, including babies, were murdered and tortured. I'd like to express my solidarity with those people, and that we hold them in our thoughts and prayers.

Madam Speaker, as we've heard, a bill similar to this one was presented a while ago in this Legislature, and there are a couple of reasons for which I did not support that bill. First of all, there is only a handful of Sikh members in this Legislature, and I strongly felt that this bill would have been strengthened had we been consulted, because it was just a blanket statement. There was no real call for action in terms of punishing the perpetrators who directed these heinous actions. As well, I'd like to point out that there are a couple of names that come up again and again in India who are being called the leaders in terms of these atrocities. One of them is Jagdish Tytler, and another one is Kamal Nath. I've been following the events recently, and the judicial process is taking its course. More recently, Jagdish Tytler has been asked to undergo a lie detector test, and he has refused to do so. That speaks volumes in terms of his involvement in what happened in 1984.

One fact is certain: We cannot go back in time. We cannot go back to 1984 and undo all of the massacres and all of the heinous crimes that were committed. People in New Delhi were tortured in the most horrific and heinous ways. One example that sticks with me vividly is that people had gasoline forced down their throats and then their insides were lit on fire. I did not hear this from an anonymous source. This is my own father telling me from his first-hand experience—just awful, Madam Speaker.

As well, in the bill that was presented, there was no call for financial or other compensation to be given to the victims of 1984. Although we cannot bring back their loved ones, at least we can help in starting the process of closure. I don't think there will ever be closure, but I think that we definitely can help people deal with and cope with the pain that they're suffering.

Again, one of the most senior cabinet ministers in India, Rajnath, in his interview on NDTV, a major television consortium in India, in December 1984—he himself described this as a genocide. That is a very, very powerful statement, coming from a person of his stature.

I just want to thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I look forward to hearing this debate further.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Less than a year ago, I debated this. I brought forward a motion to recognize the genocide, here in this Legislative Assembly.

It was, for me, a very personal journey. More important than me, this was a journey for a community that has suffered so much. People who make Ontario their home have fled persecution and oppression. People in Ontario are here today because they saw their family members murdered in front of their eyes. People are here because they witnessed the savagery and sensational violence perpetrated against people simply for being who they are. People who were identified as Sikhs by name, by identity, by appearance, by clothing, by long hair, by their articles of faith, were targeted and massacred.

What makes this so chilling, what makes this episode in the history of India so dark, is that it was perpetrated with the planning and organization of elected officials. People sworn to represent the people of a nation, the communities that they were elected in, used their power and position to commit a barbaric act of genocide against their own citizens.

Why we're here today—it needs to be addressed—is the resilience of the Sikh community. Leaders, many of whom are here today, applied pressure on the government and were deeply offended by this government for voting against this motion. It's their tremendous courage, their hard work, their persistence, their resilience—it's because of them that we're here today, and I honour them. They showed great courage and they took a strong stance, and it's because of their hard work that we're here today.

But why is this so important? Why is it so fundamentally important that we acknowledge what occurred to the Sikh community as a genocide?

There are a number of reasons, but first and foremost, there is a misconception that is poisonous. The misconception that has been propagated is that this somehow was a result of Hindu-Sikh conflict. This is misinformation. This is poisonous and it is toxic. The suggestion that what occurred was a riot creates and conjures an idea that two communities fought against one another. That could not be further from the truth. In fact, members of the Hindu community and of the Muslim community put their lives at risk to save their Sikh brothers and sisters, their Sikh neighbours. Until we can acknowledge that what occurred was a genocide, we do a disservice to their sacrifice and to their courage.

1500

Judith Herman, author of *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, writes a very powerful line with respect to what it means to have reconciliation: “Sharing the traumatic experience with others is a precondition for the restitution of a sense of a meaningful world. In this process, the survivor seeks assistance not only from those closest to her but also from the wider community. The response of the community has a powerful influence on the ultimate resolution of the trauma. Restoration of the breach between the traumatized person and the community

depends, first, upon the public acknowledgement of the traumatic event and, second, upon some form of communal action.” That's what we're doing today.

To honour the lives that were lost, we must publicly acknowledge that this was a heinous act. To have any healing and reconciliation, first there must be an acknowledgement that there was a harm perpetrated. That's what this does. It gives a sense of hope to those who suffered. It gives a sense of meaning in the lives of people who face such terrible trauma, and it rectifies the misunderstanding that this was some sort of communal violence. It was not; it was a state-organized perpetration of violence against a marginalized community.

The thing is, Madam Speaker, this isn't localized. Today in India, currently, academics, journalists and actors are being charged and imprisoned simply for voicing their dissent or their concerns about the state, people like Aamir Khan, a famous Bollywood actor who simply raised a concern about the rising intolerance in India, and was charged with sedition.

Gurmehar Kaur was a university activist who complained about the activities of fundamentalism creating a culture of intolerance, and she was threatened with rape. There's an ongoing use of violence against women. Dalit communities continue to be oppressed. People are facing caste discrimination where they are denied access to public resources because of their caste. All of this continues to go on. Human Rights Watch talks about these ongoing abuses.

This is a country that continues to use visa denial as a form of silencing critics. I currently have my visa denied. I can't go back to my own homeland. There are people here in this assembly who have been silenced because of their criticism of the human rights track record of India. They are in this assembly and they've been denied the right to go back to their own home.

This is important. This is a truly meaningful act towards reconciliation and justice.

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

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: I want to welcome the members of the Sikh community as well who are here today to watch this debate.

Madam Speaker, the diversity of our people is one of the strengths of our province. Ontario is proud and privileged to have a vibrant Sikh community that has contributed immensely—as so many members have pointed that out—to the economic and social fabric of our society.

The core principles observed in Sikhism include honest living, hard work and service to others. It's not a stretch of the imagination to say that these are the principles which resonate with most Ontarians.

The Sikh community has been an important part in the growth and success of our country. Sikhs worked hard in logging and forestry. They helped to build the railway, and even fought on behalf of Canada in the First World War.

We are debating a motion presented by the member from Brampton–Springdale that deals with justice,

human rights and fairness. It is far too often that a person turns on the news or opens a newspaper and is confronted by the reality of communal violence around the world. This sort of communal violence, hatred, hostility and intolerance must be denounced in all of its forms and all around the world.

Madam Speaker, the horrific stories which have been shared in this House—and we heard this last June as well—are true. I discussed some of them in the Legislature back in 2016, in June. Innocent people, for no fault of their own, were killed. Mothers witnessed their young sons so full of promise being murdered. Wives saw their husbands dragged out of their homes and murdered right in front of them. Young children watched as their parents were killed right before their eyes. Parents watched hopelessly as their daughters were raped. The homes they had lived in, the shops and the businesses which they built to have a new start, were ransacked and burned down to the ground.

Many movies and documentaries about the events in 1984 exist. They tell story after story of the kindness of human beings. While the carnage reigned, many individuals put their own lives at risk to protect their friends and neighbours who practised a different faith. The people who supported the others were not from the same faith. These people showcased the good nature in humanity by providing food and shelter and saving the lives of some of those people being targeted. I salute their moral efforts. I salute their kindness and the courage it took to stand against the hostility of the mob mentality and to allow compassion to serve their fellow human beings.

However, these horrific events cannot be denied. In 2005, former Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh offered an apology for the events of 1984. He said the following, and I'm just quoting him: "I have no hesitation in apologizing to the Sikh community. I apologize not only to the Sikh community but to the whole Indian nation, because what took place in 1984 is the negation of the concept of nationhood enshrined in our Constitution. On behalf of our government, on behalf of the entire people of this country, I bow my head in shame that such a thing took place." This is what the Prime Minister of India said.

In 2013, former President Obama responded to an online petition campaign that had generated over 30,000 signatures and noted that grave human rights violations had occurred. He continued on to say, and I quote him: "We continue to condemn—and, more importantly, to work against—violence directed at people based on their religious affiliation."

Madam Speaker, after 32 years, families of the victims have been asking for justice to be brought to those responsible for the events of 1984. Widows have had to raise their children without any relief or support. Young women have been exploited and extorted by some criminal elements in the society. This is indeed very shameful.

For some victims and their families, the wounds caused by the events of 1984 may have healed over time.

For many others whose wounds are still open to this day, my words in this House today are really empty words, and they offer no relief to those families unless justice is served. But as the former Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, once said, and I quote: "We cannot rewrite the past. But as human beings, we have the willpower and we have the ability to write a better future for all of us."

Madam Speaker, as I understand, the new government of the day has constituted a special investigation team to investigate serious criminal cases, and the Supreme Court of India is monitoring those investigations. The Supreme Court is now led by a world-renowned Sikh jurist and has the ability to write a better future and ensure that justice prevails.

1510

Our objective as legislators is to ensure that we leave behind a just society that values human rights. We must strive to bring communities together and help to build stronger, fair and cohesive communities where we can live in peace and harmony. Canada is a peace-loving nation, and we all are very proud to call Canada our home.

I look forward to a very meaningful and constructive debate in this House.

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

Ms. Harinder Malhi: First, I want to thank all of my colleagues who rose and spoke to this motion today: the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton—once again, I want to acknowledge him for all of his hard work—the member from Mississauga–Erindale, the member from Brampton West and the member from Oshawa.

I want to thank everybody who is here today to show your support and solidarity with an issue that we have heard about. We have travelled the province over the last year; we've made many visits to organizations. We have heard about this issue, and that's why we are acting on this issue today. Thank you for your support.

I look forward to the support of this Legislature today.

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

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government should place a moratorium on the installation of industrial wind turbines in unwilling host communities in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Oosterhoff has moved private member's notice of motion number 45. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: When the residents of my riding drive down Port Davidson Road in West Lincoln, or Highway 20 or Sixteen Road, among many others, they see a once-pristine landscape marred by industrial wind turbines that they never wanted.

Speaker, today I am simply calling on the government to respect local decision-makers and residents by discontinuing the practice of placing industrial wind turbines in unwilling host communities.

There are many on that list of unwilling host communities. At least 90 townships and counties have passed specific resolutions saying they are not willing hosts. Among the non-willing hosts are the townships of Wainfleet and West Lincoln in the Niagara region. They have been consistent in reflecting the input they received from residents opposing the industrial wind turbines that now blanket much of the landscape. Niagara regional council has also backed their resolutions. Among the regional councillors who supported the resolutions is the mayor of Wainfleet, April Jeffs, who will be in the Legislature this afternoon and is the Ontario Progressive Conservative candidate for the riding of Niagara Centre in the 2018 general election.

Speaker, this government constantly talks about having conversations. Unfortunately, it turns out that these are one-way conversations, since this government doesn't really want to listen. The Liberal government has a long history of ignoring municipalities and local residents. It forced turbines on municipalities across rural Ontario, against the wishes and concerns of the communities.

Energy prices are going through the roof. We talk about that nearly every day in this Legislature. Ontario families and business owners are shocked every month when they see their electricity bill—no pun intended, because this is a serious matter. Hydro bills have skyrocketed by over 300% since this government took power.

Industrial wind turbines are one of the reasons people are facing a choice between heating and eating. Expensive and counterproductive power subsidies for turbines we don't want or need have contributed to the soaring hydro prices that are among the greatest burdens the people of Ontario have to face.

Whether they are spending billions of dollars to stretch out future debt payments or handing out rich subsidies to industrial wind turbine operators, this government will always stick Ontarians with the bill.

I'm not just tilting at windmills like Don Quixote, but a comparison is in order. Cervantes, in his famous novel, wrote about a dreamer of no substance who could not perceive reality—sounds a lot like the Liberals and their hydro plan. This government's scheme does nothing to address the root cause of the Ontario energy affordability crisis: the Liberals' Green Energy Act. We call it the bad contracts act because it was designed to benefit Liberal corporate donors, and locks taxpayers into a 20-year contract for overpriced wind and solar power. It's also for energy we don't need.

Since 2009, Ontario has given away \$6 billion—\$6 billion—in surplus energy to US states. States that have lower energy costs than Ontario are getting electricity from us at discount prices. We're giving businesses across the border a competitive edge over our own On-

tario businesses. Truly, Premier Wynne is the best Minister of Economic Development the United States has ever had.

Speaker, I'd like to remind everyone that although the NDP also like to complain about high hydro costs and say that they too are on the side of local communities, they were complicit in setting the stage for industrial turbines being forced down the throats of rural municipalities across Ontario. The NDP joined the Liberals to pass the bad contracts act that enabled the government to sign contracts with big hydro companies that aren't transparent and can't be examined. Municipal governments also say that their planning authority was eliminated by this provincial legislation.

I have no way of confirming the NDP's motivation, but I have a hunch. Unfortunately, I believe they fell for the Liberals' Orwellian doublespeak. By calling the legislation the Green Energy Act, the Liberals hoped everyone would fail to see what it really did. I also suspect they used this misleading title so they could attempt to label anyone voting against it as being against green energy. That is absurd.

Progressive Conservatives believe in the importance of protecting the environment and doing so responsibly, but we can do that without bankrupting Ontario. The Liberals seem to forget that Ontario already has a green energy source that they're wasting: hydroelectric. In 2015, the Liberals spilled or abandoned three billion kilowatt hours of energy from water power facilities that Ontario bought and paid for decades ago. There may be no use in crying over spilled milk, but spilling that much energy gives Ontarians good cause to cry when they open their energy bill.

Ontario has an energy affordability crisis because the government arrogantly refused to acknowledge Ontarians' concerns for years and refuses to cease with its reckless schemes. Today, we can take the first step in rectifying this situation by stopping the practice of forcing industrial wind turbines on unwilling communities. Liberal and NDP members who supported the legislation that led to this disaster can make amends and show respect for our communities by voting for this motion.

This is an opportune time to remind the Liberals of your government's first throne speech under Premier Wynne. Premier Wynne, in her first throne speech, committed to the following—this is from the Premier of Ontario, the current Premier:

"Your government intends to work with municipalities on other issues, too.

"Because communities must be involved and connected to one another.

"They must have a voice in their future and a say in their integrated, regional development.

"So that local populations are involved from the beginning if there is going to be a gas plant or a casino or a wind plant or a quarry in their hometown.

"Because our economy can benefit from these things, but only if we have willing hosts."

Any reasonable person would assume that this means the government would give communities a voice and respond to their concerns. Unfortunately, that's just not the reality. Four years after these words were read out, we're still waiting.

This past December I attended a meeting in Smithville, in my riding, held by the West Lincoln Glanbrook Wind Action Group. There were more than 50 people on a Thursday evening who came out to share their concerns about the blight of unwanted industrial wind turbines in our community.

The government members may not have paid attention to the many petitions PC MPPs have submitted regarding this issue, nor seemingly have they paid attention to their own communities. The 90 unwilling communities are in several of your ridings as well. My honourable colleagues from Huron–Bruce and Simcoe–Grey brought multiple motions to this assembly asking for a moratorium and for respect for local decision-making, but they were voted down and the concerns were ignored.

Since I have your attention today, I would like to give you a sample of what people are saying. Residents in close proximity to turbine locations express concern about the impact on their health, the local environment, declining property values and, of course, the lack of local decision-making on industrial wind turbine projects. They can't fathom, along with many other Ontarians, why this government is paying unaffordable subsidies for these projects for as long as 20 years, after which we'll only be faced with disposal problems to protect the environment as they wear out or are decommissioned.

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The grassroots organization Mothers Against Wind Turbines sent me an eloquent letter that aptly describes how concerned and, yes, even scared people are about the impact of these turbines. Speaker, allow me to quote portions of the letter:

“Harm from operating wind turbines continues to strike vulnerable individuals and families within the most personal and intimate of all spaces that being our homes. Health is defined as not just an absence of disease and illness but encompasses a state of well-being. Wind-powered electrical generation facilities persistently are creating reports and case histories of residents reporting sleep disturbances, vertigo, tinnitus and many other negative health symptoms.” Some “families are leaving their homes for extended periods of time for relief. Every day new cases are becoming public where homes are abandoned following the commissioning of wind projects.

“The economics of power generation means that an increasing number of people are unable to pay their electricity bills—this is also part of the harm from wind power. Ontario's current energy policies contribute to soaring electricity rates which affect all ratepayers of our province. Energy poverty and household impoverishment are direct adverse health impacts arising from the monetary burden of the implementation of the Green Energy Act (enacted in 2009.)”

There's one particular sentence from this letter that I ask all MPPs here today to consider before voting on my motion: “Consent to govern does not give political representatives the authority to harm another without impunity or restriction.”

That is exactly what this government's industrial wind turbine scheme has accomplished—whether it's by forcing people into energy poverty or compromising their enjoyment of life. Life has become harder under the Ontario Liberals. So I ask all members today to take a step towards showing respect for our communities and relief on our hydro bills.

The Minister of Energy has acknowledged that this government has made mistakes with the energy file. The Premier has acknowledged that there are serious issues on the energy file that her government is going to be working on. Yet they don't seem willing to address the fundamental reasons behind those mistakes. Today, I'm giving them a chance, and I hope they'll take up the chance that this government can make remedy. If they're actually sorry, they will vote for this motion. If the Liberal government is actually willing to listen to rural residents, to listen to municipalities and to follow up on the words of their throne speech, I hope their caucus will vote in favour of my motion.

Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to be able to rise in the Legislature, to represent the fine residents of Niagara West–Glanbrook, and to bring their concerns forward. This is a concern I've heard every step of the way and almost every day since I've been elected. I'm very pleased to put my name to this motion and to bring it before the House for consideration, and I hope that members on all sides of the aisle will consider it in the best interests of not only their constituents, but all of Ontario, to support it.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's always a privilege to stand on behalf of the good people of Algoma–Manitoulin—and to finally have a discussion about this particular issue, which I always answer in the same way to my constituents back home when we have this discussion: Climate change is real. It is happening. We need to make sure that we deal with it, and we need to make sure that we do our part. That's the discussion, and those are the suggestions that I'm getting from constituents back home. The decisions that we have made, our practices as far as our dependency on fossil fuels, have definitely left a negative impact on this environment, and we need to take steps appropriately in order to deal with this.

We definitely support green energy. What we don't support, what we never supported, was the implementation plan of this Liberal government—how they brought it in, how they imposed it, how they took the democratic right of municipalities and communities and how they put communities against communities, groups against groups, streets against streets, neighbours against neighbours, First Nations against First Nations, elders against elders. That is nothing that we've ever supported, and

this government has full-heartedly exactly done that, which is the main problem of this issue.

The other thing that is at the heart of this problem is the privatization of the entire Green Energy Act, opening this up to foreign and private contracts—lucrative foreign and private contracts. We had an opportunity to actually give a democratic view or opinion to our local leaders, who have been asking for new revenue-generating tools. But no, let's not have the municipalities have a decision on that; the Liberal government has their own revenue-generating tool, is what they've done.

I've witnessed this extensively across my riding, in Goulais River, the Sault North area and on Manitoulin Island. It was gut-wrenching to see some of the decisions that were being made that were taken out of these communities' hands, where they wholeheartedly went in and held their picket lines and information sessions in order to talk about the issues that they have. But unfortunately, that decision was taken away from them.

This decision on the green energy—how this government has imposed it on communities—has really built walls. That's something that this government should learn from. Something that builds a wall between community members—between communities, between neighbours—is not good, sound policy; it just isn't. We should be looking at bringing policy forward that brings people together, that gives them the opportunity to provide their input, that respects the opinions of the medical field that comes in and says, "These could potentially bring harm to these individuals if they're placed too closely." But we didn't do that. The Liberal government just plowed ahead: "We know best, and we're going to do this. I'm sorry. We hear you, but we're going to do it anyway."

So when you look at this and you look at what's at the heart of the problem here, which is the privatization towards the private and foreign corporations that have signed on to lucrative contracts—are those going to be reversed by my friends here to the right? Are they opposed to privatization? Are they going to reverse those contracts? Are they going to rip them up and throw them out? I'm a little bit skeptical about that, because irresponsible, irrational actions might cost Ontarians that much more money in the future.

An NDP government will be a responsible government that will bring in real, green, public energy. That's what people are asking for. That's what well over 80% of this province has been asking for—opposed to the fire sale of Hydro One, and for bringing back under public hands.

People who are watching today, listen to the debate. Listen very closely to the words that are being said by each of the parties in there. There's only one party that is saying that we're going to return this to public hands and provide a true, true public vision in regard to how we're spending our power. That's the message that I always share with the people across Algoma-Manitoulin. It is the message that I've consistently shared with them. It's the one that I give today, and it's not changing any time soon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Minister of Economic Development and Growth.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into this debate. I've got to tell you, the member for—I should know the riding—

Interjection.

Hon. Brad Duguid: —Niagara West—Glanbrook. My eyes are fading. When you've been here for a while, your eyes start to fade.

I've got to tell you how impressed I was by the fact that while he was speaking, I gave him a couple of little heckles and he actually heard the heckles while he was speaking. That's a skill that took me years to acquire. He's only been here a matter of months and he already knows how to do that. So I can only imagine how much stronger he's going to get as he gets more experience here.

I couldn't disagree more, though, with the comments that he made. I understand he's entitled to his position, but at the same time, the fact of the matter is, we had to invest heavily to rebuild our energy system. I was just at a business this morning with the Minister of Energy where we were talking a little bit about that. Speaking from a business perspective, we would not be where we are today in our economy if we did not have a reliable energy system. If we did not make the investments that we made in our energy system, which we made because we had to, we would not be where we are today, which is leading Canada in growth, which is leading the G7 in growth, which is the lowest unemployment rate we have seen in 10 years. That's not a bad place for an economy to be, leading the G7 in growth.

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Having a strong, reliable energy system is crucial to our ability to do that. We don't tend to talk about that that much. It might not be the most interesting thing to talk about. We talk about our low, effective corporate tax rates which are among the best in North America, our really competitive R&D tax credits, which are very important for attracting investment. We talk about our talent that we've invested a lot in, to ensure we've got some of the best talent anywhere in the world.

Having a reliable energy system is just as important because, trust me, all of those big manufacturers that are producing, in many cases, at record amounts today in Ontario—our booming auto industry in this province—would not likely be here or have stayed here, especially during the tough times, if they didn't have a reliable energy system. So that was choice number one.

Choice number two was, what do we replace it with? Do we replace it with dirty coal? Do we do more of the same? Do we continue to allow 20% of the energy that we produce to be off of dirty coal? Or do we do what other countries have wanted to do, but haven't been able to achieve, and get off of coal? We decided to make a strong stand on this, and we did—the first jurisdiction anywhere that we're aware of in the world to be able to wean our energy system off of coal, the single largest climate change initiative during our time.

Our kids are going to live longer because we made the decision to get off of coal, and that is no exaggeration. I know that the Minister of the Environment is going to speak to this. He's going to talk about smog days and how I don't think we've had one since 2014. We're breathing cleaner air, we're getting healthier results. Our economy now is one of the leaders when it comes to clean tech, because of the investments we've made to get off of coal and replace it with newer forms of power, which include wind power.

So, Mr. Speaker, anybody who would support this initiative also has to say that it's okay to pollute our air; it's okay to allow our kids not to live as long as they would live otherwise; it's okay not to have healthy outcomes in our society; it's okay not to lead the world in clean tech; it's okay to let our economy not be competitive as we move to a low-carbon economy.

I don't think that's okay. I don't think that the position being taken by the member opposite is at all responsible.

I think this is a time for us to stand up for clean energy, to stand up for making those challenging decisions and moving towards renewables, and to move Ontario into the future, not take us back to the past.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to rise and speak to this motion today. There's one particular part of it that I am hoping to speak to, and that's the community consultation aspect. When it comes to fighting climate change, we will never succeed unless the communities not only approve of our actions, but are an active partner. I have one example of what happens when this goes wrong.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, a company currently owns a biodigester on Four Mile Creek Road. These biodigesters are designed to be on big, rural lots, far away from any neighbours, where they recycle waste. The problem is that the one in Niagara-on-the-Lake was put directly beside a number of houses.

Residents have had me down to their homes to see this biodigester in action. During the summer, the smell is so bad that they can't go outside. Sometimes the noise is so loud from the equipment that residents are woken up very early in the morning. Depending on what's being recycled there, it can draw flies which come in such numbers that these residents can't even open their windows on a summer day or go outside in their backyards.

Imagine, you've lived in a home for decades and one day a biodigester is built beside you. Now you can't sit outside or even keep your windows open. Does that seem right? I know these residents. They're good people. They care about the environment. I have no doubt in my mind that they want to protect our environment just as badly as I do.

Mr. Speaker, had they been consulted about the effects of this biodigester, they never would have agreed to have it there. If somebody would have talked to them, they would have said no. I have no doubt that if there was an operation there that didn't affect their ability to enjoy

their homes and their lives, they wouldn't have an issue with this.

Instead, they had to band together and try to fight this legally. They are paying out of their pocket to try and defend the right to live in their own homes comfortably.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by saying this to the member who just had the motion: The Welland riding in our area has been held for 42 years, and we expect it to be held for another 42 years. I just thought I'd throw that out to you, because you mentioned it.

I can agree that communities need to be partners in the battle against climate change. I've written to the minister, who is here today, about the issue of the biodigester. I'm hoping he'll act to help these residents and bring them on board with what they're trying to do.

I do not believe the intentions of the PC Party are pure here. We have heard their beliefs about climate change, and we know that if they ever had a chance at forming government, they'd gut every environmental regulation they could find. They have no interest in fighting climate change, even if it means that their policies would destroy the environment for my kids and my grandkids, about whom, by the way, I have stood up here and spoken many times.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I always find the Conservatives on the environment amusing. If it wasn't such a serious issue, it would be a little laughable.

First of all, there have been a number of reforms right now that have been in place that give communities more control. No one is pretending that everything that we did in this government rolled out perfectly, without flaw.

My father taught me this in business, Mr. Speaker. He said, "I'm successful in business"—and he built a great family business—"not because of my successes, but because of my mistakes." He said to me, "Glen, being successful in life is the power of your imagination and your capacity for innovation." He said, "Innovation is really about one thing. It's looking for a better way to solve a problem than the way that you've always done it."

But he said, "Here's the biggest reason that people don't innovate. The more you depart from the tried and true and the way that you've always done it, the higher the probability of both great success and great failure." My father was a guy who actually lost his entire business at one point in his life, and 10 years later he built up a business worth millions of dollars from nothing—from literally we were looking at selling our house one year because the economy went down and it was a vulnerable period in my father's business. He did that, and I learned that success, Mr. Speaker.

So where are we now on energy and on climate change? We've taken chances and risks that other governments and jurisdictions were afraid to take. We introduced a feed-in tariff that actually launched probably one of the largest scale-ups of wind and solar energy and one of the first new emerging sectors in our economy. Since

1980, we've gone from something like \$86 a kilowatt hour to 36 cents for solar and wind.

What happened was that we stepped up. We, Quebec, California and other jurisdictions—Manitoba and others—started in when it was tough. We broke the ground such that solar is now just about the least expensive energy in the world. When it came to coal plant closures, we stepped up and were the first in North America, and right now really one of the only, that closed coal plants.

Everyone loves to talk about “across the border.” The Tories love everything south of here, especially these days. Ohio is the largest source of pollution: carbon dioxide, greenhouse gases, NO_x, SO_x and mercury. Michigan now has to close nine coal plants. Talk to Governor Snyder. They have to do it, not in the period when it was less expensive, when Ontario did it, but they are now coming to a high-cost structure of closing coal and they're going to have to replace it.

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Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: Sorry, Speaker.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: In the Americas, only Quebec and Ontario, because of those programs, are below 1990 levels. We are now about 7% below 1990 levels and Quebec is about 8%. No other jurisdiction in the Americas is tracking on the Kyoto commitments. The Leader of the Opposition, as a member in Ottawa in the federal government, has the great, great honour of saying he was a part of the only government in the world that pulled out of Kyoto and then said nothing about climate change for five years.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Trump's about to do the same.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's the same politics you see from the President right now in pulling out of Paris, or threatening to.

Now we are decarbonized. Now we're benefiting from a scale phase, and now we have a reform system that reflects more local decision-making. But there are people in Pickering who have a nuclear plant with storage of the waste. I've got transmission lines that run by my building and all kinds of energy infrastructure and a gas plant within spitting distance of my house.

When we want to turn on our lights, someone has to live near the gas plant, someone has to live near the transmission lines, and if you actually look at the history of energy infrastructure and transmission infrastructure, this now is probably one of the most democratic localized sets of decision-making because nobody has unfettered ability to cancel something, because if they did, how many communities would vote for transmission lines? How many communities would like to have a transmission line running through their community? There's always a tension and balance between the general public good and “What I do want near my backyard?” I think with some humility and some experience, we've landed on a much more balanced perch.

But the other challenge we have is that we are now heading for a four-degree Celsius change in temperature on our planet. Paris was a commitment to try and stay under two, with the aspiration of staying under 1.5 degrees Celsius. We are actually heading for about four degrees Celsius right now, because if you take all of the commitments of all the signatories to Paris, some of which are failed states and have no capacity to deliver them, we're still at four degrees.

So the good news about Paris is the cup is half full. We've at least got an international commitment right now to recognize the problem and get us halfway to the solution. But if we don't double down, ironically, the one member of this House who for sure will be living through the hellish nightmare that is a 2030 or 2040 or 2050 or 2060 of droughts—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: How do you know we won't live that long?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Because I read science.

It's a really interesting thing. I remember when the NDP actually cared about the environment. I really do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. The member from Timmins–James Bay and the minister are exchanging little barbs. I'd appreciate it if they would go through the Chair. Thank you.

Continue.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to say one thing in this House, because the member for Toronto–Danforth has been one of the most reliable and solid members, one whom I've actually learned a lot from since I've taken this job. He's a generous soul, and if we all listened to him, we'd all be better informed.

I've been watching the Conservative race, where Mr. O'Leary said he's going to come and campaign in Ontario against Mr. Brown and the Conservatives over a carbon tax. It was particularly interesting when the second-highest-ranking member of their caucus, their deputy leader, the member for Leeds–Grenville, endorsed him. So when the member from Niagara Falls suggests that, as Dr. Phil says, past behaviour is the best indicator of future behaviour, I think the chances of ripping it up are darned good.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm pleased to rise to speak to ballot item 48, the moratorium on the installation of industrial turbines in unwilling communities.

As you know, we are, in my riding, an unwilling community, and we're dealing with this mess that this government has created with the help of the third party, the NDP, who of course have supported this Green Energy Act right through.

The really disappointing part is, you could shut down all the solar and wind power that this government has overpaid for for years and we would still have a surplus. Partly because they've shut down so much of the manufacturing, we're not using as much power as we did in 2003. That's a clear fact. You can't argue with that. That's the way it is today.

But look at this file; they jump all over. Closing the coal plants: If you go back to the last time a PC Party was in power, they put a plan in to get rid of the coal plants by 2014. Of course, the Liberal Party at the time said, “That’s not good enough. We’ll make it by 2007.” Well, they didn’t make it. The next election would be 2011; they didn’t make it. When did they make it? They didn’t even make the original time period that the Mike Harris government had committed to. The reason why they didn’t just throw out a date is because it wasn’t reasonable to go to that date. Even with as much as they’ve spent, they couldn’t make it either, but they were willing to string the people along, thinking they could do so much better.

I don’t want to repeat what one of the leaders of the Conservative Party called that group in Ottawa that day, the ministers of the federal government, who are in there making deals when nobody else in the world is moving ahead on it. We support climate change—but we have to be part of a plan that the world is endorsing and we can move on. We’ll be bankrupt before we can utilize the technology that the world is coming ahead on. We’ve already wasted billions on power plants we decided to move. We have another lawsuit because of turbines they turned down because they were in Liberal-friendly ridings. We have transmission lines that are going across the country, tied into the ground, generating hundreds of millions of dollars in interest. The whole file is strictly a mess. You’re destroying our economy, and we’ll have nothing left to really fight climate change.

In our last round, in my riding, you gave one of the largest—or the largest—wind turbine contracts, out in North Stormont, to a group of people that decided to turn down what many people would call a bribe to the community: almost half a million dollars a year for the length of that project if the council would pass a resolution. In most cases, if a contractor is willing to pay that kind of money to a council to make a decision, I would think that somebody should be in the courts for a conflict of interest. But not under this Green Energy Act. That’s allowed.

I think we have to look at where we’re going here. We’ve got very expensive power—power that still, in 2015, was double what they were paying in Quebec at the same time. But I understand that the people that responded to those tenders did not have to give the governing party \$1.3 million at the time. You look at what’s going on with this party and this government. Every time you turn around, there’s just another abuse of the taxpayer. We’re not getting the benefit.

He was quick to talk about how we bought into this green energy, but we paid the highest prices in the world—double what Germany was paying. And for what reason? The floor had been established at 40 cents; why are we paying 80? We’re seeing the damage that has caused our economy, and I think that, as a lot of people have rightly said, we’ll be broke well before the rest of the world comes on stream with these plans.

I know I have other people in the party that want to speak. The file is a mess.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: It’s a pleasure to speak to Mr. Oosterhoff’s, my colleague’s, motion: that, in the opinion of this House, the government should place a moratorium on the installation of industrial wind turbines in unwilling host communities in the province of Ontario.

What started as a Liberal sole-sourced and shady \$7-billion Samsung contract has morphed into a multi-billion dollar colossal energy bungle that has left Ontario families in poverty and ratepayers on the hook for a lot more, and for a very long time. Since 2009, ratepayers have paid \$37 billion for the Liberal’s wind and solar experiments and are on the hook for an additional \$133 billion in subsidy payments until 2031. The Minister of the Environment used the terminology that the Liberals were “breaking ground.” I would suggest that what the Liberals have done with this experiment is broken the bank and wallets of Ontarians. Shame, Speaker.

But what’s worse, there are still members on that side of the House who continue to doubt that these bad contracts created a hydro crisis in Ontario. The energy minister himself doubts it and denies that green subsidies are hurting Ontarians, our economy and jobs—this despite knowing that as many as 60,000 family homes have been disconnected due to inability to pay skyrocketing hydro bills; despite hearing that more people are forced to burn wood to keep their house warm and to cut electricity bills; despite seeing 300,000 manufacturing jobs disappear from our great province; and despite seeing that hydro rates increased 400% since 2003 while outages increased by 275%.

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These are the realities that party continues to deny, and it’s precisely why their Premier and their energy minister continue to call the crisis a modernization of the electricity system—irrational, Madam Speaker. You see, what’s obvious to you and I is never so to them, which is why they can’t be trusted to get us out of this hydro crisis that they’ve created and why they will keep driving us deeper into the hydro crisis. It’s simple: They probably won’t support today’s motion because they don’t believe there’s a hydro crisis.

In the words of one of my constituents, Lorrie Gillis, “There remains too much misinformation being put out there. Some seem to want to minimize the problem, some seem to want to make a buck off the problem and some don’t seem to have a clue about what’s happening at ground zero but speak as though they do anyway.”

It’s precisely this denial and doubt that has prompted the Liberals to pitch their newest hydro scheme, their so-called hydro-25-cut that’s costing nearly \$1 million in partisan advertising to spin the media. What they fail to put in those ads is that you’re getting 25% back—a reduction—but they’ve increased the rates by up to 400%. That’s not a deal for anybody, and it’s your money. Sadly, it’s going to cost these pages, for 25 years, \$25 billion that could be going to schools, that could be going to health care, that could be going to social programs.

I know that it's essentially a shell game that stretches out the cost of their hydro mistakes not over one but over three or four generations, pushing even more Ontarians out into danger, out into areas of poverty, while allowing rates to go up again under their scheme. So I challenge them to be sincere and give Ontarians the real hydro break they deserve and need by addressing the root cause of the hydro crisis: the Green Energy Act, or the green energy experiment.

Unlock ratepayers from their 20-year contracts for overpriced wind and solar power. It's for energy we don't need. Since 2009, Ontario has given away \$6 billion in surplus energy to the US.

Put a moratorium on wind turbines and don't sign any new, expensive, bad contracts—or, as we call it, the bad contracts act.

Restore democracy to local municipalities—groups like the Multi-Municipal Wind Turbine Working Group.

Stop the fire sale of Hydro One.

And, like my colleague from Prince Edward county is always bringing up over the last couple of weeks, rein in the exorbitant executive compensation in the energy sector. Admit it's unacceptable. The CEO of Hydro One made \$4.5 million in 2016 when Ontarians are burning wood to keep warm and clearly suffering to pay their bills.

If I'm wrong, and you're not in doubt of the repeated warnings and reports from the Auditor General and nine separate PC motions in this House to close the grid to any more expensive energy experiments, then you will vote to pass this resolution.

Restore democracy to local municipalities. Do the honourable thing and help restore what was a historic strength in Ontario: reliable and affordable energy.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Point of order.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I just want to correct my record, Speaker. Earlier, I said that we support climate change. We support the fight against climate change, as everybody knows.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Everyone has a right to correct their record.

Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm glad to participate in the debate because I think a couple of things have to be made very clear. First of all, as New Democrats, we've always supported green energy. That is a no-brainer from the NDP side of the House. We need to do everything that we can in order to deal with climate change and have effective policies that get us there, so that at the end of the day, we can actually make a meaningful difference when it comes to making sure that we reduce carbon emissions.

The issue here, however, is that the government and the Tories are having a little bit of a false debate here. On the government's side of the House, the government is saying, "There's no other choice. It's a question of: If

you don't do this, you've got to bring in coal." Silly. Every political party in the Ontario Legislature affirmed itself years ago to get rid of coal in this province. When I hear the government get up and start talking about Conservatives or New Democrats being opposed to getting coal, I say that it's a false debate, because each political party in this House—all three—took the same position. Nobody has ever been opposed.

What we're opposed to is the plan that the government is currently following when it comes to green energy. It's mostly all private power. Instead of looking at how we can build green power in a way that makes sense from a public policy perspective within the public system—so that we can build electricity at cost within the green sector, and not only reduce carbon emissions but do it at a better cost—this government chose the most expensive option. As a result of that, our hydro bills have gone through the roof.

Now the government is finally admitting that hydro bills are too hard for people to bear, so now they're going on the credit card, borrowing billions of dollars so they can give people a savings before the next election. When the government gets up in this House and says, "This is all about carbon. This is about eliminating coal," I say hogwash.

And on the Conservative side, if the Tories were really serious about dealing with energy prices, they should adopt the position New Democrats have, to say and to be clear that should you form the government—which I don't think you will—then at least say that yes, you will stop privatization, but that you will reverse it and bring it back into the public sector so that we can go back to what we did best in this province: to generate the required amount of electricity in this province, at cost, and pass those savings on to consumers and businesses. That's what this should be all about.

But instead, what we have is a bit of a political move here. I understand what the member is trying to do, and I want to support this resolution, because like him, I believe that municipal councils should have a say. I think it's absolutely wrong for a municipal council not to have a say when it comes to planning within their community, and planning includes windmills, digesters or whatever other form of energy is being built.

That energy will be built. There are ways of building consensus. There are ways of making sure that we bring in green power, but I think there are two things that have to happen. The first one is that New Democrats are committed to green energy. We're committed to making sure we reduce our carbon footprint, but it must be done within the public system, not a privatized system that has cost us far more money than we need and has driven hydro bills through the roof in this province.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to join the debate on this motion brought forward by my friend from Niagara West—Glanbrook. When I was a new member in the Legislature—it seems like only yesterday, but it was about six years ago now—I brought forward the Local

Municipality Democracy Act. That was in the second week that I was actually a member of provincial Parliament.

It all stems back to the fact that municipalities have had their planning authority stripped away from them, not for a new Tim Hortons on the corner of Main and Jones Streets, but for industrial wind turbines in their communities, or renewable green energy projects in their communities. Municipalities that have declared themselves unwilling hosts have had these enormous industrial wind turbines forced on them.

You drive down through southwestern Ontario, and it's all you can see basically from where my friend lives here all the way down to Windsor. When you're driving through that region in the middle of the night, all you see is the flickering red lights going off.

The Local Municipality Democracy Act, back in the day, would have restored planning authority back to the municipalities when it comes to these projects. What happens is that you have these unwilling host communities who don't want the turbines there. They have to spend thousands and thousands of dollars in court at these environmental review tribunals—which many people believe are a scam, although we did have a successful one in Prince Edward county where a wind turbine project was overturned because of concerns about endangered species and such.

The damage that they're doing to communities is enormous. They're ripping communities apart. Think about it: A company is going to give one farmer who knows how much—thousands of dollars a month—but the farmer who lives next door has got to look at the same wind turbine, and he's not getting anything except for an increasing electricity bill.

Mr. Bill Walker: And potential health issues.

Mr. Todd Smith: And health issues, as well, as my friend says. It's ripping communities apart. I know that because I've seen it first-hand, where long-time friends are no longer friends anymore.

We had an incident in Prince Edward county this past week where, because of the fact that there's no planning, there's no input with local municipalities anymore, a barge came into the Picton Terminals in Picton. It was going to load gravel to take over to Amherst Island to build a dock on the south side of Amherst Island, with no environmental assessments necessary or anything, because you don't need any of that with the Green Energy Act—who cares about the environment? It's the Green Energy Act, after all. It's going to do great things for the environment, right? Absolutely not. What happens is, this barge sinks in Picton Bay, and my community has been under a boil-water advisory now for over a week, all because no permitting is required under the Green Energy Act.

These are the kinds of things that can happen when you take the local decision-making out of the process, and that's why we have to support the motion that's put forward by my friend from Niagara West–Glanbrook today. These things have been a disaster. The government even admits it. Surely they're going to support this motion here this afternoon.

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: As always, it's a pleasure to be able to stand in this House and represent the fine constituents of Niagara West–Glanbrook. I wish to thank all the honourable members in this House today who spoke to my motion. I wish to thank the member from Algoma–Manitoulin; the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry; the Minister of Economic Development and Growth; the member from Niagara Falls; the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change; the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, who's been a strong voice and advocate for his constituents on this issue; the member for Timmins–James Bay; and the member for Prince Edward–Hastings. Thank you all very much for speaking to this.

Look, this is a matter where, as on so many issues, the Ontario Liberals play the same old games. They love to talk the talk and they hate to walk the walk. The reality is that they talk about collaboration. They talk about working with municipalities. In the first throne speech brought forward under this Premier, Madam Speaker, we saw that they said, “communities must be involved and connected to one another,” and that the government “intends to work with municipalities” on all these issues because our economy can benefit from things like wind turbines, but only if we have a willing host.

And yet, if I read between the lines on the rhetoric that I receive from across the aisle, I can see that they are in love with these bad contracts. They think that they need to ensure that we have these contracts, and that means they believe forcing industrial wind turbines on unwilling host communities is perfectly okay to do. They don't care about the mayors of these towns; they don't care about the residents of those towns.

On that note, I wish to introduce the mayor of Wainfleet, Her Worship April Jeffs, who is going to be the Ontario Progressive Conservative candidate in 2018 in the riding of Niagara Centre.

Madam Speaker, my time is coming to a close. I want to thank again all those who spoke to this, but the reality is that if we want to see active change, if we want to see collaboration, I hope that all members in this House will vote in favour of this motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time allocated for private members' public business has expired.

REA AND WALTER ACT (TRUSS
AND LIGHTWEIGHT CONSTRUCTION
IDENTIFICATION), 2017

LOI REA ET WALTER DE 2017
SUR L'IDENTIFICATION
DES COMPOSANTS STRUCTURAUX
À OSSATURE LÉGÈRE

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will deal first with ballot item 46, standing in the name of Mr. Pettapiece.

Mr. Pettapiece has moved second reading of Bill 105, An Act governing the identification of truss and lightweight construction in buildings.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear “carried.”

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I’m going to turn to the member to let us know what committee he wants to refer the bill to.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: General government, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): General government? Agreed? Agreed.

SIKH MASSACRE

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Malhi has moved private member’s notice of motion 46.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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. This will be a vote at the end of private members’ public business.

WIND TURBINES

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Oosterhoff has moved private member’s notice of motion 45.

Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Okay, let’s do that again.

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

All those opposed to the motion, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. 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.

SIKH MASSACRE

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Malhi has moved private member’s notice of motion number 46. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Ballard, Chris
Bisson, Gilles
Chiarelli, Bob
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Coe, Lorne
Colle, Mike
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Duguid, Brad
Forster, Cindy
Fraser, John
Gates, Wayne

Harris, Michael
Kiwala, Sophie
Malhi, Harinder
Mantha, Michael
Martins, Cristina
Martow, Gila
McDonnell, Jim
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Murray, Glen R.

Oosterhoff, Sam
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Singh, Jagmeet
Smith, Todd
Takhari, Harinder S.
Taylor, Monique
Vernile, Daiene
Walker, Bill

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Damerla, Dipika
Dickson, Joe

Dong, Han
MacCharles, Tracy

Sandals, Liz

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 34; the nays are 5.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We’re going to open the doors for 30 seconds.

WIND TURBINES

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Members please take your seats.

Mr. Oosterhoff has moved private member’s notice of motion number 45. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Bisson, Gilles
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Coe, Lorne
Forster, Cindy
Gates, Wayne

Harris, Michael
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McDonnell, Jim
Miller, Norm

Miller, Paul
Oosterhoff, Sam
Smith, Todd
Taylor, Monique
Walker, Bill

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Damerla, Dipika
Delaney, Bob
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han

Duguid, Brad
Fraser, John
Hoskins, Eric
Kiwala, Sophie
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Martins, Cristina
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
Milczyn, Peter Z.

Murray, Glen R.
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sousa, Charles
Takhari, Harinder S.
Vernile, Daiene

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 15; the nays are 28.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

VISITORS

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

Mrs. Cristina Martins: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: With your indulgence, I want to introduce the senior group from the Abrigo Centre in my riding of Davenport.

Remarks in Portuguese.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PUTTING CONSUMERS FIRST ACT (CONSUMER PROTECTION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT), 2017

LOI DE 2017 DONNANT LA PRIORITÉ AUX CONSOMMATEURS (MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LA PROTECTION DU CONSOMMATEUR)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 4, 2017, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

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

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 59, Putting Consumers First Act, 2017. I'll be spending my time discussing the changes in Bill 59 related to door-to-door sales and payday loans.

One of the core responsibilities of government, whether federal, provincial, or municipal, is the safety of its residents. Residents' safety can be represented in many ways: by police officers in our communities, our men and women in our armed forces at home and abroad, or the various ways that governments prepare regulations that keep us safe on a daily basis. For example, the food products that Ontarians eat everyday are required to list any ingredients and the daily value amounts per serving. This is to ensure that the people of Ontario can know what is in the food they eat so that they're able to maintain their personal health and well-being.

But, Speaker, consumer protection can take on many other forms. That is why we're here today to debate Bill 59. This bill would affect the home inspections industry, door-to-door sales, payday lending centres, and collections businesses. In Canada, door-to-door sales alone are a \$2-billion industry that employs thousands of salespeople who care about their customers and their well-being. However, there are some individuals operating in the door-to-door industry who we're aware of who, regrettably, prey on vulnerable groups. These salespeople will often confuse or coerce consumers to convince them to buy a product or subscribe to a service they don't need, and in some cases detrimental to their continued livelihood.

It pains me to say it, but more and more often, seniors are the primary group targeted by these individuals. As an example of these sales tactics, a common complaint that I've heard from seniors in my riding, is that someone will show up uninvited at their door and begin by trying to sell them a new furnace. After the sale is made, the old furnace is taken away and installation of the new one

begins. This is where many new fees and costs will suddenly be added to the transaction that were not initially discussed with the homeowner. Furthermore, claims are made that the old furnace is not up to code and cannot be reinstalled. This leaves the homeowner in a very precarious position—in fact, a hostage in their own home to these types of salespeople, as they're forced to pay much larger amounts than before to heat their homes with no real tangible benefit.

This behaviour is quite frankly reprehensible, but I would note the bad players in this industry will not be deterred by new regulation, and vulnerable consumers, such as seniors, will continue to be targeted unless the ministry takes seriously its duty to educate and proactively reach out to consumers.

Speaker, you will know from your own experience that the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, of which there are over 300,000 members in Canada, has flagged this critical issue as well, and they did that in testimony to the standing committee. The association recently polled its members to determine what the support level would be for a prohibition on door-to-door sales. Nearly 99% of respondents were in favour of such a law in Ontario. Furthermore, 95% of Canadian Association of Retired Persons members believe that door-to-door sales were an issue for seniors and nearly as many did not believe that government, at all levels in Canada, has done enough to address this problem.

1620

As a result of this survey, CARP has advocated for stronger protections of seniors, with an aim to punish sales practices effectively, and to support legitimate businesses and give them an opportunity to flourish.

Specifically, the Canadian Association of Retired Persons has recommended that the government should:

- prohibit the distribution of all marketing materials which are misleading, including distributed literature and phone calls;

- provide appropriate remedies for the restitution of individuals who are solicited in breach of legislation;

- ensure the burden of proof of such a breach is on businesses, not the customer;

- require the decoupling of billing for all non-utility services; and

- increase discipline by imposing fines for all offences.

I highlight these recommendations for the government to consider when implementing measures which truly are intended—and this is a real difference here, Speaker—to protect Ontario seniors.

Seniors across this province have built our communities, and many still contribute through their volunteerism. They should not have to spend their time on becoming experts on what their rights and obligations are as a consumer. Yet we find ourselves here this afternoon. The provisions in Bill 59 rely on consumers knowing their rights and making complaints if they are not satisfied with their contract or are refusing to sign a contract in the first place.

I'm going to take us back a bit in history—but not that distant. Independent reports by Ontario's Auditor General highlighted that consumers aren't aware of the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services or its mandate, and wouldn't consider contacting the ministry for help in resolving their complaints.

The Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus is generally supportive of the measures in Bill 59 which address home inspections, leases, cooling-off periods and the debt collections industry. But we do have some concerns with the provisions in the bill related to two industries: door-to-door sales and payday lending.

With respect to door-to-door sales, Bill 59 creates a regulation-making power for the minister to void any contract entered into at the door or any other prescribed place, for the supply of prescribed goods and services, unless the consumer solicited the salesperson's visit. Several municipalities have passed similar resolutions supporting bans on door-to-door sales as well.

This is often a popular initiative due to many consumers finding it annoying, or a nuisance, dealing with door-to-door salespeople. In conjunction, there are frequent reports of exploitive, fly-by-night operations that are designed to defraud consumers.

However, this bill gives the minister and the ministry enormous power to ban whatever they please from being sold wherever they please. This power, in my view, far oversteps the bounds of what a minister should and should not be able to do in exercising their legislative responsibilities.

Bill 59, as I indicated earlier, also contains several measures to address consumers' and municipalities' concerns about the payday loan industry. Payday lending is a last resort for many consumers who have a bad credit rating, or no credit, and who experience an unexpected expense or an unexpected drop in income. What's clear is that it is not meant to be a regular source of funding. That's very clear.

Payday loans provide an avenue for many consumers who have fallen through the cracks in our financial system and are unable to open a banking account or get credit that they require.

The expectation laid out in this bill is that the payday lending industry will strive to work with the government to create a set of consistent and fair rules that protect consumers and prevent them from becoming cyclical users.

Speaker, I want to draw your attention and that of the members of the Legislature to a recent Globe and Mail article which outlined when consumers come to depend on payday loans. It was entitled "When Payday Lending Leads to Poverty, It's Time for Intervention." The article tells the story of two consumers who are in different financial situations but who have both used the same system.

In the first situation, the consumer regularly takes out two or three payday loans each year to strategically cover unforeseen expenses. In some ways, this is precisely how the payday loan industry is meant to be used: as a short-

term convenience to bridge the gap between pay cycles when unexpected expenses occur.

Conversely, the second consumer has relied on payday loans for many years and has been caught in a debt trap. The article states that this consumer was frequently using one lender to pay off loans made from another. In this case, the consumer's financial situation was made much worse due to the payday loan system. This is becoming more and more common.

A recent report from the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada found that fewer than half of the respondents surveyed understood that a payday loan is more expensive than available alternatives. While some users may have been unable to receive traditional credit lines from banks and other sources, many were simply unaware of other cheaper alternatives. The report's findings confirm and reinforce the notion that we need to raise consumer awareness regarding the cost of and alternatives to payday loans.

The payday lending industry is often used as a preferred punching bag for consumer advocates and some municipal officials. Some municipalities have attempted to limit payday lenders' presence through bylaws and punitive licensing fees. What is glaringly absent from Bill 59, when you scrutinize it, is any provision that addresses the root causes of why people must resort to payday loans in the first place. When you step back and you look, should that not be the primary objective of legislation like this bill? This is the core problem with Bill 59, and it's simply not addressed.

While I've outlined some of the challenges with Bill 59 that we see, it's also important to note that we're not the only ones who have concerns with the proposed legislation. Some members of the Legislature would have heard this in the standing committee. For example, Brian Dijkema, who is the program director for work and economics from the think tank Cardus, takes issue with some of the provisions related to payday loans. He says that the power to regulate where payday lenders can set up shop requires additional consideration as it creates the possibility that lenders will be completely zoned out. This would not result in a lesser amount of borrowing, but rather a forced movement of the challenges elsewhere. In turn, those who find themselves in need of a payday loan would be required to travel to secure the finances they need, and this may add increased expenses to monthly budgets that exasperate their stressed financial situation.

Again, I would emphasize that the primary objective of legislation like Bill 59 should be to address the underlying reasons why people find themselves in need of payday loans, rather than to try to make it more difficult for payday loan services to operate.

In closing, the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus will be supporting Bill 59 but, clearly, not without some reservation. That is because consumer issues affect us all, and that's abundantly clear. Legislation that addresses consumer issues requires a great degree of consideration and thought, to make sure it correctly

addresses them without—and I stress this—unintended consequences.

1630

Members of the Legislature will understand that one of the principles of successful legislation going forward is a broad engagement of all sectors and stakeholders, and understanding their points of view. We heard, and we continued to hear, at standing committee that the breadth and depth of that particular consultation did not reach all of the expectations of those stakeholder communities. I think that's an instructive lesson for all of us to keep in mind going forward.

Speaker, I'll close with a quote. In March 1962, when addressing Congress on protecting consumer interests—at the very heart of what this bill is about, it's about protecting consumers—the late American President John F. Kennedy said, “Consumers, by definition, include us all.” They include us all, Speaker. “They are the largest economic group in the economy, affecting and affected by almost every public and private economic decision.... But they are the only important group in the economy who are not effectively organized, whose views are often not heard.”

Speaker, it's up to all of us—all of us in this Legislature, and those who are watching—to listen to what consumers are telling us today, tomorrow and in the future, so that tomorrow's economy and consumers can continue to thrive.

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

Mr. Han Dong: It's my pleasure to give my response to the comments offered by my good colleague from Whitby–Oshawa. I was listening to his comments. I have to say that I'm very pleased that members of this Legislature have voiced their support on this very, very important bill. As you know, it is a very important bill to me, because it adopts the licensing of home inspectors, which I put forward as my private member's bill in the last session.

But today I want to talk about my personal experience with my constituents on unsolicited door-to-door sales to seniors, which will be banned if this bill passes. I know my good colleague from Etobicoke Centre presented a private member's bill last session that speaks specifically to that issue.

I felt it in my office, because a constituent came into my office. I think his name was James Hill. He's a senior and he's on Old Age Security, but he is a victim of door-to-door unsolicited sales. He was sold a hot water tank for a huge amount of money, and when his neighbour tried to help him, tried to get it removed, they said, “Well, we can't find your old tank.” So he's stuck there between a rock and a hard place. Either he keeps paying the high fee that he was charged by the new company, or he is without a hot water tank. Luckily, we got that resolved. We got the company to compensate the unreasonable high fee, and he is all set now.

I'm saying that there are so many seniors out there who will benefit from this bill if it's passed, so I'm really

pleased to hear all the support in this House this afternoon.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: It's a pleasure to comment on the speech by the member from Whitby–Oshawa on Bill 59, An Act to enact a new Act with respect to home inspections and to amend various Acts with respect to financial services and consumer protection. It's obvious that the member from Whitby–Oshawa has done his homework, and he gave some very constructive comments on the bill. He talked about door-to-door salespeople coming especially to seniors' homes and selling them a furnace that they might not want. I know that in my mother's case, she ended up with a hot water heater that she was renting that she didn't really want to rent, and had great difficulty getting out of the contract.

It's interesting. He talked about the CARP report, the membership survey of CARP members, that showed that 99%, I believe the number was, want to see a prohibition on door-to-door sales. I tend to be in that sort of feeling that there are better ways to buy things than to have somebody show up at your door, unwanted.

I think the good point that the member from Whitby–Oshawa made was that education really is the key. I believe that was what CARP was saying as well, that they support much better education of consumers.

I thought the member did a great job in talking about some of the concerns we have, although, as he did point out, we are planning on supporting this bill.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Clearly, something needs to be done with payday loans. It is a bigger and bigger problem in all of our communities. As we see people having a harder and harder time to make ends meet, more and more they are having to rush to try to get money any way they can, in order to be able to pay their hydro bill, their rent, groceries, whatever it might be. Payday lending institutions avail themselves to those who can least afford to borrow the money.

Clearly, what we need to have is a change to banking policy, caisses populaires or credit union policy, that allows people to make smaller loans that are maybe a little bit more risky, for a reasonable amount of interest. To do that, we would need either us at the provincial level to deal with it by way of credit unions and/or caisses populaires, because that's the people we regulate, or the federal government would have to do something through the Bank Act.

Clearly, something needs to be done. This is a step in the right direction. I don't think it goes as far as I would like. I don't think it deals with the problem in a full way. It will be interesting, when this bill gets to committee, if the government is going to actually allow amendments to come forward in order to strengthen the bill, to give the protection that we need to consumers when it comes to payday loans.

Loans are a reality. I think that we need to have a regime that allows people not to get gouged when it comes to the interest rates, and to be able to get themselves in a position where they can make ends meet and they can afford to pay back their loans in a timely way, with not too much interest.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments? I return to the member from Whitby–Oshawa to wrap up.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'd like to thank the members from Trinity–Spadina and Timmins–James Bay, and my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka. I particularly want to thank the minister for being in the Legislature to listen to the debate on third reading. I appreciate that the minister has a busy schedule.

When you step back from this bill—part of the preparation of looking at the directions within the bill—what is very clear is that there is a greater need for public education, and it straddles all sectors.

But when you juxtapose that with an aging demographic—and those statistics are readily available on the Ministry of Finance website—the challenge of public education becomes more acute, because we have an aging demographic and we need to ensure that seniors across this province understand their rights and obligations in terms of consumer protection. By extension, they need to know how to access that information as well, because not everyone within that particular sector is computer-literate, nor do they have access, in the truest sense of the word, to broad-based Internet going forward.

In summary, I think what we've heard here today on third reading is that there is a consensus that the consumers are a very important group and to ensure that their views are accounted for as it relates to consumer

protection, because we also need, within the context of that, to understand that they are a driving force to the economy in how they contribute to that and how it will thrive—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further debate? Further debate? Last call: Further debate?

Madame Lalonde has moved third reading of Bill 59, An Act to enact a new Act with respect to home inspections and to amend various Acts with respect to financial services and consumer protection.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

I believe the ayes have it.

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

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): A 30-minute bell.

I've received a deferral slip: “Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote for third reading on Bill 59 be deferred until Monday, April 10, 2017.” It's signed by Mr. Bradley, the chief government whip.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Orders of the day?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Madam Speaker, I move the adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Moridi has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard “carried.”

This House stands adjourned until Monday, April 10, at 10:30.

The House adjourned at 1642.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
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Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy 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
Ann Hoggarth, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Peter Z. Milczyn
John Vanthof
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
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
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**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jim McDonell
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Monique Taylor, 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
Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch.

**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