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Lundi
29 mai 2017

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 29 May 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 29 mai 2017

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today, pursuant to standing order 71(c), the member from Nipissing has filed with the Clerk a reasoned amendment to the motion of second reading of Bill 134, An Act to implement 2017 Budget measures. The order for second reading of Bill 134 may therefore not be called today.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Gila Martow: I am very pleased to welcome today the interns from CJPAC. CJPAC stands for Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I would like to welcome Todd Taylor, Christine King and their grade 10 students from St. Joan of Arc Catholic High School in my riding of Barrie. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Steve Clark: Speaker, I want to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, a former constituent of my riding who is at my office today: Alanah Duffy. Welcome to Queen's Park, Alanah.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, we have a number of the directors of the Polish Canadian Business and Professional Association of Windsor here today. There is a reception in 228 at lunch. Everyone is invited. I would like to welcome to Queen's Park Jerry Barycki, Ewa Barycka, Kamilla Wierciszewski, and Jakub Rybaczuk. Welcome to Queen's Park. We'll see you at 228 at lunch.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I would like to welcome members for the Friends and Advocates for Catholic Education, FACE. They are attending question period this morning as part of FACE's Queen's Park day. I had the pleasure of meeting them this morning along with Minister Albanese. Of course, I would like to welcome Thomas Cardinal Collins, Archbishop of Toronto. Joining Cardinal Collins, we have Bev Eckensweiler, who is the vice-president of OCSTA; Barb Dobrowolski, who is the second vice-president of OECTA; Nicolas Bottger, who is the president of the Catholic Board Council, student trustee; Manuela Zapata, vice-president of the Catholic Board Council, student trustee; and Carole

Allen, project manager for FACE. Please welcome them to Queen's Park, along with many others.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to welcome to Queen's Park today a grade 10 civics class from Wingham, Ontario: F.E. Madill students, under the tutelage of Ms. Payne. They're going to Brant county later this week.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to welcome to the Legislature today my father, Alan French, and family friends Randy More and Jane More. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's a pleasure to welcome my good friends Denis Poulin and Caroline Souter, both recipients of an Ontario service recognition award: Caroline for 15 years and Denis for 40-plus years of volunteer service. Congratulations. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: It gives me great pleasure to introduce Bob Yaciuk, leader of the Trillium Party of Ontario; John Grant; Shawn Branch; Ryan Kagan; my wife, Janet MacLaren; Stefanos Karatopis; and Eugene Dankanych. These people are all members of the Trillium Party of Ontario, as am I. I joined the party last Friday.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I would like to introduce Laura Mae Lindo. Laura Mae is the director of the diversity and equity office at Wilfrid Laurier University. Welcome to Queen's Park, Laura Mae.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I would like to welcome to the House today Henry and Jonathan Liu. They're both community leaders from Halton. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I would also like to welcome members from the LinkedKey Debate for Excellence debate team who are here. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I would like to welcome to the Legislature today Mr. Chris Fell. Chris has become a member of my staff, so I know you will all want to send your condolences to him.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would like to welcome my former press secretary Kelly Baker and her mother, Kathleen Worgan-Baker, to Queen's Park today. Welcome to both of you. It's lovely to see you.

Mr. James J. Bradley: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today the family of page Madeleine Alexander, who is a page captain today: her mother, Carolyn Brendon; father, Rob Alexander; and brother, William Alexander, who was a page in the Legislature about a half a dozen years ago. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Miss Monique Taylor: I would like to welcome the cousin of one of our pages, Claire Le Donne. Her cousin

Alyssa Le Donne is visiting us here today from Ellwood Memorial school in the town of Bolton. Welcome to Queen's Park, Alyssa.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: In the members' east gallery, I would like to welcome Professor John Danahy from the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects; also Andrea Lloyd. Both are long-time friends and supporters. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: I want to welcome Mr. Thomas Thomas. He's a trustee for the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board. He is my constituent and a good friend as well, so welcome.

Hon. David Zimmer: I would like to welcome, from my riding of Willowdale, the parents of Jeremi Kolakowski, who is today's page captain. His parents, Veronika and Jakub Kolakowski, are here and they're very proud of him.

Hon. Laura Albanese: I would like to welcome to the House the interns from CJPAC who are here to join us today—Zachary Zarnett-Klein, Jackson Saunders and Summer Hart—and staff from CJPAC, Jaime Reich. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to introduce Elizabeth Fowler, Ian Orenstein, Glenn Kelly and Gene Tishauer from Toronto–Danforth. Welcome to the Legislature.

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Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to welcome Lisa Colombo from the Waterloo region fetal alcohol spectrum disorder action group; as well as Archbishop Brendan O'Brien from Kingston and the Islands. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would like to welcome to the Legislature someone I just saw arrive: Chris Cowley, from the OECTA provincial executive. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: In the east members' gallery, I would like to welcome Ryan Enns today, who is here learning about parliamentary procedure, as well as his mother, Sandra Enns, a long-time supporter from Cambridge. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery, at my pleasure, the artists selected for the youth art banner series celebrating both Canada's 150th anniversary and Ontario's 150th anniversary. The banners are prominently displayed on the south grounds leading up to the front door of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Please join me in warmly welcoming our young artists to the Legislature today. Thank you for joining us.

Applause.

WINDSOR SPITFIRES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Windsor West on a point of order.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: This past week, Windsor hosted the 99th Memorial Cup, and I'm thrilled and proud, as is

my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh, to announce that the Windsor Spitfires are the 2017 Memorial Cup winners.

Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to wear my Windsor Spitfires' jersey to commemorate the Spitfires winning the Memorial Cup.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Windsor West is seeking unanimous consent to wear the jersey of the Windsor Spitfires—all day?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: All day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All day.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: And tomorrow.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And tomorrow?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You stole my thunder. I was going to say Gretzky played for the Soo Greyhounds, but I'm not going to say anything.

The member is seeking unanimous consent to wear the jersey. Do we agree? Agreed.

ATTACK IN MANCHESTER

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to observe a moment of silence before question period as a sign of this House's condolences for those who lost their lives in the May 22, 2017, terrorist attack in Manchester.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Premier is seeking unanimous consent to have a moment of silence to pay tribute to those who lost their lives and their family members in support of those who died in Manchester. Do we agree? Agreed.

I would ask all members to please rise for a moment of silence to pay tribute.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): God rest their souls.

Therefore, it is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. The Financial Accountability Officer's report on the Liberals' unfair hydro scheme wasn't shocking to the opposition. We have been saying all along that it simply is a borrowing plan that kicks the can down the road.

At the lowest estimate, this plan will cost taxpayers \$21 billion and, at the highest, a staggering \$93 billion. This plan is not about sharing costs; it's about saving seats. Not only will this cost the next generation billions of dollars, but the generation after that, too. This is a short-sighted re-election scheme.

Mr. Speaker, is this unfair hydro scheme really about burdening Ontario with another \$93 billion of debt, or is it about helping the Liberal Party?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Our fair hydro plan is about helping people in this province, it's about helping mom-and-pop businesses on main streets, and it's about helping farmers. It's about people who need relief on their electricity bill getting that relief—

Mr. John Yakabuski: For 14 years you ignored them. You ignored the mom-and-pops.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order. The member for Beaches–East York, come to order. If I'm getting signals, I will deal with them.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member for Renfrew–Nipissing, in his usual thoughtful way, is heckling about the last 14 years. Mr. Speaker, over the last 14 years, we've invested in the electricity system in this province so that we have a clean, renewable system. That had been degraded by the very party that the member opposite is a member of.

Quite frankly, government after government had not made the investments that needed to be made, so electricity prices were kept artificially low and the system was degraded.

We had to make these investments. We're spreading the cost of those investments over a longer period of time. That's fair today, and it's fair tomorrow.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: The Premier said she was investing in the electricity system over the last 14 years. Well, stop investing because under your watch, you've raised hydro rates 400%. They've broken hydro in Ontario. Every time they touch hydro they make it worse.

So I've got a simple—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Leader?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, I've got a simple, multiple-choice question for the Premier: How many billions of taxpayer dollars is the Premier willing to spend on this hydro scheme for her re-election campaign: (a) \$21 billion, (b) \$45 billion or (c) \$93 billion? Which is it: (a), (b) or (c)? How much of the taxpayers' dollars are you going to waste for the—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. The signals have been sent. I'm moving to warnings.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I think it's very clear that the—

Interjection.

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

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's very clear that the Leader of the Opposition has a very different philosophy of how to grow this province and make it strong. He

would stop investing, apparently, in the new hospital in Moosonee/Moose Factory. He would stop investing in the transit that makes Bracebridge able to have a bus—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron–Bruce and the member from Prince Edward–Hastings are warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: He would stop investing in small-town infrastructure, like Bracebridge's. He would stop investing in a clean, renewable electricity grid. He would stop investing in the education and health care resources that are allowing this province to thrive.

He would stop investing. That's not a plan. That is a strategy—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin–Caledon is warned. I can do this all day.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That is a strategy for undermining the growth of this province. We're not going to go there.

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The Premier is absolutely correct for once. I will stop investing in bad Liberal contracts. According to the Auditor General, we overpaid by \$9.2 billion. That's her investment: overpaid by \$9.2 billion.

The 30 companies that got the contracts—surprise, surprise—donated \$1.3 million to the Ontario Liberal Party. That's the investment they're proud of? They have supported the Liberal Party's bank account, not Ontario ratepayers, and everyone sees it. Everyone in the province sees it. Just read the Globe and Mail this weekend: "Unless you're planning on living off the grid in Algonquin Park or moving out of the province by 2028, you will be materially worse off" under this scheme, "than had the" party "just left bad enough alone."

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This plan is going to hurt Ontario. Why won't the Premier just do the right thing and admit they have broken hydro in Ontario? Stop trying to make it worse.

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We've invested in the electricity system in this province. It is clean, it is renewable and it is reliable. People need relief on their electricity bills because of the investments that have been made in order to get us there, and we're spreading the cost of those investments over a longer period of time.

I'm happy to talk to the next generation about that. They are going to be able to access an asset that we've invested in and that we fixed, because previous governments were not able to or not willing to.

The investments that we have made in this province—let's look at what those investments have led to. Ontario has created almost 700,000 new jobs since the recession, almost 300,000 since I became Premier. Ontario's economic growth has led all G7 nations for the past three years. Our unemployment rate has dropped to 5.8%, the lowest level in 16 years. That's what investment in the province has gained us.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Another day, another Liberal partisan advertisement. This time it was the recent budget ads. It's becoming quite repetitive around here these days. First, the Liberals spend millions of taxpayer dollars on advertising. Second, the Auditor General says the ads are clearly partisan. Third, the Liberals spew some nonsense about Ontario prohibiting partisan advertising. Rinse and repeat; it is the same lines.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is warned. And I saw somebody else over in the corner.

Carry on, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Will the Premier just come clean to the people of Ontario and admit these ads are wrong? They are partisan. The Premier is using taxpayer dollars to benefit the Ontario Liberal Party. Do the right thing: Cancel these ads.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, Mr. Speaker, I would say that, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, Ontario is the only province in the country that has advertising restrictions that are legislated. We've made it very clear that partisan advertising is not allowed. The benchmark that's used for partisan advertising is what that party did when it was in office. It's quite clear that because of our legislation, we have moved very far away from that partisan advertising.

I had the opportunity to be in northeastern Ontario over the last week, and one stop that I made in Sudbury was at a unit in the hospital called NEO Kids. I had the opportunity to meet with families there who have kids who are chronically ill or who have a very serious illness, and many of them need regular medication every day, every month. They were very happy to know that OHIP+ pharmacare is starting on January 1, 2018.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier, and back to the actual question: From Wawa to Petawawa, from Parry Sound to Owen Sound, from Kapuskasing to Nipissing, what do we have in common? These are towns that are opposition-held ridings, and, as reported in QP Briefing, the Auditor General's office noted that "This could suggest that these areas were targeted for that reason."

I agree with the Auditor General. Without a doubt, the Liberal government is campaigning, using taxpayer dollars in opposition ridings. It's unethical. It should be illegal.

I will ask the Premier again: Will the Premier do the right thing and stop abusing taxpayer dollars for the sole purpose of benefiting the Liberal Party?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I absolutely understand why the Leader of the Opposition does not want us to talk about our budget. I absolutely understand that, especially—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Then talk about it on your dime.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned. And by the way, those who are warned: Next is naming.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:—especially given what he said earlier today, Mr. Speaker, that his strategy would be to stop investing in Ontario.

So he doesn't want us to talk about the 100,000 child care spaces that we'll create; he doesn't want us to talk about free tuition, because that's an investment in the young people of this province. He doesn't want us to talk about OHIP+, because that's an investment in the children and youth of this province who need medication, and it's an investment in their families, to allow them to make ends meet and support their children.

He doesn't want us to talk about any of that, because his strategy is just to stop investing in the people of this province.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell is warned.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The word "investing" is all of a sudden a code word for what is acceptable to abuse taxpayer dollars. Investing in partisan Liberal ads: You call that investment? People right now in Ontario are struggling to get by. They can't pay their hydro bills, and yet you've got a government wasting millions on partisan ads.

This isn't the opposition parties saying this; this is the Auditor General, with independent legislative oversight, saying that this is wrong, that this is unethical. Yet we get the same spin, the same talking points.

Abusing taxpayer dollars is not investing. It is wrong. When will this Liberal government learn? Stop abusing taxpayer dollars. Do what's right and pull these ads.

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I say to the Leader of the Opposition once again that he knows full well that there's only one province in this country that has legislation that forbids partisan advertising, that has standards. That is Ontario, and we are the government that moved on that.

But I will go back to what the Leader of the Opposition does not want to see us talking about. He does not want us to talk about the capital investments that we are making in hospitals. He does not want us to talk about

the fact that in Moose Factory there is a hospital that was built in 1950, and he doesn't want us to talk about the fact that we're going to rebuild that hospital. We're going to replace that hospital. He doesn't want us to talk about that, because that's an investment in the province. It's an investment in the people of Moose Factory and the James Bay coast.

He also doesn't want us to talk about the fact that we are putting a 2% minimum investment in every operating budget in the hospitals in this province, and that, Mr. Speaker, is an investment in people in every corner of Ontario.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Premier recently put forward a new law that will force all electricity companies to include her political messaging with hydro bills right up until the next election. In fact, her regulation contains the exact messaging that she plans to force the companies to use. How can this Premier justify this shameless self-promotion at the expense of everyday families in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Energy is going to want to speak to the details of this, but I am quite sure that even the leader of the third party would like to see everyone who is eligible receive the reduction that they are—

Hon. Charles Sousa: Entitled to.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —that they're entitled to.

I'm sure that the leader of the third party knows, because she has been talking about it in this Legislature for weeks, that people need that relief on their hydro bills. She knows that people need that 25% reduction. She knows that in rural and remote communities, people need even more than that, because distribution charges are so high.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the leader of the third party supports a reduction, and the Minister of Energy will speak to the details of what's in the bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, that's the whole point: People are going to get it, regardless of if there's partisan advertising in the bills or not, so why is this Premier doing that?

Look: This law forces electricity companies to do the Premier's dirty work by trying to sell the people of Ontario on her \$45-billion hydro borrowing scheme.

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This is a new low in political manipulation at the expense of Ontario families, who are already struggling to just keep up with their skyrocketing bills. Is this Premier so desperate to save her political skin that she is going to force families to pay for her own partisan advertising?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to rise and talk about our fair hydro plan, because I find it interesting from the questioning from the leader of the third party—

just last week, when I was in Sault Ste. Marie and when I spoke with Steve and Lucy, who own the M&Ms and the Country Style doughnuts, and who the Leader of the Opposition spoke to, I thought it very interesting that they didn't know about the fair hydro plan. They didn't know about the benefits that they were going to be getting when the fair hydro plan passes.

But it's interesting that the leader of the third party chose not to tell them about the plan. She chose not to tell them about all of the things that will be coming. So do you know what we're doing, Mr. Speaker? We're going to ensure that we—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I know that we have one party that doesn't have a plan. We have a new party; we'd like to hear what that new party will have to say. Then from the third party, they don't even talk about their plan anymore. We will ensure that we talk about our plan so everybody in this province knows that they'll be getting 25% off before summer.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Everybody in Ontario will be shocked when they see their bill. They'll be shocked to learn that they're now paying for the Liberals' advertising to be delivered right to their doorstep, by law, because the Liberals are putting it in legislation, in regulation, to put the advertising for that party into people's bills.

People expected so much better from this Premier, but time and time again, they have been let down. Instead of forcing electricity companies to advertise her borrowing scheme, will the Liberal Premier instead put her energy into coming up with a plan that helps people instead of helping her political party and herself?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, 800,000 families in this province will see a 40% to 50% reduction. Thank you to the Premier and this government for bringing forward legislation that will help families. Every single household in this province, and 500,000 small businesses and farms, will receive a 25% reduction on average come summer when we can get this legislation passed.

But what really is bothersome is that last week the NDP confirmed that they would repeal the fair hydro plan. The admission was courtesy of the candidate in Sault Ste. Marie, and that comes as a shock to everyone. For months we've talked about the need to help families with the cost of electricity, but when we could have supported the plan to cut bills by 25%—for those with low incomes, between 40% and 50%—do you know what they said, Mr. Speaker?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We'll have to find out. The member from Niagara West–Glanbrook is warned.

You may now finish.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: As I was saying, do you know what they said, Mr. Speaker? "No."

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. I have to say, I look forward to forming a government and cleaning up the mess that these Liberals have made in our electricity system. In her political insert, the Premier isn't even telling the people of Ontario the whole story—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The member from Etobicoke North is warned, and plenty more awaiting. You're just sitting too close to me.

Carry on, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In her political insert, the Premier isn't even telling the people of Ontario the whole story—not even close. She's leaving out the part about her hydro borrowing plan wiping out any savings for families and costing Ontarians much, much more in the long run. Why is the Premier okay with telling Ontarians only half the story?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We've been very clear with the people of Ontario and we'll continue to be clear with the people of Ontario that we understand that the investments that we've made in the electricity system in this province had a cost associated with them, that that cost is being borne right now by this generation, that this is an asset that is going to last for many, many years and that we are going to spread the costs over a longer period. Like a mortgage, Mr. Speaker, there is a cost associated with doing that. We've been very clear from the moment we brought out this plan.

But this is a plan that is being implemented right now. People are going to see these reductions, they're already beginning to see these reductions and they will see full implementation by summer—if the legislation passes—not in 2020, not somewhere down the line if the federal government agrees to do something, maybe, sometime, as the NDP strategy would have had it. We're acting right now, helping people right now with their electricity bills, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here's a news flash, Speaker: She's so clear that nobody believes her anymore; nobody believes a word she says anymore. That's how clear she's been with the people of Ontario.

In about four years, Ontarians will see the whole truth of this plan in black and white in the form of higher hydro bills that are going to continue to skyrocket for the next 30 years. By neglecting to include this fact in her political insert, the Premier is showing Ontarians once again where her priorities lie: with herself and her party. The Premier is willing to tell Ontario families and businesses a half-truth in hopes that it is going to help her hang onto power for just a little bit longer, Speaker. That is the MO of this Premier and her Liberal government.

Will she show some leadership, will she show some respect for the people of this province and withdraw that odious regulation immediately?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: We're making sure that 25% is coming off everyone's bills, Mr. Speaker, right across the province—small businesses, farms and families.

I hear they keep talking about four years. For the next four years, it is true that we are holding the cost to the rate of inflation. That's good news in the short term and it's good news in the medium term, and when it comes to the long term, it is this party—the only party that actually has a plan that is working now, is going to work in the medium term and is going to work in the long term. Our long-term energy plan will continue to find ways to pull costs out of the system.

Their pamphlet, their idea is coming up with some type of pie-in-the-sky committee that will talk about things, Mr. Speaker. We're acting. We're making sure that we're reducing bills now, in the future, and we'll continue to look after Ontarians in the long term as well.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Ontarians are smart, and I think that they're going to see right through this Liberal hydro scheme, Speaker. They'll see through the Premier's \$45-billion hydro plan and they will see these political inserts for exactly what they are: a sneaky way for the Premier to try to save her own political skin leading up to the next election.

Will this Premier stop the political games once and for all? Stop the political games and withdraw this regulation immediately?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Let's be clear: The LDCs and the government advertise for price updates, for rate hearings, for programs, like the Ontario Electricity Support Program—which they're voting against—and the saveONenergy program which will help small businesses—which they're voting against.

It seems they like to say no to everything: no to that expanded Ontario Electricity Support Program; no to the new \$200-million Affordability Fund for families; and no to eliminating the delivery cost to on-reserve First Nations. I know Regional Chief Day and Chief Ava Hill have talked about how this fair hydro plan is going to change the lives of many First Nations peoples, and that is something that this Premier and this government is doing.

It seems, Mr. Speaker, that the party opposite has been watching a little bit too much Letterkenny. All they've been saying is, "It's a hard no."

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. It's not just the Financial Accountability Officer who weighed in on the government's hydro scheme. The Auditor General attended the hydro committee hearings last week and exposed yet another secret: The government plans on borrowing all these billions and not declar-

ing it on their books. Well, the Liberals got caught again. The auditor said, "For obvious reasons, this is not allowed under Canadian public sector accounting standards." They tried to bury all of these billions and not have the cost of their scheme show up anywhere. Did they think they were not going to get caught, Speaker?

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I ask the Premier: Why does it always take the Auditor General, the Financial Accountability Officer or the OPP for the people of Ontario to get to the truth?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question. Let's remind everyone in this House that the process that's being proposed is being endorsed by Pricewaterhouse-Coopers and by a number of accounting professionals in the system.

It's being enabled to protect the interests of ratepayers and consumers. It's enabling them to benefit from lower costs today, taking an asset that's registered and enabling it to be valued over a longer period of time, and that is what's being established. It's being established to reduce rates today and enable us to provide for a good system and a clean, reliable system throughout the future.

The member opposite may oppose that. He may wish not to provide for a lowering of rates. He may decide that it's not appropriate for an asset to be registered and extended over a period of time, but professionals in the accounting system have decided that that is appropriate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: That's not what the Auditor General decided. Two weeks ago, we asked the government why they co-opted OPG as the financing arm of this hydro scheme. We asked if it's because the billions that this hydro scheme will add to OPG's debt won't show up on the province's books. Despite all their denials, the Auditor General has confirmed that that's exactly what this government was planning. They plan to spend billions now, bury that money on OPG's books and not have the province account for any of this debt. But the Auditor General says, "No way." They got caught yet again.

I ask the Premier: Now that your scheme has been revealed, will you drop this charade with OPG and properly account for these billions on the province's books?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Again, I remind the member opposite that the process that has been delivered here has been done in consultations with numerous experts. Over 18 jurisdictions in North America have provided and utilized a similar accounting practice within the system.

We have been working with OPG, who, by the way, have the necessary expertise in assisting with the financing. They currently manage over \$18 billion in nuclear funds that can be used in infrastructure and expertise in this field to help administer long-term financing.

This is not a novel approach. This has been done in other jurisdictions. Duke Energy in North Carolina and Long Island Lighting in Long Island have done it as well. We are moving forward to help consumers, to help our people in Ontario, to help our businesses be more competitive.

The members opposite obviously don't have a plan. They don't want to invest. They've made that clear. Now, they're going to vote down something that's going to help the people of Ontario and our businesses, and that, Mr. Speaker, is a shame.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Premier: Last week, the Financial Accountability Officer confirmed what Ontarians already knew: The Premier's wrong-headed hydro borrowing scheme will end up costing families and businesses more in the long run. The borrowing scheme will add nearly \$45 billion to Ontario hydro bills after a few years of temporary relief.

In light of this confirmation, now there can be no doubt about the effect of this politically motivated scheme. Does the Premier plan to present Ontarians with a better option?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: We work very closely with the Financial Accountability Officer to provide information and analysis on our proposed fair hydro plan. We welcome his final report, because the FAO report confirms the foundation of the fair hydro plan: a cut in electricity rates by 25% on average for all residential consumers and as many as 500,000 small businesses and farms. What's more is that rate increases will be held to the rate of inflation for four years, while low-income Ontarians and those living in eligible rural and northern communities would see savings of up to 40% to 50%.

It's important to remember that the FAO's projection of electricity costs reflects the point-in-time estimate that demonstrates how we can ensure greater fairness and affordability in the short term and medium term. For the long term, we are focused on our long-term energy plan which will lay out our plan to continue to keep costs down.

Families in the province have asked for real immediate relief on their electricity bills, and that's why we are working to deliver the largest rate reduction in Ontario's history, if this legislation is passed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Premier: The FAO is a non-partisan, independent officer of the Legislature whose sole job is to protect the people of Ontario. He told us, without doubt, that Ontario families and businesses will be worse off in 10 years under the Premier's hydro scheme than they would be if there was no intervention at all. How can the Premier just ignore the FAO and forge ahead when she knows that her plan will end up doing more damage than good?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Again, a 25% reduction in the short term, holding the costs to inflation for the next four years and bringing forward the long-term energy plan will continue to keep the rates as low as possible for families, small businesses and farms right across our great province. As mentioned, it's important to remember the FAO's projection of electricity costs. It reflects a

point in time that estimates and demonstrates how we can ensure greater fairness and affordability in the short and medium term. The FAO report confirmed the foundation of the fair hydro plan, that we will be reducing rates by 25% on average for families, small businesses and farms right across our province. For those who live in rural and northern parts of our province, they will see a 40% to 50% reduction, thanks to us and the fair hydro plan. The opposition parties are voting against that.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones, l'honorable Marie-France Lalonde. Ces dernières années, je vois que la francophonie rayonne encore plus à travers toute la province, et je m'en réjouis. J'ai une communauté, par exemple, très forte et très engagée dans ma circonscription d'Etobicoke-Nord. Par exemple, récemment j'ai participé dans une cérémonie de bénédiction et d'ouverture officielle de l'École élémentaire catholique Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.

D'ailleurs, je me demandais quels sont les efforts que notre gouvernement a faits pour les Franco-Ontariens depuis ces dernières années. Est-ce que la ministre peut nous rappeler l'engagement du gouvernement pour soutenir les Franco-Ontariens?

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Avant tout, je veux remercier le député d'Etobicoke-Nord pour sa question, mais surtout pour son intérêt soutenu pour les Franco-Ontariens.

J'aimerais commencer en rappelant que notre gouvernement a toujours eu un engagement fort pour notre communauté franco-ontarienne dans toute sa diversité.

Nous nous sommes battus pour l'Hôpital Montfort menacé de fermeture par les conservateurs. Nous avons créé le poste de commissaire aux services en français, et nous l'avons rendu indépendant.

Nous avons reconnu officiellement le 25 septembre comme la journée des Franco-Ontariens. Nous avons commémoré à travers toute la province le 400^e anniversaire de présence francophone, et récemment, nous avons fait de l'Ontario un membre observateur à l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.

Monsieur le Président, je suis fière de notre plan et de notre vision d'avenir.

Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac): Question?

The member from Ottawa–Vanier.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Je remercie la ministre pour sa réponse. C'est important d'avoir un gouvernement qui continue toujours de démontrer son engagement pour les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes par des actions concrètes.

D'autres initiatives pourraient certainement soutenir notre francophonie d'aujourd'hui et de demain. La participation des Franco-Ontariens se reflète dans toutes les sphères de la société, et je peux certainement le constater dans le comté d'Ottawa–Vanier et partout en Ontario, de Timmins jusqu'à Sudbury.

La ministre peut-elle nous expliquer comment notre gouvernement travaille maintenant pour bien appuyer les francophones au quotidien?

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: J'aimerais remercier la députée d'Ottawa–Vanier pour sa question et aussi souligner que tout comme moi, la députée est une grande alliée de la francophonie en Ontario.

Pour notre gouvernement, des actions concrètes faisant avancer la francophonie, c'est ce qui nous préoccupe. Mais laissez-moi vous rappeler, monsieur le Président, d'autres initiatives concrètes pour notre communauté francophone.

L'an dernier, la première ministre a prononcé des excuses en Chambre, un geste fort salué par nos communautés. Nous allons lancer très bientôt un fonds communautaire pour les francophones, et nous continuons d'ouvrir de nouvelles écoles francophones partout à travers la province. Nous travaillons fort pour améliorer l'accès à la justice, et nous comptons aujourd'hui 26 régions désignées, ce qui nous permet de couvrir 80 % des francophones de la province.

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Monsieur le Président, je travaille fort aussi avec le ministre de la Santé pour améliorer l'offre de services en français et aussi—merci beaucoup. Je continuerai la prochaine fois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Merci. New question.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Premier. The government has wasted its fair share of taxpayer dollars, but we might just have a new gold standard or, should I say, a big new yellow standard? New information shows that the Liberals have spent \$200,000 for a rubber duck to be parked in Toronto's waterfront. What does a rubber duck have to do with celebrating Canada's 150th birthday? Mr. Speaker, was, and I quote, "Kathleen's rubber ducky" really worth \$200,000?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: I'd like to thank the member opposite for his question, Speaker, and just note that on this side of the House we're not ducking any of these questions. The reason for that is, this celebration is part of the 150th anniversary of our province and our country, a fact of which we on this side of the House are enormously proud.

I thank the member for his question because it allows me the opportunity to clarify on a number of fronts. Number one, we're supporting the Redpath Waterfront Festival through \$121,325, and that's in Celebrate Ontario funding. Why is that important? Because for every dollar we spend, it triggers about \$20 worth of ancillary investments, and we know that's important.

It's also important to note that this festival is an annual summer event that provides on-land and on-water programming for people of all ages. We're looking forward

to taking part in that celebration. We know this was an important investment to make.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Again to the Premier: That answer is really quacking me up. One giant rubber ducky—\$200,000 out of taxpayers' pockets? It's an absurd waste of taxpayers' dollars. It is an absolute clusterduck.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'd ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I withdraw.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I hope you can tell I'm not happy. You are on the W.

Carry on.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you, Speaker. People are already treading water, trying to pay their bills, and you float this rubber ducky right in their faces? Mr. Speaker, how out of touch is this Liberal government?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister?

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: You know, Speaker, it's interesting when the member opposite raises an issue about investments in our society, because this is a classic case of pouring cold water on an important festival that brings jobs and investment not just to Toronto, but to cities across the province.

Furthermore, our investment in this festival, which does include this historic duck—and who doesn't like ducks? Again, not ducking the question, Speaker, I'm not against ducks. Perhaps the member opposite doesn't like ducks. I'm all about them. Perhaps we should ask the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, who also likes ducks. We like this kind of thing.

But it's important to note that people from across this province this summer are going to celebrate in hundreds of thousands of ways. We're absolutely behind them. This particular festival is going to be leveraged by other funding, the member should know, that is also creating jobs and opportunities right across Ontario.

Again, Speaker, we're not quacking about anything. We're going to have fun this summer, and this is exactly the kind of investment we should be making as a government.

Interjections.

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

New question.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question's to the Premier.

Interjection.

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

Finish, please.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much. My question is to the Premier. The Changing Workplaces Review—Final Report is out. There's no getting around it now. Hard-working Ontarians have waited 14 years for

this Liberal government to acknowledge the struggles they face every day to balance work and families and bills that keep rising.

Union jobs are good jobs, and we believe that it should be easier for more Ontarians to join unions. New Democrats have long called for a return to card-based union certification and first-contract arbitration.

Will the Premier commit to implementing, without further delay, card-based union certification and first-contact arbitration protection today?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the honourable member for that question. Certainly it is on a lot of people's minds these days. The Changing Workplaces Review is complete. It was released to the public last week, Speaker, and tomorrow you're going to see a response from the government to that report.

The advisers, in my opinion, have done an incredible job canvassing the variety of opinions that are out there on things like scheduling, on things like unionization, card-based certification, remedial certification and hours of work—all the things that have changed in the last 20 to 25 years since we looked at these acts, Speaker.

The world of work has changed. It has shifted underneath our feet, and what we need to do is ensure that the legislation we put in place mirrors the realities of the workplace today.

There are a number of people out there who are struggling and who need to be assisted by some changes. I'm hoping that when we see the response from the government tomorrow it's going to move us forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Days off without reprisals is a start, but there is no ban on replacement workers in these recommendations. There is no automatic access to first-contract arbitration. And millions of part-time, temporary, even full-time and multiple job holders are struggling to support their families—58% of whom are women, according to a United Way study. They deserve the benefit of paid sick days and a \$15 minimum wage.

Will this government commit today—because they might not have a chance after the next election to do so—to implementing paid sick days for every Ontario worker? And will the Premier, without delay—even after 14 years—commit to bringing in a \$15 minimum wage for the workers in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Clearly, action is needed in order to make sure that the benefits of the incredible growing economy we have right now in the province of Ontario—we're leading the G7. Unemployment is at the lowest it's been in a number of years. The economy is growing. It's doing well. We need to make sure that every Ontarian has the ability to share in that prosperity, Speaker.

The response that will be coming forward tomorrow is going to ensure that hard-working Ontarians get treated with fairness, with decency and respect in the workplace. There are a number of recommendations around wages, around scheduling.

You'll have a full response from the government tomorrow. I suspect, Speaker, you're going to see that it meets the needs of the province of Ontario. I think that once those people who are feeling a little insecure these days see the response from this Premier and this government, they will feel a lot more confident and secure at work.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the President of the Treasury Board. Our government committed to balancing the budget in 2017-18, and we delivered that balanced budget.

In 2009, when the recession hit, we said that our government would take a fair and balanced approach that focused on growing the economy and delivering the best possible value for every single dollar spent. For eight years in a row, our government beat deficit targets while improving the services that matter most to Ontarians.

We have created over 700,000 jobs since the recession, and now the unemployment rate has dropped to 5.8%. That's the lowest unemployment rate in 16 years, Mr. Speaker.

Canada's big banks are forecasting that Ontario will lead—let me repeat: will lead—the country in economic growth this year, while economic success is being felt across all sectors, including manufacturing, real estate, finance and technology.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the member for Kingston and the Islands. In order to balance the budget, we've been very diligently managing the growth in program spending. Over the past four years, we've held the annual growth in spending to 1.4% while continuing to invest in priority programs and services like health care and education.

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In fiscal 2014-15, Treasury Board identified \$250 million in efficiencies and reduced administrative overhead without affecting front-line services. In fiscal 2015-16, we identified a number of major initiatives to modernize public services and we met our \$500-million savings target. We continue to realize savings by undergoing changes supported by the establishment of our Centre of Excellence for Evidence-Based Decision Making Support.

We will—

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

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: The PCs voted against our budget. Instead of investing in Ontarians, the PCs are desperately trying to not talk about our recent budget and all the important things that we're doing, all the important investments that we're making for Ontarians in their everyday lives. They keep repeating claims that our budget isn't balanced, flying in the face of facts.

We're helping seniors cover the cost of public transit by introducing the Ontario Seniors' Public Transit Tax

Credit. We're increasing support for the most vulnerable through ODSP and OW by investing \$480 million more in the programs. And we're launching a basic income pilot to see if there's a better way to provide income security for people. The PCs voted against every single one of these items.

Minister, can you please tell us more about what this budget does for Ontarians?

Hon. Liz Sandals: It was indeed very disappointing to see the PCs vote against the budget. We're making medicine free for children and youth 24 and under so that no child in this province faces financial barriers to getting healthy. We're lowering electricity bills, on average, by 25% to make people's electricity bills fairer. Through the Fair Housing Plan, we're making it easier to buy and rent a home. We're providing free tuition for 210,000 low- and middle-income students. We're creating 100,000 more affordable quality child care spaces to help families in their everyday lives. So Speaker, I ask the members opposite, which of these initiatives do you not support? Which ones would you not invest in? Which ones would you cut?

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Earlier this month, in Ottawa, the federal Minister of Natural Resources was asked a simple question: "What is your government doing to support lumber remanufacturers?" His answer: "What is a lumber remanufacturer?"

Mr. Speaker, I know what a lumber remanufacturer is. I have visited their facilities and heard their grave concerns for the future of their businesses. Does this minister know what a lumber remanufacturer is?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: It's interesting that I also met with the lumber remanufacturers in Ontario and heard their concerns very clearly. On this side of the House, we've been taking stern action to make sure that our industry is protected here in the province of Ontario. We have increased our funding to be able to keep our workers working on roads in the Far North.

For the lumber remanufacturers themselves, they were able to outline their concerns. They know that we have hired chief negotiator Jim Peterson to be able to continue those conversations in the US. On this side of the House, all options are on the table. We sent a letter to Minister Carr months ago to be able to advocate for ensuring that we have a guaranteed loan program. We continue to keep that conversation going, especially with our lumber remanufacturers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the Minister of Natural Resources: The lumber remanufacturing sector is responsible for more than 4,400 full-time, permanent Ontario jobs. They're concerned with softwood lumber tariffs. Northern Ontarians have been asking for support from the Premier and the Minister of Natural Resources and they're hearing nothing but silence. The government is

failing them. They need their government to support them while they continue to create jobs and stimulate the economy. Speaker, will the minister explain why she's not doing her job and advocating to her counterpart in Ottawa for good Ontario jobs? Will the minister pledge her support to this small but vital softwood lumber sector today?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you for the supplementary. It is the federal government's negotiation that goes on south of the border. I'm not sure if the member opposite knows that.

But we on this side of the House are continuing to advocate. We have had continual dialogue with our federal and provincial colleagues. We all have chief negotiators who are down doing their business across the States. We have made sure that our business sector is speaking to business sectors across the border. We have ensured that we have people at the table talking union-to-union.

We know exactly what these lumber manufacturers are underneath. We have not taken anything off the table yet. We are continuing to support our industry. We are continuing to look at all options on the table, and we continue those dialogues to ensure that we have a strong softwood lumber sector in this province and we continue to support those lumber remanufacturers.

NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Last week in Sault Ste. Marie, I announced that an NDP government would fund the province's fair share to keep the Huron Central Railway line to Sudbury open for business.

This rail line is essential for protecting and creating good jobs in the Soo. Does the Premier plan to keep this rail line operating?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Of course, as I've said many times in this chamber and in every corner of the province, we are a government that is absolutely committed to continuing to make the right kinds of investments, strategic investments in the infrastructure that we need in every corner of Ontario, whether we're talking about northern Ontario, whether we're talking about the south: highways, and all forms of transportation.

That's why, in this year's budget, we literally added billions of dollars to our infrastructure plan, so that over the next, I believe, 12 years we're talking about \$130 billion-plus that will flow through this program out to the 444 communities across the province. I'd be happy to provide a more extensive answer in the follow-up question from the leader of the third party.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I look forward to the details from the Minister of Transportation or the Premier, because the fact of the matter is that this rail line is the rail line that 65% of the goods that are produced at Essar

Steel travel on; 65% of the goods that are on that rail line are from Essar Steel. So we need some details, Speaker, because without a firm commitment from this Premier and her Liberal government to help fund the improvements to keep this line open, people in the Soo will continue to be devastated by job losses.

Too many young people have already left the Soo because of the lack of jobs and the uncertainty that this Premier's policies have created in that part of Ontario. So, will the Premier actually step up and undo some of the damage that her Liberals have already done by agreeing to fund the province's fair share of the HCRY rail line?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm happy to take the follow-up question from the leader of the NDP, and also happy, from the Ministry of Transportation's perspective, to have a conversation here on this side with my colleague the Minister of Northern Development and Mines around this specific request.

There will be an opportunity, I'm sure, to provide additional details with respect to the specific question that's being asked today. But I will say, Speaker, that in my time here in this Legislature, not only as the Minister of Transportation but as an MPP proud to represent Vaughan, year after year, this government, our Premier and our finance minister have literally come forward on an annual basis with budgets that have contained billions of dollars to support—whether we're talking about goods-movement transportation or commuter transportation, almost every year without exception—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: You shut down the Northlander.

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

Carry on.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thanks, Speaker. As I was saying, almost without exception, the leader of the third party and members of her caucus have consistently voted against budgets that contain funding to support the transportation network that we are working hard to build across the province of Ontario.

Now, shockingly, Speaker, on the eve of a by-election in Sault Ste. Marie, this question comes across the floor to me. The timing is certainly curious.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the Minister of the Status of Women. This month is Sexual Assault Prevention Month. During this month, we must address the causes of sexual assault and violence, which affect the lives of one in three women, and we look ahead to the work that needs to be done to create an inclusive and safer Ontario. I know that we have done extraordinary

work to prevent sexual assaults by focusing on ways to raise awareness in the provincial sexual violence and harassment action plan.

1140

I remember, almost 25 years ago, getting my first white ribbon from then-Councillor Jack Layton to help raise awareness amongst men of sexual assault against women. Speaker, through you to the minister, can she please update the House on the initiatives that are taking place across the province to raise awareness about consent and sexual violence and harassment against women?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I would like to thank the member for Beaches–East York for this very important question. All Ontarians should feel safe from sexual violence and harassment in their communities, workplaces and homes, but the reality is that many women and girls just aren't safe in their communities. Women are 11 times more likely to be sexually victimized, and this is absolutely unacceptable. That's why it's important for us to recognize Sexual Assault Prevention Month and the work being done province-wide to end sexual violence and harassment.

Earlier this month, I attended the regional sexual violence conference in Mississauga hosted by the Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse. I heard about some incredible work happening on the ground to combat sexual violence and harassment and to keep women safe. Organizations like the Amelia Rising Sexual Assault Centre are working hard to combat sexual violence and harassment. They are holding healing workshops, talks and exhibits to highlight the importance of supporting survivors.

I'll tell you about more later.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I thank the minister for the important work that she's doing on this very pressing file.

I'm very pleased to hear about the events that are taking place across the province. It's important that we raise awareness and keep the discussion going. Without organizations such as the ones the minister has now mentioned and our front-line service providers, survivors would not be getting the kinds of supports that they need.

But we all know we have an important role to play and that we need organizations to work with us to further raise awareness. As part of our new It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment, we created the Creative Engagement Fund.

We have organizations such as le Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions, which, through its project entitled "Rights First," is creating a social change in preventing violence and sexual harassment by creating and presenting a series of three short films.

Will the minister please inform us about this important work and the successful recipients from the engagement fund?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I want to thank the member again for this important question and for his advocacy on this vital issue. In order to eliminate sexual violence and harassment, we know we need to raise awareness and build supports for this issue not just

during the month of May. Recently, I had the honour to do just that by announcing the new recipients of the Creative Engagement Fund.

Art speaks in a language everyone understands and can have incredible healing powers, so I'm proud that our three-year commitment to this initiative has expanded to fund 20 projects across the province. These projects are important. They spark meaningful dialogue in communities and help eliminate sexual violence and harassment in homes, workplaces and society.

In addition to the four new Toronto projects, we have added projects throughout Ontario in Mississauga, Peterborough, Hamilton, Woodbridge and London, doing our best to build support—

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

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr. Lorne Coe: To the Minister of Education: Workplace violence against Ontario's teachers in our classrooms continues to grow, and 30% of teachers have said that they have received no training related to workplace violence. Most alarmingly, 55% of teachers say they have been pressured by their employer not to report violent incidents.

Is it the policy of the Ministry of Education that violent incidents which occur between a teacher and their student in a classroom should go unreported?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. I know that this is a very serious issue that we take very seriously. We want to ensure that our schools and our school boards are safe places for all students and our education workers. That is why we partner with and we work together with all of our education partners on this issue of violence in schools, because we want to ensure that there are real solutions put forward.

You raised the question of training. This is an area that we are focused on. In fact, we have done training with the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario for professional development training for teachers. Our two-year curriculum for all new teachers includes aspects of classroom management to ensure that our schools are safe places for all education workers and all students.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Back to the Minister of Education: A recent Global News TV report highlighted the violence that students and teachers experience in classrooms at Durham District School Board schools.

Teachers should be able to teach, students should not be afraid to go to school, and parents should be confident in their children's safety.

When will this Liberal government address violence in classrooms and protect Ontario students and teachers?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: That's why we're investing in our schools here in Ontario. We want to ensure that we create the best opportunities possible for all students to receive an education. We have a policy of equitable, inclusive classrooms in our schools. We want to ensure that

all students of all abilities are welcome in classrooms across Ontario.

If you look at the investments that we're making in the member opposite's own school board, the Durham school board, which I have had the opportunity to visit—I went to Notre Dame secondary school, and what a great school, with Richardson attached. It's a community hub school. What a fabulous campus. You see the learning that is happening in those schools—\$98 million in more funding for special education for Durham school boards.

We are taking this issue of violence in schools very—

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

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Wayne Gates: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

A few years ago, the Fort Erie Race Track was facing closure. The residents of the town rallied and were able to come together to ensure the track survived.

Premier, you yourself have committed to rural Ontario and have also said that you're committed to ensuring the Fort Erie Race Track stays open. The new stabling policy put forward by Woodbine Entertainment will put the Fort Erie Race Track out of business. The mayor of Fort Erie and the CEO of Fort Erie Race Track have both written to you regarding this stabling policy. The stabling policy and the introduction of \$5,000 claimers and \$6,200 claimers are designed to put the Fort Erie Race Track out of business, pure and simple. We're going to lose a thousand jobs in that town.

Premier, will you step in today and stand up for small horse racing tracks in Ontario and the thousands of livelihoods that depend on you stepping in and stopping this destructive stabling policy?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the member for Niagara Falls—I've got the letter that he delivered to me. Thank you very much for that and for bringing this to my attention. I know that the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is going to be meeting with the member. The member has asked whether there could be a broader meeting with the mayor of Fort Erie and the CEO of Fort Erie Race Track, and we're prepared to do that. I think that it would also be a good idea for the Minister of Finance to be part of that conversation.

Mr. Speaker, I did stand up for racing in this province. We changed course—if I can say—and we made sure that there was a strategy that would allow small race-tracks to survive. I want to continue on that track, and I will absolutely commit to work with the member and with our colleagues to make sure that happens.

REPORT, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, during the recess, the following report was tabled: on May 24, 2017, a report from the Financial

Accountability Officer entitled *An Assessment of the Fiscal Impact of the Province's Fair Hydro Plan*.

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I also beg to inform the House that, during the recess, the following report was tabled: on May 23, 2017, the report of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario concerning the review of expense claims covering the period April 1, 2016, to March 31, 2017, under the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002.

VISITORS

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that we have a prominent constituent of Mississauga South here with us today, who also happens to be the mayor of the entire city of Mississauga. Please welcome Mayor Bonnie Crombie to the Legislature.

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: I just noticed a constituent of mine up in the west public gallery: Mr. Tim Moloney, who is a superintendent with the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Roman Catholic separate school board. Mr. Moloney.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: I'd like to welcome the Most Reverend Bishop Marcel Damphousse. He's the former bishop of Alexandria-Cornwall and he's the current bishop of Sault Ste. Marie. Welcome.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'd like to wish the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport happy birthday.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 31 relating to the allocation of time on Bill 68, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to municipalities.

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

The division bells rang from 1151 to 1156.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On May 18, 2017, Ms. Jaczek moved government notice of motion number 31, relating to allocation of time on Bill 68. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura

Duguid, Brad

McMeekin, Ted

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

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Gretzky, Lisa	Oosterhoff, Sam
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Sattler, Peggy
Barrett, Toby	Hatfield, Percy	Scott, Laurie
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Smith, Todd
Brown, Patrick	Jones, Sylvia	Tabuns, Peter
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	MacLeod, Lisa	Taylor, Monique
Clark, Steve	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Coe, Lorne	McDonell, Jim	Vanthof, John
Fedeli, Victor	McNaughton, Monte	Walker, Bill
Fife, Catherine	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John
Gates, Wayne	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff
Gélinas, France	Nicholls, Rick	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 51; the nays are 38.

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

Motion agreed to.

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 32, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 114, An Act to provide for Anti-Racism Measures.

Call in the members. This will be a five—

Interjections: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote? Carried.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 51; the nays are 38.

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

Motion agreed to.

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

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We are dismissed, but I need to make this announcement. Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Whitby–Oshawa has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to

his question given by the Minister of Education concerning violence in classrooms. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

We are now dismissed.

The House recessed from 1200 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm very pleased to welcome former MPP Frank Klees to the Legislature. He's in the members' west gallery. I had the opportunity to spend a lot of quality time with him on public accounts committee in the last couple of years he served here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I am going to take the opportunity to do what the Speaker always does, which is to introduce former members who are in the House. So I will now stand up and introduce, from Newmarket–Aurora—but I'm going to get the right details so that he gets full privilege and honour of this wonderful introduction. He's smiling like a little Cheshire cat over there: Mr. Frank Klees from York–Mackenzie in the 36th, Oak Ridges in the 37th and 38th, and Newmarket–Aurora in the 39th and 40th. I got that right. Mr. Frank Klees, we're glad you're in the House.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GLENGARRY CELTIC MUSIC HALL OF FAME

Mr. Jim McDonell: Last Friday night, I attended the 2017 Glengarry Celtic Music Hall of Fame induction dinner. I can reassure you that Celtic music and dance are still very alive and vibrant in Glengarry county today, a product of the Scottish and French cultures as they gathered as neighbours over the past 200 years.

As a high school student, a night out often involved the two-step to the music of Sylvester MacDonald and the Clansmen at the Bonnie Glen, or the Brigadoons at Bob's Hotel in Dalhousie.

The night started with the piping in of this year's inductees, Darrel MacLeod, Hughie McDonell, Lloyd MacCuaig and the Ranger family—all very active in the county's music scene over the past 100 years.

After a terrific dinner, the crowd sat back and were entertained by numerous musicians and singers, including the Glengarry Fiddlers and Hughie McDonell home from Nova Scotia, performing a medley of some of the 60 songs he had written, many about the memories of growing up in Glengarry county.

It was a wonderful night, and I want to thank President Isabel Clark and her volunteer team for a great and entertaining night.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Since the member has a couple of seconds, I'll just let him know that he was mentioned in our speak with the Ontario–Quebec delegation at Niagara-on-the-Lake. A McDonell was one

of the first legislators; 225 years ago, a McDonnell was there. He was so dedicated to his job, he tied himself up to a horse so that he could get there.

If you tie yourself up to a horse and get here, I'm quitting.

DELTA SECONDARY SCHOOL TIME CAPSULE

Mr. Paul Miller: I can guarantee there was a Miller there somewhere.

On Friday, May 26, 1967, the students at Delta Secondary School in East Hamilton buried a time capsule on the northeast lawn of the school which was intended to be opened 50 years later. And 1967 was Canada's centennial year. The Hamilton Tiger-Cats won the Grey Cup. It was the last time the Toronto Maple Leafs won the Stanley Cup. Human feet had not yet left their mark on the moon—a lot has changed, Speaker.

Last Friday, May 26, 2017, I had the pleasure of joining Delta Alumni Association and the Delta school administration as they honoured those students' wishes. There were many friendly and familiar faces to be found in that auditorium. It was also a good fortune to look out into the crowd to many faces from the class of '67 themselves.

Fifty years later to the day, the time capsule was opened to reveal a treasure trove from 1967. Despite some water damage over the decades, hundreds of items remained intact. There were photos, class lists, letters from politicians, and several letters and sketches from students who tried to predict what 2017 would look like.

Congratulations and thank you to the students and staff of Delta, past and present.

I'd also like to add that in June, Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School in my riding is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Hamilton students of today are privileged to have so many links with Canada's centennial year.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Last week, I had the pleasure of visiting Cameco, a world leader in uranium production, in Port Hope, a community in my riding. Today, I proudly stand to commend both Cameco and Bruce Power, who recently announced a long-term arrangement in support of Ontario's Long-Term Energy Plan. The two companies extended their fuel supply arrangement for the next 10 years. Cameco will also provide reactor components for all six of Bruce Power's major component-replacement projects starting in 2020.

This agreement helps to ensure that Bruce Power continues to provide low-cost electricity to families and business to 2064 while providing long-term economic benefits to the Northumberland region. The deal gives additional security for more than 700 people working the fuel service operation in Port Hope, Cobourg and Blind River, where their mining operation is. That's a huge

contribution that will be felt by thousands in Northumberland—Quinte West and indeed across the province.

Bruce Power continues to provide 30% of Ontario's electricity at 30% below the average residential price. With agreements with partners such as Cameco, this means another 40 years of low-cost, emissions-free power to the province. This helps Ontario businesses stay competitive and helps Ontario families build a better future to 2064 and beyond. Congratulations to both organizations.

FREEMASONRY

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's my privilege to rise today in the Legislature and officially recognize two very special anniversaries this year. This year, 2017, marks the 162nd anniversary of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario and the 300th anniversary of Freemasons, who developed a central governing body under the United Grand Lodge of England in 1717. Central to the tenets of freemasonry is a belief in brotherly love, relief and truth, with charity to all mankind, no matter an individual's race, nationality, sect or condition. With more than 550 lodges and over 40,000 members in Ontario, the good works of freemasonry can be seen in every corner of our province.

On Saturday, June 3, to celebrate freemasonry's 300th year, the Masons of Ontario will be hosting open house celebrations in communities across this province. Speaker, please join with me in congratulating the membership of freemasonry on both their 162nd anniversary of freemasonry in Ontario and the 300th anniversary of the United Grand Lodge of England. As they continue to "take good men and make them better," may this great and time-honoured fraternity continue from strength to strength until time and circumstance shall be no more. So mote it be.

JEAN GAGNON

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today, I want to pay tribute to an incredible man. His name is Jean Gagnon. He died on May 1, 2017, at the age of 90. Jean dedicated over 60 years of his life fighting for health and safety and compensation for his fellow sintering plant workers and their families, all victims of an industrial disease that was only recognized because of his persistence and his determination.

Jean was a health and safety activist way before that position was recognized. Jean had no medical training and even less epidemiological training, but he saw what his co-workers were exposed to and he could recognize the cough that they all had. The sintering plant had been jam-packed with five machines where there really was only room for three, so there was no way to contain the nickel dust. Workers could not see one another if they were more than 20 feet apart because of the dust. The nickel dust was so toxic that some women who never set foot in the sintering plant got sick just by washing their husband's work clothes that were covered in that dust.

The sintering plant is now demolished, and no one who ever worked there has survived. Jean got those sick workers the care that they needed and their families the compensation that they deserved so that these women don't live their remaining lives in poverty because they looked after their sick husbands, who died too young.

For everything you've done, Jean, merci. Thank you.

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SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I'm happy to rise today as we mark Sexual Assault Prevention Month. As a government, we recognize the devastating impact of sexual violence. We are committed to a society where survivors of sexual assault feel safe coming forward, and supported. That's why our government introduced It's Never Okay, our \$41-million action plan to stop sexual violence and harassment.

We have launched a free, independent legal advice pilot program for survivors of sexual assault. We have increased funding to the 42 sexual assault centres across Ontario by \$1.75 million, for a total of \$14.8 million per year. And we have passed legislation removing barriers for survivors of sexual assault to start a civil action or claim.

With all that said, I believe that there is more that we can be doing in this province to ensure justice for survivors of sexual violence and harassment. That is why I introduced the judicial sexual assault education act to ensure that judicial candidates have proper training on these issues before they are appointed to the bench.

This training for judicial candidates would complement the enhanced education and training for crown and victims services workers, which has already provided special training to 600 crowns, who received training in 2016 on conducting sexual violence prosecutions, and improved data collection to help identify areas that require attention.

I know that is always more we can do to ensure justice.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: The recent labour snapshot report released by the government in March shows that youth employment is headed in the wrong direction. From 2006 to 2015, employment for youth declined from 14.9% to 13.5%—yet another example of how life has become harder under the Liberals.

Too many of my peers are caught in a vicious cycle of underemployment, unemployment and precarious work. They want more than jobs; they want careers, and they want opportunity.

Employers also need the next generation of skilled workers to succeed, because there is currently a significant misalignment between the number of post-secondary

graduates' subject areas and employers' needs, threatening the future of both our youth and our economy.

Ontario PC leader Patrick Brown and the Ontario PC caucus understand that investing in our youth now is at the centre of Ontario's future success. We need to ensure that our students have the best education possible, and close the skills gap that is estimated to cost Ontario's economy up to \$24.3 billion in forgone GDP a year and \$3.7 billion in provincial tax revenues.

There is much that government can and should do to overcome this problem. We can bridge the skills gap by first bridging the information gap. Collecting and sharing better labour market information to inform the decision-making process of students, educators and businesses will lead to better planning.

When we invest in young minds, it's an investment in our future. Solving the skills mismatch is key to Ontario's resurgence as an economic powerhouse in Canada and across North America.

WINDSOR SPITFIRES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my pleasure to rise as the MPP for Windsor West on behalf of my constituents, as well as on behalf of the member from Windsor–Tecumseh and his constituents, to congratulate the 2017 Memorial Cup champions, the Windsor Spitfires.

This past week, we've seen hockey teams come from all over to compete in the Memorial Cup. Although the Windsor Spitfires were seen as the underdogs, they really put up a strong fight in each game, and proved that Windsor has spirit.

In 2009 the Windsor Spitfires won the Memorial Cup, and then again in 2010 they were Memorial Cup winners. We had to wait a few years, but we saw this weekend that the Spitfires still have what it takes to play a good game, to bring their best game even though they were the underdogs, and make our entire city proud. In fact, last night, I think we could say that the Windsor Spitfires scored their hat trick when they brought home their third Memorial Cup.

Some people in this House may not realize that there was, for a very short period of time, a Gretzky who played for the Windsor Spitfires. Now, it wasn't me, and they certainly wouldn't want it to be me, but I can tell you that I was there with them, both at the games and then last night here in Toronto, in spirit, cheering them on. The crowds were electric. The pride in our community is great. I want to thank everyone in our community who made it happen and congratulate the Windsor Spitfires on a well-played tournament.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And the member is a huge fashion statement today. Thank you.

ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN INDEPENDENCE

Ms. Soo Wong: Today is a special day for the Armenian community. On May 28, 1918, the First

Republic of Armenia declared independence, creating a new and independent Armenian state for the first time since the Middle Ages.

Celebrating the declaration of independence of the First Republic of Armenia is of great importance to Armenian communities here in Ontario and around the world. For many, it represents an opportunity to celebrate the collective identity of Armenian people, as well as a chance to commemorate the courage and perseverance of Armenian leaders throughout history who fought for freedom and the right to self-government and who deeply valued democratic rule.

The anniversary of the First Republic of Armenia's independence day also allows us an opportunity to reflect on the contributions of Armenian Canadians to our province. Ontario has prospered because of the courage, strength and resilience of communities like the Armenians who have built up this province.

I'm proud to represent Scarborough–Agincourt, a diverse riding with a thriving Armenian community. One of the great privileges I have as a member of provincial Parliament is representing the members of the community, celebrating their successes and also advocating on their behalf.

I would like to thank the Armenian Canadian community here in Ontario for their contribution to this province, especially leading the way in bringing Syrian refugees to Ontario.

I want to wish them a great day as they celebrate the declaration of independence of the First Republic of Armenia.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I beg leave to present a report on the Long-Term Care Home Quality Inspection Program, section 3.09 of the 2015 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I'm pleased to table the committee's report, entitled Long-Term Care Home Quality Inspection Program (Section 3.09, 2015 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario).

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the permanent membership of the committee at the time this report was written: Vice-Chair Lisa MacLeod, Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon, Han Dong, John Fraser, Percy Hatfield, Randy Hillier and Monte Kwinter.

The committee extends its appreciation to officials from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for their attendance at the hearings.

The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations by the Office of the Auditor General, the Clerk of the Committee and staff in the Legislative Research Service.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Introduction of bills? Member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Mr. Speaker, if I could just have leave for one second to introduce my guests before I move this motion. Joey Gagne is president of the Provincial Towing Association of Ontario. We also have Elliott Silverstein, manager of government relations for South Central Ontario CAA. Thank you for joining us today.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LE COMITÉ CONSULTATIF D'AMÉLIORATION DES RÉSEAUX DE TRANSPORT

Mrs. Martow moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 136, An Act to require the establishment of a Transportation Systems Improvement Advisory Committee / Projet de loi 136, Loi exigeant la constitution d'un comité consultatif d'amélioration des réseaux de transport.

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. Gila Martow: This is just a bill to set up a transportation systems improvement advisory committee to require the Minister of Transportation, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police to establish this committee to do the following:

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(1) Analyze highway incident management and to develop a comprehensive program for the improvement of highway incident management;

(2) Inquire into and report on a system of accessible parking for persons with a disability; and

(3) Consider how to optimize the use of technology to make highways, roads and transportation infrastructure safer and more accessible.

STOP THE CALLS ACT, 2017
LOI DE 2017 SUR LES APPELS
INDÉSIRABLES

Mr. Baker moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 137, An Act to prohibit unsolicited phone calls for the purpose of selling, leasing, renting or advertising prescribed products or services / *Projet de loi 137, Loi interdisant les appels non sollicités visant à vendre, à donner à bail, à louer ou à annoncer des produits ou services prescrits.*

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.

Mr. Yvan Baker: This bill enacts the Stop the Calls Act, 2017. The act establishes a prohibition for unsolicited phone calls for the purpose of selling, leasing, renting or advertising prescribed products or services. Any contract entered into as a result of such contravention would be void, and the consumer would be entitled to repayment for the product or service and, if applicable, to the payment of any reasonable costs incurred in uninstalling and returning the product and, if appropriate, in obtaining and installing a replacement. If the refund isn't paid, the consumer may commence an action in court, and the consumer would be entitled, if successful, to twice the money paid under the contract, in addition to the reasonable costs referred to above.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

SEXUAL VIOLENCE
AND HARASSMENT

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of the Status of Women, I'm honoured to rise today to recognize the month of May as Sexual Assault Prevention Month in Ontario. We know that here and around the world, people are struggling in silence with the pain and trauma of sexual violence. We know that sexual assault is a reality for many women and girls. And we know that sexual violence is unacceptable.

Sexual Assault Prevention Month provides an opportunity to shine a light on the problems of sexual assault, harassment and gender-based violence, and their devastating impact on our society as a whole. It's an opportunity to acknowledge the survivors of violence who will not or cannot speak for themselves. It's an opportunity for

government to listen and to support change. And it's an opportunity for society to say, "Enough."

Throughout the month of May, women's shelters, sexual assault centres and advocates have been adding their voices in their communities on the need to end sexual assaults—and we've listened. They will build on this momentum into the first week of June, when we recognize Sexual Harassment Awareness Week.

Speaker, we first declared Sexual Harassment Awareness Week 10 years ago, in 2007. For a decade now, we have used this week to increase understanding of the negative, painful impact of sexual harassment. It's important at this time to honour and recognize women and girls who have experienced this type of assault. Work has continued during those years through crisis centres, shelters, and public awareness campaigns.

Almost every day, we hear of women and girls who have survived sexual violence and harassment, but, tragically, we sometimes hear the stories of those who did not survive. And for every story that we do hear, there are almost 100 incidents that go unreported. The fact is, sexual violence and harassment still happens far too often, and causes serious long-term trauma for survivors and their families.

The statistics are chilling: One in every three women in Canada will experience some form of sexual assault in their lifetime, and sexual assault victimization rates are five times higher for women under the age of 35.

The reality is that the vast majority of people who report incidents of sexual violence are women, and that means women and girls in our province do not always feel safe. This is not acceptable and it will not be tolerated.

All Ontarians deserve to feel safe from sexual violence and harassment in their communities, workplaces, homes and schools. Speaker, that's why our government released *It's Never Okay* in March of 2015. *It's Never Okay* is our action plan to stop sexual violence and harassment in Ontario, and is an important step on a very long road. It's about helping more survivors feel that it's safe to come forward, and supporting them when they do. It's about strengthening our laws to better protect people at work, in our communities and on our campuses. And it's about challenging and changing deeply rooted attitudes and behaviours that are the core of sexual violence and harassment in our society.

Actions lead to change. Speaker, in the past two years, our action plan has delivered on key initiatives from across government. Our *#WhoWillYouHelp* and *#ItsNeverOkay* public awareness education campaigns have challenged existing attitudes and sparked discussions about sexual violence and harassment in Ontario, across Canada, and around the world. These campaigns have reached more than 85 million and 56 million people respectively, and received international recognition.

But these campaigns are only part of our efforts to challenge and change the long-standing attitudes and culture about sexual violence and harassment. We are training front-line workers in the hospitality, health,

education and community services sectors to help them recognize and respond to sexual violence and harassment. We're providing survivors with enhanced information and supports through a pilot program that empowers them by giving them access to free legal advice regardless of how much time has passed since the incident. And we are investing in 15 two-year pilot projects that train police to provide a survivor-centred response.

Speaker, the fact is that when it comes to sexual violence and harassment in Ontario, indigenous women are especially vulnerable. We have made important progress over the past year through Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women.

We recently expanded the I Am a Kind Man program, which empowers indigenous men and youth to take an active role in helping to end violence against women and girls in their own communities and allow them to acknowledge and resolve trauma in their own lives.

Mr. Speaker, we have also launched Ontario's Strategy to End Human Trafficking, and this past month, Ontario passed the Anti-Human Trafficking Act. These new laws will fight exploitation, support and protect survivors, and enhance awareness about this terrible crime. Throughout this work, we are continuing to support survivors by providing funding for hospital- and community-based services.

While we have made this important progress towards ending sexual violence and harassment in Ontario, we know there is more work to do. Our government understands that stopping sexual assault takes a long-term commitment, so we cannot do it alone. Real and significant improvement in our fight to end the disturbing presence of sexual violence and harassment in our society requires all Ontarians to work together.

Speaker, I want to take a moment to thank all of the individuals, communities and organizations across Ontario who have played a role in addressing the struggle to end gender-based violence, especially those survivors who have had the courage to speak up. To anyone who has ever spoken on behalf of the tireless efforts of front-line workers, you are reinforcing the message that sexual violence is never okay. The truth is, we all have a role to play in making our province a place where everyone lives in safety, where everyone is treated equally, free from the threat or fear of gender-based violence, and where everyone can feel and be secure.

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Speaker, we all have a role to play in saying to the survivors of sexual violence and harassment in every corner of the province: We see you. We hear you. We believe you. And we know what happened to you is wrong. You are not alone. We stand with you this month and every month, and we won't stop until we have put an end to sexual violence and harassment once and for all. Together, we can. Together, we will. Because it's never okay.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to add my voice, on behalf of my PC caucus colleagues, to the recognition of Sexual Assault Prevention Month. I thank the minister for her comments, but I will point out that this is a message she should have delivered in this chamber at the beginning of the month, not right at the very end of it.

Mr. Speaker, sexual assault is a very serious and, sadly, a very widespread issue in our society. Aside from expressing our words of encouragement and support for victims, we need to show real action. We have seen the explosion of human sex trafficking in our communities, which is a horrible form of modern-day slavery affecting mostly Canadian girls as young as 13 years old. We have seen our victim services organizations overwhelmed by victims desperately seeking help. In recent years we have also seen cases involving terrible sexual assaults dismissed by the courts, in some cases by judges who showed a shocking lack of sensitivity.

Unfortunately, we have seen too little action from this government in response to all of these critical issues. I know that Canadians and Ontarians are very concerned about recent stories of questionable court rulings in cases involving sexual assault. They don't understand why sexual criminals are being set free while victims are left vulnerable and deprived of justice. The reality is that we have shockingly low reporting rates and conviction rates well below 50% in sexual assault cases. That means something is wrong in our system.

One of the most obvious ways to improve this situation is to mandate training for judges, to make sure they understand the devastating impact of sexual violence on victims, and that they treat these cases with the highest sensitivity.

Former interim federal Conservative leader Rona Ambrose introduced legislation in the House of Commons that would require potential judges to have received sexual assault training in order to be considered for appointment. This reasonable and straightforward idea was widely supported across party lines. Even Prime Minister Trudeau supported Ms. Ambrose's bill, which has now become law for federally appointed judges. So I wonder: Why are the Premier and her government so opposed to doing the same thing at the provincial level? The Attorney General keeps suggesting that such a move would undermine judicial independence, but that just doesn't make any sense, given the federal example. In fact, requiring our provincially appointed judges to be trained to properly handle sexual assault cases would strengthen Ontarians' trust in our judicial system and protect survivors of sexual assault from being re-victimized. It would also encourage more victims to come forward to tell their stories. The passage of Rona Ambrose's legislation represents a real step in the right direction, and it's time that the Wynne government follows suit here in Ontario.

Aside from the court system, we also see the importance of having a well-resourced and flexible system for funding victim services organizations across the province. Unfortunately, the government doesn't even have a

clear funding formula in place. Victim services organizations tell me that they are severely under-resourced for the number of victims in need of support. Hope 24/7, for example, has over 100 people in urgent need of specialized care on a wait-list because of the government's lack of flexibility and compassion. We need this government to listen to Hope 24/7 and other service providers across Ontario and implement a more effective model for funding victim services in our province now.

Mr. Speaker, responding to sexual assault should be a top priority for all of us. I hope that the government will stop looking at this issue through a bureaucratic lens, as they have so far, and start looking through a lens of compassion. Instead of telling victims' organizations that they're doing "too much work," they should be finding better ways of supporting them in their important work.

In closing, the PC caucus will continue to pursue policies that combat sexual assault and protect survivors. We hope that the government will listen to our constructive proposals and work with us to truly help sexual assault survivors in our province.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to rise, as NDP women's issues critic, to speak to Sexual Assault Prevention Month, an annual initiative to highlight the ongoing and unacceptable reality of sexual violence in our communities. The month provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the sexual violence prevention strategies that are already in place and the supports to survivors that are currently available. More importantly, however, it is a time to identify the barriers that too many survivors continue to face in accessing supports, to develop new strategies to address these barriers and to strengthen prevention efforts.

We cannot begin to address a problem until we acknowledge that it exists. The reality is that one out of three Ontario women will experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime, often before they have reached the age of 25. Most will know the person who attacked them, and most will be attacked in spaces they believed were safe, such as post-secondary campuses, health care settings and at home. The overwhelming majority will not report their assault to the police. Of those who do, very few will choose to go to court. Even fewer will see their assailant convicted.

Any advancements that have been made over the past year to prevent sexual assault have been led by survivors, who bravely shared their stories despite the real possibility of continued harm through victim blaming, slut shaming and stigmatization. They have been achieved because of the relentless advocacy of front-line workers in sexual assault centres, rape crisis centres and other violence-against-women agencies across the province. They have been bolstered by the media, which has not only played a critical role in amplifying the voice of survivors but has also uncovered the harsh truths around sexual assault for those who experience it.

Here I want to acknowledge the work of Robyn Doolittle and the Globe and Mail for the comprehensive

20-month investigation revealing that one out of every five sexual assault complaints in Canada, nearly double the rate for physical assaults, are classified by police as "unfounded," considered not worthy of further investigation. The research informing this in-depth study confirms what survivors have been saying for years: The fear of not being believed is real, and it is a major barrier to reporting.

In my community of London, this revelation has spurred calls to implement the Philadelphia model, what we know is the gold standard in terms of community responses to sexual violence, and has motivated the beginning of change with a commitment from the local police to review almost 700 cases from the past seven years in order to address internalized biases and better support victims.

This month, we also saw another systemic barrier being challenged with the announcement that new judges in Ontario will receive sexual assault training. It is to be hoped that this training will prevent future judges from telling victims to "keep their legs together" to avoid being raped. However, there is a long way to go to ensure truly trauma-informed and survivor-centred responses from police, the justice system and from judges who are already on the bench.

Despite this incremental progress, it continues to feel that any steps forward are often accompanied by more steps back. For example, my private member's bill, Bill 26, was twice passed unanimously through second reading in this Legislature. It has been endorsed by Ontario's labour movement and almost every violence-against-women advocacy organization in the province. My bill would provide up to 10 days of paid leave for workers who have experienced domestic violence or sexual violence and would also require mandatory workplace training on sexual violence and domestic violence. Yet instead of recommending protected leave for both domestic violence and sexual violence, the Changing Workplaces Review recommends that domestic violence be covered by personal leave provisions.

I urge this Liberal government to move my bill through committee, to pass it into law or to fully adopt it in their response to the Changing Workplaces Review that we hear we will learn more about tomorrow.

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Further, more than a year after the final report of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, this Liberal government has failed to act on many of the committee's recommendations, such as making sexual violence training mandatory for servers and bartenders. This would go a long way to preventing sexual assault, yet the government has refused to include sexual violence training in Smart Serve certification, and has instead opted for voluntary training that is unlikely to be accessed.

Another concern is this government's continued siloed approach to sexual violence and domestic violence, creating barriers to community coordination and integration to respond to these forms of gender-based violence, which often co-occur.

Sexual Assault Prevention Month requires more than words, Speaker. Sustained and committed action is needed now.

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

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Norm Miller: I seek unanimous consent to revert to motions and be permitted to put forward a motion without notice regarding committee membership.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Mr. Norm Miller: I move that the following change be made to the membership of the following committee: that on the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills, Mr. Walker replaces Mr. MacLaren.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Miller moves that the following change be made to the membership of the following committee: that on the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills, Mr. Walker replaces Mr. MacLaren. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Bill Walker: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas schools play an integral role by attracting new families to communities; and

“Whereas one in eight Ontario schools is now at risk of closure under the Ministry of Education’s new Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG); and

“Whereas the new review process has removed community impact consideration and value of a school to the local economy; 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 a devastating impact on the growth and overall viability of rural 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 community impact component has been rein-

stated into the PARG and the school funding formula has been fixed to better accommodate all schools’ needs.”

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

LCBO OUTLET

Mr. John Vanthof: I have a petition here initiated by Pat Kelly and many others.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the LCBO has announced the closure of the Larder Lake LCBO outlet; and

“Whereas the economy of Larder Lake relies heavily on seasonal tourism traffic; and

“Whereas the announced closure of the LCBO outlet will have a severe economic impact for the town of Larder Lake and the outlying areas, including Kearns, Dobie and Virginiatown; and

“Whereas the next outlet is a minimum of 26 km away, with no form of public transportation available for the 1,000-plus residents of the area;

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

“To re-establish an LCBO outlet in the town of Larder Lake.”

I wholeheartedly agree and send the petition down with page Noah.

NANJING MASSACRE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition with over 3,950 signatures from across the GTHA. The petition states:

“Whereas the events in Asian countries during World War II are not well-known;

“Whereas Ontarians have not had an opportunity for a thorough discussion and examination of the World War II atrocities in Asia;....

“Whereas Ontario is recognized as an inclusive society;....

“Whereas some Ontarians have direct relationships with victims and survivors of the Nanjing Massacre, whose stories are untold;

“Whereas the Nanjing Massacre was an atrocity with over 200,000 Chinese civilians and soldiers alike were indiscriminately killed, and tens of thousands of women were sexually assaulted, in the Japanese capture of the city;

“Whereas December 13, 2017, marks the 80th anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre;

“Whereas designating December 13th in each year as the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day in Ontario will provide an opportunity for all Ontarians, especially the Asian community, to gather, remember, and honour the victims and families affected by the Nanjing Massacre;

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

“That the Legislature pass the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day Act, 2016, by December 8, 2017,

to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre, which will enable Ontarians, especially those with Asian heritage, to plan commemorative activities to honour the victims and families affected by the Nanjing Massacre.”

I fully support the petition. I will give my 3,950 petitions to Eesha.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition, affix my signature and give it to page Hayden.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Miss Monique Taylor: I have this petition signed by residents from Ottawa and Kanata. It reads as follows and is titled, “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 couldn’t agree with this more. I’m going to give it to page Rada to bring to the Clerk—and I add my signature.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I have a petition here that I have previously presented in this House, and I’m happy to read it here in the Legislature today on behalf of the member for York South–Weston and her many constituents. It’s a petition addressed 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 reviewing employment and labour laws in the province;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change employment and labour laws to accomplish the following:

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

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

“—offer fair scheduling with proper advance notice;

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

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

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“—end the practice of contract flipping, support wage protection and job security for workers when companies change ownership or contracts expire;

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

“—protect workers who stand up for their rights;

“—offer proactive enforcement of the laws through adequate public staffing and meaningful penalties for employers who violate the laws;

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

“—all workers must be paid at least \$15 an hour, regardless of their age, student status, job or sector of employment.”

I agree with this petition. I'll affix my name and send it to the table with page Gabriel.

HYDRO RATES

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

“Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Whereas the billion-dollar gas plants cancellation, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020; and

“Whereas the Liberal government wasted \$2 billion on the flawed smart meter program; and

“Whereas the recent implementation of the Ontario Electricity Support Program will see average household hydro bills increase an additional \$137 per year starting in 2016; and

“Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

“Whereas home heating and electricity are a necessity for families in Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

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

“To immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario's power consumers, including families, farmers and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity.”

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

POLITIQUES ÉNERGÉTIQUES

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais remercier M. Leo-Paul Bourdon d'avoir signé la pétition.

« Entendu que les factures d'électricité sont devenues inabordables pour un grand trop nombre de personnes et que la réduction des factures d'électricité de 30 % pour les familles et les entreprises est une cible ambitieuse mais réaliste; et

« Entendu que la seule façon de réparer le système hydro-électrique est de s'attaquer aux causes de base des

prix élevés, y compris la privatisation, les marges de profits excessives, la surabondance d'électricité et plus; et

« Entendu que les familles ontariennes ne devraient pas avoir à payer des primes du temps d'utilisation, et celles qui vivent dans une région rurale ou nordique ne devraient pas avoir à payer des frais de livraison plus élevés et punitifs; et

« Entendu que le retour de Hydro One comme propriété publique remettrait plus de 7 milliards de dollars à la province et à la population de l'Ontario; »

Ils demandent à l'Assemblée législative de « réduire les factures d'électricité pour les entreprises et les familles jusqu'à 30 %, éliminer les délais d'utilisation obligatoires, mettre fin aux coûts de livraison rural inéquitables et rétablir la propriété publique d'Hydro One. »

Je suis en faveur de cette pétition. Je vais la signer et je la donne à la page Rada.

ENERGY POLICIES

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

“Whereas Ontario families and businesses have seen their hydro costs more than triple under the current government since 2003;

“Whereas the government's unaffordable Green Energy Act, the \$2 billion wasted on the smart meter program and the \$1.1 billion wasted on the cancelled gas plants will translate into a further 42% increase in hydro bills over five years;

“Whereas the Auditor General revealed that the government has collected approximately \$50 billion over the last decade through a global adjustment tax on hydro bills largely used to subsidize exorbitant green energy contracts;

“Whereas the government has allowed peak hydro rates to increase by 15% on May 1;

“Whereas the government's elimination of the clean energy benefit will mean an average increase in hydro bills of \$137 per year;

“Whereas the government's planned sale of a majority share of Hydro One will mean higher hydro bills;

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

“To call on the government to protect Ontario families and businesses from further increases by applying all proceeds from the sale of Hydro One to the \$27-billion electricity debt and imposing a moratorium on any new industrial wind and solar projects.”

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

LCBO OUTLET

Mr. John Vanthof: I have a petition here signed by, among others, Dave Oerhing of Larder Lake.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the LCBO being a provincial government enterprise;

“Whereas the recent closure of the LCBO outlet in Larder Lake;

“Whereas the services of the LCBO have a major impact on our local communities of Larder Lake, Virginiatown, Kearns and Dobie;

“Whereas the citizens of the Larder Lake area expect the continuation of an LCBO outlet to have continuation of customer convenience, choice and shopping experience, while continuing to ensure that consumers in the Larder Lake area can purchase beer, wine and liquor locally.

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

“We are requesting the reopening or establishment of a new outlet in our community immediately to provide the services offered as has been for over 50 years plus by the LCBO.”

I wholeheartedly agree and hand it to Maddison.

HYDRO RATES

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

“Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government’s mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Whereas the billion-dollar gas plants cancellation, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020; and

“Whereas the Liberal government wasted \$2 billion on the flawed smart meter program; and

“Whereas the recent implementation of the Ontario Electricity Support Program will see average household hydro bills increase an additional \$137 per year starting in 2016; and

“Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

“Whereas home heating and electricity are a necessity for families in Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government’s mismanagement of the energy sector;

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

“To immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario’s power consumers, including families, farmers and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity.”

I fully support it, affix my name and send it with my good friend Rishi, the page.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I have a petition entitled “Support Families by Eliminating Waiting Lists for the Passport Program Now.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas when children living with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other developmental disabilities turn 18, support from the Ontario government drastically changes;

“Whereas families in Windsor-Essex and across Ontario are met with continuous waiting lists when trying to access support under the Passport Program;

“Whereas waiting lists place enormous stress on caregivers, parents, children and entire families;

“Whereas all Ontarians living with ASD and other developmental disabilities are entitled to a seamless transition of services;

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

“To take immediate action to eliminate the waiting lists for Passport funding so that people living with ASD and other developmental disabilities and their families can access the support they deserve.”

I agree with this petition, will sign it and send it to the table with page Peter.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Liz Sandals: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 89, An Act to enact the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2016, to amend and repeal the Child and Family Services Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, when the order for third reading of the bill is called next, one hour of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

That, at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Ms. Sandals has moved government notice of motion number 33. Debate?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I believe the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children and Youth Services will be delivering our remarks later.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise to speak today. Unfortunately, we're speaking on a time allocation motion regarding Bill 89, the Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act. In case people are watching and don't know what time allocation means, it basically means the government passes a motion that says we're not going to have as many hours of debate as we would normally.

Generally, because we're in opposition, we don't like these time allocation bills because we want things to progress as they should. But I think we recognize here, if it's a bill that's very straightforward and very simple, just enacting a few things and not affecting too many other acts—that we can handle if there's not that much debate. But here we're talking about a child welfare system that hasn't been overhauled in 32 years.

1400

The government consulted with numerous community groups—I don't like to call them stakeholders, because to me that sounds more like industry. These were community groups. These were youth who had aged out of care, meaning that they were too old to be in care. The provincial child advocate, the privacy commissioner—all these people had so much to say about this bill before it was even written.

Then we went to committee after second reading, and we heard that the preamble that we were really basing our hopes for the bill on was completely inaccurate to the actual bill. All these community groups and indigenous representatives came from all kinds of communities across the province, travelled to Queen's Park to tell us their concerns, and the government did listen. They did listen to the concerns, and the government's answer was to amend the bill in committee.

What that means is that normally the government writes the bill and it's what the government wants. After they've done all these consultations—we heard so much about all the consultations that went on—you would think that the government would be able to reflect all those consultations in the bill. When we read the preamble, which said that the bill was going to give voice to children, work better with our indigenous communities and take the advice of the child advocate—all of these recommendations—we expected the preamble to be reflected in the bill, and it wasn't.

Normally you would see more amendments to a bill from the opposition parties, but in this case, Mr. Speaker, what we saw were 200 amendments from the government, and some of those amendments were the size of bills that I've had put on my desk in the Legislature. We have a very long, complicated bill, which affects so many things, and here we are debating time allocation. Well, I'm very concerned that we're not getting this right.

I'm going to talk a little bit about what some of my concerns are, starting with probably the most important part of this bill, in my opinion, and I believe that there's some support for that on this side of the House: that 16- and 17-year-olds will be able to go into care for the first time. It would be voluntary unless under a court order. Basically what that means is that up until now, a 16- or

17-year-old wouldn't be taken into foster care or a group home unless they had been in care under the age of 16. Now we are changing those rules, and we are going to allow a 16- or 17-year-old to go into care if they had never been in care before.

That's a big deal, Mr. Speaker, and I'm concerned that we're not getting it right, because the youth have their own ideas about what care should be. Even though we consulted with them, I'm very concerned when I hear that there aren't enough foster homes. What many of these youth would prefer is to be in a foster home, and if the only options are group homes, that's problematic.

There's nothing in this bill that tells me how we are going to address the fact that there is such a shortage of foster homes in the province. We saw data; in fact, the government didn't believe it and demanded exact data. We got a presentation from a foster parent group that said that in the last 10 years we have seen the number of families standing up to foster-parent decrease by approximately half in the province of Ontario. This is extremely problematic. We have youth who want to go into care, into foster homes, and we don't have enough foster homes.

In fact, foster homes are, in my opinion, probably more often than not for younger children, so that means that older youth are going to be less likely to be placed in a foster home. They're basically going to go into care and leave. As we just heard in statements about sexual assault, we are concerned for the vulnerability of our youth in care to human traffickers. We heard stories of human traffickers hanging out outside of group homes, waiting for the kids to leave and approaching them. This is a very vulnerable group. It's a vulnerable age, even when they're living with their families, and I think that we can all appreciate how increasingly vulnerable they are to human traffickers if they are living in a group home.

It's somewhat heartbreaking, actually, because some youth came to the committee and they actually said that they feel like, when they're in care, they're being kept alive. They're given food. They're given shelter. They're given some clothing. That's okay in a crisis, just like an emergency room is okay in a crisis situation. But for long-term care, a hospital isn't where you want to be, and it isn't where you should be. We need to focus on the fact that foster parents are the ideal way to improve the outcomes for our youth in care.

I want to talk about Jane Kovarikova, who wrote a report exploring youth outcomes after aging in care. I'm not going to go into her whole report, but I'm just going to say that her report shows that when youth come out of care and they're left on their own—we know how difficult it is for our own children when they leave our homes, and we're checking up on them, so we can imagine if they're leaving a group home and there isn't that connection to a family. The youth aging out of care have lower academic achievement, unemployment or underemployment, homelessness and housing insecurity, increased involvement in our criminal justice system,

poor physical or mental health, and loneliness. They are lonely because they don't have that family connection, and I think that that's why they do sometimes find themselves in difficult situations. Then there's the stigma of having been in care that they have to overcome.

We want to ensure that there are better outcomes. We want to ensure that our children coming out of care have a strong sense of self. This is what is really the crux here: Human beings need to develop, and the different stages of development have to take place with the right adult authority supervising it, so that they develop their own personal identity, and a strong enough personal identity so when they're out in the world on their own, they can fend for themselves—yes, they can survive, but they can do more than that. They can reach their potential. They can get an education or get a job or make the right kinds of friends and connections in our communities.

How do we ensure that? Well, it's a bit of a vicious cycle, because parents aren't offering to open up if they have an extra room in their house to take in a foster child, a child in care or a youth in care if they hear that there are a lot of issues, problems, difficulties, rules and regulations. We have to ensure that the rules and the regulations that we have are absolutely necessary, and offer more support to the foster families, because there's a reason why people aren't offering to foster care. Maybe the houses are smaller. Maybe it's the fact that there has to be an adult who isn't working full-time in the house.

All of these things make it difficult. Maybe we have to look at more creative solutions where, if you have multiple family units, they can help with the supervision. Maybe we have to go and appeal to all of the community organizations that are receiving government grants and say, "Okay, we're helping you; you've got to help us. Help us promote and help us find some families who are willing to foster." Maybe we have to be a little creative and allow single family units to take in foster children and youth.

The youth come into care and they feel like they've been apprehended. That was the word that we saw taken out of this bill. They feel that they've been somehow mixed up in some kind of justice system, and they're being treated like a criminal. Well, I'm reminded of my late mother, who used to often say that if you tell a child they're bad, they're going to show you what's bad, and if you treat a child or a youth as a criminal, they're going to be a criminal.

We have to work with those youth in care and aging out of care to see what we can do. I know it's easy for me to talk. There are child care workers out there working with our youth. It's easy for me to say we can do better. I'm not an expert in working with children and youth who are in difficult circumstances, but I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I understand when people are developing a strong sense of identity and want to contribute to society and want to feel that they belong to something. And, yes, we would like everybody to grow up and feel that they belong to a community and that they feel loved, and then they're able to love.

1410

Just yesterday, in the Toronto Star editorial, and I'm going to quote, it said, "If you don't know the size of a problem and how it's changing over time, you almost certainly won't do a good job of dealing with it." This is so true. This is what it comes down to. In her report *Exploring Youth Outcomes After Aging Out of Care*, what Jane is saying basically is if we're not measuring the outcomes, how do we know if we're doing a good job? I think that that's what's missing from all of this discussion about overhauling the child welfare system.

We know that children have a voice and they should be encouraged to use that voice. The member from the third party brought forward a private member's bill called *Katelynn's Principle*, about Katelynn Sampson, to remind us all that Katelynn's legacy, really, of her unfortunately short life, and a brutally short life, is to remind us that children do have voices and should be involved in the discussion of their care. This bill attempts to do that very well.

The francophone community came and gave presentations. As the critic for children, youth and families and for francophone affairs, I was very interested to hear that they really struggle with the fact that it's so difficult for them to have children who speak French as their first language be placed with families who speak the language as well. Not just that, but in terms of the child care workers, the court systems, the teachers at schools, it's very important for us to recognize the francophone communities and their needs as well, and maybe we have to appeal to those communities to help us out, also, in finding people who are willing and able to foster.

Defence for Children International Canada: I thought it was very interesting that they sent a letter, and they spoke a bit about the fact that with more regulations, staff have less time to do the work that we need them to do. It's absolutely true. I'm going to quote a little bit of what they said: "There is a need to increase accountability for those responsible for children in care. Our concern is that simply expanding the rules and penalties may have unintended consequences. As legislation and regulations are increased, it is likely that staff will focus more on ensuring that rules are followed and will have less time to actually spend with and for children and young people in their care."

This is what it comes down to, Mr. Speaker: Whatever we're doing, we have to consider the consequences. There's a new networking system. In my notes I put down "eHealth," and I hope it's not going to turn into another eHealth boondoggle, because we're spending close to \$1 billion on CPIN. It's a digital data networking, tracking, inputting system for the child welfare system. I'm hearing stories of child care workers and social workers spending way too much of their day typing in data instead of doing the work, one-on-one, with the children.

We can have a bill that says children have a voice and children have to be spoken to, but what good is that, Mr. Speaker, if the social workers have no time to speak to

the children, or, while they're speaking to the children, they're busy looking at a computer and typing in slowly because they aren't stenographers? Why was it not ensured that there was some kind of voice inputting? You see people walking around sending emails and text messages, talking into their smart phones. We seem to be putting in a system that is behind the times, and we haven't even got it completely up and running. It's still in the test phases in many areas of the province.

There's a lot of concern about privacy—the protection of privacy in the system. We heard that over and over in committee, and I'm still not comfortable. The Information and Privacy Commissioner said his main criticism is that he is worried that the government is going to collect more than what they actually need and that when there's a privacy breach his office won't be notified. Right now, I believe that the way the bill was written in the end his office will not be notified.

We heard from Irwin Elman. I don't think he's here today. He is often here. I'm sure he's watching somewhere in his office. He's the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, and he spoke about the fact that group homes basically—I'm going to paraphrase what I heard from him, which is that group homes aren't homes; they are more like detention centres.

We can understand why Plexiglas is on the windows if children are breaking the windows, but it's not getting to the root of the problem if we're locking the doors and locking the windows for children who aren't criminals. That, I think, is the crux of the matter: to get to the root of the problem.

Mr. Speaker, if you saw how the youth interact with Mr. Elman, the way I did—there was a special event here at Queen's Park just a couple of weeks ago, and even at committee the youth know him. If you saw the way the youth interacted with Mr. Elman, you would say, "Where do we find thousands of Mr. Elmans to work with our youth in care?" Because that's exactly what we need, Mr. Speaker. We need to not just write legislation; we need to realize that these are human beings, these are children and youth who need to develop, to be contributing members of society, to be happy, to live a rewarding life.

That's really our job here, and it's a difficult one. I'm hoping that we are going to find a way to work with all the organizations and all the communities who want to be involved. I think that I'm not the only one here who goes to town halls and goes to events and hears from people who want to be involved and want to help, but when they hear how complicated it is and how difficult it is, and they read in the newspaper about somebody who was accused and who had to hire their own lawyer and pay for their own lawyer—they were fostering a child, and then it turned out that it was a false accusation—it does not encourage others to want to get involved.

What can we do as legislators? That is, I guess, my big question that I keep asking myself. What can we do as legislators to get out in the communities and help find people? Because we're not going to get the outcomes we want if we cannot find more foster homes. We're taking a

whole new cohort into care of 16- and 17-year-olds. We don't have enough foster homes for the children and youth who need them right now, and I don't see anything in this bill that is going to help attract those foster parents.

I've been to some community meetings with organizations and I have brought it up, and the organizations have said to me, "Nobody has ever approached us. We have email lists, we have committees, and nobody from the government has ever even suggested to us that we should use our organization to somehow appeal to people and advertise the positives."

Too often we read in the newspaper about the teachers who didn't do a great job, the parents who didn't do a great job, and maybe even the foster parents who didn't do a great job, but we don't hear about the good stories. So let's go out there—because there are so many good stories. We heard from youth who have aged out of care and who 10 years later still borrow the car of their foster parent. Their foster parent taught them how to drive. Their foster parent helped them develop the skills that they needed to be happy, to be fulfilled. Let's find those foster parents and let's help them promote the idea that it can be so rewarding. As much as the youth get from staying connected, I'm sure that the foster families get as much or even more, many times.

We want to develop that sense of self. We want to ensure that children and youth going into care feel that they belong to a family. I know you cannot pay people to love, and it was kind of heartbreaking to hear some of the youth speak in terms of that—that it's our job to find them families who will love them. I wish we could. But we can certainly find them families who care deeply for them. I kind of liken it to when I worked at a summer camp: I wasn't their parent, but I certainly cared deeply for the kids who were in my care.

I'm sorry that we're doing time allocation on this bill because I think it was a bit rushed through committee in terms of the number of amendments we had to get through. We did get through them all; it took a long time. But it's unfortunate when we don't spend the time that we want to in debate, but we are going to hear from some others here today. I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity.

1420

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm very pleased, as always, to be able to rise in this fine Legislature and speak on behalf of not just the folks from Oshawa; when we're talking about a bill that protects children and focuses on children, then I'm speaking on behalf of families across the province, and that's always a special opportunity.

Speaking of families, I'm going to take a moment and point out that my father and some family friends have joined us here today and they're taking it all in. My father's the one who's looking really impressed that I just outed him in the Legislature, but that's okay. I'm very pleased to welcome them, and I'm going to share with

you a little bit about what we talked about at lunch, which does connect to this. So, if any of the Liberals are going to pop up and tell me to speak to the bill, I am.

We're debating time allocation, and we had the opportunity at lunch to discuss much of what goes on here. It's interesting for me to talk about the process, to try to explain the process and to share what the process should be and is on paper, but what it isn't in actual fact, what it isn't in practice.

When we have a bill like this one, Bill 89, the Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act, we have the opportunity to debate. We have the opportunity to hear from folks across the province, from those interested who are interested in it. They bring their ideas forward. We discuss it. It goes to committee. We hopefully during that committee process, fine-tune, improve, make changes, catch mistakes, make the laws of the land better during that process, bring it back to discuss in a fulsome way and make sure that everybody has had their voices heard. We make the legislation in Ontario the best it can possibly be, and then after a time, it passes and becomes the law of the land, and hopefully makes things better.

That's, I think, how we all want the process to work. I think that's the understanding in the greater province. However, this is another example of the process gone Liberal, or gone awry. That is, while we debated it the first time and heard from folks across the province, as we know, that process is rushed. The government shuts her down so that we can't keep hearing from the people across the province and we can't keep debating.

They're going to pretend that it's because we want to get it through committee: "We want to get it there quickly. We want to make these changes." It matters so much, but they're not willing to put in the time. We're going to hear far more about the committee process because my fabulous colleague from Hamilton Mountain, who has put her heart and soul into this file and has done phenomenal work, unfortunately—well, fortunately she was at committee, but unfortunately she had to endure parts of the process where again, as I said, the process went Liberal.

During the committee process, while we heard from folks who were experts in the field, people who are invested, people who care, people who want what's best for Ontario's children, the process was so rushed because, as we've talked about, there were so darn many amendments. I'm not suggesting there shouldn't be; if there's a need for them, that's one thing. But if there was the opportunity to avoid the need for them, like to put forward a decent, solid, strong piece of legislation in the first place—why don't we ever have that conversation?

But anyway, all of the amendments in committee—my colleague from Hamilton Mountain I'm sure can walk us through that process a little bit more, but during that time there were a lot of folks in Ontario who didn't know that this was going on, because the debate part had gone through so quickly. They didn't know the committee process was open to them, because they're just folks in the province who are living their lives, working in their communities, helping where they can. Then they found

out about this bill and said, "Oh, hey, wait a second. We have ideas on this. We have voices to bring. We have concerns. How do we get involved?"

Well, it's "Oh, too late, missed the boat. Sorry. Ha, ha." That's what keeps happening. I have folks in my riding who missed the boat, missed the window of opportunity to present at committee. I'm disappointed for them, and I will speak a little bit about their concerns in a minute. But that shouldn't be what happens at committee.

Then we come back and now here we are in time allocation. Time allocation, for the folks at home or the folks who are visiting, is when the government says, "We must get to the end of this debate. We must get through this. We must bring this law to fruition and bring it to the fine folks of the province. We're in such a hurry. We must end debate. Stop dragging it out, oh, you opposition members." The thing is, that's not what we're talking about. Time allocation is shutting down debate when there's still debate to be had, when there are others whose voices haven't been heard, when we're still getting e-mails and phone calls from our constituents, who are only now catching wind of where we are in the process. That does speak to, I think, all of us in this Legislature: How do we connect with the folks in our communities to make sure their voices are heard? Anyway, that's my little bit on time allocation for the day and the lesson to the folks at home about the process we have. Time allocation: shutting it down.

I would like to take this time, though, and actually speak to the bill that they're ending debate on: Bill 89, the Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act. I support children, youth and families; I think most of us would say that we do. I stand in the Legislature so often and say, "What a brilliant, fabulous, warm, fuzzy, huggable title." If we could give points to the government for their bill titles, this is another good one. Well done. But it's what's in the bill—or what isn't in the bill—that matters.

So this is when I want to go back to that group in my community that I met with recently. I had to say, "Sorry, folks. You missed the window of opportunity to present at committee." But this is why we continue debate: so that I can tell some of their concerns. This is a group that came to me, and their concern is about accountability, as is often the case, and the complaints process when it comes to black children and youth in care in our system and a want to really look at the overrepresentation of black youth in our systems and black youth in our care systems. That's a conversation we all want to have. We want to look at our systems and say, "Who's getting the care, who isn't getting the care, and who's over-represented and under-protected, perhaps?"

Some of their concerns, as well, were about the anti-oppression leads. They had very specific suggestions about the different CAS offices and those that have the anti-oppression offices. It isn't consistent across the province, and there are questions and conversations to be had about that: "Should they be? Should they not be? What are the criteria?" All of this would have been so

well suited for the committee discussion. Should there have been an amendment that came from their presentation or that came from their questions and concerns, those ideas could have ended up in the bill, but there wasn't time for that; there wasn't the opportunity for that. It is very frustrating to hear, time and time again, that folks in Ontario who are so busy out in their communities making our communities stronger are unable to access our legislative process.

I want to take a moment—and we've been hearing it time and time again around the room. I want to applaud the work that has been done for so long by our critic for all things youth-related, the member for Hamilton Mountain, who happens to be Monique Taylor, who has done a phenomenal job on this file. We all know and have agreed with and have supported Bill 57, Katelynn's Principle, as we've talked about, which was to bring the story of Katelynn Sampson to this House and to ensure that her story can never be repeated.

While we are glad to see, sort of, the spirit of that bill reflected in this piece of legislation, we don't see the strength of that bill reflected in this piece of legislation. For that to happen, it should be an addendum—not an addendum; an amendment. It should be its own stand-alone, not just sort of tucked into the corners of this bill. Again, while it's a main feature of the bill and we're glad to see that—we all supported it in that bill's journey—how do we ensure that it's the strongest version it can be?

1430

When I was working on my master's program, I had a professor who was a lawyer and had been a judge in Family Court for, I think, about 30 years. He was teaching this education law course—I'm not professing to be a lawyer; I took a course—and while he was talking to us about education law, he made an off-the-cuff remark. He referred to a piece of the discussion and said, "If I was in charge, if I was in the big room at Queen's Park, this would be the one thing I would fix first."

I followed him after the class to his office and said, "Hey, you made reference to how if you could close one gap, if you could fix one thing, it would be this. What did you say? What was that again?" It was about closing the gap with 16- and 17-year-olds, the giant chasm, the lack of care that, if you're 16 or 17, you can fall into. If you hadn't already entered care before that age, then you were on your own. After 18 you're considered an adult and you have different protections, but there was this hole that folks could fall through.

So I ended up learning a bit about that. Some of the specifics escape me, but when I was doing the research at the time, I realized that a number of our pieces of legislation and acts across the province change when a child becomes an adult: 16 for this, 18 for that, and it always seemed to err on the side of cost savings rather than on strengthening the future for our youth in need. So when we have a piece of legislation that addresses a part of that, I'm glad. New Democrats of course support youth and support them on their journey. But it is a very real need, and we have to be listening to our community partners.

There's a youth outreach partner organization in Oshawa that's called the Refuge. They serve youth in need—street-involved, often homeless—and many of those are in that age group, 16 and 17 years old. Because they don't have care and don't have access to the services that they need while they are in crisis, they live on whoever's floor they can land on. They don't have that consistency. They are the forgotten. They are the ignored. They are the invisible. I'm always relieved when we have the opportunity to shed light on realities that aren't our every day. We always want to protect our youth, wherever they are, and we have a case of that here.

My colleague from Hamilton Mountain had said that she has had many opportunities to speak to this bill, of course, but one of the things that she said was that if our child protection system is going to work, if it is going to do what it has to do for children and families, it must have the confidence of the public. While she has hours on the record—is that fair to say?—with Katelynn's Principle and this whole journey, that is a piece that I want to take: We have to do this with our public, our youth and our families involved, to make sure it's the best version.

I wanted to talk about some of the concerns that we have with this bill, even after it has been through committee and come back. What I mentioned about Katelynn's Principle—we're very pleased that that is a significant part of this bill. It could be a bit stronger, and that's what I would like to say. While there are pieces of Katelynn's Principle throughout the bill in various provisions, it doesn't have the same legislative force as was laid out in Bill 57, and it also isn't as far-reaching as it would have been in that.

That's our argument. That's what we come back to say: That private member's bill, Bill 57, should be a companion piece to this Bill 89, rather than an amendment to it. So I correct what I said before. I think I said it should be an amendment. No, it shouldn't. It should be a companion piece. It should stand alone because it needs to.

Something that again speaks to what I had mentioned, the group from my local community who were there advocating for our black children and youth: There hasn't been much laid out in this bill to ensure that race and racism are adequately addressed. There has been extensive work done by One Vision One Voice, but we're not seeing that reflected in the act as clearly as we would expect, frankly. There isn't any requirement to collect data on, as I mentioned, overrepresented groups. There isn't a requirement to take race into account in the same way as it's required for First Nations, Inuit and Métis. I'm not sure why that happened, because we've been having excellent conversations, frankly, on the anti-racism actions and initiatives and the need for them. So to have a piece of legislation come to this floor in the greater context of those conversations begs the question: What happened?

Speaker, you may recall that up until recently I was the critic for community safety and correctional services. We've had important conversations, not just in question

period, but in the greater society about segregation and isolation. Those are big conversations to have, certainly—not just in the province, but globally. We had some really major events and opportunities, like Adam Capay and others in the province who are in segregation within our correctional facilities. That's in our adult correctional facilities. I'm going to bring it back to this conversation and say that there's a piece in this bill that gets into the kind of wordy—I don't know—grey area, that they are renaming the term “secure isolation,” which essentially is solitary confinement or segregation. They're renaming it “secure de-escalation.” All of the other language in this section remains the same, so it doesn't inspire confidence that anything regarding their use will actually change.

We're in the broader community having that conversation about isolation limitations: “What is segregation? When can/should it be used? In what context?” Then here we have a piece of legislation that addresses it for youth, but only kind of, sort of. We've only changed the wording in a part of the legislation, but not throughout the rest of the act.

Secure de-escalation: I've been in and out of 17 of our correctional facilities and put eyes on different scenarios and situations. You can call things whatever you would like, but what the practice actually is is what we need to be talking about. I think if you're going to change the name, you should be willing to have the conversation, define it. That's something that, again, is a missed opportunity, I think.

All right, I've got a minute or so left, so I won't get into that.

The last thing that I'll end on, and this is not a—Speaker, stop me if you've heard this one. There's a lack of funding attached to this bill.

Interjection.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Right? I'm sorry to bore you. This must just—anyway, it's true. There's an apparent lack of funding in this. As we often see, you have a piece of legislation that comes into this room and it's got maybe a good idea or maybe not. There's a vision that you're trying to sell to us, but there isn't the funding or there isn't the clear understanding of how on earth this is going to happen. That's, again, a problem, not a new story, but I'll give you the specific, and it connects back to what I was saying about youth 16, 17 years old. Raising the age of protection from 16 to 18: As I mentioned, we're onside, we're on board. We want to look after all of our ducklings, no matter how old they are and no matter where they land, okay?

1440

We want to raise the age of protection. That's fine, but that's going to require additional investment into children's protective services. That's going to require additional resources. What is that going to look like, and when do we get to find out?

Speaker, I'm out of time, but I could talk about youth and children all day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to have an opportunity to debate this time allocation motion on Bill 89. The time allocation motion is government motion 33:

“That, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 89, An Act to enact the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2016, to amend and repeal the Child and Family Services Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, when the order for third reading of the bill is called next, one hour of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties.”

It goes on to talk about how the vote would go on. But essentially what that means is that, for our party, we get all of 20 minutes in the third reading stage of the bill to debate this bill, which is no small bill. I'm holding Bill 89 here. As far as bills go, it's quite detailed, quite substantive.

I'm disappointed to be speaking to another time allocation motion, the time allocation motion for Bill 89, Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act. This is the 12th bill that the government has time-allocated since the beginning of this session in September. That is the 12th out of 21 government bills. More than half of the government bills have been time-allocated.

People watching at home may wonder why time allocation is a bad thing, so let's consider how some members of the current government described time allocation when they were in opposition. The esteemed member for St. Catharines, who is, I think, tomorrow going to be celebrating 40 years in this place—

Applause.

Mr. Norm Miller: Yes, I look forward to that little celebration—described it as “choking off of debate, the ending of debate or the government allocating how much time there shall be for the debate on a piece of legislation.” That was on December 11, 1997.

Here's another quote about time allocation, and this was from our current Speaker—not the one sitting in the seat today, but the member from Brant: “It's stifling great opportunities for people to point out concerns with legislation: some of the faults in it, some of the flaws, some of the improvements that could get offered.” As I mentioned, that's our current Speaker, the member from Brant. That was December 23, 2002.

The government will say they are forced to time-allocate because we're holding up their important legislation. They have said that about Bill 127, the budget bill. They introduced the budget bill on April 27, and time-allocated after only three days of debate. They say they had to do that because we held up debate.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we objected when the government tried to call the bill for debate the very next sessional day after they introduced it: Monday, May 1. MPPs need enough time to read a bill before they can be expected to debate it, so yes, we did hold up debate for one day to give our members the opportunity to read the bill.

Let's look at how the debate on the budget bill proceeded after that, because I think it's fairly shocking,

really. The bill was debated on three days prior to time allocation. Only six opposition members had a chance to speak to the bill. That's six out of 48 opposition members who had a chance to speak to the bill.

We had one day of debate on the time allocation motion, then the second reading vote was called on May 15 after question period. One hour later, the committee met to hear from Ontarians about this bill, so people officially had only one hour's notice if they had anything to say about this bill. This is the budget bill we're talking about. If someone lives outside of the GTA or if they have a job other than as a lobbyist, they didn't have an opportunity to speak to this bill.

Those presenters who did manage to find out in time and get to Queen's Park to speak to committee were given five minutes to present—five minutes. To me, asking anyone to come before a committee and speak for five minutes is an insult to them. It really is just going through the motions to make it look like you're listening to the public.

Amendments were due at the same time the presentations were set to end, at 7 p.m. on Monday May 15. The government obviously didn't want to hear from MPPs about this bill and they didn't want to hear from Ontarians and they certainly did not want to even consider any amendments.

Clause-by-clause consideration of the bill was scheduled for the very next day, from 8:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. This is very interesting, because the committee was set to sit right through question period, which starts at 10:30. I can't say that I've seen that happen before. It turns out, though, because there was so little time to actually prepare any amendments, to draft amendments, the committee didn't have to sit very long. Regardless, the government was willing to have the committee sit through question period.

I want to point out that this is not a simple, straightforward bill. This bill amends 33 different acts. So, Mr. Speaker, rather than taking the time and actually listening to the public and the opposition and trying to make thoughtful changes and really ending up with better legislation, they're rushing pieces of legislation through, which inevitably leads to mistakes.

The government keeps saying that we're holding up important legislation. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, if the initiatives in the budget were so important, why did they wait until April 27 to introduce it? The end of the fiscal year—a lot of people may not be aware—is actually March 31. Certainly, when you're in business, you usually have the budget for a business done well before the next year starts, so it's interesting that in government they can be a month into the year of government business and still not have even presented the budget, let alone passed it or done other things to implement it.

Today's time allocation motion is about Bill 89. So let's have a look at that. The bill, as I mentioned, is 186 pages long. It did get a fair amount of debate at second reading and passed unanimously. There were a number of committee meetings about this bill. I do want to point out

that, once again, all the committee meetings were held here in Toronto, so no one in northern or rural Ontario had an opportunity to appear before the committee.

As a result of the hearings, there were a number of amendments made to this bill. I think the member from Thornhill pointed out that there were some 200 amendments, basically all by the government. When you look through the bill, you can see entire sections crossed out. So my point about rushing it and getting it right is sort of demonstrated by that, where you see, on page 40, the whole section on the best interests of the child stroked out and replaced and quite substantive amendments made by the government to its own bill.

Going on then, there was third reading. As I mentioned, that is limited to just 20 minutes per party in the case of this, based on the time allocation motion. You would think you would need a lot more time with all the changes made at committee to fully—I don't think you could even list off the 200 amendments in the 20 minutes each party gets to debate this bill, let alone get into any sort of detail about whether there are still mistakes that were made in the many changes that were made.

As I said, this is the 12th bill this government has time-allocated just since September. On September 27, they time-allocated Bill 13, the electricity rebate bill; on October 20, Bill 37, the Protecting Students Act; on November 29, Bill 70, the 2016 budget bill; on December 5, Bill 41, the so-called Patients First Act. On March 1, they time-allocated Bill 92, the School Boards Collective Bargaining Amendment Act. And then this month, they really got anxious to get things passed: On May 2, they time-allocated Bill 124, their rent control bill. This bill was introduced with much fanfare to protect tenants from big rent increases. The minister said the government had to time-allocate this bill because there was a "pressing need to protect tenants." If that is the case, why hadn't this government—which has been in office for 14 years—done anything about it until this spring? They sit on their hands until an issue attracts media attention and then they sweep in with poorly considered legislation drawn up on the back of a cocktail napkin.

1450

Bill 127, the budget bill, was time-allocated, as I've already discussed. Two weeks ago, on May 16, this government actually moved time allocation for two different bills on one day. First they time-allocated Bill 132, their unfair hydro plan bill, and then Bill 87, the so-called Protecting Patients Act.

Bill 132: That's a bill that adds billions in debt to the province, despite it not showing up on the province's books. Let's look at the legislative path of Bill 132, the hydro bill. It was introduced on May 11, debated for one day on May 15 and then time-allocated on May 16. There were committee hearings last week, although, again, all here in Toronto—and I have to tell you that the people here in Toronto, who generally have access to natural gas to heat their homes, are not the people most in need of relief from their hydro bills. That committee needed to hear from people in northern and rural Ontario. But this

government really doesn't want to hear from anyone because they think they know better than anyone else in the province.

During the committee hearings on Bill 132, the hydro bill, there was one individual who called in from Sarnia. She relies on a feeding tube and she was turning off her feeding tube during the day because hydro rates were too expensive. She told her story and then had exchanges with members of the two opposition parties. The government member, instead of really talking to her, gave a monologue long enough to take up the remaining time, and when he finished and she tried to respond to his comments the Chair cut her off abruptly.

That's what happens when you have such shortened committee time put in place by these time allocation motions. For someone who is taking the time to come before committee—it's embarrassing if you're sitting there and they're just trying to have a reasonable exchange and they're cut off by the Chair of the Committee. That illustrated to me just how little this government is willing to listen to anyone except themselves.

Bill 132 has massive implications for this government, for future governments and for Ontario taxpayers. Just last week we got new information about this bill. The Financial Accountability Officer reported last week that this bill will cost Ontarians \$45 billion over the next 20 years, and that is assuming the government can maintain a balanced budget and that interest rates don't go up. There are much higher numbers that are also being predicted.

Also last week, the Auditor General told the Standing Committee on Justice Policy that Bill 132 sets a dangerous precedent which is not in line with Canada's public sector accounting standards. Essentially, all that debt that's being used to lower hydro rates in the short term is not going to show up on the books of the province of Ontario. It will show up on Ontario Power Generation's books, but won't be considered in the books of the province of Ontario, so they'll paint a rosier picture than is actually happening in the province.

So we have the Auditor General who is saying that we're not following recognized accounting procedures. This is very much like when the government had its budget recently and said that they balanced the budget, but, for example, one of the things that they counted was \$500 million in teachers' pension funds that they don't have access to and that the auditor said shouldn't be counted. There were other numbers so that it added up to about a \$5-billion deficit in last year's budget, not a balanced budget as the government has been stating.

We should have the opportunity to debate this bill properly, but thanks to this government's time allocation motion, we will have only 30 minutes to debate it. That's just 10 minutes per party—again, that's Bill 132, the hydro bill—in third reading. Ontarians who presented to the committee had five minutes to present, followed by nine minutes for questions from the committee members, but each party only gets 10 minutes to debate this legislation at third reading. That is 10 minutes to debate a

bill that's expected to cost Ontarians, at a minimum, \$45 billion.

Back to this government's record on time allocation: The 10th bill they time-allocated this session was Bill 68, the Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act—and I see the member from Oxford here; I'm about to mention him in my next paragraph, as a matter of fact. The abbreviated third reading debate will be later this afternoon, so I know the member for Oxford will have a great deal to say in the 20 minutes he will be allowed. But I do want to point out that this is another complicated bill that amends a number of acts.

I also want to point out that the member for Oxford requested that the committee travel to the north to hear from northern municipalities on this bill, but the government refused to do that.

This bill did get lots of debate at second reading, and got its fair share of committee hearings, even if they were all in Toronto. It was reported to the House, as amended, on May 3, so I don't understand why the government hasn't called it for third reading before now, but they didn't. And now that we're into the last week of the Legislature, it has been time-allocated and given just one hour of third reading debate.

Finally, this government has time-allocated Bill 114, An Act to provide for Anti-Racism Measures.

Twelve out of 21 government bills have been time-allocated. Some of them were contentious, but some of them had all-party support—and I think that was mentioned by the member from Thornhill, our critic on this bill. If this government was willing to work with the other parties, I'm confident we could have found a way to pass these bills without the use of the blunt instrument of time allocation motions. But rather than try to work together with the opposition parties, this government relies on time allocation.

To see just how badly this government is abusing time allocation, let's look at the agenda for this week in the Legislature. After question period today, we voted on two time allocation motions. Now we are debating a time allocation motion on Bill 89. After this, we will have a 30-minute debate—time-allocated, of course—on Bill 87, and then another time-allocated debate on Bill 68. On Wednesday, we will have time-allocated debates on Bill 132, Bill 114 and Bill 89.

I've described in detail just how restrictive some of this government's time allocation motions have become.

Let's look at some more comments by the member for St. Catharines when he was in opposition—and it's not that I'm trying to pick on the member from St. Catharines, but he is very quotable. He said, "Each of the time allocation motions which close off or choke off debate in this House seems to be more drastic as it comes forward, seems to be more sinister as it relates to the privileges of members of this House and as it relates to healthy, democratic debate for the people of this province." That was from December 16, 1997. I completely agree with him. I could use those exact same words to describe this government now. These time

allocation motions are choking off healthy debate on many important bills, including Bill 89, which is a very substantive bill.

In my last few seconds, I would mention that, as the member from Thornhill pointed out, part of what this bill deals with is increasing the age of coverage for 16- to 18-year-olds, but one of the problems is that there's no funding that goes along with that increased responsibility. Certainly, I support increasing coverage for 16- to 18-year-olds, but if there is no funding, then it's pretty hard for the children's aid societies to do their job. In Parry Sound–Muskoka, we just came through a few-months-long strike of CAS workers. Obviously it's one thing to change the rules, but if you don't provide funding to provide the service, it doesn't really mean that much.

Thanks for the opportunity to speak this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: It looks like the government is looking to have the final say once again and is refusing to take their position in the lineup of typical debate that happens in this House.

It is my privilege and honour to be able to stand in this House on behalf of the people of Hamilton Mountain, and I take that privilege very seriously. I also take that privilege to be able to speak for families and children across this province. This is one of those times where I am definitely privileged, because I have the ability to speak out against the government for what they have done to this bill, a bill that should have been an opportunity to be bold, a bill that should have been an opportunity to make real changes that will truly affect our child welfare system, our corrections and our youth mental health. And yet it has been, "Hurry up, rush, get it through the door. We need it done," and quite frankly, a lot of it will sit on the shelf.

The schedules of the bill set it out very clearly. I'm just going to start there. Schedule 1 introduces the new Child, Youth and Family Services Act and replaces the existing Child and Family Services Act. Its main purpose is to promote the best interests, protection and well-being of children—perfect; exactly what we should be doing. When the minister spoke in his opening on this bill, he spoke to the premises of Katelynn's Principle, as we've heard from previous speakers. He spoke of the child being the main focus. The minister himself said that when the bill was introduced, it was the biggest game-changer in decades.

We've heard from the Premier previously, saying that perhaps it was time to blow up the whole thing and start again. That was regarding child welfare. This bill, I don't believe, accomplished that. This was something where, after the Katelynn Sampson inquest, when there were 173 recommendations, and after the Jeffrey Baldwin inquest, where there were many, many recommendations—this

was the government's solution, bringing in something different.

But I'm sure that when they gave it to the bureaucrats, they said, "We need to have this finished by June 1, 2017." They had to rewrite the entire legislation, somewhat, to make it what the government wanted. They obviously rushed them. They were able to table the bill in December—the very last day in our last session.

Then we started reading through this legislation, which is very difficult. This is child and family legislation. It should be in plain language, so that a youth or a family member can pick it up and understand what they're reading. We as legislators were having a difficult time trying to get through this bill, trying to understand all the different parts where they've moved things through and how they've shuffled things around. How many times can they say "may" instead of "shall"? How many times can they just put things—

Mrs. Gila Martow: "Apprehend"; "take to a safe place."

Miss Monique Taylor: "Apprehend"—not using concrete language throughout the committee process. Speaker, I spoke up several times about the need for—I lost my train of thought on that one because there was so many things I had to say throughout committee, I have to tell you, because the process itself was just flawed. Oh, where was it? Let me go back here.

Schedule 1: That's what it's supposed to set out to do.

Schedule 2 amends the CFSA to include services so that 16- and 17-year-olds, on an interim basis, can be brought into care until the CYFSA is proclaimed.

Schedule 3 is to be enacted at the appropriate time, and it amends the CYFSA to decommission the Child Abuse Register so that CPIN can be implemented. That's the Child Protection Information Network, which we heard about earlier.

Schedule 4 amends 36 other acts to ensure that they accurately reference the new CYFSA.

My point for bringing that up is that we could have put this over a larger amount of time and still been able to bring through schedule 2 as its own bill, to ensure that services for 16- and 17-year-olds were able to be implemented.

The government claims that's why they needed to push it through: They needed to ensure that 16- and 17-year-olds could be brought under the legislation. They could have done that on their own and still spent the time to get this bill correct, and to ensure that families had the opportunity to be heard and that indigenous communities were able to be visited throughout the process.

We had hearings for three days here at the Legislature, here in Toronto, where many people don't have access, to be able to come to the Ontario Legislature.

I asked throughout the pre-committee process, when they were arranging times, to be able to travel the bill. It was important that we were able to get to communities on their own turf, where they're comfortable speaking about their own communities, and for us to see the communities and what was happening there. But, no, the

government decided that they were going to push things through as quickly as they possibly could.

What happened because of that was that we had a bill brought before us that was incomplete. It was incomplete. We heard from the parliamentary assistant, the member from Kingston and the Islands, several times throughout the process that they travelled to 77 communities and that they had hundreds of people delegate before them. Well, if they did that, maybe they should have invited us so that we could listen to those people too, and then maybe we could have had input before the actual bill was created.

When the government brought forward the bill to us, they brought forward 150 to 200 of their own amendments to their own bill. They did not get it right the first time, and that's because they rushed the process. They forced the bureaucrats to get it done, and then they tried to fix it on the fly, throughout the committee process.

What that did was it bottlenecked the committee, so that we spent all of this time having to focus on amendments, and we didn't have the ability to truly hear from people throughout Ontario. We did have 54 deputations. We had many written communications from folks. But the timeline didn't leave enough time to be able to take what those deputations said to us and change it back into legislation, time after time after time.

I made a point of wanting to share with the people of Ontario who are listening how quickly the process worked. On March 9, it passed second reading. On March 29, the hearings had already started. Remember, in our offices, we're working to ensure that we're getting all of our amendments forward. I brought forward, I believe, about 115 amendments. Most of those amendments were based on what the child advocate had wanted. They didn't listen to even the child advocate when it came to the deputations and when it came to building this bill.

So, the hearings started on March 29. On March 30, we had hearings again. Through this process, I had to plead to get a third day. We were able to work it out so we could get some extra time, so on Thursday, April 6, we had further hearings, and they ended that day. But it was also the deadline for the written submissions, so no more people could have their say. That was it; people were shut off from the process. By April 10, we had a deadline for amendments, and by April 13, clause-by-clause had started.

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So we have deputations—one which I will point out in a minute; I'm going to go there very quickly, actually, because time goes quickly—and by the 13th, we already had to have it to the lawyers. We already had to be able—first of all, we had to absorb what the people had said to us, translate that into what the amendment should look like and where it needs to go, and get it to the lawyers to be able to write it and get it back to us so that it could be put as an amendment.

Quite frankly, Speaker, out of the 115 amendments that I put in, two passed. One was because it was

identical to what they said, and on the other one, I was able to get a plain-language amendment slipped in. The government was excited that I should be excited that I had an amendment passed. It was unbelievable, but that's what this government does. Not one Conservative amendment passed at committee. Not one. The only ones that passed were the government's. The members sat there. They were on their BlackBerry's. I don't even know if they had any idea what was going on, other than the parliamentary assistant, because she was on top of it. Hand up, hand down, hand up, hand down: That's all they did. It was unbelievable. Unbelievable.

The point that I want to share here is, there was one group in particular who came to me during clause-by-clause; we were right near the end of clause-by-clause. They came to me and they were like, "We have these amendments. What do we do? How do we get them in? How do we change the bill?" I'm like, "It's too late." They're like, "What do you mean?" I said, "It's too late."

So here they are: April 6. They were on the agenda. It was two groups. One was at 2 o'clock, the Black Community Action Network. At 5:30 on the same day was the African Canadian Legal Clinic.

The African Canadian Legal Clinic doesn't understand the process of what happens here, which many organizations don't, by any means. It's no offence to them; it's just how this process works. By the time they get to me—they want amendments—it's too late. It's too late to get anything through, and everything is already started. So their voices were not heard.

I asked people throughout the committee process, "Were you consulted?" Many said no; some said yes. If they said yes, I said, "Do you feel your voice was reflected in this bill?" "No." "No, no, no" was something that I heard very often.

People have no idea what happens in this bubble here at Queen's Park, Mr. Speaker, but it does nothing to make the process friendly. When things are time-allocated, it just pushes it through even quicker. Even though the first process wasn't time-allocated, it might as well have been, because things were on such a tight timeline so the government could push it through that families are going to be let down.

I'll go back to the schedule reason, and that's why I brought it up, the schedules, because they had to push it through so that they could get schedule 2 done. The rest of it is going to sit on the shelf until when? We don't know. Is it going to come again before—are they going to write regulations? Are they going to share regulations? Are they going to talk about regulations? Are the public going to know what the regulations are actually going to mean? I highly doubt it.

So where is this miraculous change that's happening within our child and youth sector? Where is the big change? Because other than 16- and 17-year-olds coming in, which they could have done as a separate bill and made life easier for folks to do on unapportioned time, they decided to ram it all through, when they could have done it separately and easily given this bill the time that it needed.

Speaker, the Child and Family Services Act has been in place since 1985. This was a golden opportunity to spend the time—probably a good year. It could have taken a good year of all of us working together for the best interests of children and families to be able to put together a new plan: not a plan that mirrors what was already there, because there are still going to be so many issues within child welfare, children's mental health—that's completely underfunded; both of them, actually—and child corrections.

We missed the opportunity of making sure we have a seamless system that is under one rule of law instead of OPS and the BPS, which are two completely different ways of dealing with the exact same children. They just missed the opportunity on so many levels. This is certainly not blowing up the system, as the Premier said, but she does say a lot of things that she doesn't do, so I guess I shouldn't be so surprised over that.

Interjection.

Miss Monique Taylor: It could have been, yes, another stretch goal.

But unfortunately it's our children who will suffer. We heard from young people who know that they need something different when it comes to residential facilities. Now we're bringing in 16- and 17-year-olds. We don't have nearly enough beds to be able to manage those young people, because they are certainly not going to end up in loving foster homes because they're just not available.

We're going to be putting children in residential homes, which we've heard have Plexiglas on the windows. The door is locked. Finally, the fridge will be unlocked so that a kid can have a snack when they're hungry, because I know at my house, when my daughter was hungry, she got to eat whenever she was hungry. It wasn't about, "Well, it's not snack time yet," and, "Here, I'll give you your bottle of shampoo; let me write down what time you're having your shower," and, "Do you need some women's hygiene products? Let me write down how many you're using throughout a week."

These are meant to be our children's homes, and we're treating them as if they have been apprehended, as if they have done something wrong. This is in no way an environment that deals with our children's stability, with ensuring that our children are able to leave these homes of care. They're brought into care, they're brought into protection, and yet we're making life so much more difficult for them. We're just adding layers and layers and layers of trauma on top of these young people.

Of course, we have some who succeed, and they come out stronger. They've got that lucky ticket and they hit that family that does love them, does cherish them, does help them through the education system and does stay in their life after they're out of care because they've created that family unit. But we see way too many young people who are quite the opposite and literally have those layers of trauma, probably PTSD, from what they have faced. We hear of young people being abused. We have children who have been killed. We have recommendations

from inquests that just were not implemented into this system.

I know that the government is going to move forward with this. It's quite obvious that they're just pushing it through. They want to have another notch on their belt, but hopefully that notch doesn't come with some despair for families, which I fear it will. I hope that it doesn't take any more lives, because we've certainly lost enough to these systems. I hope that somehow through regulation, we will be able to fine-tune things to ensure that indigenous families and communities get what they need when they need it, that they have the supports and the dollars to be able to actually take care of their own communities, that we provide them with the tools to help them succeed, and that we talk about black kids who are overrepresented in our CAS system, that we talk about black kids who are overrepresented in our corrections.

For some reason, the government refused, absolutely refused, to identify black children in this bill, and yet they're the highly populated, overrepresented youth within our system. The government refused to name them, and they were begging to be named, Speaker. They're begging for those changes. They're begging for the help and the assistance to be able to fix their communities and to be able to grow healthy families. The government has ignored them throughout this. They talk about all cultures, but the black youth really needed to be here.

Thank you for this opportunity.

1520

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It's been 30 years since this province made changes as comprehensive as those proposed in Bill 89 to the child, youth and family services sector. We need new legislation to support the children of today, the children of tomorrow and the children of the next 20 years.

I'm proud to speak today on the importance of the Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act, which I will refer to as Bill 89 moving forward. I stand here today committed to helping the children and youth of Ontario reach their full potential. It is on a day like today that I'm reminded of the words of our Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth when he said, "You can't legislate love, but you can legislate the conditions in which love can flourish." These words carry special significance today.

This legislation would raise the age of protection to 18. With these changes, 16-year-olds and their peers in care will have more support as they finish high school and sort out where they want to go in life. It's true that we can't legislate love, but we can carry it with us as we create policy that will shape the future of our province. That is what we've tried to do with the legislation, Mr. Speaker.

This is why we've proposed legislation to ensure that every child who needs medication is able to access it, regardless of their background. I've heard from our own family and children services that these measures, the

OHIP+, will actually have the potential to help children stay in their homes longer. This is why we've passed legislation to ensure our young people can access post-secondary education based on their ability to learn and not on their ability to pay. This is why we've proposed Bill 89.

For three decades, this province's children and youth have waited for the reforms that are before us today in Bill 89. For three decades, this province's children and youth have waited for the reforms that are so necessary. The existing legislation came into force, in 1985, to "promote the best interests, protections and well-being of children and youth." But now, quite frankly, it's outdated and it really doesn't reflect the needs of our children and youth today.

There are several goals we want to achieve through this legislation, including:

- centring children and youth in decisions and strengthening their rights so that they have a voice in the services they receive;
- improving the quality of services and the consistency of supports offered to children, youth and their families;
- increasing accountability and oversight of service providers; and
- supporting First Nations, Métis and Inuit children, youth and families through services that respect their cultures, their heritage and their traditions.

If passed, the legislation will accomplish these goals by focusing on four priority areas:

- prevention and protection;
- quality improvement;
- accountability and oversight; and
- relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis children.

I would like to address our province's children and youth specifically: For the first time in legislation, your rights—including the right to participate in decisions which will affect you—are at the heart of everything that we are trying to do. If there ever comes a time where you come into care or are in need of protection or to access services, it will be required that you are actually informed of your rights. We are going to affirm and strengthen those rights. Listening to your experiences and your perspective will shape how you access services and how they are delivered to you.

This is Katelynn's Principle: ensuring our children and youth are at the centre of the decisions which affect their futures and have their rights respected regardless of who they are and where they are. It recognizes that children and youth receiving services under the proposed CYFSA have the right to express those views freely and safely about matters that affect them. They will have their views given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity, they will be consulted on the nature of the services that they are receiving and advised of the decisions being made.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? Further debate? One last time: Further debate?

Mrs. Sandals has moved government notice of motion number 33 relating to allocation of time on Bill 89, An Act to enact the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, to amend and repeal the Child and Family Services Act and to make related amendments to other Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell—I'm sorry; it will be a 10-minute bell.

Actually, it will not be either, because I have received a request for a deferral signed by the chief government whip asking that the vote on government notice of motion number 33 be deferred until Tuesday, May 30, during the time of deferred votes.

Vote deferred.

PROTECTING PATIENTS ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PATIENTS

Mr. Hoskins moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 87, An Act to implement health measures and measures relating to seniors by enacting, amending or repealing various statutes / Projet de loi 87, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre des mesures concernant la santé et les personnes âgées par l'édiction, la modification ou l'abrogation de diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I look to the minister to lead off debate.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I rise today to lead off third reading debate of the Protecting Patients Act. I'll be speaking to a single element of the bill, the proposed changes to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, which would strengthen Ontario's zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse of patients by any regulated health professional.

Mr. Speaker, our government has a zero-tolerance policy for sexual abuse. That includes zero tolerance for criminal sexual behaviour of any kind, regardless of position, title or occupation. Our government is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all Ontarians, and as the Minister of Health it is my specific priority to protect patients. That is exactly why our government has introduced this bill: Bill 87, the Protecting Patients Act.

This important piece of legislation that is before us today is informed by the important work undertaken by the sexual abuse task force that our government appointed. My colleagues will remember that, back in 2014, I appointed human rights lawyer, professor and now senator Marilou McPhedran to chair this task force in the wake of some very high-profile cases of patient sexual abuse.

I asked this task force to assist our government in reviewing and modernizing the legislation designed to prevent and deal with sexual abuse of patients by regulated health professionals. The result of this initiative

was the task force's report, which contained 34 recommendations for improving the prevention of and response to patient sexual abuse in Ontario.

Of course, I want to take this opportunity to thank both Marilou McPhedran and Sheila Macdonald, who was the other member of the task force, and all of the important members and associates of the task force for this report and for their invaluable contribution to patient safety and protection in this province. It's because of their work and dedication to protecting patients that we have this bill in front of us today.

1530

I would also like to thank all of the many patients, health care professionals, associations and advocacy groups that we have heard from throughout the process of drafting this bill. I'd like to thank them for their time and for their valuable input. The feedback and advice that we received throughout this entire process was absolutely critical to getting this important bill right.

This bill, Bill 87, proposes a number of legislative amendments to the Regulated Health Professions Act, which sets out the governing framework for regulated health professions in Ontario. The additional steps that we propose in this bill would strengthen measures to protect patients, support victims of sexual abuse and improve the accountability of the health regulatory system.

As a start, the proposed bill would expand the list of acts that would result in the mandatory revocation of a regulated health professional's certificate of registration. The bill would also change a regulatory college's ability to impose gender-based restrictions on a regulated health professional's certificate of registration. If we mean to promote a culture of zero tolerance, then this is a logical and necessary next step.

Fines for health professionals and organizations that fail to report an allegation of patient sexual abuse to a college would also increase. The maximum first-time fines for failure to report an incident of sexual abuse to a health regulatory college would go up to \$50,000 for individuals and \$200,000 for organizations.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we will also be taking an important step forward to boost the supports provided to patients throughout the college's complaints, investigations and discipline processes. We know that patients find it difficult to report incidents of sexual abuse by health professionals. We want to make the necessary changes that encourage victims to come forward and support them when they do.

The relationship between a patient and his or her health professional must be built upon a foundation of trust, confidence and safety, and our government is taking concrete action to uphold and reinforce a zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse of patients by any health professional. The proposed Protecting Patients Act will go a long way to strengthen measures to protect patients, to support victims of sexual abuse by health professionals and improve regulatory oversight and accountability. But our work doesn't end there. We will continue to listen to

patients across the province and we will continue to work closely with all health colleges to ensure effective oversight of these new regulations and, with it, improved transparency so that every person in Ontario receives the care they need in an environment they can trust.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate an important point that we heard in public hearings. When Farrah Khan, an advocate for sexual abuse victims and a prominent voice in this sphere, was asked by the official opposition if we should extend the proceedings for this bill, she replied to the official opposition with this: "We cannot wait any longer. We have been told to wait too long. What are we going to tell the women and men and all genders who have come forward...." She goes on to say, "We cannot wait, and safety cannot wait anymore."

Mr. Speaker, I purposely want to leave all members on this very important point. This issue is too important to be complicated by politics or partisanship. We all have a common goal here, a common goal in protecting patients from sexual abuse. I hope that all members will strongly consider this very important goal and vote in favour of protecting patients.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm glad to stand up and debate about Bill 87 on the third reading. Again, from the Progressive Conservative side of the House, we are in full support of zero tolerance with regard to sexual abuse. We, too—like, I think, any member of this Legislature—are looking out for the safety and well-being of all Ontarians. It's not subject to one party or another. I think anybody running for the office of provincial Parliament holds those values in tight.

However, Mr. Speaker, we're at the same point we were at with our other health bills with Bill 87. Bill 41 was rushed through with limited debate in the House. Bill 119 was rushed through. This bill was introduced on December 8, 2016, and wasn't called for debate until the end of March. Now we are rushing this bill through because this government was unable to manage its legislative calendar properly to get the proper debate out in the Legislature.

When you rush bills, as we've mentioned from other bills previously, you end up with unintended consequences. Unfortunately, this government has time-allocated this legislation, and we get an entire 10 minutes as a caucus to have final debate in third reading.

What we heard at committee from the colleges themselves—the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, the College of Pharmacists—is that they were saying, "Slow down. You've got some problems with this legislation. Take the summer, sit down with the stakeholders and let's make this bill stronger." But unfortunately, this government didn't want to listen to that, and they time-allocated it.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are still quite a few issues outstanding in this legislation that the government is not fixing them in legislation, but maybe in regulation they'll actually reach out and sit down with stakeholders—

which they haven't been doing lately with many of their health care bills—and fix these problems through regulation.

One of the items that the college had brought up and that we brought forward as one of our amendments in the Legislature was the ability to allow the colleges to provide information to police about non-members. They specifically wanted to focus on the opioid crisis in this province. Right now, through an investigation of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, if they find a non-member—a patient—has been diverting opioids, they can't tell the police about that patient. They can't put out that information.

We have an opioid crisis going on in this province, killing two people a day. We need to ensure that we have all the tools available to our law enforcement to ensure that we can deal with the situation. We need more treatment for addictions, we need more support, but if the colleges do find somebody through their investigations diverting opioids, we need to allow the police to have that information in order to stop that.

We also heard quite a bit from those parents who are against vaccinations that the educational classes aren't going to change their minds. We would have liked to have seen perhaps allowing a family doctor or a pediatrician to provide that education through their regular scheduled appointments and have that signed off if the government wants to go forward with the educational classes.

I've been contacted by some of those folks who are against vaccination, and they hope that they are thought of and have discussion in the regulations as they develop the classes. They, too, want to be part of that process, to ensure that the educational classes that they're putting forward are balanced in their minds, and I think it's only fair to have them at the table and have that discussion.

Mr. Speaker, we put through a number of amendments put forth by the Ontario Pharmacists Association to acknowledge the abilities of pharmacists in the province with regard to vaccination. We had hoped that they would be included as one of the primary names: "physicians, nurses, pharmacists and others as prescribed." Pharmacists have earned the right of the expanded scope of practice to give injections. However, the government does not really want to acknowledge their importance. It's a lack of respect for the profession.

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In addition we also heard with regard to reporting vaccinations, which I'm concerned about—and hopefully the minister and ministry will take their time on this. Right now the government has spent \$8 billion on eHealth and, as of yet, individual medical practices cannot communicate with Panorama. So for a health care professional to deliver a vaccination and transfer that information to a health unit for record-keeping—we think centralized record-keeping is a great idea, but the technology is not there yet.

We heard from Peel region's health unit that they figure they'll get over 200,000 pieces of paper in a year with regard to vaccination updates. That will be utterly

impossible to keep straight. You'll either miss vaccinations as you won't have an updated schedule or you'll end up with duplicates. We're hoping the government holds off on proclaiming that part of the legislation until the technology becomes available. They mentioned at committee that they're considering it. We wished they'd put a statement in to the legislation to ensure that didn't happen until then. Unfortunately, we didn't get that.

In fact, our party put forth 40 amendments on this piece of legislation. Do you know how many the government agreed upon? We didn't make up these amendments. They came from stakeholders. They came from OMA. They came from CPSO. They came from Vaccine Choice. They came from other deputations that we heard. They accepted none of the amendments. In fact, the time for debate at committee was time-allocated. We only got through half of the amendments before debate was cut off and we just simply voted "yea" or "nay" on each amendment without reading it in to the record. That's how mismanaged this government is with their own legislative calendar at the Legislature, that they have to now remove debate amongst all of the parties and rush legislation through the Legislature. And they're going to come and have problems that we're going to have to fix down the road.

Mr. Speaker, I find it terrible that the government that wants to work and build up Ontario refuses to work with the opposition parties. It refuses to work with the members who were elected in each and every riding with the voices of different stakeholders and their own members. This government flatly refuses to look outside of themselves to make bills stronger. It's unfortunate that this is the ongoing work of this government. We're dealing with matters of serious importance. I wish that they would actually include the opposition in debate, include opposition amendments and make bills stronger. However, 40 amendments, and there is nothing to show for it for support.

There is a lot of work that needs to be done in these regulations to fix this bill. I know the opposition won't be allowed to be part of the regulation-making process, but I'm hoping the government reaches out to all stakeholders, all those being affected by this piece of legislation, and works out those kinks in the system so that we have a bill, we have a law set in place that's going to protect those from sexual abuse, it's going to ensure our vaccination program is top-notch, it's going to ensure the lab programs are in place, and senior community centres.

We want to make sure that this bill is done right and not have to do a redo a year or two down the road when the unintended consequences, because of this government's ineptitude at managing time and legislation, come to fruition.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I will try to use my 10 minutes wisely to go through a bill that has five schedules to it.

The first schedule has to do with the Immunization of School Pupils Act. Basically what it will do is, before a

parent can file a statement of conscience or religious belief—that is, you sign a piece of paper that says that you don't want your child to be immunized—you will have to take part in some form, yet to be defined, of education program. I wish we would know a little bit more as to what this will look like in my part of the province, where the territories are really huge. We don't know yet, but I guess we'll know later.

But the main problem with the first schedule of the bill is that they say, "Those who administer immunizing agents"—think of physicians and nurses—will have "to provide information to the local medical officer of health." That's the people in charge of health unit after health unit. As well, their associations came to us and said clearly that eHealth is not ready to handle this, and that right now, if they were to get every immunization from every child, one at a time, none of them are able to handle it.

I'm always a little bit leery of supporting a piece of legislation that will not be supportable in the field. I'm okay with the spirit of it. If our electronic health record was working and, as you entered the data, you could electronically transfer it to the health unit, that would be really good. But Ontario is not able to do this, and I don't know when Ontario will be able to do this. But I know that we will be voting on this bill tomorrow.

The second part is lab and specimen collection. For reasons that have not been explained to me, we have decided to take laboratory and specimen collection centres and lump them under a new term called "laboratory facility." Everybody understands that in order to be a lab, you have to undergo a series of oversights, to make sure that the tests being done in there are quality, so that the diagnostics being brought forward are based on facts.

The problem is that a lot of physicians, nurse practitioners, aboriginal health access centres, community health centres and a whole bunch of other primary care all collect blood—not all; many of them offer lab services. This has been done very safely in our province forever, amen. Now, with this new change, will that mean that every time a physician's office, a community health centre, aboriginal health access centre or a nurse practitioner-led clinic wants to offer that service to their clients, they will also have to meet this very heavy protocol of oversight, which means none of them have the resources to do this, which means that the good people I represent will lose access?

The bill even goes further. If a lab wants to open up a new site, they have to receive the minister's approval. But if they want to close one of their collection sites, then they can do this, no questions asked.

I represent a rural riding in northern Ontario. We have lost all of our specimen collection centres in Nickel Belt. Everybody now has to make the trip down to Larch Street, in downtown Sudbury. That makes no sense. It was an opportunity to change this.

To make matters worse, the way that labs are funded right now—think of it as a big pie. The pie has been divided, and each lab has their share of the pie, no matter

how many collection centres they have, no matter where they offer those services. Now we're going to take this away, and we're going to bring in competitive bidding. When you live in an urban area, competitive bidding is a thing of beauty, because they will bid for your services, and chances are you will have better access, better care. When you represent people in Nickel Belt, nobody will bid to come to Nickel Belt. Nobody will care whether we have access or not, whether we have equity. I am completely opposed to this.

The extra little kick is this: Why is it in there that now public hospitals will be allowed, if the minister agrees, to do community lab work, and I'm all for it, because in lots of communities, that means finally we will have access to community lab services. But it also opens the door to do it in reverse: The for-profit labs will be allowed to take the easy, high-volume cases of our hospitals, which means more and more privatization of our hospitals. I draw the line there: Our hospitals need to continue to have solid lab services available 24/7, or our hospitals won't be able to provide good hospital care. I don't know why this is in there.

Schedule 3, the Ontario Drug Benefit Act: It doesn't matter how much I try. We hear the minister was there, talking to RNAO. I was there, sitting beside him. He made it clear that RN prescribing is coming. Yay! That was our opportunity to put in RN prescribing. I put it in at every single clause-by-clause; I was voted down every time. Only the RN extended class, which means nurse practitioners, is now under the Ontario Drug Benefit Act. Why didn't we take this opportunity to put the RNs in there, given that we are promising them RN prescribing? I don't know, but it is not in.

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Then comes the reason for this bill. The reason for this bill is schedule 4. The reason for this bill is zero tolerance of sexual abuse by health care providers, something that we have been asking for for a long time, something that is long overdue and something that is addressed, partly, by the bill.

The bill does some good change in the right direction, but the bill also falls short in many areas that we know.

The first area is the Mental Health Act. If a psychiatrist abuses a patient while he is giving care in a psychiatric facility, he—or she—can shield everything that he has done. We know this. We had people come and tell us we need to change the Mental Health Act to make sure—if a psychiatrist does something wrong in the community, we can cover him or her and have them go through the college. But if the same psychiatrist abuses the same patient while they are admitted to a psychiatric facility, we can't. This makes no sense. People who require mental health services in a psychiatric facility needs to be protected.

The second is compensation for members of council. There are some councils where the workload is quite heavy. The colleges have told us that—that they need to be able to compensate their public members. It's quite sad that they will compensate their professional members

to the tune of a thousand bucks a day to be able to sit there and have their attention to do the work, but that the person sitting next to them, who is not a professional but a public appointee, doesn't get that. That wouldn't cost the province anything. The different colleges want that to be there, and it was voted down.

Another thing that the PCs have also mentioned is that when they do investigations—and this is a real case. They did an investigation. They realized that a physician's eHealth system had been hacked. There was somebody who was using that physician's eHealth system to print opioid prescriptions and other prescriptions, simply because they had hacked into their electronic health record. Well, even though the college—it was the College of Physicians and Surgeons in this case—found that out and knew that this was happening, they could not report it to the police. We put amendments forward so that when a college finds something wrong that is being committed not by one of their members but by somebody else, they should be allowed to go to the police. But no. The way the bill is written right now, this practice will continue to happen.

It's the same thing if there was fraud happening but the fraud was not by their member. So if it's the College of Nurses and it was not the nurse who was committing the fraud, it was the secretary, even if they do find that there's been fraud that has an impact on patients, they cannot go to the police because they found that information during an investigation. The college asked us to change this, and we did not.

I have 18 seconds left.

The fifth part has to do with elderly persons centres. That has absolutely nothing to do with protecting patients, because there are no patients there, but it got put in there for reasons still unknown.

So the bill does some steps towards zero tolerance, but also falls short.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 87, the Protecting Patients Act, just to say a few words.

As the member opposite mentioned, there are five schedules to this act. Perhaps the most important is schedule 4, the Regulated Health Professions Act, which establishes what we already had, which was zero tolerance for any form of sexual abuse. I think we struck the right balance. We listened to the delegations that came forward and some of their suggestions about how to strengthen that section of the act. I think we managed to strike that balance.

I want to read, from the College of Midwives of Ontario, a comment that they made: "I am here today in support of Bill 87 on several accounts: first, in support of the shared commitment to eliminate sexual abuse of patients, and second, in support of increased transparency with respect to additional information shared with the public about our registrants and also with respect to information shared about college processes...."

"We value consistency in our procedures and, therefore, we are in favour of the minister's intention to

appoint an expert adviser to develop a framework for investigation and prosecution of sexual abuse cases and would welcome the opportunity to work with this person.

"We support increasing access to funding for victims of sexual abuse by health care professionals and applaud the fact that colleges do not need to first make a finding of guilt in advance of releasing those funds. This is truly patient-focused and most respectful of victims."

Speaker, I would also like to say a few words about the Immunization of School Pupils Act. I think it's a very important part of this bill. We know some of the challenges that exist right now with misinformation around immunization and ensuring that families have access to that information is critical. As well, I think it's a very balanced approach to it.

I would like to comment that in committee we were able to work with the member opposite to make a couple of amendments to the bill: one in schedule 5, which was the Seniors Active Living Centres Act, and the other one to section 0.1 with regard to pharmacies and the application under this act.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of this bill. I think we struck the right balance. I look forward to later on when we get to vote on it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? Further debate? Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 17, 2017, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Hoskins has moved third reading of Bill 87, An Act to implement health measures and measures relating to seniors by enacting, amending or repealing various statutes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

Those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I wish to inform the House that I have received a notice of deferral from the chief government whip asking that, pursuant to standing order 28(h), the third reading on Bill 87 be deferred until deferred votes tomorrow, Tuesday, May 30, 2017.

Third reading vote deferred.

MODERNIZING ONTARIO'S MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LA MODERNISATION DE LA LÉGISLATION MUNICIPALE ONTARIENNE

Mr. Mauro moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 68, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to municipalities / Projet de loi 68, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les municipalités.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I look to the minister, if he wishes to lead off the debate.

Hon. Bill Mauro: Speaker, thank you very much. I stand today to begin third reading of the Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act, known as Bill 68. I'll be sharing my time today with Lou Rinaldi, my parliamentary assistant and the member for Northumberland–Quinte West.

Like many members in this House, I began my career in politics at the local level. Local governments know their communities best. They provide front-line services like public transportation and recreation facilities. They deal with local issues like fixing roads and collecting property taxes. As we have seen in the case of flooding in central and eastern Ontario—and, I would add, in my home community of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, where we have had two major floods in the last five or six years or so—they are often the first responders when residents are in need.

Our communities need to be strong and vibrant places where people can live, work and raise families. Local governments should have the legislative framework they need to be open, accountable and flexible in responding to the needs of their residents. This legislation, if passed, would improve that framework.

If passed, these proposed changes would do a number of things to strengthen Ontario communities right across the province of Ontario. They would increase fairness and reduce barriers for women and parents elected to municipal governments by providing time off for pregnancy or parental leave. They would better position municipalities to address climate change in their communities.

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These proposed changes would broaden municipal investment powers for eligible municipalities, which may help them raise more revenue for repairs and replacement of local infrastructure. They would improve access to justice for both the public and municipal councillors by allowing integrity commissioners to investigate conflict-of-interest issues if a complaint was brought to them. They would ensure municipalities have a code of conduct for members of municipal councils and certain local boards. These are some of the significant changes that have received fulsome debate during second reading and at committee.

I would also like to take a moment to extend my thanks to the Premier, my fellow cabinet members and to my colleague the member for Kitchener Centre, Daiene Vernile, for her work on the parental leave sections of this bill, which the member for Northumberland–Quinte West will be speaking about in more detail.

To the member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale: It was under your watch that this process began, and your leadership was essential to the successful introduction of this bill.

To my staff and to members of the community who have weighed in since day one of the municipal legislative review, I also extend my thanks.

To organizations like AMO, FONOM, NOMA and OGRA: Your input has been instructive and appreciated.

I would also like to thank those who recently provided feedback to committee, either through a presentation or through a written submission. The bill we have in front of us for third reading is stronger and more responsive to local needs. This is because of the feedback we received from the people I have just mentioned and from many others.

Over the past few weeks at standing committee, we have heard from a number of individuals and organizations across Ontario about the proposed changes. I would like to acknowledge the thorough work my colleagues on the Standing Committee on Social Policy have done in regard to this bill. Their insight has contributed to the careful analysis of this bill and helped to make it stronger.

I would say, Speaker, that all parties brought forward a number of amendments that were quite similar in spirit, if not in letter. In many cases, we were hearing the same feedback and trying to make the same improvements to the bill. In some situations, we ultimately decided to pursue the government-proposed versions of these amendments. In doing so, we had the advantage of working with our ministry staff to ensure the amendments were comprehensive and represented a range of expertise.

In the case of extending the proposal for parental leave to school board trustees, all parties were in agreement and supported this motion.

There were also concerns from all parties, as well as municipalities, about allowing any person to bring forward a complaint under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act. In the end, we proposed scoping this provision to more closely align with the recommendations of Justice Cunningham in the Mississauga inquiry.

The bill before us today would allow an elector or a person demonstrably acting in the public interest, as well as integrity commissioners, to bring forward a complaint under the MCI Act, rather than any person. We think this amendment strikes the right balance between providing access to accountability and protecting members from inappropriate complaints.

Speaker, there are many provisions in this proposed legislation that would strengthen accountability. We believe members of the public should be able to bring their concerns forward to local accountability officers. However, we also recognize that public accountability processes should not be a tool for influencing an election campaign.

We are proposing that a local integrity commissioner must terminate any code of conduct of Municipal Conflict of Interest Act inquiries that are not completed by nomination day for a regular municipal election. If an inquiry is terminated, the commissioner cannot start another inquiry on the same matter unless, within six weeks after voting day, the person or organization who made the request or the member—or former member—whose conduct is concerned makes a written request to the commissioner to begin the inquiry anew.

Speaker, we have come out of the committee process, we believe, with a stronger piece of legislation, one that reflects the input of many people right across this province. Again, I would like to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Social Policy and all the individuals and organizations that submitted input during public hearings, and again, I want to recognize my parliamentary assistant, the member for Northumberland–Quinte West.

The proposed legislation contains much-needed updates to the municipal legislative framework and some significant steps forward. If passed, it will ensure that local governments are stronger for the people that they serve.

I look forward to comments from the member from Northumberland–Quinte West, who helped guide this legislation through the committee process. Speaker, I thank you and I now yield the floor to my colleague, my parliamentary assistant, the member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I should clarify—I know the member is impatient for his debate, but there is time for the member if he stands up in the next rotation.

Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 68. It's an omnibus bill which amends 17 pieces of legislation and in committee had 130 pages of amendments put forward. It is a bill that should be debated thoroughly by MPPs from across Ontario. Instead, our party has a total of 20 minutes to talk about all the problems with this bill and the amendments which we put forward to fix them—amendments which the government voted down.

Mr. Speaker, the government was clear that they did not want to listen to the people about how to make this bill better. They refused to allow a committee hearing in the north and they did not give sufficient notice or time for the committee meetings held in Toronto. A bill being rushed through the legislative process is not a sign of efficiency; it's a sign of a government that is disorganized and can't manage its schedule. It's easy for someone sitting in a downtown Toronto office tower to write a bill, but it is municipalities, organizations, businesses and individuals that need to deal with the impact of the new legislation. It's the municipalities that have to bear the cost.

If you want to make legislation better, you need to take the time to do it right. As the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario said in their submission, "As with Bill 130 and Bill 8 before it, some of the measures in Bill 68 seem to have been motivated by bad headlines and anecdotes, rather than extensive information and detailed analysis. The consequences for municipalities are nevertheless significant."

As I said, the government voted down every single opposition amendment, and often it seemed that who introduced them was the only reason they were voting them down. I want to go through some of those amend-

ments and why we introduced them, and the support from stakeholders. For instance, we put forward amendments to extend the parental leave for municipal councillors and school trustees from the 20 weeks proposed in the bill to 24 weeks—almost six months—to give new parents a little more flexibility, and yet the government members voted against them. When we asked at the ministry briefing why they had chosen 20 weeks, they said that it was the number that had been in the private member's bill—no other reason. The government members voted against lengthening the leave for new parents, twice.

They also voted down our amendment to require municipal councillors to attend meetings in person instead of phoning in. Mr. Speaker, as one mayor commented, this bill will mean that councillors who go south for the winter would no longer have to fly back for meetings. It's ironic that the government actually pointed out some of these challenges when they explained why they don't trust councillors enough to allow them to call into closed meetings. One of the Liberal members of the committee said, "There's something in my gut about in camera meetings and people phoning in from the cottage. They may be on the beach; they've probably got their cellphone on because they're having trouble hearing, with all the noise around them, the conversation."

Most councillors are very responsible and want to represent their constituents in person, but we shouldn't be setting up a system where someone can call in from the cottage, the beach or even another country instead of being there in person, where they can be held to account. This experiment has already been tried. Port Moody in British Columbia rescinded their bylaw allowing electronic participation in council meetings after two different councillors tried it on separate occasions and both had technical difficulties. The council considered spending \$45,000 to upgrade their teleconferencing abilities, which resulted in outrage from their residents. As a resident said, "Face-to-face interaction is crucial."

Electronic participation became an issue in another municipality in 2004 where a councillor who was also a professional actor took on an acting role involving a 17-week world tour. As one of his critics said, "People want their representative to be there—in person." In Peachland, British Columbia, where it was also an issue, the mayor said, "I think if you're going to run for an elected position, then you should be there in person." There are also concerns about dropped calls and connection issues which make it difficult to hold councillors to account.

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In his written submission to the committee, Paul Dubé, Ombudsman for Ontario, said, "I understand the policy reasons why official 'meetings' would be restricted to situations where the requisite number of members is physically present. This requirement reinforces that the public is entitled to attend municipal meetings and witness democratic decision-making in process." If one should be there, Mr. Speaker, they all should be there.

We cannot support a bill that reduces accountability and transparency by allowing councillors to call into the

meetings instead of being accountable to their constituents in person. We put forward amendments to remove this from the bill, and the government members, of course, voted them down.

This government is in favour of reducing transparency. They think that politicians don't need to be accountable to their constituents, but we strongly disagree.

There were many more instances where this government failed to listen to the organizations impacted by this legislation, such as the changes requested to the prudent-investor rules. We support the right of municipalities to use prudent-investor standards. It's something municipalities have been asking for, but there are concerns with how the government chose to implement it in Bill 68. The legislation says that only municipalities that meet the prescribed requirements will be allowed to use the broader prudent-investment standards.

The challenge is that no one knows yet what those standards will be. Municipalities may be supporting this bill because they believe it will give them access to new investment vehicles, only to find out later that they don't qualify. Even the organizations involved in the talks with the government about prudent-investment standards don't know who will qualify.

As the town of Bracebridge said in their submission, "Without understanding the conditions to be outlined in future regulation, the town is concerned that small and medium-sized municipalities may not be eligible to access the prudent-investor standard, leaving them in a higher-risk investment environment."

The second concern is that the government has made the prudent-investor bylaw irrevocable. As the president of the Municipal Finance Officers' Association of Ontario said during committee presentation, "We certainly agree that a transition process would be required for a municipality to adjust its portfolio holdings to comply with the legal list, but we don't see a reason why such rules cannot be set out in advance." Despite this, when we put forward the amendment, the government voted it down.

If a council decides that they don't have the expertise to use the broader investment powers, this government still won't let them revert back to the old model. It just doesn't make sense. But the government didn't listen, just like they refused to listen to municipal integrity commissions that raised concerns that municipal integrity commissioners were at personal risk of being sued. We put forward an amendment to protect the municipal integrity commissioners by providing them with immunity and requiring municipalities to provide them with insurance. This amendment was requested by Halton region, AMO, ROMA, Suzanne Craig, Amberley Gavel Ltd., the city of Toronto integrity commissioner and the city of Ottawa integrity commissioner, and yet, the government still voted it down even though theirs did not grant immunity.

Municipalities and stakeholders raised a number of concerns about the integrity commissioner rules, but they were also concerned about the cost. They said it was a

new burden on municipalities at a time when they are already struggling and a cost over which they have absolutely no control.

As the AMCTO stated in their submission, "While it is difficult to predict the full fiscal impact of these changes at this point, there are some troubling examples that we can point to. From our research we know that retainers for an integrity commissioner alone can range from \$305 to \$12,000 per year.

"One municipality paid a \$10,000/year retainer even though their IC didn't conduct a single investigation."

They also provided examples of municipalities forecasting to be billed \$20,000 for a single investigation that found no merit and another investigation in which a municipality was billed \$10,000 for a review of a single media article.

We could have helped manage the costs by restricting inquiries to those where there was merit. Instead, the government refused to pass our amendment to allow the integrity commissioners to simply dismiss frivolous complaints.

The chair of ROMA, Ronald Holman, said, "Further, if Bill 68 passes without amendment, any complaint by anyone would mean" integrity commission "action—even to determine a complaint has no merits would mean a file has to be opened, a preliminary examination undertaken and to close the file."

We put forward an amendment that would restrict those who can apply to an integrity commissioner for an inquiry to a ratepayer, an elector, a person who operates a business in the municipality or a business that provides goods or services to the municipality. Our definition was clear. It would have prevented people with no connection to the municipality from filing frivolous complaints or an individual filing complaints in municipalities across Ontario. Even though these complaints might be dismissed, there is still a cost to municipalities and the reputation of councillors.

This is something that was requested by multiple stakeholders, including AMO's president, Lynn Dollin, and Patrick Daly of the Catholic school trustees association. Despite all these requests, the government members voted down our amendments in favour of their own vague amendment, which allowed people from other municipalities or another country to file frivolous complaints.

It's even more ironic when you consider that another government member had said just shortly before, "So I think we need to be very careful about that scope, Lou, as we go forward, and make sure we're not building into the system the very kinds of abuses which on a good day all of us would pledge to try to be rid of.

"I understand there are some other amendments that will narrow that. I don't think somebody in Toronto, unless there's a very specific sort of focus, should be launching some kind of integrity challenge against my mayor in Hamilton." Despite that, they still voted down our amendment.

There were also concerns about the role of the integrity commissioner relating to local municipal boards. One

of the main ones was that this would discourage volunteers on local boards because they were being asked to put their reputation at risk with no remuneration. The other concern was that it should be implemented for councillors first, and then expanded to allow time for problems to be worked out.

Craig Wray of Wawa, during his presentation to committee, said, "Please give serious consideration to amending Bill 68 to delete entirely or perhaps delay the application of the provisions for local boards until it has been tested on members of municipal council." We put forward an amendment to that end; of course, it was voted down.

Following clause-by-clause, AMO sent out a communication to municipalities that said, "AMO remains very concerned about how the integrity regime may affect the many citizens and business people who volunteer to local boards."

A number of people both at committee and through letters expressed concern about the fact that this bill would allow existing grandfathered billboards to be removed. These are signs that were put up in good faith and that conformed to the bylaws of the time. One of the unintended consequences is that hundreds of small-business people could lose rental income from these signs.

Many of the letters showed how important this income was for people. As one letter said, "I'm a landlord who's had a sign on my property for over 40 years, and this is mine and my husband's source of income during our retirement. We're voting to grandfather landlords who already have signs, as removing this sign from our property will take away our retirement funds. We don't have any other source of income other than the rent from the sign and government pension.

"We're both seniors over the age of 70 and are also taking care of my son who suffered a brain injury nine years ago. Without this rent, we would be left on the street and there would be no care for my son."

Another letter said, "I'm 62 years old and the roof sign income will be part of my retirement income. I have been self-employed all my life and do not have a company or workplace pension."

Some of the letters also talked about the impact on the community. One said that the billboard is used to promote the CHIN picnic and Little Italy events.

I read those letters in committee and the government members still voted down our amendment, knowing what the impact would be on these people. They put forward an amendment that would have delayed the implementation for five years—similar to ours—to give these seniors, small-business people, community organizations and churches time to adjust, but then, after giving those people hope, the government at the last minute withdrew their own amendment with absolutely no explanation.

1620

Most members have received emails about Bill 68 eroding democracy and the lack of respect for private property. Bill 68 allows municipal employees access to

private property without respect for property owners. We put forward an amendment to require 24 hours' notice for property owners if municipal employees need to access private land for non-emergency maintenance, repairs or alterations. It still allowed municipalities to access the property immediately for emergencies. This amendment would have increased safety for both municipal employees and homeowners and given the homeowners time to point out hazards that the municipal employees may not be aware of. In ridings like mine, it would also give farmers time to inform municipal employees about the biosecurity measures on their farms to keep animals and crops healthy. Despite pointing this out during the committee, and all the emails members have received, the government voted this amendment down.

We also heard from municipalities who were concerned about Bill 68. Municipalities are no longer eligible for the remaining proceeds from tax arrears sales. I have here a letter from another municipality received just in the last week or so. This is money from people with no heirs or a corporation that has been dissolved which hasn't been claimed. Municipalities used to have a claim to that money, but through this bill the provincial government is quietly grabbing it for themselves. The township of O'Connor said in their submission, "When the province entered into consultations with respect to proposed changes to municipal legislation, none of the consultation questions related to tax sale processes or revenues. Municipalities and members of the public participated in good faith in the consultation review process, but were not given an opportunity to provide input on these matters, now before the provincial Legislature."

Our municipalities are struggling to make ends meet and deliver the services their residents depend on. We should be looking at ways to reduce their burdens. Instead, the government is adding additional costs and removing some of the revenue that they were previously receiving. In fact, the city of Toronto passed a motion stating that they "vigorously object to the proposed revisions of Bill 68 that would see excess tax sale proceeds go to the court for 10 years after which are forfeited to the crown."

Mr. Speaker, the cash grab on tax arrears isn't the only thing that was put in this bill with no consultation. There's also a number of changes to the Municipal Act, including significant increased contribution limits to candidates and third parties. Last spring, we had an intensive debate about the Municipal Elections Act that we dealt with in Bill 181. I doubt that any of those organizations who came in and talked about transparency and accountability expected that just a few months later the government would quietly introduce new, higher contribution limits.

I want to point out that the Ontario Home Builders came forward to committee to raise concerns about the impact of the bill and housing affordability. Red tape and delays in the building process are a significant issue in affordability, so we put forward an amendment to shorten the planning timelines to what they were before this

government lengthened them. It would have saved months of approval time and reduced the cost of new homes by thousands.

We asked an industry expert to review this amendment before introducing it, and he said, “These are the type of amendments that would help facilitate bringing supply to the market more expediently and putting some more tension in the planning system to get discussions and negotiations moving more quickly.” But the government voted that down.

The government missed many opportunities over the last few months to listen to municipalities, AMO, other municipal organizations and the opposition to make this legislation better. As a result, what we have here before us is legislation that adds additional costs to municipalities, reduces their revenue, and makes municipal councils less transparent and accountable. This legislation leaves municipal integrity commissioners open to being personally sued, and it will lead to confusion because it is unnecessarily vague. We put forward amendments to solve these problems because we listened to municipalities and stakeholders. I want to assure them that we will continue to listen and we will continue to push the government to address these challenges.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you very much for allowing me this time, even though it was short. Obviously, this will be the end of the debate for our party. There were a lot of people in this party who would have liked to speak to this bill but were unable because of the short time frame that they have put in place for absolutely no reason at all. They’ve been working on this bill for almost a year, and it comes down to, “Limit it to 20 minutes for each party because we’ve got to get it passed today.” I think we would have done better to do it over a longer time and done a better job of this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Once again, it’s my privilege to stand and speak on behalf of the good people in the great riding of Windsor–Tecumseh.

Dissecting Bill 68 has been a most curious experience. It almost makes you want to cry. I’m almost at a loss for words. Or, as Lewis Carroll wrote in *Alice in Wonderland*, chapter 2, *The Pool of Tears*, “‘Curiouser and curiouser!’ cried Alice”; she was so much surprised, she forgot how to speak good English.

Speaker, how often have we heard the Liberals say, “It’s time to cut off debate and time-allocate this discussion so we can get the legislation to committee”? They say that’s where the opposition members will be better able to put forward amendments and fashion a better bill. That’s what they say. From their lips to God’s ears, Speaker, but unfortunately, the devil is in the details.

We on the opposition side interviewed the various delegations. We listened to their views. We heard how they thought the bill could be improved. We fashioned our amendments based on those public hearings.

You know what, Speaker? I know you won’t be surprised by this: The Liberal members, as polite as they

were, rejected each and every amendment put forward by the New Democrats and the Conservatives. We in the NDP had suggested 46 amendments. The official opposition put forward 29. Get this, Speaker—you’ll love this; it’s practically unheard of for any bill that had been properly thought out before being rushed through this House. The government members themselves realized how badly Bill 68 was put together. The Liberals had 48 amendments of their own. Can you believe it? Forty-eight from the Liberals. So 123 amendments in total, and most of them came from the Liberals on their own bill.

This is a bill, Speaker, updating the Municipal Act, and it’s done on a regular basis. In the past, each and every time, the committee has travelled the government’s proposal around the province. Interested parties attend the committee hearings and give their input. And never before this updated bill have we seen this number of amendments, especially from the government side.

Our hearings were all held in Toronto, the home base of the Liberal Party, where they feel most comfortable. They’re the home team, and members of that team refuse to go visit other parts of the province to listen to the views of people who will be directly affected by this bill.

They rushed this bill through. It’s evident from the number of people who told them how messed up their thinking was on aspects of this bill, and evidence that the original bill they came up with was so weak, so misguided, so juvenile that it needed 48 of their own amendments to make it presentable to the public.

And the egos, Speaker, the arrogance demonstrated by the Liberal government, that not one of the amendments—no matter how good they were—that came from the NDP or the official opposition was accepted. They were rejected out of hand.

Then, Speaker, you know what? Time and time again, with a slight change in the wording, a very modest change, the Liberals took those ideas from the opposition and crafted their own amendments and passed them, lest anyone ever think that anyone but a Liberal had a thumbprint on this legislation. Oh, their prints are all over this bill, Speaker: 48 of their own amendments, 123 in all, because of the poor way it was originally presented.

And the time-allocated debate in this House: They rushed it through committee before listening to all of the members of the House, all of the opposition members who were suggesting ways the bill could be improved.

Let me jump to some of the delegations and some of their suggestions, Speaker.

1630

Joe Vaccaro—you all know Joe; he’s the CEO of the Ontario Home Builders’ Association. He spent a great deal of his time warning against allowing all municipalities to be able to implement a land transfer tax. Toronto can do it. They bring in \$640 million a year in revenue from it, to help pay for infrastructure and other amenities. Other municipalities in Ontario would like the same advantage, or, at least, they’d like the option, should they choose to go that route, so they wouldn’t be restricted in raising money just from their property tax base.

Scott Butler from the Ontario Good Roads Association was arguing for more revenue tools for a municipal government. He used the Liberals' own words against them in the discussion, quoting former municipal affairs minister Ted McMeekin, who, at the AMO convention in 2014, in response to the question, "Would you be willing to entertain a consultation process to look at new revenue tools?", said, "Yes." Nothing happened. Then, the Premier gave the new minister, Minister Mauro, a mandate letter which told him, under section 4, to address the municipal fiscal sustainability challenge, "including the role of revenue tools, recognizing that municipalities are mature, accountable and responsible local governments." Nothing has happened with that yet.

Mr. Butler reminded the committee that there is a \$60-billion municipal infrastructure deficit in Ontario. The property tax base can't afford that. He said that just to maintain the status quo, taxes would have to rise by 4.5% each year for the next 10. And if we are to make any headway on the deficit, you're going to have to tack on another 3.84%. That's an increase each year, Speaker, meaning an 8.5% property tax increase for the next decade. It is simply not sustainable.

He called on the Liberals to allow for a destination tax, which municipalities, should they choose, could charge to help pay for some of the costs they're facing. They didn't get it.

Alan Kasperski is the founder of the Green Party of Toronto. He argued that this was the time to correct the unconstitutional barrier of not allowing municipal candidates to self-declare on the ballot what political party they represented. He said if candidates were independent, they could state that, but that those who wanted to be known as members of the Green Party should be allowed to have that on the municipal ballot. He says they do it in BC and Quebec, and he wanted it corrected in Ontario or he said we'll face a constitutional challenge at the Supreme Court of Canada.

We heard about the people erecting billboards for advertising—we just heard that from the member from Oxford—who had their issues. Stephen Thiele represents the Toronto Party for a Better City. Mr. Rinaldi, the parliamentary assistant to the minister, told him: "I certainly appreciate your comments"—in asking to allow his party's name on the ballot—"and I'll certainly bring it to the attention of the minister." Well, maybe he did, but the minister didn't offer any amendments to that effect.

Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner, Brian Beamish, spoke a lot about the nature of municipal councillors meeting behind closed doors. He wasn't satisfied that councillors needed any more reasons for closed sessions.

My friends at AMO made some wonderful points. President Lynn Dollin, who also serves as the deputy mayor in the town of Innisfil, represents 425 of Ontario's 444 municipalities. Speaker, just so you know, 379 of Ontario municipalities have populations with fewer than 50,000 residents, and of those 379, 190 of them have populations of less than 5,000. These municipalities run

on a shoestring budget. They may have two full-time staff; they may have six. If they need to raise money for anything—let's say what to most of us seems reasonable: \$50,000—one half of the municipalities in Ontario, in order to raise \$50,000 on their property tax base, they have to raise their property taxes by 1%—a 1% increase to raise \$50,000. Keep that in mind as we go forward with this bill, because a good part of the bill deals with the need for all municipalities to have integrity commissioners.

Originally, they said that if any person files a complaint—it doesn't matter if that person lives in China, Japan, Russia; someone on a lark can file a complaint—integrity commissioners, in the original wording of the bill, would have to investigate. Those investigations can cost as little as \$1,500 or \$2,500 and run up to \$15,000. We tried to take away that "any person" with our suggested wording. The Liberals shut it down and introduced their very own similar wording. Good for them. God bless. Have a nice day.

Ms. Dollin was opposed to the idea that the Integrity Commissioner could launch an investigation on her own, without the direction of council. That won't be happening now, because did we did change it. There will be restrictions placed on investigations in or around the near timeframe of municipal elections, as well.

We had interesting debates on whether the volunteers who sit on municipal boards, agencies and commissions would all be subject to the same rules as the elected officials in dealing with the Integrity Commissioner. AMO is of the opinion that this would cause hardship for many smaller municipalities. It might be harder to find volunteers. It might be very expensive. They wanted it phased in until after the next election, after this next one, and that didn't happen either.

AMO reminded us that "the greater the prescription and the more there is a one-size-fits-all approach placed on municipal governments, the less responsive they can be to their community's needs." Boy oh boy, did we get more evidence of that. The Liberals have this one-size-fits-all, cookie cutter approach to what they bring to the House. That point was driven home by the reeve of a small township in the riding of Timiskaming-Cochrane.

Reeve Merrill Bond drove down to Queen's Park—it's a seven-hour drive—to raise the issue of having to get 25 signatures on a nomination form for municipal office. Now, 25 names doesn't sound like a lot to most of us, but the reeve represents a municipality of only 671 people, and 426 live outside the town in the township. He has to drive over rough terrain, over gravel roads, with miles in between homes, to go knocking on doors and hoping to find someone home.

Twenty-five signatures in his municipality is about 4% of the total population. Do the math. With this cookie cutter approach, if we all had to find 4% of the population to sign our nomination forms, in Windsor you'd need about 8,800 names; in Hamilton, 20,000 names; and in Ottawa, 4% of the population would mean you would need 56,000. In Toronto—oh my heavens, Speaker—if you had to get 4% of Toronto's population to sign your

nomination papers, you'd need 108,000 names. That's if you do the Liberal math, the cookie-cutter approach, one size fits all.

In this House, we don't think enough about the small, rural, northern communities. We make rules in our political precinct here in Toronto, inside our little bubble, without thinking about how those rules would play out elsewhere. Here, you can get 25 names standing on the street corner for a couple of minutes, but go with Reeve Bond in Charlton and Dack—which, by the way, is about halfway between Temiskaming Shores and Kirkland Lake. It could take days, or the better part of a week, if you couldn't find people at home. They don't have sidewalks or a transit system. If you use a walker or a wheelchair, you're out of luck. Especially if you can't drive, you would never be able to get the names.

Well, I hope we're thinking about it now, so that the next time we bring in these types of rules, we think about the people in the far north and rural communities across our province, because they just didn't get it right with that one; I have to say that.

Our committee also heard from Conservation Ontario, which pointed out another flaw in the bill. It deals with site alteration and development permits required from local conservation authorities. The bill repeals the section of the act, but in doing so, it creates two overlapping and concurrent jurisdictions that are not harmonized. Conservation Ontario warned this will create confusion between all parties, including landowners, municipalities and conservation authorities. There would be nothing in the proposed enabling bylaw to ensure collaboration between municipalities and conservation authorities when making permanent decisions. We tried an amendment on that to correct it. Again, it was rejected by the Liberals. It will certainly lead to problems down the road.

Now, let me say we did have trouble with people trying to phone into a council meeting. It's done in some communities already. If you phoned in, you couldn't be counted for a quorum. The official opposition didn't like the idea at all. New Democrats weren't so much troubled by it, but what continues to bug me is the fact that the new rules say you can call into the public meeting, but you can't phone in and listen to the in camera meetings of council.

1640

I served seven years on city council in Windsor. I know that at in-camera, you get the most up-to-date information. You listen to the experts—they could be legal or otherwise—and they shape your discussion about what is to take place at the open and public meeting. The information in camera is sometimes new and updated and could swing a discussion down a different avenue altogether.

To me, not allowing an elected councillor—who has to answer to an integrity commissioner and who has to follow strict codes of conduct—to hear the in-camera material, and then inviting them to take part in the public debate is telling them they can skate around the rink, but only if they wear just one skate and only if they skate backwards. It puts them at a distinct disadvantage.

However, the Liberals, bless their souls, felt that councillors could be calling in from the cottage or the beach. They said it's bad enough that information leaks from in-camera meetings anyway. Here's a quote from one of the Liberal members: "Do I trust municipal councillors? Almost all, almost all of the time, but some, hardly ever—that's the few, very, very few"—and Speaker, for those very, very few, they stuck to their guns, even adding "... and then you've got the whole trick of getting papers back and forth to the person who's going to be calling in. Where do they go? Who delivers them? Who sees them ahead of time?"

Speaker, how silly. The papers to all meetings, be they public or in camera, are delivered to the same people in the same way by the same people every week. You either pick them up at the municipal office, or a courier delivers them to your door. Obviously, the Liberals weren't interested in changing their minds on this.

This, I find hilarious. Get this, Speaker: School board trustees in Ontario have been allowed for years to call in to their in-camera meetings and their public meetings, and nobody has ever said boo about it. Nobody has ever complained that a school board trustee can call in to an in camera meeting: "Are they going to be trusted? Could they be overheard? Would documents go missing?" What a farce, Speaker. The Liberals trust their school board trustees, but they don't trust their mayors and municipal councillors to have enough common sense not to call in to a meeting from a location where they might be overheard. "If they're in the sickbed, that could be dangerous. Your hotel room may be bugged. You may give away trade secrets." How silly.

It doesn't make any sense, and to me, Speaker, it makes even less sense to hear the Liberal members try and justify that decision. They had their talking points, and they stuck to them, never mind common sense.

We tried amendment after amendment; it didn't work. The PCs tried amendment after amendment; it didn't work. Speaker, as you know, when we try to get these things done to try to fashion a better bill, it takes all parties.

The bill does allow for a local member of council, for example, to fill in for a regional councillor at the regional level, should that person not be able to attend a meeting. That fill-in replacement councillor would be named at the beginning of the four-year term and serve throughout.

We tried to help the city of Toronto with a number of their requests, but were shot down in our attempts.

I don't know, Speaker, if you know about how a property gets listed for tax sale. It used to be every three years; it will now be every two. That could be problematic if some people are struggling to put food on their table, pay their hydro bill and keep a handle on their property taxes as well. No one wants to have their property listed for back taxes, and no one want to lose their home, but we'll only have two years now, instead of three, to get those property taxes up to date.

There is new emphasis on so-called community hubs. As the Liberals wrote it, "This proposed amendment

aligns with the government's commitment to implement the community hubs strategic framework and action plan's recommendation to 'require integrated planning to ensure client-focused service delivery regardless of jurisdictional boundaries...' I think that means mayors and councillors will work with school board trustees on plans to offer community services in buildings that might otherwise remain empty when no longer required for their original purpose.

Speaker, this bill is worthy of support—

Interjections.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Hello? This bill is worthy of support. The unfortunate part of it is that the Liberals were in such a rush to push legislation through the House that they were not allowing enough time for consideration of the sophisticated input that came from the many stakeholders from every part of this great province.

Toronto offered great suggestions, as did the smallest of our municipalities—and the depth of the passion presented to committee, be it from those who have been fighting for years to have the right to designate their party affiliation on the municipal ballot, or from people such as Reeve Merrill Bond, who drove seven hours down to Toronto to make his point on behalf of his deputy reeve and three councillors—to drive all the way down from that far up north to talk about 25 signatures.

There is no cookie-cutter approach to the way we treat our 444 municipalities. Let's hope, if nothing else, that point was driven home to this Liberal government yet again.

Speaker, I had to laugh at the beginning, when the minister stood up and thanked everybody who was involved in the process and this committee and thanked all of his Liberal members, all of the delegations—everyone except the opposition members. He gave them no credit at all for trying to fashion a better bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It certainly is a pleasure to speak to the bill. I just want to say that I want to thank the member from Windsor–Tecumseh after his 20-minute discussion. He did a fairly good job. I'm glad to hear that he supports the bill at the end of the day, because it's something that needs to be done. So thank you for that. I think that, all in all, he did a very good job.

Speaker, first of all let me thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, for sharing his time with me today. I would also like to thank him for entrusting me to work with our municipal partners across the province, as well as members of the public, as we conducted our review of the municipal legislative framework.

As the minister has said, our discussions at committee have helped make this legislation much, much stronger. We listened, we acted and I think at the end of the day we delivered.

They led to a proposed change to the Municipal Elections Act after discussions at committee. We agreed at committee that a one-size-fits-all approach to a require-

ment for potential candidates to have 25 signatures for a council nomination to be filed creates complications in municipalities with smaller or remote populations, and we've heard from some of those. We have heard from stakeholders about this issue, including input from FONOM, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities. They have commented that the signature requirement recently put in place for the 2018 municipal election could cause an unreasonable burden on prospective candidates in some communities. We will consult on this requirement and make appropriate changes via regulation. There was good, good discussion about this.

On this particular case, I would like to thank the reeve of Charlton and Dack for travelling to Queen's Park to speak on this issue, as well as the dozens of municipalities that wrote in. Actually, Speaker, I believe he had a number of municipalities that supported their resolution, and he brought that to our attention during committee meetings.

On the signage issue: During our review, the city of Toronto requested a change to ensure greater consistency and efficiency of sign regulations within the city. We believe this is something all municipalities could benefit from.

Speaker, I'm just going interject from the script. I remember that in my days in the municipal field we had a company—actually, it was outside the municipal boundaries—that virtually littered the landscape with signs. We had no by-laws. Unfortunately, by the time we put the regulation or by-laws in place—I thought it was a reputable business, but it was on every street corner, not just across the municipality I had the fortune to be mayor of, but even beyond. I think that this will certainly address some of Toronto's issue.

We would reduce red tape for municipalities, allowing them to be more responsive to the changing urban landscape—and this is related to the signs I was talking about, Speaker. Our proposed amendment would allow the city of Toronto and all municipalities to manage all signs in their jurisdictions consistently, if they choose to do so. It's at their wish. If passed, this proposed change would not automatically affect existing signs. The bill includes a transition provision that would make it clear that a municipality would need to pass a new by-law if it wishes to address all signs in the municipality.

Parental leave: The minister mentioned during his second reading debate that, currently, women comprise just 26% of councillors across Canada and 16% of all mayors in this country.

1650

As you know, the member from Kitchener Centre, in the fall, received unanimous second reading support for her private member's bill, Bill 46, which aims to ensure women and parents are entitled to take up to 20 weeks off for pregnancy or parental leave without fear of being removed from elected office. The member from Kitchener Centre's bill has been incorporated into Bill 68, which we're debating today. If passed, this bill will ensure offices of members of council will not become

vacant because of an absence related to pregnancy or parental leave for 20 consecutive weeks or less. As a result of the committee process, we're also extending this provision to school board trustees. Municipalities could still decide to excuse absences from meetings for any reason, including to provide for parental leave beyond the 20-week time period. It will be a council decision.

The 20-week parental leave period was requested by Kitchener councillor Kelly Galloway-Sealock. It was brought forward by the member for Kitchener Centre, as I mentioned a few minutes ago. This parental leave and the requirement for every municipality and now school board to adopt a policy on parental and pregnancy leave was supported by AMO and it received support from all parties during second reading debate on Bill 46 and Bill 68. I think this provides a strong rationale for including a 20-week parental leave period in this proposed legislation. I think it's a significant step in terms of removing barriers to elected positions.

We believe that the proposed changes we outlined today are a step in the right direction to help municipalities thrive and keep pace with our changing times. The changes proposed in this are the result of extensive consultation with municipalities, members of the public, organizations like AMO, OGRA, FONOM and ROMA.

Bill 68 would, if passed, update the legislative framework for municipalities. It would help local governments to be more open, flexible and accountable to the people they serve. It would increase transparency, giving the public added confidence in the rules governing local elected officials. The proposed legislation would increase fairness and reduce barriers for women and parents elected to municipal governments by providing time off for pregnancy or parental leave. It would better position municipalities to address climate change in their communities. It would broaden municipal investment powers for eligible municipalities, which may help them raise more revenues for repairs and replacements of local infrastructure. Speaker, if passed, it will ensure that local governments can better meet the needs of their constituents.

I would like to thank Minister Mauro for his leadership on this bill. As someone with many years of experience in local government, I think this is a strong piece of legislation that has been made stronger through public input. I urge all members to pass this bill.

Speaker, before I wind up, I would be remiss not to talk about last week. As you know, we had a constituency week and we attended a lot of functions in our ridings. But I will also say, I had the opportunity to meet with a number of my local mayors to talk about issues that they are facing to date, and we did talk a little bit about Bill 68. There were at least a couple of them I spoke to who did indicate that we need to modernize as time moves along, and I think this is along those ways.

We also talked quite a bit about supports that we provide to municipalities. The OCIF program, the OMPF program, especially for rural municipalities, which have a large amount of roads and bridges and very little

population. It's never enough. We know that, but we'll partner with them. We talked about some experiences from the past, other governments, without going into a lot of detail. Yes, I think we all agree that we need to do more.

Speaker, as we move forward, whether it's this piece of legislation or another, where it impacts municipalities, we know, Speaker, and I know, having spent some 12 years at the municipal level, the importance that municipal politicians have in their communities. They are actually the folks who are closer to the people, closer to the ground.

Speaker, I must say, when I was first appointed—I was appointed to my very first part-term, because there was a death of one of the councillors, and the council decided to appoint at the time. I remember that when somebody called—of course, we worked from home. In a small community, councillors don't have fancy offices or a secretary—

Hon. Jeff Leal: You worked out of your kitchen.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: A kitchen table. Sometimes we had to share.

But Speaker, I would say to you that when somebody called me about a culvert maybe being blocked a little bit, I knew exactly where the culvert was. I knew where the crack in the road was. I was able to talk to the public works foreman, and he knew every inch of our roads—every inch. Sometimes, I'm going to say, one would say that I miss it. But then, like most of us here, I have the opportunity to serve for the greater good.

One of the things that we talked about, which came up during conversation with a couple of the mayors, was the fact that they're very, very happy about the additional gas funding for communities with public transit. We hear from the opposition that, yes, not every community has public transit. But I can tell you that all eight of mine have some sort of public transit—it might be a community-care van; it could be a proper transit system—that is going to benefit from the doubling of the gas tax.

I talked a little bit about the OCIF funds. Municipalities now have a certain amount of money, through a formula base—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Guaranteed.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: —guaranteed. We also talked somewhat about uploads, and we talked about things that we were able to take back. You know, it's some \$4 billion—

Hon. Bill Mauro: From \$1.1 billion to \$4 billion, since we came into government.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Speaker, we talked a little bit about that. But we need to do more, and I think, as a government, we're prepared. I think we've shown what we can do.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Now there's a balanced budget.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Well, yes, we talked about the balanced budget, as my colleague would tell me.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Let's talk about the hydro bills, Lou.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: The hydro bills? They're going down.

Mr. Arthur Potts: They're going down 40%.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: The hydro bills in the majority of my riding are going down up to 40%. Imagine that, Speaker. People welcome it. I tell you, we're in a better position, Speaker.

Interjections.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I want to thank the members from the opposition, because I know they're going to support this bill. They're going to support this bill. I can see the thumbs-up from the other side. I won't mention any names.

Thank you for the opportunity, Speaker, to speak to this piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 29, 2017, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Mauro has moved third reading of Bill 68, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to municipalities. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I think I can help you out here.

1700

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. I wish to inform the House that I have received a deferral notice signed by the chief government whip, asking that the vote on third reading of this bill, Bill 68, be deferred until deferred votes tomorrow, May 30, 2017.

Third reading vote deferred.

ANNUAL REPORT, FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES COMMISSIONER

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Before I call orders of the day, I beg to inform the House that the following report was tabled: the 2016-17 annual report from the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario.

Orders of the day.

SAFER SCHOOL ZONES ACT, 2017 LOI DE 2017 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ACCRUE DES ZONES D'ÉCOLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 18, 2017, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of speed limits in municipalities and other matters / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant le Code de la route relativement aux limites de vitesse dans les municipalités et à d'autres questions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm pleased to rise to speak, on short notice, to Bill 65, Safer School Zones Act, 2016. I would like to begin by congratulating our critic from Kitchener–Conestoga, the critic for transportation, who has done a really effective job in offering solutions to improve this bill. Unfortunately, the government didn't take all of the advice.

I would also like to—and I'll talk about this a little bit later—congratulate my neighbouring colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex on putting forward a very important private member's bill dealing with drivers who blow past stopped school buses. Obviously, as a father of a young daughter who isn't attending school yet—she's still preschool age—it's something that's very concerning. I know everyone in this House heard during the debate of my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex just how many drivers, every day, blow past school buses. It's quite frightening as a parent, Mr. Speaker, and something the government should take seriously and really throw down the gauntlet at these drivers who do that.

The act affected with Bill 65 is the Highway Traffic Act. This bill amends the act by addressing the ability of municipalities to set speed limits within their borders and the use of automated speed enforcement systems and red-light-camera systems. Section 128 of the act is amended so that municipalities can designate areas by bylaw where they can impose speed limits that are lower than 50 kilometres per hour. Highways within the community safety zone that exceed 50 kilometres per hour may be excluded from bylaws that aim to reduce the maximum speed to below 50 kilometres per hour, though that is at the discretion of that individual municipality.

Speaker, I've had a number of calls about this bill at my office, and there's been quite a bit of discussion within my local newspapers in southwestern Ontario regarding this, especially around the whole initiative that the government is taking on photo radar.

A local reporter in Wallaceburg who works for Postmedia wrote a column. His name is David Gough and the column was entitled, "Not Feeling the Photo Radar Love," and I just want to read an excerpt from that article, which was on Friday, May 5, in the local Wallaceburg Courier Press. I believe it was in the Chatham Daily News as well. I'm just going to start reading this article, Mr. Speaker:

"It was about 10 years ago when I gave up speed.

"Up until then I probably drove too fast. Especially, on wide open roads like Highway 78 towards Dresden or Kimball Road." I know that area very well, Mr. Speaker, obviously, representing this riding and this area for about six years now. It goes on to say:

"I stopped driving fast cold turkey. I decided that getting somewhere five minutes faster was not worth putting my life and other lives in danger.

"I'm not saying I'm perfect, but whenever I see a police officer with a speed radar, I don't really worry, as I am rarely over the speed limit and if I am, it's usually only by a few kilometres.

“Proposed legislation Bill 65 will allow Ontario municipalities to implement bylaws permitting photo radar in community safety zones. According to the Highway Traffic Act, a ‘community safety zone’ is any zone where in a municipal council’s opinion, public safety is of special concern on that part of the highway, which is kind of murky. To me it sounds like photo radar could be set up just about anywhere in Ontario.”

Mr. Gough goes on, “On the surface photo radar sounds fine. Don’t speed, don’t worry. But what type of threshold will there be for photo radar?”

“In some ways, the whole system is a licence to speed for wealthy drivers. Plus it does little to stop aggressive, drunk and distracted drivers.

“The Edmonton Sun reported that an astounding 522,795 photo radar tickets were issued in Edmonton in 2016. Based on a low average of \$120 per ticket, that’s \$62,735,400 in the form of fines was raised by the city. Sixty-two million!

“I have relatives who live in Alberta and they tell me that photo radar is rarely seen around schools but it sometimes operates on local highways at 4 a.m. on Sunday mornings and on holidays. Is it about safety, or bringing in a few bucks?”

“I’m afraid that just like Alberta, Ontario municipalities will wrap the photo radar argument as something that is needed to keep school zones safe, while they will soon be addicted to the large amount of cash that will come in. Is this a police enforcement tool or a cash grab?”

“Ontario tried photo radar once. The NDP government unveiled photo radar in the early 1990s, and it was later [scrapped] by the Mike Harris government.

“I want to hope the Liberals are looking at improving road safety and not dinging me and other safe drivers for going 10km/h over the speed limit on Highway 40 so they can balance the province’s budget.

“Let’s hope municipal governments use photo radar for good rather than for money.”

I thought that was a well-written column and, of course, wholeheartedly agree with David Gough from Postmedia, who writes weekly for the Wallaceburg Courier Press and daily for the Chatham Daily News and some other southwestern Ontario Postmedia newspapers. It really is a concern that I hear from people in my riding and right across the province. I know all MPPs have heard from constituents on this bill and the concern about photo radar being used as simply a cash grab.

We’re here debating Bill 65, third reading. Of course, this bill was hotly debated at the committee level. Despite a series of significant motions presented at committee, Liberal government committee members chose to refuse measures to focus on enhanced student safety. We heard during question period a number of times when our critic was sparring with the transportation minister that there were partisan roadblocks and fake spin attacks against our caucus and my colleagues, who put forward very reasonable and sensible amendments to improve this bill.

Ideas as easily understood as doubling fines in school zones or implementing radar speed signs, this govern-

ment at committee flat-out rejected. Efforts of the Liberal government members at committee to squash a key amendment we offered based on the bill of my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex, MPP Nicholls, which would have taken aim at school bus blow-bys were particularly disappointing. It is an outstanding piece of legislation that he has introduced during this session. As a colleague who neighbours his riding, I’ve heard from a lot of moms and dads out there that they support MPP Nicholls’s bill. I hope the government will actually move forward with bringing his piece of legislation forward. It’s sensible, it’s reasonable, and it’s the right thing to do.

Instead of supporting the use of school bus camera evidence in court, the Liberal members put up legislative roadblocks to reject the issue and push it into proposed consultations. Recent pilot projects and studies show that blow-bys are occurring at a daily rate of two per bus or more, and yet Liberal members have kicked the can down the road to do more consultation and study. This is something that, again, as a parent—and I know probably everyone in here agrees that this should be acted on quickly to protect the safety of our little ones who go to school every morning and come home late afternoon.

1710

Bowing to opposition pressure that highlighted the potential in Bill 65 to place photo radar on municipal expressways, parkways and highways across the province, the Liberals introduced and passed a motion with our PC Party’s support to restrict the use of photo radar to roadways with speeds less than 80 kilometres per hour. While the restriction removes some of the potential roads from photo radar, all municipal roads less than 80 kilometres per hour remain on the table for photo radar.

I think that goes back to this column that was written on May 5 in a local southwestern Ontario newspaper about concerns people have that this could be used for a cash grab, quite frankly. This government, in particular, seems to be addicted to finding ways to tax people more and increase revenues more and more in higher fees, so we have to keep an eye on this, Mr. Speaker.

But in an escalated offence campaign, Liberal members and the minister himself, in targeted news releases sent to some PC-held ridings across Ontario, accused the PCs of filibustering by introducing over 300 amendments, including those to remove photo radar from roads with schools on them. The Liberal accusations are completely false. Only 40 PC amendments were actually debated. While amendments were drafted to remove specific roads from photo radar—that were not introduced—they specifically excluded areas with school zones from the restriction. Therefore, at no time did amendments attempt to remove Bill 65 photo radar provisions from school zones.

I’d like to repeat that, Mr. Speaker: Therefore, at no time did amendments attempt to remove Bill 65 photo radar provisions from school zones.

Clause-by-clause committee deliberation ran for a total of just over six hours, not an extraordinary length by any comparison and clearly not delayed by filibuster, as the Liberal government accused the opposition.

There was another excellent short article that I believe appeared in the *Toronto Sun* by Antonella Artuso on Tuesday, May 2, of this year. It's entitled, "Photo Radar Should Help Convict Drivers Blowing Past Stopped School Buses: MPP." I'm going to read that into the record:

"When a motorist blows by a school bus with flashing lights, the photo taken by onboard technology should be allowed in court to help convict the driver, PC MPP Michael Harris says.

"An amendment to a photo radar bill that would make these photos admissible in court goes before an Ontario government committee Wednesday, Harris said in a statement Tuesday.

"Bill 65, introduced by the Kathleen Wynne government, authorizes the use of photo radar technology in school zones and community safety zones.

"The amendment to Bill 65, which flows from fellow PC MPP Rick Nicholls' private member's bill, would improve the safety of students who use school buses, Harris said.

"If the Liberals truly want to strengthen student safety through Bill 65 as they indicate, they will step up and support new rules that will expand the use of school bus cameras and help to penalize offenders," Harris said. "This amendment ... represents a vital step to help clamp down on the devastating impacts of school bus 'blow-bys'."

I believe that was the end of that article, Mr. Speaker.

Again, it is important to know that reasonable amendments were put forward at committee. We've had a very sensible and important private member's bill introduced to deal with school bus blow-bys.

Just a little bit more, Mr. Speaker, in my time that's remaining: Look, we all support enhanced student safety. As I mentioned earlier, a lot of us in this House are parents. We care deeply about the health and safety of our kids. We all support enhanced student safety. That's not a partisan issue; that's a parenting issue.

But the fact is, with Bill 65, the government attempted to bring us back to the future by opening the door to photo radar. That's been our critique of this piece of legislation. We know the third party went along for the ride. We know the history of photo radar in Ontario. But our caucus, led by our transportation critic, our member from Kitchener-Conestoga, put forth substantial amendments to actually improve student safety and remove the threat of photo radar from our highways, a threat which we succeeded in pushing the Liberals to remove all highways above 80 kilometres per hour.

As you said, the safety of our children is paramount, and through committee we put forward real measures to make students safer. Instead of working to create safer school zones, the minister's legislation, as originally proposed, actually cleared the photo radar runway for implementation all across the province of Ontario.

We are pleased that the government members were forced to remove major municipal expressways and parkways from the threat of photo radar. That said, we

continue to regret the fact that government missed the opportunity to support significant amendments from the PC caucus, from our members at committee, to enhance the safety of our children.

Just before I conclude, Speaker, I do want to reiterate, because I know some members in all parties have heard from constituents regarding Liberal accusations on this bill, and I mentioned this earlier, but only 40 PC amendments were actually debated over six hours of clause-by-clause, so clearly not a filibuster as the Liberals accused opposition members of performing, and at no time was any PC amendment created to remove Bill 65 photo radar provisions from school zones. We've been very clear on that.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll leave on one final thought in this debate on third reading. I urge the government to adopt the legislation, hopefully before the end of the session. Don't delay what the MPP from Chatham-Kent-Essex proposed regarding school bus blow-bys—very important. The sooner we can do that, the better. Hopefully it's in place for the beginning of the September school year. If you could work magic and have it in place by the end of this school year, that would be great, but we know it's going to take some time, so I think a reasonable amount of time would be to have it in place for September. That would be the first thing.

Second, don't make photo radar about a cash grab. We know the government from time to time gets addicted to revenue streams or taxes or more fees, higher fees. I'm trying to think of what other terms they attribute to—

Interjection.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Yes, a premium of some type. Remember the health premium. I'd rather the government live within their means like the people of this province. That would be a better approach, but I'm happy to debate Bill 65 today and congratulate once again our critic, Michael Harris, from Kitchener-Conestoga, as well as my neighbouring colleague, the MPP from Chatham-Kent-Essex, MPP Nicholls, on a superb job representing the PC caucus's view on this important piece of legislation. Again, I would encourage the government to ensure that our kids are kept safe. We don't want any more tragedies. We know how many drivers across the province on a daily basis are blowing by school buses. Urgent action needs to be taken.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Any questions or comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: It's a pleasure to have an opportunity to make some comments to the speech from the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex on Bill 65, the Safer School Zones Act. He did talk at length about the fact that we've made amendments, some that were adopted. Some of the key ones that were adopted were reducing the speed so that it's only roads less than 80 kilometres an hour that could have the automated speed enforcement systems on them, or, as we've been calling it also, photo radar. I think that is a key amendment that the government adopted so that this couldn't be applied to all kinds of provincial highways around the province.

1720

But he also spoke at length about the private member's bill from the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, and that we had put forward amendments for this bill—that unfortunately weren't adopted—to do the thing that I think would make the most difference for the safety of our students across the province. It's not just in rural areas. I believe it was CTV that did a series. I just assumed that this would be a very random thing, that cars would blow by school buses and endanger our kids. But you watch that TV series, and it's two a day in Mississauga. You see the kids getting off the bus, and they've got their music playing and they just walk out. A car goes zipping by, and the bus is honking its horn, and it's terrifying.

This is something that is very real. I posted the link to that CTV series on Twitter, and I had a bus driver, within a few minutes of my doing that, say that it happened to him twice a day. This is very real, and it's very dangerous for our kids. It's something that does need to be acted on quickly.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise today and say a few words about Bill 65, the Safer School Zones Act. Coincidentally, just this morning, I did a press conference on my private member's bill that I tabled today, the Transportation Systems Improvement Advisory Committee Act.

There are so many suggestions being put forward by people in our community, by members here in the Legislature. The Toronto Police Services Board put a motion just last week to Toronto city council, to appeal to the city to do more about fraud in accessibility parking permits, because people are in wheelchairs and cannot get a parking spot.

I was joined this morning by Louise Russo, who is quite well known for the tragic circumstances that put her in a wheelchair; and by a real advocate for more being done, Wendy Murphy, a former journalist; and by Peter Athanasopoulos—I want to say his name correctly—from Spinal Cord Injury Ontario. They're all pushing to get this advisory committee of representatives from first responders, from government and from accessibility groups to work together to ensure that our roads are safer and more accessible.

There's fantastic technology out there. We should be implementing it—not 10 years too late, when it's old, but to be cutting-edge, knowing what is out there. If it means putting photo radar on school buses; if it means using some kind of electronic fob or transponder for accessibility parking; if it means implementing smart traffic lights that are synchronized properly and let you know at one light, when it turns green, what speed you should go so that when you get to the next intersection, it's just turning green—we need to do more, Mr. Speaker. I hope that we will do better in the future.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to speak to this bill. I'm going to be speaking at length to it as well, but I'm just going to reiterate a bit of what my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka said. This is all about safety, and the safety of children.

My colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex introduced a private member's bill about the blow-bys and utilizing technology such as cameras on the side of buses for this. My colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga also brought it to the attention of the government and tried to bring in an amendment, and the Liberals voted against it. How can you be against the safety of children? I can't fathom—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Because you don't understand the way it works. That's how.

Mr. Bill Walker: Well, once again the Liberals say, because they know everything, that we don't understand. I don't think that's true when it comes to children's safety. I think you could actually embrace thoughts from other people. I think you could listen to the other—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We were having a very civil debate. I would ask all members of the House to come to order and allow the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound to finish his two-minute hit.

Mr. Bill Walker: I would respectfully suggest to the Minister of Transportation that if he engaged with the opposition—we actually bring some ideas to the table. We're trying to be non-partisan. We're trying to put the focus on children's safety, and we want to do the right thing. We want to ensure that children are always the focal point.

I can't believe that someone in that type of position would not be willing to reach out and ask, and actually listen to an amendment that makes sense.

The CBC, as we've heard, already did a documentary. We have school bus drivers coming to us all the time, suggesting that this is happening to them. There is a way to prevent this before some child loses their life.

I can't believe someone would heckle across, saying, "You don't understand. You don't get it. Why don't you just listen to us?" You don't have licence on all the good ideas in the world, especially when it comes to safety. Shame on you for not being willing to listen.

It was a good private member's bill by both colleagues. I think there's still time to find a way to do this as we debate this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment. I recognize the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm very happy to have the chance to say a couple of words on this. This is something, obviously, near and dear to my heart. We've been working very hard on this legislation for some time.

I know that the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex has come forward on a number of occasions, in good faith, with some ideas around how we can deal with safety issues relating to using technology like cameras on school buses.

Speaker, unfortunately, despite my best efforts and despite the Ministry of Transportation's best efforts to

educate members on that side of House—other members, including the one who just spoke—the way the system works right now, there is a requirement for the evidence to be entered in at a court hearing; there's a requirement that there be a witness. It's because of the way the legislation, the Highway Traffic Act, is currently structured. It's also because—when you think of the red-light camera program that the ministry currently uses, the actual infraction can be completely captured by the technology. When you put a video camera on the arm of a school bus, even though it's well intentioned, it cannot by definition—under the current technology, as far as I know—capture the entire infraction. It can't capture both the vehicle and its licence plate, and the fact that the red lights and the arm are being extended all at the same time. As a result, there is an evidentiary requirement that there be an objective witness who can say, "Yes, this is in fact what happened." We have tried, on multiple occasions, to explain this to members of the Conservative opposition. For some bizarre reason, they refuse to listen to us on this.

I've told the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex that I'm happy to engage with him and others who are interested, in a good-faith way, to go forward with consultation, with experts and those out there, our safety partners.

In the meantime, passing Bill 65, which deals with so many other elements that are critical to vulnerable road users, including kids and the elderly, is absolutely, critically important.

So I just want to reiterate: This is not about us knowing better. This is about us trying to find a way to get to the outcome that they claim to be looking for in a way that actually makes sense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We return to the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex for his reply.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It has been great to debate Bill 65 here this afternoon.

I'd like to thank my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka, my seatmate. He talked about the PC amendments that were brought forward during committee. He talked about the CTV story about two blow-bys a day in Mississauga. He's right—I brought a rural lens, from the communities that I represent in southwestern Ontario, in the riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex—that this is happening right across the province, whether it's urban, rural, or northern Ontario. I can't stress enough that the government and the Minister of Transportation need to do whatever it takes to prevent blow-bys from happening.

I'd like to thank my colleagues from Thornhill and from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound—he reiterated what I said during my remarks about the importance of child safety and doing what's in the best interests of the children in this province—and, of course, the Minister of Transportation, for his perspective on Bill 65 and the debate here this afternoon.

I have two points. First, let's do what we can to eliminate school bus blow-bys in the province. Again, congratulations to the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex on a very important piece of legislation that he

brought forward to protect the kids across the province. Second, don't make photo radar a cash grab. It's the wrong approach. I think our critic has put it quite bluntly where we stand on photo radar—as a cash grab.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 65. I'm going to just start my thought process off by continuing a little bit of what the question and comment was.

I respect the Minister of Transportation. We normally have a very good collegial relationship. But I don't really appreciate being told, "You don't understand"; if you don't understand, then you come and have that conversation directly with me and let me understand your side. He tried to suggest that it was a technical thing, that we just don't get it and you can't do this. You know what? We can't change the legislation, he said, and it's the legislation that is at issue.

1730

You know what? It's interesting. They changed the Planning Act. They took out the Planning Act and superseded it with the Green Energy Act because of their ideology. They said the legislation is a challenge and there are all these technical reasons why we can't do it. But you know what? They changed technical legislation to prohibit the Auditor General from actually commenting on partisan advertising.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: At least in the last 10 or 15 seconds, I don't believe the member opposite is speaking to Bill 65. I heard something about an Auditor General. I heard some other stuff about technical requirements—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Yes. I hear the member speaking to the bill. It's not a valid point of order.

The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound has the floor.

Mr. Bill Walker: So now he's challenging you, Mr. Speaker, and he's challenging me. I was referring to his comments, that he talked about technical challenges, why he can't actually make changes to protect children. He says they can't do the technical things because we can't go there, but they change the—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I ask the Minister of Transportation to withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound has the floor.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. He says they can't change legislation, the technical parts, to get to legislation, but they changed the gas plant decision, which cost the taxpayer of Ontario \$1.1 billion, and could be up to \$2.5 billion. But we can't go to that effort and listen and work with the other two parties to

find a way to truly protect children? We know these blow-bys are happening, but we can't engage to find a way, Mr. Speaker.

I find that very challenging. I don't like the thought process that there's someone who has all the answers and we don't get it because we're on this side. That's not acceptable. So we'll try in this debate to give some other ideas and to give some thought processes so hopefully, like some of the other legislation we've had here—Mr. Speaker, the other one, just before I move off that point, is that we have certainly a situation where Bill 65 reflects, and it's ironic with the speeches coming out now, the typical Liberal pattern of saying one thing and doing another. Remember: Up until a few years ago, a fire sale of assets was not the Liberal way, but then it was, and so Premier Wynne began her sale of Hydro One. Closing schools was not the Liberal way. The Premier especially said she got into politics to fight school closures. But today there are going to be 600 on the chopping block to be closed here.

Now, Mr. Speaker, photo radar as proposed in Bill 65 will be yet another Liberal flip-flop. Back when the NDP introduced it in Ontario in the early 1990s, the Liberals were quick to call it, and I quote, "nothing but a cash cow." As of just a few years ago, the Liberals were set against it, arguing, and again I quote, "More needs to be done to crack down on speeding, but photo radar is not the answer": a cash grab that brought in 13,000 tickets every month back in 1994. I guess after 13 years of overspending and record high debt, the Liberals need a cash cow. Now more than ever, they're trimming police budgets, and yet they want to try to increase revenues through here.

They've cut funding to municipalities. The OMPF grants have been cut back. They're losing businesses—the cost of energy to things like arenas, curling clubs, schools, all of our public institutions, Mr. Speaker. With the arbitration process, the no share of the gas tax, the infrastructure that we're hearing out there, there are going to be municipalities that say, "We wanted this," because they are so cash-strapped. This government has cut off the cash flow because of their incompetence and their waste and their scandal, so, yes, municipalities are going to be standing up, saying, "We want access to this," because they can see this is an ability to generate revenues, Mr. Speaker. But it's not the right thing. It's truly not about children's safety, and that's what we want to focus on. That's what my colleagues in committee tried to focus on, and at the end of the day, we need to understand that.

With Bill 65, part of that will be the "photo-radar system evidence of the act is repealed and replaced by a new part—automated speed enforcement that authorizes the use of automated speed enforcement zones in community safety zones" and school zones. We totally support this, of course, in a school safety zone. We want the safety of children to be paramount with anything we're doing.

Obviously, we want school zones to be there, but to give carte blanche, which is what they were purporting in

their original draft—that anyone could choose, as a municipality, to put it anywhere. That's not about a school safety zone. That's not necessarily about children's safety. Some people in my riding question, "Is it true they just want to take this and make it a cash grab?" That's not what this bill was supposed to be from our perspective, so we're going to challenge that.

I'm going to say, probably ad nauseam, that public safety, particularly children's safety, is the number one priority of Bill Walker and certainly for our party. I know, from the feedback I receive from parents, that it's certainly their number one priority to protect their children, grandchildren, loved ones and friends of their children.

Is automated speed enforcement the way to do it? We would prefer to see police officers doing that work, catching poor driving behaviours on the spot. Again, a punitive system: Where someone gets caught breaking the law, they should do the time. They should get penalized for that. They should actually have to take accountability and pay the piper. But we want to make sure that we're putting police out there to actually change driving behaviour, not just become a cash cow where numbers are coming in through the door.

This is not what we are seeing will be happening under Bill 65. Cars speeding near schools or anywhere else won't be nabbed on the spot. Actually, they'll get a notice in the mail maybe a week or two or even longer after the fact. That's what photo radar does. They trim police budgets and bring in cash for the government, but they don't police bad drivers. Mr. Speaker, it becomes even more challenging, because the person driving the car, whether it's a borrowed car, whether it's someone in a fleet—it isn't necessarily the owner who's actually the driver of that car, but they are the ones who are going to be registered to that vehicle and have to pay the fine. Again, that poor behaviour is not being addressed in the person who truly committed the crime. That's one of the challenges we have with photo radar.

We want to ensure that the focus, again, is always about safety, changing poor behaviours and, at the end of the day, preventing anyone from being harmed or, in the worst case, killed because they didn't take enough direct action with the driver and change that behaviour and make it punitive.

I think it's sad that they're trying to pass this off as a public safety bill when the priority appears to be the potential revenues collected from photo radar. No one, I don't think, in Ontario can dispute, after 13 years and the size of the debt where it is with this government—\$312 billion—that they're not challenged to try to continually bring in more cash.

Having said that, they actually have had record revenues in my six years here, and they have still increased the debt and the deficit double of what every other provincial government in the history of our great province has. There's definitely a spending problem here, Mr. Speaker. We don't want to see this as yet another opportunity for them to grab some quick cash, basing in

on public thought that it's a safety bill. This is truly what our concern is.

As I said earlier, they have been cutting funding to municipalities, the Ontario municipal provincial fund transfer payments. Everyone remembers that the Liberals cut on average 10% from municipalities in northern Ontario and 15% from municipalities in southern Ontario. Factor in the 40% energy rates at a minimum—some are suggesting 200% to 400%, in some cases—and there's another hit to that challenge. As I say, arbitration is a big issue across the province. Many of those municipalities truly are—I'm sure they're stepping out and they're going to be asking for more options for revenue tools.

What the government needs to do is step back, first of all, and address their own overspending habits that they can't see they're addicted to, and put tools in their own hands to look at how they can cut some of those wasteful spending habits, mismanagement, scandal, corruption, Mr. Speaker, and not try—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm not going to allow that word. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Bill Walker: I withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

The scandal, the waste, the mismanagement is a challenge that we've talked about in here over and over and over, and now they're trying again to reach out and try to appease some of those municipalities that they continue to cut, that they don't give, frankly, a portion of the gas tax to—which my colleague from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has asked for, I think, nine times in this House—to share fairly across all municipalities, like the federal government does. But no, they deem it to only go down, because again they know best and know rural Ontario. Despite having almost no people who actually stand in this House and represent rural Ontario, they seem to want to tell us what to do.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go back to my riding a little bit. In my riding, the small community of Kimberley has been, for 15 years, advocating for more traffic enforcement and increased police presence to help reduce speeding drivers in their village. They appealed to Grey Highlands council, Grey county and even the province to help them as they try to reduce vehicles that are driving over the 50-kilometre-per-hour speed limit in their village.

I believe a study by Grey county showed that 92% of drivers exceeded the limit when driving through this village. Again, Kimberley residents had asked for solutions, for more traffic enforcement and tickets, rumble strips, flashing signs and increased police presence in the village, and reducing the speed limit to 40 kilometres per hour. They did manage to get the designation of a community zone, which means fines for speeding are doubled, and that is something that makes sense. If they're asking for it and they've proven it, then that's a good way to go. Hopefully that will change behaviours, if those people are actually getting fines for breaking the law. Grey county also agreed to paint new transverse lines across Grey County Road 13 at both the north and south entrances to the village, to alert drivers of signs

ahead about changes to the speed limit. At the end of the day, they did actually get a solar-operated light, which they went out and found a way to fund, as their way of doing most of that. I think that cost about \$10,000. The county covered their side of the portion as well.

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This brings me to the question of who will pay for the costs of implementing Bill 65, specifically for the implementation of photo radar across Ontario. The reality is that the Liberal government isn't helping municipalities to implement parts of this bill and instead is leaving underfunded municipalities to find ways to implement it.

The second issue, which I don't think the government has truly shared—if they've given it consideration, they certainly haven't shared much in respect of the photo radar impact to the workload of our already bottlenecked provincial court system. I will talk about this in a bit, namely about the unintended consequences of photo radar in Winnipeg. Let's remember that just last year, this government was toying with the idea of taking traffic tickets out of the courts after acknowledging courts were “at capacity and beyond, with an ever-increasing backlog.”

Look what happened in Winnipeg, as I said I was going to speak about. In 2014, it brought a windfall to that city: \$14.6 million in a single year. In contrast, the city collected just one third of that, \$4.5 million, in traditional non-photo radar traffic tickets. It makes some people say, “Hmm, a bit of a cash cow here.” Is this something the Liberals are doing, forgetting the whole safety aspect, as a way for them to appease municipalities, from whom they continually—quietly, in many cases—just keep pulling back, pushing back and pulling back funding, leaving it to them to try to keep up with an ever-increasing challenge to balance their books?

Meanwhile, drivers were miffed as many of their speed signs were “non-reflective, obscured by bushes or placed at wildly hard-to-spot locations, such as five metres up a pole or on a patch of grass more than 11 metres away from the roadway.” The drivers also documented some 200 missing school-zone signs. As a result, the province had to cancel or refund about 3,000 tickets, worth \$1.2 million. It's more administration, more bureaucracy and more tying up our courts, so that people who truly need to be there can't get their court cases heard.

What happened in Winnipeg wasn't just inappropriate enforcement; it was scandalous. I know Ontario drivers would not want to be duped like that in their home province. That's why we're using examples where this has been tried, again, being veiled as safety legislation. We have big concerns that they won't address some of the safety opportunities that we're giving them. At least explore it. At least come to us and say, “How can we make that work?” How can we be a “yes,” as opposed to a “no, we know better than you”?

I want to go back to my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound again. There was another community effort similar to the one in Kimberley to reduce speeders.

Marilyn Noble of Shallow Lake had called my office about speed limits in her community. The concern there involved some 13 families whose mailboxes were situated just off a busy two-lane highway in the great village of Shallow Lake. They asked that the speed limit there be reduced to 50 kilometres per hour to ensure safe retrieval of the local residents' mail.

The Ministry of Transportation looked into it, reviewed this section of Highway 6, taking into considering traffic operations, road geometry, collision history and area development. In the end, the MTO determined against a reduction in the posted speed. It argued that sometimes when speed limits are set lower, they can decrease safety, as drivers exceed the posted speed or increase passing activity on two-lane highways.

Again, the idea is that police officers are out there enforcing speed limits and other traffic laws because their presence is believed to be an effective way to encourage compliance. Nowhere is photo radar mentioned as a means to getting compliance. I think saving lives, as I've said over and over, is about changing driver behaviour. It needs to be addressed. It's not about "gotcha" politics such as photo radar.

A number of my colleagues have spoken to this. As I've said a number of times, we want to ensure that the total focal point is on children's safety. We have had some success as a result of committee. Our folks on this side of the House did push back, and they asked for an amendment at committee to remove roads with speed limits of less than 80 kilometres per hour from photo radar provisions allowed for community safety zones. So in that case, we did make some movement. But we want to make sure that if you're going to call it a safety bill, then the whole focus needs to be about that, not getting caught off here and sliding through a photo radar part of the bill.

Committee members chose to refuse measures to focus on enhanced student safety and engaged in partisan roadblocks and fake spin attacks against our caucus. They actually sent letters to some of our ridings, suggesting that we voted against children's safety.

Most of the media in our area know us very well. Three that I talked to said, "Bill, we know, when you stand in the House, when you go to represent us, that the safety of children, the safety of all of your residents, is the absolute priority. So we can't even believe that this would come out." And it came out under the name of the Liberal caucus. How blatant can it be, when that was out virtually before the bill was even debated? They were trying to play smear politics, and it backfired on them big time.

So if I'm a little cynical, if I sound a little negative in this debate, it's partly because I don't appreciate those things happening. I don't appreciate being told, "You don't understand and you need to listen," when we've had very competent committee members standing there, offering a number of amendments—40 amendments, I believe, they actually put—that were valid, worthy acknowledgements and that, you would hope, would be

embraced, when they use the words "partnership" and "listening" and "co-operation" and "collaboration" every day in question period.

And yet, when we go to committee, it's almost the exact opposite. They won't accept a single amendment, or what they'll do is vote down an amendment in our member's name, then put the exact, same wording with different names, Liberal names, at the top, and approve it.

How much more partisan can you get? It's not what the people of Ontario want. If we're going to talk about being partners and collaborators, then we need to ensure that when those types of amendments come, we move them through as expeditiously as we can and we truly look at them.

Mr. Speaker, I've talked a fair bit, and I'm going to continue to talk a fair bit about my colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex, Rick Nicholls, who brought in a bill that said there is an opportunity here. There is technology available for us to actually do something about it. We can actually use that technology to start to change behaviour.

I don't know about you, but if I was to get a video that was of me driving my car, blowing by a school bus, and there was a \$1,000 or a \$5,000 fine, that would get my notice, Mr. Speaker, and I can guarantee you that it would never happen again. If it was someone using my car, I would certainly go and have that discussion with them and say, "That's absolutely unacceptable."

Even the thought of one of those children being hit by someone blowing by a school bus—I can't believe that, if I was on that side of the House, I wouldn't at least have the decency and respect to stand up and say, "Let's go and explore this; how can we find a way"—maybe exactly what's there now. But telling me it's a technical deficiency, that they can't get through this? We can put someone on the moon, but we can't figure out how to use camera technology? Why is it not worth at least exploring? A child's life could be in limbo here, and we're saying, "No, no, we just won't do this. We know better. It can't work; it won't work. We know better. We've talked to some experts, and we're not going to go there."

I can't fathom, after all the things I hear in this House, that you would not take the opportunity to work with the other two parties and say, "How can we become creative with you and find a way to make this work?" If it even gets close to saving the life of one child, I think it's worth taking that step.

At the end of the day, we have put amendments forward. We've tried to work with them. We've tried to ensure that it is not being slid through as photo radar that's a cash opportunity for them to say to municipalities, "Here's a gift for you, because we've cut you over here significantly."

Let's not forget that energy rates are predicted to go up another 40%, Mr. Speaker. Let's not forget that last week, they introduced the fair energy act—which is nothing further from the truth—to borrow \$25 billion that could escalate, frankly, to \$93 billion, which we found

out from the Fiscal Accountability Officer, and to spend all of that money in interest payments. That's not fair: "We're going to give you just a little bit of short-term relief, but it's going to cost you over and over and over and, down the road, billions of dollars." Then we don't have the same health care levels. And we're closing schools.

I actually asked someone at my school closure meeting last week—it's interesting that at the stroke of a pen, you were able to find \$25 billion—ironically, just before an election—to give a bit of hydro relief, but you couldn't find any way to even talk about keeping rural schools open. Six hundred rural schools are going to close under the administration of this government, whose Premier said she got into politics to stop school closures.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: No, she got in to close them.

Mr. Bill Walker: Apparently, she got in to close schools.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to this: If it's about safety, then there's nobody who has the only idea that can work in this House. Whether you're the minister, whether you're the governing party, you should reach out to all people who have ideas. If the life of one child can potentially be saved, then, to me, it's worth having debate. It's worth reaching across the aisle and saying, "How can we find a way to embrace this? How can we make this truly about children's safety?"

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I have a feeling we've seen this film before. There are a number of words that are burned into people's minds if you go back a number of years: "Bob Rae" and "photo radar." That was 1994. They brought in photo radar, to the consternation of both the present governing members and the present opposition. It didn't take very long. We were seeing 13,000 tickets a month under photo radar. One of the forefathers of today's Liberals in the House here referred to it as "nothing but a cash cow." By November, the revenue from photo radar was \$2 million. Eleven months after it was brought in by Bob Rae, it disappeared. Mike Harris got rid of it, referring to it as a "cash grab."

Of course, as we continue to stress, it is very important to continue to work to create safer school zones. Our concern with this legislation is that we could see possibly a reduced police presence near those schools that we're trying to correct—fewer officers to be on top of distracted driving; for example, weaving, tailgating, impaired driving.

But just to go back, and I've got a few seconds left, I'd like to quote former Premier Dalton McGuinty. This was in July 2007: "More needs to be done to crack down on speeding, but photo radar is not the answer."

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise and speak on Bill 65. We are talking about the Safer School Zones Act, yet we're hearing a lot about photo radar and

that photo radar does not seem to be restricted to school zones. That's part of what I'm questioning of the government: If the bill is called the Safer School Zones Act, why are you allowing municipalities to develop a cash grab by having photo radar on roads outside of school zones?

I just had a bit of a discussion with the Minister of Transportation and he's suggesting that we are somehow thick in the skull because we are not understanding that the government can't easily implement photo radar on school buses, because that we do support. A school bus is actually a moving school zone. We support photo radar in school zones, and I consider that the area around the school bus where you're not allowed to move your vehicle if the arm is out—that means children may be getting on or off the bus. I call that a moving school zone.

What he said to me is that the reason you can't have photo radar on that arm is because the photo radar, when it captures the blow-by, wouldn't know if the school bus lights were flashing or not. It wouldn't be able to capture that on the camera. Well, it would be quite simple, Mr. Speaker, seeing as now we can put dash cams in for \$20. I cannot imagine that it would be even that expensive to put in a tiny flashing light that flashes near the camera on the arm that the camera can pick up, or somewhere nearby, while that arm is open. It seems ridiculous to me.

I would suggest that the ministry should look into what would be the actual cost. Perhaps we need to do some fundraising with the parents who support it, or in the communities, if the school bus companies don't want to be liable to put those flashing lights on for the cameras to capture. But let's focus on keeping our children safe. Let's focus on not having a cash grab, but on having the technology in the school zones, and I'm including the school buses.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm proud to rise on behalf of my constituents. I think we've heard a lot from the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. He brings up some very good points. I hear that technology is fooling a lot of these people. But there are little cameras that, when you put on the switch, you can also activate a light inside the cabin, which I think it does right now. When the light flashes and you've got a camera that's shooting through the front windshield, it's not very hard to see when the light comes on and whether that car is either passing or coming towards them.

You can make a lot of excuses here, but it obviously seems that the government is interested in a cash grab, photo radar by another name, because not that long ago—I think it was within the last six months—they denied a request to turn on photo radar for the municipalities. They said it was cash grab and they couldn't support it. Lo and behold, here we see this bill come out.

A simple fix is to designate it for school zones—let's have a definition of what that is—but no, they don't want to do it. Now they've reduced it to highways of 80 kilometres an hour or less. That's 100% of our county roads.

It also includes Highway 138, which is a provincial highway with a speed limit of 80 kilometres an hour. Now, I guess we're relying on them not incorporating it there, but if you want to put some trust in this government—we've already heard different municipalities talking about bringing that legislation in and using it for the very purpose we're talking about. The Don Valley Expressway and the Gardiner Expressway have been mentioned. It may eliminate those, but what about all of the other expressways around this province? As I say, throughout rural Ontario, it's essentially 100% of the road network.

I think we just want to be forthright with the public, give them something to trust and come forth here to actually put the definition in that we asked for. I think that would settle a lot of our concerns.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm proud to stand up to give a two-minute comment. I really was hoping that I could hear something from the government side on the speech from the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, who spoke eloquently not only on Bill 65, but on the fact of the rural school closures going on through this province. My riding itself is losing five rural schools due to this government's incompetence. The fact that they're willing to close 600 rural schools throughout this province, but they have money to buy a rubber duck for \$200,000—where are the priorities of this government, Mr. Speaker? We're totally lost on the facts.

I am so thankful for the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound stepping forward and fighting for rural Ontario and their school system. It's unfortunate that this government has sat and ignored the whole structure. They set out this task force without really instructing people to come and attend. They didn't even come to my riding. I'd love for this task force, after the schools have closed, to actually come and go, "What went wrong with the system? What went wrong with the process?"

I would really love for this government to sit back and start listening to Ontarians, to start working with the opposition party. We put through some amendments to Bill 65 to strengthen the bill. The school bus cameras that we want to put on to catch the people who blow by the stop sign, endangering our kids' lives—they voted against it.

There's a lot of fake news coming out of this government, and I understand the minister heading up this fake news, because he's obviously running to be the next leader of the Liberal Party. He has got the blessings of Greg Sorbara, and he's raising his funds and he's hoping he's going to be leader. But do you know what? You have to support kids and safety to become the leader of that party. That Minister of Transportation failed the children of this province by voting against cameras in the school buses, and he should rescind that and bring it back to this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments, and the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound can reply briefly.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'll try to make it quick because I know it's almost 6 of the clock, so we need to get out of here.

Thank you to the members from Haldimand–Norfolk, Thornhill, Elgin–Middlesex–London and Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

I'm going to focus a little bit on my last colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London, who talked about some of the challenges with schools. This was all supposed to be about school safety zones. I want to be unequivocal. We all support enhanced student safety: everyone in our PC caucus, parents, teachers and, of course the students.

But the fact is that with Bill 65, this Premier is attempting to bring us back to the future and is opening the door to photo radar to cover up some of the challenges of their waste, incompetence, overspending and scandal, which is resulting in things like school closures, like my colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London said.

I'm just going to share with him: Don't wish for one of those little tours to come around, because all they really do is ask you for input on closing schools that they've already closed. There's nothing new there. Like here, they're not really asking for your input: They're doing a dog-and-pony show to say, "What can we do differently? How could we do that better? Why can't we do this? Could we have listened more?" Why would you not have had those meetings before you put out a directive to close 600 schools, particularly when you had a Premier of the province who says she got into this business to stop school closings. There's a bit of irony here, Mr. Speaker. I won't say the other word because I'll have to retract.

At the end of the day, my colleague from Nipissing, I think, summarized it in his eloquent presentation. He referenced Let's Remember Adam. He was a young child killed by somebody blowing by a school bus.

It infuriates me when I hear the party opposite say, "We can't, because the act doesn't allow it." They've changed all kinds of acts that are never going to be of benefit to the people of Ontario. Why can't they change the act? Why can't they embrace this technology if there's even the hope of saving one more Adam? Let's truly remember Adam and do the right thing. I challenge the government to do that before they actually pass this piece of legislation, and to ensure that we can have something that truly is going to reflect safety as the paramount concern for our children.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1801.

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Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	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)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
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

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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**

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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

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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**

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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

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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
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Jennifer K. French, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Mario Sergio
Bill Walker, Soo Wong
Jeff Yurek
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**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
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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 / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley