

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 88

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N^o 88

2nd Session
41st Parliament

Wednesday
31 May 2017

2^e session
41^e législature

Mercredi
31 mai 2017

Speaker: Honourable Dave Levac
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Dave Levac
Greffier : Todd Decker

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



ISSN 1180-2987

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

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 31 May 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 31 mai 2017

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FAIR HYDRO ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 POUR DES FRAIS
D'ÉLECTRICITÉ ÉQUITABLES

Ms. MacCharles, on behalf of Mr. Thibeault, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to enact the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 and to make amendments to the Electricity Act, 1998 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 132, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur le Plan ontarien pour des frais d'électricité équitables et modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité et la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I believe the Minister of Energy will be making our third reading remarks.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: It's interesting the way that the morning has started off already.

We've been talking about electricity for about the last six years that I've been here, certainly, in this Legislature, and the mess that the Liberal government has made in the electricity sector. They've been scrambling over the last several months to try and make up for the mess that they've made in the electricity sector. Previously, on "As the Grid Burns," we had a government that had overseen hydro increases in some parts of the province that were well over 300% since they had taken power.

Better than 70% of what the government has spent on energy since taking power in 2003 has been on new generation. Coal was replaced by natural gas. While my colleagues on the opposite side of the House like to think that coal was replaced by wind and solar, it simply wasn't. First, as the Minister of Energy said just yesterday at the National Energy Roundtable conference, coal was 25% of the supply mix. On a given year, wind is about 5% and solar is about 1%.

They also can't do things, from a technical perspective, that coal was doing in the system. That's another reason that coal was replaced by natural gas. You can't replace a technology capable of doing voltage control or load-following with technologies that can't—and wind and solar can't do those things.

The more than 70% of new generation that the government put on the grid has already cost us \$37 billion above market value, and is going to cost us \$133 billion more by the time these contracts are over. By the way, we actually told the government at the time that this was going to happen, only to have the Minister of Energy at the time tell us that the increases were only going to be 1% per year, Mr. Speaker. I've already indicated it's been 300% in some parts of the province. We're going to call that the first time that the Tories were right, because it starts a trend.

So the government made electricity really expensive, and then came up with two bills to try to mitigate that. This House unanimously passed the HST rebate last year, after the Liberals spent years railing against it when it was first introduced in November 2011. I can remember in my first election we had members who are still ministers in this government telling us why we couldn't take the HST off hydro bills. Now we're doing it. That's the second time that the Tories were right, Mr. Speaker.

In front of us, we have Bill 132, the unfair Liberal hydro scheme. When the bill was introduced, the House was provided with a cabinet document that was leaked by a whistle-blower who was concerned about the long-term costs of the plan. The government first said that the document was wrong. It then said that the document was old. When the Financial Accountability Officer issued his report, we found out that the document was right. I'm going to call that the third time that the Tories were right on this issue.

Now, here's the thing: I don't want to be proven right in the long gaze of history a fourth time when it comes to the electricity sector. I'd really rather just be listened to right now. I'd rather the Financial Accountable Officer be listened to right now. I'd rather that the Auditor General be listened to right now.

Last week alone, we heard from the province's two fiscal legislative officers about their concerns about the financial structure of this bill. One confirmed the fact that it's the government's intent to bring in a debt retirement charge—under a different name, of course; they wouldn't want to call it the "debt retirement charge." But this debt retirement charge is actually going to be four times the size of the old debt retirement charge. It's the debt retirement charge coming back on steroids.

The Auditor General confirmed something that I actually said in my leadoff speech on the bill, which is that the only reason that this new debt entity was created over at OPG as a result of this bill, Bill 132, is to keep all of that debt off the government's books. That's a man-

oeuvre that caused members of the opposing benches to howl the last time that something even similar was proposed.

Yet at every opportunity to introduce more oversight at committee and give these legislative officers a greater role in making sure this legislation was transparent, guess what the government members did at committee? They shot it down every time. It didn't matter if we were trying to bring in Auditor General oversight or not, transparency to the system, to the bill, to this government's inner workings: They shot it down every time, at least two opposition motions for unanimous consent just to give the Auditor General increased oversight authority. When this much money changes hands, we're denied by government members, because, hey, they've got their marching orders. We haven't even talked yet about how much money we're dealing with. We'll get to that in a minute.

The Financial Accountability Officer's projections were based on two things happening that have never happened in Ontario's history: We would have to balance the budget for 29 consecutive years and interest rates would never rise over that time. If those two things don't happen at the same time, for exactly that long, then the cost of this plan could end up anywhere between \$68 billion and \$93 billion—\$68 billion and \$93 billion—just to get the Liberals through the next election campaign without electricity prices being at the top of people's minds.

I don't think it's going to work, Mr. Speaker. I think people are still going to be upset about the increased cost of electricity, because as I mentioned earlier, in many parts of the province, electricity prices are 300% higher than they were when this Liberal government took power.

Of course, the government believes that a potential cost of \$68 billion to \$93 billion deserves 10 minutes of debate in the Legislature this morning: 10 minutes from me, 10 minutes from my friend from the NDP and 10 minutes from, I'm assuming, the Minister of Energy. I have no confidence that the ministry has any appreciation of what it has actually done here.

0910

In my speech to this bill at second reading, I mentioned the fact that from 1997 until 2013, a grand total of \$50 billion in these types of bonds had been issued in all of the United States, according to Moody's—\$50 billion. With the figures we have from the Financial Accountability Officer, we now know that this potential debt bond that's being created here in Ontario is \$45 billion. I want members to think about that. Over 16 years, the entire United States posted only \$50 billion in this type of debt. In 20 days, this government will almost equal that. As I said, I have no confidence that the ministry has any appreciation of what's being done here. As a matter of fact, the *Globe* said it perfectly this morning: "Liberal political expedience never" changes.

What information we've received from the ministry through official channels has been at best incomplete and sometimes not even that. I take some comfort in the fact that in meetings with Ontario Power Generation, they

seem to know what they're doing. However, I'm reminded that, at committee, the government gave itself the power to remove OPG as the financial services manager if OPG became unwilling to do what it's told by this government. We tried to get the government to change this, but guess what the government members at committee did, Speaker? They said no.

So, in other words—I just want to explain that further—if OPG thought that the government was trying to pay for things with this debt issue that shouldn't go into it, the government could deem OPG to be unwilling, under this legislation, and simply replace it as the financial services manager. There's no further impediment to this becoming a place where the government can bury any off-book costs that it wants to—none. There's even a clause for it in section 1. It reads, "such other costs ... as may be prescribed." That gives the minister the opportunity to throw everything but the kitchen sink over into this new debt entity at OPG. He can throw the kitchen sink in, too, if he wants. It's a chef's dream, if you're the Minister of Finance, to be able to throw whatever you want into this concoction that you're cooking up.

You can hide anything from the auditor in it, because as I mentioned earlier, the government kept us from adding any oversight. You can violate public sector accounting standards, you can bury people in debt, you can do it all in 20 days, and you can expect to be thanked for it. You can actually run ads using electricity customers' own money to congratulate yourself for doing this. You can purchase millions of dollars in radio ads to pat yourself on the back for creating, potentially, a \$93-billion debt entity.

In closing, I want to paraphrase the American playwright Peter Stone, who wrote that, "One useless man is called a disgrace; that two are called a law firm; and that three or more become a" government. Mr. Speaker, the Ontario people have had enough of this government. They won't be fooled again.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to talk this morning, even if it's so very briefly.

We're about to decide—this chamber is about to vote on—a bill that will add \$45 billion or more to people's hydro bills. Thirty minutes of debate: That's extraordinary, and it's not because the matter before us is minor, but because this government doesn't want this bill debated in public. It wants to have electricity customers pay for advertising promoting its profile, promoting what it sees as a wonderful decision, but they don't actually want the substance debated. And that's why we've gone through a process, as my colleague from the official opposition said, of very, very brief debate—at every point this government jamming it through—because it doesn't want this discussed.

Speaker, people need to understand that inside this cream puff of a bill, this tasty morsel of reduced hydro prices for the next little while—most particularly leading up to the election—there is a fish hook. People will have their bills cut for a few years. They will get Liberal ad-

vertising in their hydro bills. The election will come and the Liberals hope—hope—that people will have moved off the hydro issue as something that they're upset with the government about. Who knows? They may be right. I have real doubts; it's not what I'm picking up at the door. I have people here in Toronto who tell me and people in Sault Ste. Marie who told me that they understood entirely what was going on: that they were going to get a break on their bill for a short period and then they were going to have their wallets and purses raided.

So in a few years, that hook in this bill will catch, and people will see their bills go up by at least 7% a year just from the cost of repaying this \$45 billion—and they will notice; have no doubt, Speaker, they will notice, because that increase doesn't include all the other cost pressures in the system. All of the other factors that will be driving up the price will be on top of that 7%.

As you may be aware, Speaker, Darlington nuclear power plant, which provides somewhere in the range of 20% to 25% of the power in this province, is going to see its rates go up from about six cents per kilowatt hour to 16 cents per kilowatt hour, almost tripling. It's a major contributor to the electricity grid, and people will notice that rise in cost. With the Bruce nuclear refurbishment, I'm assuming that the numbers will be very similar, so for the bulk of power generation in this province we're going to see the cost almost triple at the same time as the Liberals have set up this financial trap which will crank up the rates about 7% a year, and then leave us with rates higher than we have ever had.

The cost pressures won't just be from the nuclear refurbishment, not just from repayment of this pre-election goodie, but we will also be paying for surplus power that we will be exporting to the United States at dimes on the dollar. And I expect that we will see more surplus power because prices are high enough now that it's economic for people to bail out of the system, and they are—they are. It isn't just that they're conserving, but people are substantially cutting their reliance on this electricity system. As they do, those who are left behind face higher bills. This bill sets the stage for destabilization of the hydro system. No one can predict how that will turn out, except likely with a lot of tears.

Let's review again: The Liberals in their 14 years in office have abandoned their commitment to public ownership of the hydro system; they've decided that putting profits on top of people's hydro costs is something that they were entirely happy with. We didn't have to pay profits on top of our hydro bills back when the system was publicly owned, but we do now with this government.

This privatized system produces more power than we need or can consume, which means we're paying for power we can't use—power that we have to dump in neighbouring jurisdictions, power that we sometimes have to pay people to take. That's the logic of the privatized system set up by the Liberals. This is a government that doesn't want to make conservation its first choice when it makes investments in the system because that would deprive powerful owners of generating capacity

from the profits they get from selling power, whether we need it or not.

So we are faced with soaring hydro prices and the Liberals are faced with an election conundrum of how to deal with this; how to cover over the mess they've created in the 14 years they've been in power—an approach that they inherited from the Conservatives and one that they have joyfully, even gleefully, continued on.

They're going to set us up to be in a position to pay back that \$45 billion—or more, depending on interest rates; we could be talking as high as \$93 billion. Once they get through the election, frankly, that isn't something that they are concerned about. Really, their universe ends when the last ballots are cast in the next election. After that, they really don't care what the consequences are.

0920

That was pretty much at the heart of the gas plant scandal: They were facing a tough election; they had seats that were at risk. They were willing to blow a billion dollars to save four seats. This time, they're willing to put ratepayers in this province at risk for \$45 billion to \$90 billion to get through an election. Speaker, one always has to leave reserves for an extraordinary cynicism when it comes to this government, because if you aren't extraordinarily cynical, you can't understand how they operate; you get confused.

In order to make all of this work, the Liberals had to go through committee. They had to put forward amendments to the bill. We put forward amendments: for transparency, for regulation, for some sort of public control and oversight, but those didn't satisfy this government.

Interestingly, one of the amendments they brought forward was to give them the power to ditch OPG as the financial services manager of this whole scheme for whatever reasons occurred to them. We had questions. Legal counsel from the Ministry of Energy was summoned before the committee. We got to ask a few questions, and then I posed the question: Is this being set up so that if OPG is privatized, they can move the financial services manager to another body? At that point the lawyer was shut down; questions were blocked.

This government doesn't believe in the idea of a government running things, providing infrastructure. They believe in selling off what we own. So it was entirely logical to assume, given they sold off Hydro One, they privatized new power generation, that they would be considering the sale of Ontario Power Generation and would react sharply to any question that raised that in committee. Any such question is not allowed, it's blocked, it's shut down. Any attempt to give the Ontario Energy Board some regulatory power, some oversight, was blocked by this government.

Speaker, 14 years of Liberal government have given us an unmanageable and unaffordable electricity system. The waters are being calmed by the applications of large amounts of dollars, but, in the end, those dollars will get soggy, they will sink, and the mess that we're in will become entirely apparent again to people who will have to pick up the tab.

This government does not care what happens to the people of Ontario. The only thing they care about is getting elected in the election next year.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

L'hon. Glenn Thibeault: J'aimerais remercier mes collègues de la Chambre de leur présence ici pour débattre de la Loi pour des frais d'électricité équitables qui a été proposée. Si elle est adoptée par la législature, cette loi permet d'offrir dès cet été la plus importante réduction des tarifs d'électricité de l'histoire de notre province. Mais avant de parler des mesures contenues dans la loi proposée, j'aimerais expliquer pourquoi ces tarifs ont augmenté en Ontario. C'est un défi que, si elle est adoptée, cette loi proposée relèverait parfaitement.

Le projet de loi 132, la Loi de 2017 pour des frais d'électricité équitables, de notre gouvernement, contient des mesures importantes pour fournir un soulagement immédiat et substantiel afin d'aider à réduire les factures d'électricité grâce à la proposition de la Loi de 2017 pour des frais d'électricité équitables. Si elle est adoptée, cette loi réduirait les factures d'électricité de 25 % en moyenne pour les consommateurs résidentiels dès cet été. Environ un demi-million de petites entreprises et d'exploitations agricoles bénéficieraient également d'une réduction.

Ce plan limiterait les hausses aux taux de l'inflation pendant quatre ans.

J'ajoute que cette réduction moyenne de 25 % comprend la remise de 8 % équivalente à la partie provinciale de la taxe de vente harmonisée qui est entrée en vigueur le 1^{er} janvier de cette année.

La loi aiderait également les consommateurs d'électricité vulnérables de différentes façons. Monsieur le Président, permettez-moi de m'expliquer.

Tout d'abord, le Programme de protection des tarifs d'électricité dans les régions rurales et éloignées, ou le PPTERRE, serait élargi pour fournir un nouveau programme de protection des taux de livraison qui donnerait un redressement des frais de livraison par les sociétés de distribution locales ayant les tarifs les plus élevés. Cette modification permettrait à environ 800 000 abonnés de bénéficier du programme, contre 350 000 aujourd'hui.

À titre d'exemple, un abonné à faible densité d'Hydro One qui se chauffe à l'électricité et qui consomme 2 500 kilowattheures par mois verra une réduction de son tarif de distribution d'environ 75 \$ par mois, soit une économie totale de 135 \$ si l'on tient entièrement compte du PPTERRE.

Deuxièmement, le Plan ontarien pour des frais d'électricité équitables a permis d'étendre la portée du Programme ontarien d'aide relative aux frais d'électricité, ou le POAFE, en réduisant les frais d'électricité pour les personnes les plus vulnérables grâce à un rabais sur les factures mensuelles, en augmentant les crédits de 50 % et en élargissant l'admissibilité. Ces changements au POAFE sont entrés en vigueur le 1^{er} mai 2017.

Monsieur le Président, je pense qu'il convient également de mentionner que, depuis son lancement le

1^{er} janvier 2016, le POAFE a approuvé plus de 192 000 ménages à faible revenu qui recevront des crédits mensuels sur leur facture. Nous travaillons également avec le ministère des Services sociaux et communautaires pour accroître la participation au POAFE de clients déjà inscrits dans d'autres programmes provinciaux d'aide sociale.

Prenant la parole sur le Plan ontarien pour des frais d'électricité équitables après son annonce au début de mars, M. Alan Spacek, maire de Kapuskasing et président actuel de la Fédération des municipalités du Nord de l'Ontario, a déclaré ceci : « Nous sommes ravis que les abonnés puissent voir les résultats positifs du [plan] dans un proche avenir, avec l'engagement que les tarifs n'augmenteront pas au-delà du taux d'inflation pendant les quatre prochaines années. » Puisque je suis moi-même du Nord, j'apprécie ses commentaires favorables.

0930

Troisièmement, si elle est adoptée, la loi éliminerait les frais de livraison pour tous les clients résidentiels des Premières Nations dans les réserves grâce à un nouveau crédit de livraison. La Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario estime que cela fournirait aux clients admissibles une économie mensuelle moyenne de 85 \$, soit plus de 1 000 \$ par année. De plus, les clients résidentiels des Premières Nations dans les réserves sont automatiquement admissibles. Cela représente quelque 21 500 clients au total.

Nous aidons également à faciliter de meilleurs échanges d'information entre les distributeurs et les conseils de bande pour mieux identifier tous les clients des Premières Nations dans les réserves. Cette mesure proposée a été bien accueillie par les dirigeants des Premières Nations et leurs communautés. Parmi eux, le chef régional de l'Ontario, Isadore Day, a déclaré que le crédit sur les lignes d'approvisionnement permettrait de « réduire la pauvreté énergétique » dans les collectivités des Premières Nations. Cela ouvre la voie vers une meilleure qualité de vie pour les Premières Nations de l'Ontario.

Donc, je suis convaincu que, si elle est adoptée, la Loi pour des frais d'électricité équitables permettrait de réduire les tarifs d'électricité et de profiter à tous les abonnés résidentiels et à peut-être un demi-million de petites entreprises à travers la province. Conséquence tout aussi importante, en fournissant un véritable soulagement, la Loi pour des frais d'électricité équitables représente également une bonne action à faire.

Monsieur le Président, merci pour le temps pour parler avec mes collègues dans l'Assemblée aujourd'hui.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 17, 2017, I am now required to put the question. Ms. MacCharles has moved third reading of Bill 132, An Act to enact the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 and to make amendments to the Electricity Act, 1998 and the

Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

Those opposed, please say “nay.”

I believe the ayes have it.

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

Third reading vote deferred.

ANTI-RACISM ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 CONTRE LE RACISME

Ms. MacCharles, on behalf of Mr. Coteau, moved third reading of the following bill:

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Ms. MacCharles.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I believe the minister responsible for anti-racism will be making our third reading remarks later in the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure today to rise in support of the Anti-Racism Directorate as the critic for anti-racism in the Progressive Conservative caucus.

Just now, as I sat in my seat, I was reflecting on the wonderful constituency that I have been blessed to represent over the past 11 years. It's called Nepean–Carleton. It is the largest geographic and population-based riding in Ottawa. It has the largest population and most diverse in all of eastern Ontario.

As I go to events throughout the region, particularly now because of the high growth, I do a lot of community events in downtown Ottawa. In fact, Speaker, I can tell you something: On Saturday, I could spend my morning in the most rural part of Ottawa, in a community called Vernon and I could be at a farmers' market in North Gower, and then in the evening I could be at a wonderful event celebrating Indo-Canadian culture with the high commissioner. And I can go to an event that is designed for the African Canadian community, which I did last week at Aberdeen Pavilion, or I could be at the mosque or at the synagogue. This is important to me, because as I get to know the people whom I represent, and I have over the past 11 years, I realize that together we are a stronger community. It makes me very proud after having grown up in a very small, largely homogeneous community in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, where I'm very proud to be from, but it makes me understand that there is a big world out there.

I used to have a dream, as a young girl, that I would know at least one person from every province in Canada. I've exceeded that, Speaker, but the wonderful thing today is that I now have a dream for my own daughter, that not only does she know people from the rest of her country and the rest of her province, but that she understands, accepts and embraces the diversity that we have

in Nepean–Carleton, in the communities of Barrhaven, Findlay Creek, Riverside South, Manotick, Bells Corners, Trend-Arlington and Craig Henry.

When I approach this position as the anti-racism critic—and I was just given this role a few months back by my leader; this is my first bill, my first opportunity to engage with the stakeholders in this portfolio—I must say it's become an exciting one. It's become exciting for me because I've gotten to see some of the challenges that people have faced through systemic racism in the province of Ontario, but I was able to listen to them to find out how we can change that and solve the problems.

Throughout this debate, I've had the opportunity to meet with some very interesting people. I was very forceful, Speaker, as you know, in trying to ensure that anti-Semitism found its way into this legislation. I'm pleased to say that at committee on Monday, when we met for clause-by-clause, the government accepted my premise that anti-Semitism should be included in the legislation. On behalf of CIJA, the Canada-Israel Jewish action committee, and the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center, as well as B'nai Brith, I get to stand here in the Legislature saying that that is a major win for Ontario's Jewish community.

I came from a small town, as I mentioned few minutes ago: New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. It came to light just a few months ago that the first woman ever to be put on Canadian currency, outside of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, would be a young lady called Viola Desmond. Now, Viola has passed away, but I'm going to share with everybody in this Legislature a story because I knew who Viola Desmond was before I was the age of these pages who are here in this House. This is a good story for them because I don't know if you've ever heard of Viola Desmond. I'm going to actually speak to the pages for a moment, Speaker, if that's okay, if you'll indulge me.

Viola Desmond was a young woman from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. She was travelling. She defies all odds of being on the currency and I'm going to tell you why. She was about 16 years old. She owned her own company. She grew up in rural Nova Scotia and she was a black woman.

One day, she wanted to go to the Roseland Theatre. I want the pages to look around here. See the galleries? The Roseland Theatre, which is still there today, was a place where I would go when I was your age. There was a gallery, much like this, where people would sit, and then there was a gallery up at the top. Back then, in those early days, in the 1940s and 1950s, there was still racial segregation. It meant that the people who were watching movies on the ground floor were white and the people who were watching from the gallery were black.

Viola Desmond, at about 16 years old, decided enough was enough. She decided to challenge that. What Viola Desmond did is she walked right down and she plunked herself right where she wanted to, where it was most comfortable. She took off her shoes and she sat with the white men. For that, she was charged, and she was taken out of that movie theatre.

0940

Now, by today's standards we think that's wrong, don't we? That's completely wrong and unacceptable. But she was a civil rights leader before there were civil rights leaders in the United States. She was the first to take a stand in North America that way. We've all heard of Rosa Parks. She was Rosa Parks before there was a Rosa Parks. It wasn't until the late 1960s I think when the province of Nova Scotia understood that this was wrong and started to restore her. She died before she ever got an apology from the province of Nova Scotia.

But I'll tell you something: This is instructive of what it means to be a Canadian, and I'll tell you why. She has defied all odds—rural, Maritimer, young, woman, black—and she's the first female in Canadian history, outside of Queen Elizabeth II, to grace our currency. She was the underdog of all underdogs. I had the pleasure of speaking and rising in this House to announce that, because what could be considered a very black mark on the community I grew up in—they understood after that incident that that was wrong. So the community I grew up in has embraced Viola Desmond.

We had a wonderful civil rights leader who came after her, Dr. Carrie Best. My parents made sure I knew who both of them were. There is a plaque on a monument in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, where we have taken my daughter so she has gotten to see this very important piece of Canadian history.

What does that have to do with the legislation, Speaker? It has everything to do with the legislation because today not only do we have to fight anti-black racism; we know that for decades, for centuries, there have been systemic challenges faced by our indigenous population, but more and more today we see anti-Muslim bigotry, we see anti-Semitism—it's reported almost weekly. All of this will be addressed in this piece of legislation.

More than that, as our country grows, as we understand and recognize that 60% of Ontarians are either first- or second-generation Canadian, we're not the same as we were 10 or 20 years ago. As we see around the world, people are inflaming differences rather than seeing what unites us, and what unites us are our core democratic values, the values that we share: peace, order, good governance. We share those values. That's why people come from all around the world to live here.

But we must make sure that the children who are growing up today don't see physical differences. That's what our job is in this Legislature. It's my job as a mother. It's my job as a legislator to ensure that people are treated equally under the law regardless of who they love, what they look like or how they pray.

That has become increasingly important to me as I see the growth in my own constituency of Nepean–Carleton. I'm very, very proud to represent a riding inside the city of Ottawa. Nepean–Carleton will split into two and a half ridings in the next election; some will go to Orléans and will be represented by the member from Orléans. It's interesting to see that because I've always had to have that balance of managing rapid growth and expansion, and at

the same time protecting the rural agrarian roots of some of the villages in the old Carleton county.

What I've noticed in the past 11 years that I've been here is the welcoming atmosphere of not only my community but this entire province in embracing people and diversity. I've spoken many times about my community—hopefully, God willing, I will be back here after 2018 to represent Nepean, where I live. I've talked many times about our cultural communities and the sheer fascination I have. For example, last weekend I was at the Chinese newcomers' event in Ottawa. A lot of these cultural communities actually will have events in my community or I'll be invited to go to downtown Ottawa. I'll sometimes see the members from the government side who are largely from Ottawa as well, and we'll go to these wonderful events.

I'll just give you an example of my weekend. I told you I went to a farmers' market. I then went to a Top Shelf hockey game. I saw little girls and little boys playing hockey, and had a little barbeque there. I had people come from everywhere—and they literally did come from everywhere.

After that we went to an event with the Kerala community, as I mentioned, with the Indian high commissioner. I had an opportunity to speak to people and tell them about my trip to India. What's very interesting, of course, is that the Indian high commissioner actually said that India is the largest democracy in the world, and so is Canada. You're going to say, "How does that even make sense?" India is the largest population that shares our democratic values and we have the largest country geographically.

So it was interesting and fascinating, because when you look at India, for example, they have multiple ethnicities, multiple languages. It is a very large place. What was wonderful about this particular event celebrating the Kerala region is that they actually brought people from the Gujaratis, from different parts of India that have their own different organizations. That was really wonderful. Then, of course, I went to this wonderful Chinese event. I had an opportunity to speak and to talk to people. Often-times I run into a former member of this place, who is the current mayor of Ottawa, Jim Watson, who is doing a lot of cultural outreach as well.

And so it's really important for me when I go to these events to make sure that my constituents know that their province, that their country, does not want to see systemic racism and wants to ensure that they feel comfortable and know that they will not be judged based on how they look, how they pray or who they love, which brings me to an event that I've spoken about many times in this House and makes me very, very proud. I started to get bothered after the American election with all of the negative rhetoric. I wanted to do something in my area to bring together the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths, as well as those in society who may feel marginalized because of their different cultural or ethnic background. So we had a Day of Humanity, Inclusion and Acceptance. We held it at our local synagogue, the Ottawa Torah Centre.

Speaker, I'm going to go through the day because it was so uplifting. It was one of the most amazing days. I think it could be a model and a template for every member here. What we effectively did is we had the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership come in and talk about the changing demographics of Ottawa. People think that in Ottawa we're all a bunch of civil servants and we all look the same. We don't; we're different people. We're a big city; we're the second-largest in Ontario; we are the fifth-largest in Canada. We can actually fit the cities of Montreal, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver inside of our city boundaries because we are the largest agricultural city in the world. We are big.

But we're also growing. We are almost one million people, and those one million people are coming from different places. About 50% of our population is diverse. I think they almost mentioned that about 70% were racialized. So I think what was important for me was to bring all of those communities together.

So we had that conversation with the Ottawa immigration partnership. Then we moved in to what I thought was a very fun exercise. A lot of us participated, including our local city councillor, Jan Harder, who has ushered in most of the growth inside the city of Ottawa. What we did then was, we had my rabbi, Rabbi Blum. I call him my rabbi. I also have an imam. I also have a minister. I think that's just fantastic; everybody should, because you should have relationships with lots of different people.

In any event, Rabbi Blum and his friend Dr. Aisha Sherazi—she's a young hijabi mother and he is a rabbi—walk in and they try to strip down the differences and the preconceived notions that we all have. It became a very fun and interactive process for us to go through. When we finished that, Speaker, the rabbi left his pulpit to our local imam, Zijad Delic. Imam Delic is a wonderful man. He talked about what it means to be a Canadian—very passionate, very forceful.

We started to notice, at the beginning of the day, maybe being afraid of change and all of that, to actually confronting maybe some of our own internal biases and then realizing that people are beyond just what they look like. We moved in to what it meant to be a Canadian.

Then we had Brian Lee Cowley, who runs the Macdonald-Laurier Institute. He talked about what makes Canada great. And as our passion, our pride and our patriotism rose, we then brought in four Canadians who were survivors of genocide—in the Holocaust, Rwanda, Armenia and the recent crisis the Yazidis are facing in Syria and Iran. They talked about why they wanted to come to Canada after they had survived such horrors, why they wanted to be Canadians. It wasn't just for their safety; it was for their values.

0950

One that I want to leave you with, one experience, was the survivor of the Rwandan genocide. She watched her family be murdered. She was shot multiple times. Can you imagine that trauma? They sent her to Canada all by herself. She spoke to us about longing to go back to Rwanda to see if she could find at least one of her sib-

lings. She needed closure in Rwanda. So she went back and she found a younger sister. They built a monument to their family and to their community after they had been killed in a genocide. Then she wanted to come back to Canada. Now she lives in the city of Ottawa; she lives in Orleans.

These are important stories, and I'm going to finish with this one last one. I talk about my daughter all the time. Hopefully next year, she's going to be a page. She goes to Manordale Public School, and they have about 50 or 60 young Syrian refugees. I've been worried about their mental health, as I have been an advocate of mental health. I worry about the kids having sufficient language resources, and their parents.

I was talking two weeks ago about some of their experiences, and I just asked around in the community. One particular young fellow was a bit aggressive, and I said, "So, how does that work?" Through a translator, the father told my friend, "My boy was a good boy, but he saw his family being murdered by ISIS and he's never quite been the same."

If we think we're all the same, at the end of the day, we do have similarities, what's inside. So I beg of everybody in this assembly to look beyond physical appearance, look beyond how people dress, look beyond how people pray, look beyond who people love, and think of those little boys and girls who come to this country for a better life. It's important that we ensure that they feel safe and comfortable, and that they feel that their province will stand up against any discrimination they may face.

With that, I appreciate the opportunity to rise here today in support of this bill on behalf of Patrick Brown and the entire Progressive Conservative caucus.

I will say this one other thing; I haven't had an opportunity to speak to it. On Sunday, a video arose that was very anti-francophone. My leader, Patrick Brown, acted swiftly and moved and removed a member of our caucus.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock.

There's quite a group conversation going on over there. I don't want to hear any arguments about it. If you want to have a group session, go outside.

Continue.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks, Speaker. I just wanted to be very, very clear. This caucus actually condemns racism in all of its forms, including anti-French racism, which was seen by a former member of our caucus last Sunday. I reject his implications and I condemn them fully. I applaud my leader, Patrick Brown, on taking a very significant stand on removing that individual from the Progressive Conservative caucus.

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Apparently, they don't also condemn that, and that's actually very sad, but I also notice they're all backbenchers and probably one-hit wonders in this place too.

Thanks very much, Speaker.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Okay, the member from Nepean–Carleton won't be yelling across the floor, will she?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today on behalf of the Ontario NDP caucus to speak to Bill 114, the Anti-Racism Act, during third reading debate.

I have to say, Speaker, that I rise with somewhat mixed emotions this morning. This is a day that should truly be a day of celebration in this province. It is a day when we come together in this Legislature to demonstrate unity, to show our shared resolve, our strong commitment to dealing with racial injustice in this province, to advancing racial equity, to eliminating systemic racism, to addressing the deeply entrenched—embedded—barriers that black communities and indigenous communities have experienced for decades, the hate-motivated attacks against Jewish communities and Muslim communities that have only grown more frequent in the recent past.

We have before us a piece of legislation that is taking very strong and important steps to dealing with that completely unacceptable issue in our province. Yet, in the face of this third reading debate that we are having today, I have to reflect on the process that led to this third reading version of the bill, the process that took us through the clause-by-clause debate on this legislation just a couple of days ago, on Monday of this week.

We've heard a lot from this government throughout the announcement of the anti-racism strategy, throughout the bringing forward of this bill, that collaboration is absolutely essential if we are to effectively deal with systemic racism. We agree, and yet that process that took us through the clause-by-clause analysis of this bill on Monday was not collaborative, Speaker. Sadly, it showed a pettiness on behalf of the government that I found, quite frankly, unacceptable. I saw the government playing games with the time allocation motion that the government itself had written.

Let's remember: This Liberal government has a majority. They have complete control over the contents of their time allocation motion. They have complete control over how long they will allocate to debate on a bill, over the deadlines by which amendments have to be submitted, over the length of debate that is going to take place during this third reading process. The government's time allocation motion on this bill set a specific time deadline for amendments to be submitted, and so one would have expected that the government would honour that deadline, that the government would be prepared to review amendments that were received in advance of that deadline. Otherwise, why would they have set that deadline? They should have been staffed up, ready to review amendments and to consider the impact of those amendments on this legislation.

Instead, what we saw on Monday was that every single amendment that was submitted by the NDP caucus within

the deadline that had been determined in the time allocation motion was rejected by this government under the rationale that the government had not had time to review the NDP amendments. These were amendments that were submitted within the process that the government itself created, and yet the government showed no willingness, no interest whatsoever to consider the amendments that the NDP put forward. One wonders why this government created a timeline that they were not in any way prepared to respect in dealing with this bill.

If we were engaged in a process of collective bargaining, this would be called bad-faith bargaining, Speaker. It did not show good faith on behalf of this government. It did not show a willingness to collaborate, a willingness to listen to all sides and strengthen the legislation that was before us and move forward in the interests of the people of this province on an issue that must be addressed, on an issue that has a profound impact on black Ontarians, on our Muslim communities, on our Jewish communities, on our indigenous first peoples in this province. Yet we saw the government completely unwilling to even review the amendments that the NDP put forward.

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I have to say, Speaker, that what was particularly galling for me as the NDP representative during that clause-by-clause process was that the government kept telling me that the NDP had declined the government's outreach to engage in a conversation about amendments. I have to say that my office received a single email from the minister's office on Friday at 2:30 in the afternoon—a Friday of a constituency week, when MPPs were not here at Queen's Park—inviting me to a conversation about the amendments. This was on Friday, when the amendments were being considered on Monday.

I do not consider that a good-faith openness to having an honest conversation, a genuine conversation about amendments. In fact, what it turned out to be was to provide the government an excuse to dismiss all NDP amendments that were submitted during clause-by-clause, to reject every single NDP amendment on the grounds that the amendments were received too late, when they were received well within the timeline that the government had set in its time allocation motion.

The effect of this, Speaker, was that it prevented any substantive debate on the amendments that the NDP proposed that spoke directly to the input that was received during public input on this bill. It allowed the government to evade going on the record in any way to try to explain their refusal to listen to the input that had been heard, and to incorporate some of the very legitimate concerns that had been brought forward by the deputies who spoke to the committee.

I'm going to speak at length to a couple of the amendments that the NDP had brought forward that were dismissed by the government without any kind of explanation as to why they would not support them, except to say that they were received too late, when they were received well within the deadline that had been set in the govern-

ment's time allocation motion. But before I do that, Speaker, I do want to make absolutely clear that the NDP caucus fully supports this bill. We agree that the amendments that were made during the committee process have strengthened this bill, and that, in many ways, they speak to the input that was received during the public input.

In particular, I want to acknowledge the changes that were made to explicitly name anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in this bill. This was very, very important to many of the presenters who came before the committee, and the new language that is included in this bill, I think, goes a long way to addressing the concerns that were raised. Most importantly, it does that in a way that does not diminish the historic marginalization, the ongoing exclusion and the displacement of black communities and indigenous communities in this province.

So, Speaker, the amendments that have been included are unquestionably constructive. They are positive and I think they are helpful in moving us forward collectively as a province to eliminate systemic racism in Ontario.

Unfortunately, the same kind of openness and the same kind of respect was not demonstrated by the government in its response to concerns that were raised by multiple deputants to the committee about the exclusion of health information custodians from the data collection requirements of the bill. Currently, section 6 of the bill excludes health information custodians from having to engage in the collection of data and the analysis of data that is just so critical to ensuring the success of Ontario's anti-racism initiatives.

During the public input, we heard from the Association of Ontario Health Centres, we heard from Colour of Poverty—Colour of Change, we heard from the Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, we heard from the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants that the exclusion of health information custodians is going to undermine the effectiveness of this bill in understanding the impact of systemic racism, in actually moving forward with effective strategies to address that systemic racism.

I'm going to read at some length from some of the comments that were made during clause-by-clause about the exclusion of health information custodians.

The Association of Ontario Health Centres noted that, "If Bill 114 excludes health service providers from the requirement to collect data that can help identify and monitor systemic racism and racial disparities in Ontario, then the broad goal of a health equity approach to planning as set out in the government's Patients First Act cannot be achieved effectively.

"We know that racism is one of the determinants of health. It's well documented that indigenous populations, as well as black communities, experience the worst health outcomes in Ontario. This is entrenched through systemic racism, but it is virtually impossible to address systemic racism, in particular anti-indigenous and anti-black racism as described in the preamble of Bill 114, without collecting race-based data. Excluding health service providers from the requirement to collect data, in-

cluding race-based data, is inconsistent with the province's own health equity mandate and indeed works to ensure ongoing inequity and entrenchment of systemic racism."

The Association of Ontario Health Centres goes on to say, "It's not clear what rationale there is for excluding health service providers from this requirement to collect data, including personal information. Community health centres, our members, are health information custodians and have been collecting race-based and socio-demographic data for years, often with the most vulnerable populations who they serve. Indeed, in the last few years the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network has mandated all health service providers to collect socio-demographic data, including race-based data, so we know that it is possible for health service providers to collect personal information without contravening privacy laws."

When the NDP brought forward a motion to address this very concern, a concern that was repeated in multiple deputations during public input, instead of the government explaining why they were rejecting the amendment that the NDP had brought forward so that the legislation would cover health information custodians, the government dismissed the NDP's amendment without any kind of substantive debate at all.

This is a disservice to the people who came and presented to the committee, to the organizations that had surveyed their members, to the organizations that are dealing with the impact of systemic racism on the front lines on a daily basis, to the organizations that include people with lived experience of racism, who understand what the impact is and, in particular, the impact on health outcomes. The government gave no explanation as to why the legislation could not be amended to address this concern.

Having made my concern clear about the process that led to this third reading version of the bill, I do want to say that New Democrats recognize how vital it is to collect data, to create an impact assessment framework that would help us understand the systemic exclusion, the systemic discrimination that is experienced by racialized communities, black communities, indigenous communities, Jewish and Muslim communities across this province. We know the benefits of collecting that data and understanding that data. We've seen it in policing, in education, in child welfare.

1010

Legal Aid Ontario has done a really useful infographic about carding: statistics on carding in various communities and how they shine a light on the systemic biases that exist in policing, that result in visible minority communities and black communities and middle eastern communities and indigenous communities being carded at a much higher rate—double the rate—than their actual representation within the population.

We saw just last month, in a report from York University called *Towards Race Equity in Education*, how systemic barriers are reflected in public education in this

province. We learned that in the Toronto District School Board black students are twice as likely to be enrolled in applied courses instead of academic courses compared to their counterparts from other racial backgrounds, and they are more than twice as likely to have been suspended from school at least once during high school.

Data can shed a light on some of these practices and help us understand what changes have to be made to eliminate those barriers and improve equity for all racialized communities in this province.

I want to acknowledge the work of my colleague the member for Hamilton Mountain and the concerns that she has consistently raised about the overrepresentation of black children and indigenous children in the child welfare system. Again, the data confirm this. We see that in Toronto 8% of young people under the age of 18 are black, and yet 42% of children in care have at least one black parent—five times their representation in the general population.

So, Speaker, understanding the impact of race in terms of access to services in Ontario is vital if we are going to ensure a province that is fair, that provides opportunity for everyone and that enables all citizens to achieve their full potential.

Before I conclude, I wanted to mention one other amendment that was proposed during the public input process. Again, multiple presenters talked about the need to establish an anti-racism secretariat and a disability rights secretariat to complement the work of the Anti-Racism Directorate. I was pleased to hear that and I actually asked the people who had made this recommendation in their submissions how they saw the work of an anti-racism secretariat as distinct from the Anti-Racism Directorate. They talked about the need to have a completely independent, arm's-length body that is not answerable to the minister, that is not susceptible to the political whims of the day, to do this fundamentally important work. This was a recommendation from Colour of Poverty—Colour of Change, from the Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, from the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, from the Ontario Federation of Labour.

Speaker, I have to reflect on the fact that the Anti-Racism Secretariat was an initiative long ago of a previous NDP government in this province. It was a body that was created and that was embarking on this important work and was disbanded by the Conservatives when they took power.

This is something that we must move forward with. Whatever we do, we're not going to have an impact unless there is sustained political will, regardless of who is in government. We need to ensure that there is a shared commitment to moving forward on this critical work to ensure a province that is fair to all Ontarians.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Lorne Coe: It's my pleasure this morning to introduce to the Legislature Jade Harper, the executive director of the Ontario Network of Victim Service Providers for Durham region, who this morning accepted the 2017 Victim Services Award of Distinction on behalf of the Ontario Network.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to introduce two interns working in my office this summer who are here in the gallery: Houman Tahavori and Christina Alulio. Welcome to Queen's Park again, and thanks for doing a great job.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's a pleasure and honour to welcome to the Legislature this morning Dan Dawson, who is the vice-chair of the Temiskaming VCARS board, and Monique Chartrand, who is the executive director of Temiskaming VCARS. They were also here this morning to receive a well-deserved award.

Mr. Mike Colle: Today I'd like to introduce Julia Innes, who is the daughter of David Innes, who has had a great career here at Queen's Park. Julia is a 10-year-old grade 4 student at a great school on Bathurst Street, Hillcrest Community School. Welcome, Julia Innes.

Mr. John Yakubuski: I'd like to introduce in the public gallery this morning, from the Women's Sexual Assault Centre of Renfrew County, JoAnne Brooks and Nancy Lounsbury, who received Attorney General's Victim Services Awards of Distinction this morning. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It gives me great pleasure to introduce the guests of page captain Kaitlin Grierson: her mother, Catharine Ann Matthews, and amazingly, her twin sister, Lauren Cooper Grierson, in the gallery.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'd like to extend a warm welcome to correctional nurses and staff here today. From OPSEU, we have president Smokey Thomas and Clarke Eaton, as well as Monte Vieselmeyer, chair of MERC, and also correctional officers, including Chad Oldfield and Chris Jackel from the riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. We have Autumn Butsch, a correctional nurse, along with Glenna Campbell, Denise Clark, Jen Mitchell, Linda Staples and Emily Morrison.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Chief Neal Roberts, who is chief of the Middlesex-London EMS, who is here today for the paramedic awards.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to welcome a couple of people today. First of all, my interns: Alex Glista, Madison Leisk, Shelby Dockendorff and William Cook. I welcome them today.

I also want to welcome Donna Tranquada, who is the mother of one my staff members, Blane McPhail. She's no stranger to Queen's Park, having worked here as a journalist in the past. Welcome.

Mr. Steve Clark: I see a familiar face from the riding of Leeds-Grenville. I want to welcome Sonya Jodoin from Victim Services. She's also a member of the Brockville Police Services Board. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Please help me welcome two interns working in my office this summer: Jennifer Bocti and Abdullatif Al-Shaikh.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'd like to welcome my friends Doug and Dianne Penrice, who are here from the town of Halton Hills. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature; it's great to have you here.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: On behalf of my London colleague, the MPP for London–Fanshawe, I would like to welcome Nazish Rehan, who is the mother of today's page captain, Eesha Rehan. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Jeff Leal: In the public gallery today, I would like to welcome Ashley Fontaine from Victim Services of Peterborough and Northumberland. She won the Attorney General's Victim Services Award of Distinction this morning.

Mr. John Fraser: On behalf of my Ottawa colleagues, I'd like to welcome Melissa Heimerl, who is here with Ottawa Victim Services and who also won an Attorney General's Victim Services Award of Distinction.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to welcome Kendra Drohan, a correctional nurse from OPSEU here for OPSEU's correctional nurses' day, and to acknowledge the work they do in our institutions every day.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Please join me in welcoming, from the beautiful riding of Dufferin–Caledon, Patricia, Jamie, Joanie and Erin McBride. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's my great pleasure to welcome two recipients of the Victim Services Award of Distinction from my riding of Richmond Hill: Clive Algie and Todd Morganstein, who are sitting in the east gallery. Please join me in welcoming them.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm really happy that we have four guests from OUSA, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance: Amanda Kohler, Danny Chang, Colin Aitchison and Deb Lam.

I also spot Neal Roberts from Middlesex–London EMS, and David Innes, a great member of our team.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would also like to welcome correctional nurses from across the province who do wonderful work every day in our jails. Autumn Butsch is here, a correctional nurse and the Local 368 VP, along with Smokey Thomas, president of OPSEU, Monte Vieselmeyer, the OPSEU-MERC chair, and, along with him, Chad Oldfield and Chris Jackel. I would like to also introduce Chris Butsch, the president of Local 368, with his two sons today, Nathan and Hayden Butsch, who are here joining us at Queen's Park. Welcome.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I want to acknowledge also the great work that our correctional nurses do every single day and welcome them this morning. We had a wonderful breakfast.

I also would like to welcome the executives who were here: Mr. Thomas, Monte, Chad, Chris and Richard. Again, thank you for all of the work that our correctional nurses do every single day.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: It's my pleasure to introduce a very special 10-year-old constituent, Daniela Farrell. She

wants to be an MPP, so in two elections she might be here. She is accompanied by her mom, Kelly Farrell.

I also want to acknowledge representatives of the Somali Canadian Association of Etobicoke who have won one of the Attorney General's awards, and thank them for their work.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to announce one of the recipients of the Victim Services Awards of Distinction, Liz Kent from Victim Services Wellington in Guelph. Congratulations, Liz.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I am delighted to welcome to Queen's Park and very proud of Corrie Hummel, Julia Manuel and Ingrid Thiessen of Waterloo region, who today received Victim Services Awards of Distinction. Welcome to Queen's Park, ladies.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce important health stakeholders we have here with us in the gallery today. I'm pleased they are able to join us today on World MS Day. I would like to welcome the staff and ambassadors from the MS Society of Canada who are here to commemorate World MS Day. Canada has the highest rate of MS in the world. Welcome.

Hon. Chris Ballard: I'd like to welcome Casandra Diamond, the founding director of BridgeNorth in Newmarket, an organization that helps sexually exploited women and girls. She is a recipient of the Attorney General's Victim Services Award of Distinction. Welcome.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I have a few introductions this morning. First, my office manager is here in the west members' gallery; Melanie Moscovitch is with us here today. Also, I have two interns here, I think, or they are on their way: Nicholas Ryma and Fatima Nadhum.

I'm also happy to welcome to Queen's Park two nurses from Thunder Bay corrections who are here as part of the OPSEU delegation this morning.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm pleased to welcome a constituent, Taylor Jantzi, and also Neelam Champaneri, who are both political science graduates.

And our good friend Howard Brown is here with his colleagues Blake Keidan and Laura Casselman, and a client, Jeannette Chau, manager of government liaison programs at PEO.

I also want to recognize the Distress Centres' Survivor Support Program of Toronto, who are also winners of the Attorney General's Victim Services Awards of Distinction. Welcome to Queen's Park.

1040

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I would also like to welcome Neal Roberts, who is the president of the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs. He is in the gallery today.

I'd like to remind all members that the annual paramedic bravery awards are taking place this evening on the main stairs—at Queen's Park, obviously—and I hope all members can join us at 6 p.m. to honour the brave and hard-working paramedics of Ontario.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Earlier today, as the Attorney General I had the great honour of recognizing the 2017

Victim Services Awards of Distinction. I want all members to please join me in thanking 15 remarkable individuals and organizations from across our province for their outstanding work on behalf of victims of crime in the province of Ontario. Thank you very much.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please join me in welcoming, in the Speaker's gallery, personal friends of mine and long-time Brant residents: Pat Eyzenga, Jean Taylor and Susan Howell. Welcome to Queen's Park. Thank you very much for being here.

MEMBERS' EXPENDITURES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the individual members' expenses for the fiscal year 2016-17. Members will find copies in their desks.

WEARING OF CARNATIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Speaker, I believe you'll find we have unanimous consent for MPPs to wear carnations for World MS Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London is seeking unanimous consent to wear the carnations. Do we agree? Agreed.

I believe that in the lobbies all members have access to the carnations if not already on their desks.

ATTACK IN KABUL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would also seek unanimous consent. We had a terrorist attack in Kabul. A lot of people died and I think we should take a moment to recognize those who died in Kabul.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins–James Bay is seeking unanimous consent to do a moment of silence for all of the victims in Kabul, Afghanistan. Do we agree? Agreed.

I would ask everyone to please rise for a moment of silence to pay tribute to the victims in Kabul.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Peace be upon them. God rest their souls.

It is therefore now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Thanks to the Financial Accountability Office, we now know that Ontario does not have a balanced budget. The

books were cooked for an election illusion. The FAO said the Liberals won't—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sorry, but that the phrase can't be used. Please withdraw.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Withdraw.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: The FAO said the Liberals won't be able to "balance the budget without significant fiscal policy adjustments...." I repeat, "significant fiscal policy adjustments." What does that mean for a Liberal? It means either hidden new taxes or front-line service cuts. So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier: Given what the FAO has clearly said, what will it be? Is it going to be new taxes or is it going to be cuts to front-line services?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I really appreciate the work of the Financial Accountability Officer. I was—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville will withdraw.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): —the person that continues that trend. It's unparliamentary and I won't accept it.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I was pleased that his economic forecasts are broadly in line with ours, showing strong economic momentum in 2017 and 2018, and confirming strong job gains. His analysis is also in line with the major Canadian banks and financial institutions. They also predict Ontario will continue to lead Canada in economic growth. That is very good news for the people of Ontario.

Our unemployment rate is at the lowest that it has been in 16 years—great news—and has been below the national average for the last two years. I thank the FAO for his report. We've got a good strong outlook, and he agrees with that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: I get that the Premier's talking point is to thank the FAO. That may sound good, but the reality is that the FAO is calling this government's budget a charade, a sham. Look at what has actually been said. The FAO is projecting continued Ontario budget deficits over the next five years. "2017-18, the FAO projects a ... deficit," due to more taxes and a "\$3-billion boost from one-time, non-tax revenues."

Ontarians will not be fooled. The FAO is saying that your numbers do not add up. Ontario does not have a balanced budget. This is a significant deficit, and if I'm supposed to believe the FAO or this Liberal government, I'm with the FAO. The non-partisan legislative oversight is calling the government out. Will you do the right thing? Will the Premier admit that we still have a huge deficit in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question from the member opposite, recognizing that the FAO has also revised his numbers from the spring to the fall, increasing

the economic growth that the province of Ontario has been having and recognizing that the trends are improving over time. The FAO makes reference to that. Independent forecasters have also assessed it, and we have actually taken their projections and tapered them down in order to be prudent in our projections going forward.

But what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is the actual numbers. The actual numbers, year over year, have always exceeded our budget and our targets. This coming year, we projected a deficit of \$4.5 billion. It's now down to \$1.5 billion and improving—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's going to calm down.

Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The Minister of Finance is saying that the only thing that counts is the actual numbers. Well, the FAO is saying that we have a deficit well beyond \$5 billion. How is it possible that we've got a Premier and a Minister of Finance who have the audacity to say to the people of Ontario that we have a balanced budget when we don't? The non-partisan legislative oversight is saying that your numbers do not add up.

I want to make sure the government tells the truth to Ontarians. Is the FAO correct that your numbers do not add up? Is the FAO correct that we don't have a balanced budget?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The FAO is correct that Ontario's economy is improving. The FAO is correct that we are trending downward. The FAO is correct that our debt-to-GDP—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Inches away from warnings. Answers will be heard by me.

Finish, please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Those are projections by the FAO, which we actually do appreciate. In fact, we appreciate others and their input so that we can then taper and—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Durham, come to order. Thanks to him, we're in warnings.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Speaker, we've put forward a budget. It's a living document. We always overcome challenges that they foresee, and we take those efforts.

What the member opposite is doing is he is voting against pharmacare for children. He's voting against increased funding for hospitals. He's voting against increased funding for schools. He's voting for the elimination of free tuition for our students. He's voting against the very measures that improve our economy to enable us to come to balance.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Since I can't get an answer on the budget deficit, I'm going to ask the Premier something directly. We've heard other government ministers try to give their spin on this, but I want to hear directly from the Premier. What does a \$120,000 giant rubber ducky have to do with Canada's 150th anniversary?

1050

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

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: I'm happy to take this question. I want to thank the member opposite.

When we say yes to festivals, like we did with the Waterfront Toronto Festival at \$121,000, we did so confident it would leverage the kind of results this festival has led to in the past number of years, including \$6 million in tourism spend. We think that's a great return on investment. I don't know about the members opposite, but we absolutely agree that that's the case.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. The member from Kitchener–Conestoga is warned. And I'm going to get tighter.

Finish, please.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: We have faith, unlike the party opposite, in local tourism operators. We have faith in their ability to make good decisions about what is going to leverage tourism opportunities in their part of the province and what's going to make it fun—

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier—I asked the question to the Premier, and I want the Premier on the record. I understand why the Premier is embarrassed that her government spent \$121,000 on a giant rubber ducky, but if the Premier is actually—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The President of the Treasury Board and the member from Barrie are warned.

Carry on.

Mr. Patrick Brown: If the Premier can actually defend this, and she's not going to send someone else out to defend it, she will say here in the House that her government is okay with spending \$121,000 that we don't have—remember we're in a deficit; \$121,000 we don't have—on a giant rubber ducky. Can the Premier say here today that she supports it? If she won't, why won't she?

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: You know, Speaker, none of those arguments hold water, and the Leader of the Opposition knows it.

Here is what else we know: Again, when we have faith and confidence in these local organizers—they know what works. The \$121,000 that we are leveraging in this festival is now being leveraged amongst six municipalities, and that's really important. You know what? The member opposite says it's shameful. You know what's shameful? That the party opposite doesn't under-

stand the importance of local tourism investments and is completely out of touch with what municipalities want. You are completely out of touch.

I also want to add, Speaker, that the member from Brockville had something interesting to say, and was quoted as saying: “These activities are not only an important part of life in our towns and villages, but provide a real boost to our local tourism economy.”

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I stand; you sit. The minister is to be reminded that when I stand, you sit.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: I would have more empathy for the Premier if she said, “We made a mistake. We shouldn’t have spent \$121,000 on a giant rubber ducky when the province is in a deficit.”

The reality is that we have homeless men and women on our streets, children can’t get funding for autism and nurses are being fired. Yet, this government thinks it’s a good value of taxpayer funds to spend \$121,000 on the giant rubber ducky.

I understand the Premier’s staff are probably telling her, “Don’t get clipped on this.” Have someone else defend this ugly government policy. But once again—a third time to the Premier—will you defend your decision to sign off on \$121,000 for a giant rubber ducky? Yes or no?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Niagara West–Glanbrook is warned. The member from Trinity–Spadina is warned. The Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is warned.

Minister.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: You know, Speaker, I know that the leader—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins–James Bay is warned. Who’s next?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Try it from this place.

Carry on.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: I know that the Leader of the Opposition doesn’t want to talk about the increase in minimum wage or the labour reforms that we’re proposing on this side of the House. I know that he doesn’t want to talk about that, so he’s ragging the puck, Mr. Speaker, and he’s put it over to me. I’m quite happy to take it, and here’s why: because not only is this festival in Toronto going to bring tourists from around the world to Toronto and that’s why the city of Toronto gave \$75,000 to this festival, but it’s because five other municipalities across our province said yes, too.

What did they say yes to? They told us that they want to take this duck around the province. It’s going to the Leader of the Opposition’s riding, so is he going to call

local organizers and tell them that the duck can’t come? That’s what I want to know.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

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

New question.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, to the Premier: This session the Premier has done nothing but plow ahead with her own agenda to try and save herself and her party before the next election. Take hydro, for example: The Premier went ahead with her wrong-headed Hydro One sell-off, even though 80% of Ontarians are against it. Does the Premier think she knows more than 80% of Ontarians?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I’ve had the opportunity over the last couple of days to talk about, specifically, the changes that we are making to labour laws and employment standards and to the minimum wage. All of that is part of a plan. It’s part of the reality that government, in my opinion, exists to help people. It exists to do things that we cannot do alone. Government exists to make society more fair.

Whether that’s free tuition for students who will see that this fall—over 200,000 students will go to college and university. They will get free or better-than-free tuition. Whether it is cutting people’s electricity bills, whether it’s building 100,000 new child care spaces, or whether it’s raising the minimum wage and making sure part-time and full-time workers are paid the same, all of that is about a fair Ontario. That’s what we’ve been doing this session.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, I’m not surprised the Premier doesn’t want to talk about Hydro One. Under this Liberal government, hydro rates have gone up by a staggering 300%. Under this Premier alone, rates have gone up 50%. Instead of doing something to fix the mess that she’s helped create in our hydro system, the Premier signed Ontario families and businesses on to a \$45-billion borrowing scheme that will cause our hydro bills to soar even higher. What does the Premier have to say to the people who will be hurt by her scheme?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the member opposite. I know him quite well and I know that he is committed to, for example, building transit. I know that he believes in infrastructure building. I also know that he recognizes that over many years—because he knows a lot about the electricity system in Ontario—over many years, government after government did not make the investments in the electricity system in Ontario that were needed. The system was degraded.

By the time we came into office in 2003 under the previous Premier, there had to be investments in order to up-

grade the system. We made those investments, and we are paying now for those in this generation. We believe that it is more fair to pay for those investments over a longer period of time. That's what we're doing in order that people can see some relief right now. They will see that relief come this summer.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Indeed, I do know the system, and privatization is damaging the hydro in this province—damaging it. The Premier didn't even give the people of Ontario or the opposition, for that matter, reasonable time to have their say about her hydro scheme. She's ramming it through the House in a little over two weeks—two weeks—for legislation that will affect our lives for the three decades to come.

1100

Why does the Premier insist on limiting public input and opposition debate on her hydro scheme? What is she afraid of?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There has been an enormous debate and discussion around this province about the cost of electricity. The member opposite knows that. We're moving forward to give people relief by this summer, because we know that that will help people, and it will help small businesses on main streets all over the province. They will see a reduction in their electricity costs, and people in more rural and remote communities will see up to a 40% to 50% reduction.

I believe that it was an important decision to move ahead. I also know that the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One was part of our plan to invest in the people of this province and invest in infrastructure. We were not—as the member opposite is, I believe—constrained by an ideology that says, “Never work with the private sector. Do not trust the private sector.” I believe that the way society works is that government, the private sector and civil society work together to improve the lot in life of the people of Ontario.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, I don't consider 30 minutes' debate to be adequate time.

Again to the Premier: After months of heartbreaking story after heartbreaking story, the Premier still doesn't get that families are at a tipping point. They can't afford more of her hydro rate hikes. So why does the Premier insist on pushing ahead with a plan that even the non-partisan Financial Accountability Officer says will end up costing Ontarians more on their hydro bills in the long run—more on their hydro bills? Why?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The cutting of the electricity bills across the province is part of a broader recognition that we're living in a very uncertain global economy. Ontario is doing very well, as both the Minister of Finance and the Financial Accountability Officer have identified. The economy is growing, but not everybody is sharing in that growth and that wealth evenly.

Cutting electricity bills, making sure that young people have access to post-secondary education, building

child care spaces and raising the minimum wage, making sure that people have the resources that they need to look after themselves and their families: All of that is about building a fairer Ontario. I know that the member opposite understands that. He knows exactly why we're taking these measures.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Premier: It's not just that she sold off Hydro One or that she's ramming her borrowing scheme through this House; the Premier is also using the power of her office to advertise that scheme to Ontarians by forcing utility companies to include her Liberal Party messaging in people's hydro bills.

Will the Premier admit that she's just using these political inserts to save her own skin before the next election?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: One of the things that has concerned me and that has concerned us is that not everyone who's eligible for the Ontario Electricity Support Program has actually applied for it or knows about it. We're doing everything we can to make sure that people know about that program so that they can apply and they can get a 50% reduction. We are making sure that that can happen.

As I said, I know that the member opposite knows that people in the province need relief. It's quite astonishing to me that I expect that he and his colleagues will be voting against that relief. I think that there has been enough discussion and that they've talked to enough people, as we have, to know that people need relief and they need it now.

In fact, the member opposite brought forward a plan with his party that actually would not have given people relief, certainly not in the short term and maybe not ever. We're bringing relief to people. They're voting against it. We know that people in the province need this relief right now.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Premier: We are voting against soaring hydro bills. Make no mistake.

The Premier has focused on nothing but her own political fortunes this session. She has barrelled ahead with a massively unpopular sell-off of Hydro One. She has allowed hydro rates to skyrocket. She's ramming through a \$45-billion borrowing scheme that the FAO says will do nothing but drive hydro bills even higher. And she's forcing private companies to do some sneaky political manoeuvring for her in their bills.

Why doesn't the Premier get that she can't win an election or improve her poll numbers by continuing to make decisions that sell out the people of this province?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased that it's this Premier and this government that's bringing forward a plan that's going to be reducing bills for people right across the province by 25%.

But let me quote Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day: "The elimination of the delivery charge will assist our citizens by reducing energy poverty in our communities. It also represents recognition for the use of the land in the development and expansion of the provincial energy grid ... Today's commitment by the Ontario government is commendable and allows a path forward for greater quality of life for First Nations in Ontario." That is what they are voting against, Mr. Speaker.

Let me quote Chief Ava Hill: "Each one of our community members will benefit from Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan. This is a step towards reconciliation and recognition of our inherent rights as treaty holders." That is what they are voting against, Mr. Speaker.

We are making a difference for every family in this province. That is what the opposition is voting against today.

Interjection.

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

New question.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. The headline on the Financial Accountability Officer's release this morning says it all: "FAO Expects Steady Deterioration of Ontario's Budget Deficit."

Despite the government announcing a so-called balanced budget, the FAO confirms this is only by using one-time revenue from the sale of Hydro One. He confirmed this is also due to using revenue from the one-time sale of buildings, such as the OPG headquarters across the street.

Speaker, what business in Canada would be allowed to pull the wool over their investors' eyes? In the real world, people have gone to jail for pulling a stunt like that. So I ask the Premier: Will you fess up to the taxpayers and provide the real state of Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I was listening very carefully to the question and I'm concerned that there are some implications in it. It will not go any further off that line. He knows what I'm talking about.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you for the question, because it does give us an opportunity to reinforce the tremendous growth in Ontario's economy, outpacing Canada—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If the member wants to test it, I will. The member will withdraw.

Mr. Steve Clark: Withdraw.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: Because of these initiatives and efforts, we put forward a budget that not only is balanced, it's balanced this year, next year and the year after that. Public accounts coming forward in the fall will reinforce that we've outperformed yet again even last year. Those are actual numbers.

But the member opposite is asking a question—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will accept the challenge. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned, and someone else is very close.

Carry on.

Hon. Charles Sousa: But I say the member opposite is asking these questions because he and his party are uncomfortable with supporting our most vulnerable workers by increasing minimum wage. He even had the audacity to say that the minimum wage increase detracts from more—

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: We know the government only announced a balanced budget through these one-time sales. They're going to run out of things to sell next year. The Financial Accountability Officer said the budget deficit will continue to deteriorate, "without additional government measures."

We saw the government trying to balance the budget on the backs of front-line health care workers; they fired 1,600 nurses. We saw the government trying to balance the budget on the backs of students; the Liberals have closed more schools than any other government in the history of Ontario.

So my question is to the Premier. Which group is she going to target next to continue this charade of balanced budgets?

1110

Hon. Charles Sousa: We are always looking at our economic policy. We're always putting forward fiscal plans that enable us to grow our economy. We are, of course, looking at assets that are unproductive to re-purpose them, to reinvest in making even greater contributions to our economy, and that is exactly what is happening.

Part of that contribution in this budget, Mr. Speaker, is to increase support for our health care by \$11.5 billion, which that member opposite is voting against. He's voting against an additional \$9.5 billion into our education. He's voting against pharmacare, free medicine for all young people under the age of 25. He's voting against free tuition for our students. He's voting against the very measures that enable our economy to succeed.

As I said before, he is distracting from the issues around minimum wage, and that is what affects the people of this province. We are talking about a plan for the people of Ontario for today and tomorrow.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Premier. Niagara Health serves tens of thousands of families, some of whom are with us here in the gallery today. They made that long trek on the QEW for three hours on a bus to be here, along with the Ontario Health Coalition's Natalie Mehra and Sue Hotte. They brought over 2,500 letters, which I will deliver to the Premier and the health minister after question period, from community members asking the government to stop the proposal to close hospitals in our riding.

The Liberal government has a proposal in place to close more hospitals in south Niagara—in Welland and Port Colborne—all based on a non-validated report, issued in 2012 by Kevin Smith, that experts describe as lacking in “total evidence or reference,” and without any formal consultation with families in my community. This restructuring will be unprecedented in Ontario.

Will the minister explain to my friends who are here in the gallery today and those watching at home why the Liberal government refuses to put a stop to this short-sighted proposal?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I want to first welcome and acknowledge the members of the Ontario Health Coalition who are here this morning, and other community members and leaders from Welland and the Welland area and the Niagara region, who have made that trip here today to advocate on behalf of health care in Ontario and in their region.

I'll have more to say in the supplementary, but I want to begin by saying that that party voted against our budget, which allocated \$9 billion more in capital infrastructure for hospitals, including a dedicated, brand new hospital in Niagara for the Niagara region. It was the hard work not of that member opposite, but the member from St. Catharines, the local Niagara mayor, Mayor Diodati, and many other local leaders who have worked so hard over the years to get us to the place where we are today, to be able to make that financial commitment to build a brand new hospital for the Niagara region.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Unfortunately, it's not sited in south Niagara, which is actually where the hospitals are closing.

But in any event, we know that Niagara has one of the highest populations of seniors in the province, many of whom live on very low incomes. Worse, the region has the second-lowest number of long-term-care beds in the province. Studies from the Niagara region show that the growth is actually going to be in south Niagara. So while Niagara Falls deserves a new hospital and needs one, Welland and Port Colborne and Wainfleet also deserve to have a hospital for their residents. Closing the hospitals will have devastating impacts on not only economic development in the south end of Niagara, but on the people who live in our community.

So I will ask again, will the minister listen to the experts and to the message brought from the constituents of my riding today and put an immediate stop to the closure of the Welland and Port Colborne hospitals?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows that I've spoken with her about the hospitals in the region, including the Welland hospital that she is most preoccupied with. I've met with Mayor Campion, as well. I've met with other community leaders, other mayors in the region about the Welland hospital. She knows that I have been absolutely open and flexible on the future of the Welland hospital. In fact, I have instructed my officials to demonstrate that flexibility.

I grew up not very far from Welland. I understand the importance of that community hospital to the community and I will do everything I can to work with my ministry and with the community to keep Welland open. That is my commitment. That is what we have been working towards. The member opposite knows that. I'm glad that the members in the gallery are also here to listen to that commitment: that we are working with the LHIN, the local leadership, the mayors, the communities—everybody—to find the right solution.

CYCLING POLICIES

Mr. Han Dong: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Residents in my riding of Trinity–Spadina have different options to get to work and around the city. In my mind, the most convenient way is to bike. I know that many in my community are passionate about biking. At the same time, there are many more in my community who want to choose cycling, but feel that the necessary infrastructure isn't there to allow for them to ride around safely.

Speaker, I am aware that, on Monday, the Minister of Transportation was with the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport to make a very important announcement about our government's commitment to cycling. Would the minister please provide the members of this House with more information on how exactly we're making Ontario a better and safer place to ride a bike?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Of course, I want to begin by thanking the member from Trinity–Spadina for his question and for his tireless advocacy on behalf of his community.

This past Monday, I was very happy to stand alongside the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport as we made a very important announcement regarding the future of cycling here in Ontario. Speaker, you'll know that in budget 2017 we announced that we'll be investing \$50 million to support commuter cycling infrastructure in our province.

On Monday, we were pleased to announce specifically that as part of this commitment we'll be providing eligible municipalities from across the province with fund-

ing through the Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Program. This funding will go directly to municipalities so that they can build more bike lanes and other cycling infrastructure or choose to enhance existing cycling infrastructure.

To make cycling an even more convenient option for commuters, we have also created a new cycling Web hub that will provide a single point of access for all things cycling here in Ontario.

We'll keep making these critical investments because our government knows that investing in cycling infrastructure makes for a safer, more comfortable ride, and that's exactly what helps encourage Ontarians to #CycleON.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Han Dong: I want to thank the minister on behalf of the cycling community in my riding. As the minister mentioned, by helping municipalities improve their cycling infrastructure we're making it easier for people to choose their bikes to get around, both for recreation and to get to school and work.

As a part-time cyclist, I know there's nothing better than riding along a trail, discovering new towns and regions, spending time outdoors with kids, or even something as simple as riding your bike to work in the morning. It is no secret that cycling in Ontario is experiencing rapid growth as more people realize that this is a fun and healthy form of transportation.

Minister, through the Speaker to you, can you tell us about other incentives happening around Bike Month?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: I want to thank the member for the question and for his advocacy. He likely has more cyclists per square metre in his riding than any riding in the country. He really knows how to look after them, and I appreciate his advocacy.

I'm very pleased to rise in the House and talk about this announcement because I had a great time on Monday with my colleague the Minister of Transportation announcing what is the largest investment in cycling infrastructure in the history of our province, a significant investment that is going to contribute to the extensive trails across our province and to the cycling facilities and infrastructure.

We're also responding to the growing needs expressed by municipalities. This, in turn, is really all about cycling tourism as well, which we know grows local economies. Our Cycling Tourism Plan: Tour by Bike was something I was pleased to announce earlier this year.

Our government is clearly committed to investing in cycling, making it easier and safer for people to ride, responding to the needs of municipalities, and working hard with the local tourism officials and not-for-profits who are making this happen. I want to thank them on behalf of all of us for their diligent work.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Correc-

tional nurses face a difficult dual task of protecting the health and well-being of inmates while also protecting themselves. They face plenty of verbal assaults, as well as being spat at and having feces thrown at them. The good work they do is not possible if they are not safe.

1120

Dawn Goodenough, a nurse and steward with Local 234 at Maplehurst Correctional Complex, said that "one of our most urgent needs is finding alternatives to segregation." Mental health is a huge concern right now. To simply say that we can't segregate without viable alternatives in place will only lead to more violence.

Speaker, to the minister: How does this government plan to address increased violence in our jails or will they simply leave the hands of our correctional nurses handcuffed?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I thank the member opposite for his question, because I had the pleasure this morning of meeting with our correctional nurses, but also in the past few months during my visits into our institutions, meeting with them and talking with them about some of the challenges that they are experiencing.

First, I want to say thank you and to thank them for their dedication and all their hard work that they do in often difficult and dangerous conditions. They are on the front lines every day and know better than anyone the challenges and the opportunities that exist in our facilities.

By working together, we are committed to giving them the tools and the support they need to do their job to the best of their greatest ability. Through our ongoing transformation, we are committed to reaching our shared goal, which is to ensure the best possible outcome—

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Minister, actions speak louder than words. Explosive reports from Global's Carolyn Jarvis shed new light on the crisis in community corrections due to a lack of resources for overworked probation and parole officers. Ontario's new corrections minister stated that she was unaware of the fact that home visits were not being done. The Attorney General was even more reckless, stating that these concerns were "manufactured" by the opposition. But the fact is, Speaker, staff have highlighted these issues countless times in the past and were ignored by this ministry.

On Sunday, a Sudbury man who was issued a lifetime weapons ban and probation order was arrested after attacking a bus driver with a knife. Speaker, to the minister: Why is the rest of the province more concerned with clear issues in community corrections than this government?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Our government takes the safety of our community very seriously. I want to put some facts for the member opposite: The recidivism rate has dropped significantly. The crime rate has declined by over 30%.

I have to say, with a lot of pride, that we are currently in the biggest, greatest transformation of our justice

system in generations. I look at the member opposite asking questions, and I remember their failed Mike Harris era. When I go to the jails, I'm reminded about what they have done to our correctional services.

Interjection: Privatizing.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I would say privatizing, but let's not forget cutting services and cutting our correctional staff in there. We are actually rebuilding a system that they poorly managed for several years, unfortunately.

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy with the great work of our parole and probation officers. I have met with their executives and I'm going to continue engaging to find a solution—

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

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. I have been raising concerns about London's mental health crisis since I was first elected, but over those past three and a half years, all this Liberal government has done is make things worse.

Two months ago, I shared the story of a constituent forced to lie for a week in a hospital hallway waiting for a mental health bed. Last week, another constituent, David Warren, spent more than three days in the ER waiting for his wife to be transferred to the mental health unit after she had been ordered to go to the hospital through a Form 1. Eventually, she had to go to St. Thomas to get the treatment she required.

Does the Premier think it is acceptable that Londoners have to leave their community to access the emergency care they so urgently need?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We continue to make investments in mental health and addiction services across this province, including in London. It was this government just a couple of years ago that provided more than \$1 million in funding for the operations of the crisis centre, which provides, as the member well knows, a critically important resource for individuals in London who are facing those mental health challenges.

We've also—fairly substantially, I would say—increased the budget of London Health Sciences itself: \$16 million more to their operating budget this year, in addition to the funds that were provided to them last year, which enables them to deal with some of those challenges that they're facing, whether that's in the ER or whether it's bed capacity.

We're working on all fronts. We're working with the hospital; we're working with the crisis centre; we're working with the community to find other measures that can be taken to provide that high-quality care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Again to the Premier: Speaker, when my office spoke to the London Health Sciences

Centre about David Warren and his wife, staff at the hospital acknowledged that long waits in the ER only worsen the condition of mental health patients. They said that the system had failed David's wife.

One of the things that could help is London's proposed mental health diversion project, which could divert as many as 3,000 people a year from the hospital ER to the community-based crisis centre. Five times I have asked this government to approve this pilot project, but the project remains stalled. In fact, Middlesex-London chief Neal Roberts, who is here today, has become so frustrated that he has temporarily withdrawn EMS participation from the project.

Does the Premier agree that her government is failing families like David's, and will she commit to implementing London's much-needed mental health pilot project now?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Of course I acknowledged Neal at the beginning of question period, and I'm glad that he is here with us on this issue. Neal himself and other paramedics and EMS providers understand the law in the province. If they receive an individual—whether it's a mental health or a physical health situation—they are required by law to deliver that individual to a hospital environment.

There was a solution that was suggested to the crisis centre, where they could strengthen the relationship between the hospital and crisis centre run by CMHA that would have permitted—almost overnight, Mr. Speaker—for that solution that the member opposite is looking for to happen.

However, notwithstanding their rejection of that solution, which exists in Ottawa and in Sudbury and works quite well, we are working on what I believe is quite an innovative solution. We're working with all partners: EMS, the LHINs, London Health Sciences and CMHA. I wish we were working with the member opposite. I know she's raised it six times. I am prepared to work with her if she'll work with me.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the Minister of Labour. Speaker, yesterday the minister, alongside the Premier, announced the government's exciting response to the Changing Workplaces Review. We heard that the workplace of today is not the same as when legislation was first created to protect workers.

Our economy is strong, and it is growing. It is outperforming other jurisdictions. Our unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in 16 years. But not everyone is feeling the benefits of our strong economy. People are worried about falling behind, even as they work so hard to get ahead.

I have heard from constituents and community groups in my riding of Davenport that they are struggling to support their families on part-time, contract or minimum

wage work. Our workers want stability in their jobs and to avoid tough decisions on whether they should earn a wage for the day or take care of themselves or their families.

Speaker, can the minister please tell us more about the government's proposed measures to help safeguard employees and create fair and better workplaces?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'll tell you how proud I am to stand today and to answer that question from the member from Davenport. I'm so happy to stand today in the House on this really important issue, Speaker.

When we launched the Changing Workplaces Review two years ago, we did so on the understanding that workplaces had changed. The workplaces that a lot of us entered as young people simply have changed. The legislation needed to change with it. We know that responsible change can ensure that every hard-working person in the province of Ontario has a chance to reach their full potential.

1130

Ontario has got a tradition of fairness and decency in our workplaces. They have got to continue to be the defining values. Whether it's wage equality that lifts people out of poverty, paid sick days that will allow working parents to take better care of themselves and their children, leaves that allow Ontarians to take care of themselves and their loved ones, or increased enforcement, I am proud of the response of this government to one of the best-written reports I've seen in the history of Ontario labour law.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you to the minister for his answer. I am thrilled to hear about these proposed changes.

Minister, you already know that we need to move forward in order to give people a fair chance in today's workplace. A few years back, our government ended the minimum wage freeze that the previous Progressive Conservative government had brought in. We put together a plan and a system that have raised the minimum wage by 70% since 2003. As a result of those changes, full-time minimum wage earners in the province are currently making \$2,392 per year more than they did three years ago.

But, Minister, as I have written and spoken to you in the past, you know that I believe all Ontarians should have a fair and livable wage of \$15 an hour. Yesterday, you and the Premier announced that we are going further to support our minimum wage earners. I know that these proposed measures are going to greatly improve the lives of the hard-working people in my riding of Davenport.

Can the minister please tell us more about the proposed changes to minimum wage?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, there is no member in this House who has advocated or been involved more than the member for Davenport on this issue. She has stood up for her constituents in a way that is unlike many others.

Hard-working Ontarians really deserve to be paid a decent wage. Everybody's got to have the right to be able to provide their family with the necessities of daily life.

Speaker, what we propose to do is increase Ontario's general minimum wage to \$14 per hour on January 1, 2018, and then to \$15 an hour on January 1, 2019. That's going to ensure that workers across this province are paid fairly for their work. It's going to help them get ahead. It's going to help them share in the economic prosperity of this province. It's going to support higher consumer spending. Higher wages support strong business. That's because customers create the wealth, Speaker—the spending.

I can't wait to hear the response from the other parties. You know where we stand—

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

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. A large number of Welland-area residents are here today to voice their concern over the Liberal government's plan to close their hospital. The hospital services treat over 100,000 Welland-area residents. However, due to this government's fiscal mismanagement, the health care system has become rationed. Because of the rationing, nurses have been fired, access to services cut, and now the Liberal government is planning to close hospitals across the province. Area mayors have concerns about that. The replacement of their hospital will make it very difficult to recruit doctors.

Speaker, will the minister reconsider the closure, listen to the residents here and across the province, and keep the Welland hospital open?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm really grateful for the opportunity to address the Welland hospital for a second time this morning, and to do it in the context, as I referenced in my previous answer, of an unprecedented capital investment in our hospitals: \$20 billion over the next decade. We added \$9 billion in this budget alone that that party, of course, voted against.

One of the specific items referenced in that budget was a new regional hospital—and we have many regional hospitals around this province—a brand new Niagara hospital which will serve that entire community, including the community the member opposite has expressed concern for, I believe, for the first time.

That brand new hospital is the result of the hard work of individuals like the coalition that's here today and their fight for Welland and other hospitals in that region, which is critically important. I admire them for that and respect them for that. We will be working together.

I'm happy to talk specifically about Welland in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member for Niagara West—Glanbrook.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Mr. Speaker, seniors and families in my riding are also hurting because of Liberal mismanagement of health care. Now they are afraid that the minister is going to close the Welland hospital.

Closing this hospital would mean that the elderly and sick in remote, rural communities would have to travel almost an hour to reach an emergency room. One elderly family is very concerned because they have no public transit and do not know how they will be able to receive the care they need and visit their loved ones in hospital.

My question is simple and it's to the minister: Why must you make seniors and families pay for the waste and mismanagement of this Liberal government?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Perhaps the member opposite can check Hansard from about 40 minutes ago, when I specifically and, I think, emphatically expressed my commitment to do everything I could to keep the Welland hospital open.

I've met with the mayors throughout the region, including Mayor Campion. I've certainly met with the NDP, which has for some time, to their credit, unlike the PCs, addressed this as a concern of the communities involved.

Mr. Speaker, I will work with the community and with the LHIN and the local leadership to see what solution is best for that community. As I said before, there has been no decision made in terms of the future of the Welland hospital.

We are building a brand new hospital for the Niagara region. We've given them a \$26-million planning grant. We're going to continue with the capital investment. That commitment is in the budget—a budget that member voted against.

MERCURY POISONING

Ms. Sarah Campbell: My question is to the Premier. Two days ago, we learned that the government's plan for cleaning up the Wabigoon River is to offload this responsibility onto somebody else. The Ontario government intends to make Domtar responsible for cleaning up the mercury, even though decades ago the Ontario government formally declared that Domtar is not responsible for cleaning up the mercury. This is a cynical ploy to delay action on cleaning up the mercury that is poisoning the people of Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong First Nations.

Will the Premier stop these stalling tactics and get to work on cleaning up the Wabigoon River?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change is going to want to speak to the supplementary.

Mr. Speaker, just let me be very, very clear: We are committed to cleaning up the Grassy Narrows water system. We've made a commitment to that. There is work that has begun already. As part of that, there is a commitment—and I made this commitment when we were meeting with folks from the community, with the chief, with scientist John Rudd, who has been part of these discussions, and with David Suzuki.

Yes, we are calling on Domtar to take responsibility, but that is not going to stop us from moving ahead and cleaning up the water in the Grassy Narrows community.

That is not in any way going to stop us from doing that cleanup.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: The Premier is well aware that Ontario's Superior Court has ruled that it is illegal to offload their responsibility. She doesn't care that what she is doing is illegal. She knows that she will lose this latest court battle. Her goal is not to win; her goal is to delay. All the while, families in Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong are literally dying of mercury poisoning.

Will the Premier listen to her conscience, stop this pointless delay and get to work cleaning up the mercury once and for all?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We're doing what that party didn't do in government; we're enforcing the law. We are holding companies that pollute when there are additional sources—and if your government had done it, we wouldn't be having this discussion. If the party opposite had enforced the law, we wouldn't be having it.

The member is confused about the remediation of the river. She should listen. The remediation of the river: We are moving the science from two years to one year, fast-tracking it. That money is going to the remediation of the river.

If you think we shouldn't hold corporations to account—when did the NDP become so sloppy in enforcing the law? You're demanding we don't enforce the law?

Interjections.

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

Start the clock.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Windsor–Tecumseh knows better.

New question.

1140

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr. Yvan Baker: My question is to the Minister of Seniors Affairs. Minister, my riding of Etobicoke Centre is home to one of the largest populations of seniors in Ontario, and that's why issues that affect seniors are one of my priorities. That's why I hold a monthly seniors' advisory group. It's why I hosted a consultation on the dementia strategy, it's why I've been an advocate for funding for our local hospitals, like Etobicoke General Hospital and Trillium, and it's why, this week, I introduced a bill that would ban telemarketing sales and harassing phone calls, which many of our seniors receive and are concerned about.

Last week, the 2016 Canadian census confirmed that the number of seniors in Canada is still growing. In fact, in Ontario, the seniors population is projected to double over the next 25 years to four million people. For the first

time, there are now more Ontarians over the age of 65 than there are children under the age of 15.

Minister, my question to you is: Can you update us on what we are doing as a government and what is in our budget to help seniors in Ontario?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I want to begin by thanking the member from Etobicoke Centre for the important question, but more importantly, for the advocacy work he does on behalf of seniors in his riding. I've had the opportunity first-hand to see him in action with the seniors' advisory committee and I just have to say that he does an outstanding job.

The challenge I have is that we're doing so much for seniors that I'm afraid I will run out of time, but I'm going to try and give you a flavour.

As part of our budget, the government is providing \$8 million over the next three years to support the creation of 40 new elderly persons centres, soon to be renamed as seniors active living centres. This is going to increase the number of these EPCs from about 360 to 400.

We're also committing about \$11 million over three years to provide further funding for the very popular Seniors Community Grant Program, which has already helped over a quarter of a million seniors in just three years.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, but I'm out of time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you, Minister. I know those investments that you talk about will make a difference. We want seniors living happy, healthy, active lives, and some of those investments will certainly assist in that.

Actually, since you mention it, as we speak I'm actually working with a group in my community that is working on trying to establish a community hub so that we can deliver those services that seniors need in their community in an accessible way. So thank you very much for that.

I know, in addition to the things that you mentioned, there are other elements in the budget and there are other things that we are doing. I know you said that there's a lot you wanted to talk about. Minister, could you expand a little bit on the things that we're doing for seniors in this province?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'm so glad for the opportunity of this supplementary so that I can continue to talk about what our government is doing for seniors. For instance, Ontario is increasing health care investments by \$11.5 billion over the next three years to increase access to care, reduce wait times and enhance patient experience, including an expansion of the hospital in my city of Mississauga by 350 beds.

Recently, I was with Minister Hoskins at Baycrest, where we announced an additional \$100 million over three years for dementia. This will include funding to expand province-wide access to community programs and other investments to enhance access to care.

Finally, Ontario is helping seniors cover the cost of public transit with the proposed Ontario Seniors' Public Transit Tax Credit.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Almost 15 years ago, the Romanow report identified an inverse care law for rural and remote communities. It says, "People in rural communities have poorer health status and greater needs for primary health care, yet they are not as well served and have more difficulty accessing health care services than people in urban centres."

Speaker, does the minister accept this fact? If so, will he reject any proposal to take long-term-care beds out of rural Ontario, where many homes already have long waiting lists? And does the minister agree that simplistic, so-called bed ratios don't tell the full story?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: There are so many parts to that and so many questions I was asked, I'm not sure if it's wise for me to—I think I'll say yes to the first part, which was the evidence, the science in terms of disparities that exist, which are well acknowledged, and the social determinants of health that are often behind that. In fact, there is an HQO report that came out recently looking at that situation in the northern part of this province.

I'm just not sure how I should declare myself—maybe he'll be more specific in the supplementary—but certainly it points to the importance of the investment that we made this year, which that party regrettably voted against, of a 3.1% increase to the operating budget of our hospitals, to an \$11-billion cumulative increase in our health care budget for the next three years and significant investments, as well, in long-term care, including important elements like the food allocation.

I'm curious to see in the supplementary where this might be going.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Hillside Manor, near Sebringville, is slated to the close. This government is considering the proposal to move as many as 50 long-term-care beds to London, and we still don't know what will happen to Hillside's remaining 40 beds. If London needs more beds, give them more beds, but don't drag us down to the lowest common denominator.

At my constituency office, the phones are ringing. E-mails are pouring in. Municipalities are writing letters and passing resolutions. They are totally opposed to this bed transfer and they want to be heard. Will this government listen?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the clarity from the member opposite. As I recall, I know that he's written to me on the subject of Hillside Manor. He knows, as a result of that exchange, that no decision has been made with regard to the balance or the allocation or any potential moving of licences or long-term-care beds, including for Hillside.

What has begun—as is required under the law, as we look to redevelop 30,000 long-term-care beds across this province to provide greater support and greater care—is that it's required that long-term-care home operators, that they consult with the community. In fact, I explicitly asked—which is likely how the member found out—that

the long-term-care home operator specifically consult with the local members of provincial Parliament, as well as other local leaders. That's the process that has been undertaken, that appropriate community consultation. No decisions have been taken.

REPORT, FINANCIAL
ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: Report on the Economic and Fiscal Outlook, Spring 2017, from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

DEFERRED VOTES

BUDGET MEASURES ACT
(HOUSING PRICE STABILITY
AND ONTARIO SENIORS' PUBLIC
TRANSIT TAX CREDIT), 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LES MESURES
BUDGÉTAIRES (STABILITÉ DES PRIX
DU LOGEMENT ET CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT
DE L'ONTARIO AUX PERSONNES ÂGÉES
POUR LE TRANSPORT EN COMMUN)

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

Bill 134, An Act to implement 2017 Budget measures / Projet de loi 134, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2017.

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

The division bells rang from 1147 to 1152.

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

On May 30, 2017, Mr. Zimmer moved second reading of Bill 134. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Forster, Cindy	Miller, Paul
Anderson, Granville	Fraser, John	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	French, Jennifer K.	Murray, Glen R.
Ballard, Chris	Gates, Wayne	Naidoo-Harris, Indra
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gélinas, France	Naqvi, Yasir
Bisson, Gilles	Hatfield, Percy	Natyshak, Taras
Bradley, James J.	Hoggarth, Ann	Potts, Arthur
Campbell, Sarah	Hoskins, Eric	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chan, Michael	Hunter, Mitzie	Rinaldi, Lou
Chiarelli, Bob	Jaczek, Helena	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Kiwala, Sophie	Sattler, Peggy
Coteau, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Leal, Jeff	Tabuns, Peter
Damerla, Dipika	MacCharles, Tracy	Takhar, Harinder S.
Del Duca, Steven	Malhi, Harinder	Taylor, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Thibeault, Glenn
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Martins, Cristina	Vanthof, John
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Wong, Soo
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	Zimmer, David
Fife, Catherine	McMeekin, Ted	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milczyn, Peter Z.	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Oosterhoff, Sam
Bailey, Robert	MacLaren, Jack	Pettapiece, Randy
Brown, Patrick	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Clark, Steve	McDonell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Coe, Lorne	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff
Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 67; the nays are 26.

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

Second reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: I refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

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

FAIR HYDRO ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 POUR DES FRAIS
D'ÉLECTRICITÉ ÉQUITABLES

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

Bill 132, An Act to enact the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 and to make amendments to the Electricity Act, 1998 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 132, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur le Plan ontarien pour des frais d'électricité équitables et modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité et la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

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

The division bells rang from 1156 to 1157.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Earlier today, Ms. MacCharles moved third reading of Bill 132, An Act to enact the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 and to make amendments to the Electricity Act, 1998 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998. 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	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indra
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Chiarelli, Bob	Kiwala, Sophie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Takhar, Harinder S.
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Thibeault, Glenn
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina	Vernile, Daiene
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Matthews, Deborah	Wong, Soo
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	McGarry, Kathryn	Zimmer, David
Dong, Han	McMahon, Eleanor	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Oosterhoff, Sam
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Pettapiece, Randy
Bisson, Gilles	Hatfield, Percy	Sattler, Peggy
Brown, Patrick	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Campbell, Sarah	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
Clark, Steve	Martow, Gila	Taylor, Monique
Coe, Lorne	McDonnell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedeli, Victor	McNaughton, Monte	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	Miller, Norm	Walker, Bill
Forster, Cindy	Miller, Paul	Wilson, Jim
French, Jennifer K.	Munro, Julia	Yakubski, John
Gates, Wayne	Natyshak, Taras	Yurek, Jeff
Gélinas, France	Nicholls, Rick	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 53; the nays are 41.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order: The member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Although they're not in the chamber—they're just outside the chamber; they've just arrived—I want to acknowledge that here today are His Worship Mayor Dave Henderson of Brockville; Bob Casselman, the chief administrative officer; and the new economic development officer, Rob Nolan. I want to thank Minister Duguid and Minister Matthews for having meetings with them today regarding the closure of Procter and Gamble.

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

The House recessed from 1201 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm delighted we have Nikki Holland in the House. It's good to have you here.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am delighted to welcome 11 girls, who are here today from the London West Girls Government, from St. Jude Catholic School and Woodland Heights Public School. They are Brooke Leduc, Brooke Winegarden, Juliana Groulx, Sara Hamam, Jeanesta MacDonald-Stewart, Emma Willsie, Zoe Kell, Sydney Brisbane, Emery Hopkins, Natalie Mei and Larissa Mitchell-Bawden—and their two chaperones, parent Lori Mei and school staff Brigitte Dorsey. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. We're glad you're with us.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: In a very few short minutes, I'll be introducing a new bill to modernize Ontario's construction laws, and you will see many members from our

construction sector who will be coming in the House. I want to welcome them and thank them.

I do want to give special thanks to Bruce Reynolds and Sharon Vogel, who will be joining us from the law firm BLG and are authors of the Construction Lien Act Review, and have provided the government with critical advice on this very important bill.

I also want to welcome the advisory group who helped us in drafting that bill. I want to personally thank them for their work.

I also want to welcome the representatives of Prompt Payment Ontario, the Ontario General Contractors Association, COCA, and the carpenters' union.

Lastly, I want to welcome some very hard-working staff who worked diligently on this bill. Please join me in thanking Sheryl Cornish, Andrea Strom, Delia Greco and Morgan Watkins from my office as well for their hard work.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome to all. We're glad you're with us.

Further introductions?

Mr. Yvan Baker: I just wanted to introduce, from my riding of Etobicoke Centre, Barry Steinberg and David Zurawel from the Consulting Engineers of Ontario. They're here today for the introduction of the construction reform legislation.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Further introductions?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I know that my friend from Beaches–East York already introduced Nikki Holland, a dear friend and someone who at one point worked in this building and now actually works in a role at the Carpenters' District Council of Ontario that I used to have before I became MPP. She's also joined today by Stephen Chedas, who is her colleague at the CDCO. I wanted to recognize both of them today. Thank you for being here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Two introductions—that hasn't hit the record yet. There are many people who have been introduced many more times than that.

Further introductions? Last call for introductions.

Therefore it is time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**WORLD MS DAY**

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm pleased to rise today to highlight World MS Day. World MS Day is celebrated every year on the last Wednesday of May. During the month of May, the global MS community comes together to share stories, raise awareness and campaign for everyone affected by MS.

Canada has the highest rate of multiple sclerosis in the world. An estimated 100,000 Canadians live with the disease. In Ontario, more than 35,000 people are living

with MS, and each day, three people are diagnosed with this terrible affliction. That number quickly increases when you consider the impact of MS on family caregivers, friends and the community.

The unpredictability and sometimes invisible nature of this disease creates a challenge for Canadians living with MS and their caregivers as it affects their employment and financial security. Ontarians with MS need our support to ensure those able to work remain employed and that adequate financial supports are in place to address their daily challenges. They also need access to quality, coordinated care, and it is our job to ensure they receive it.

Today, on World MS Day, I'm wearing a carnation to show my solidarity with the MS community in the fight against MS. I urge each one of us to join this fight to end MS in our lifetime and effect positive change in the lives of those impacted by this disease today.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Today I rise on the important issue of telecommunications infrastructure in north-western Ontario. The sad reality is that much of my riding is still without cellular telephone coverage and decent Internet service. This lack of service prohibits northerners from competing in the global economy. Where other areas of the province take for granted the ability to conduct business online, in many areas of the northwest, something as simple as maintaining an up-to-date company website—a necessity for doing business—is often a struggle. Couple this with the lack of cell service, and you can understand why tourists who are eager for adventure in nature, but who require the ability to check in with work and family, are driven away, costing resort owners business.

Traffic accidents or vehicle breakdowns are made that much worse by it happening along a desolate highway, hundreds of kilometres from the next town, where there is no cell service to call for help.

Speaker, this is unacceptable at a time when most of the world, regardless of how remote, has access to these basic services. Northerners are tired of having to make a business case to this government for what should be a matter of basic fairness.

All of Ontario benefits from the natural resources of the northwest. We should not have to generate these benefits at an unfair and dangerous disadvantage.

Residents, business owners and travellers in north-western Ontario want to know when they can expect the same basic infrastructure investments that are enjoyed by the rest of the province.

WORLD MS DAY

Ms. Soo Wong: Today is World Multiple Sclerosis Day. Multiple sclerosis, or MS, is an autoimmune disease of the central nervous system. This complex and chronic

disease attacks the protective covering of the nerves, causing inflammation.

Most MS patients are diagnosed in their late teens. Canada has the highest rate of MS in the world. An estimated 100,000 Canadians live with the disease. In Ontario, more than 35,000 people are living with MS, and each day three people are newly diagnosed.

World MS Day gives us an opportunity to spotlight this debilitating disease, but also highlight the initiatives the government is taking to support individuals with MS. Starting January 1, 2018, young people under the age of 25 with MS will have their medication covered by the OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare Program.

The province also recognizes the importance of caregiver support for individuals living with MS. Besides the eight-week unpaid caregiver leave, the government plans to introduce legislation to expand personal emergency leave. This is in addition to the new Ontario Caregiver Tax Credit.

Many people living with MS live independently in their community with support. I would like to acknowledge TransCare, a recognized health agency in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt, for their quality of care in supporting individuals living with MS in Scarborough.

Speaker, I encourage all of us here in the chamber and across the province to recognize MS—but more importantly, to support them in our fight against MS.

MOOSE TAGS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: We have a great lifestyle in northern Ontario. Patty and I enjoyed touring the riding this weekend, as we do every weekend when I get home.

At breakfast on Saturday, a group of concerned citizens met with us at Echoes Restaurant in Powassan. Elle served us a beautiful breakfast, but the talk was quite serious. In fact, none of them got a moose tag this year. In the zone they live in, the tag allotment has been drastically reduced. It was 106 tags in 2013, six last year, down to one this year. This is their heritage—this is our heritage—and it's being lost.

I promised these good people that I would delve into this. It didn't take long to realize what the issue was. On my drive from Echoes to Trout Creek, I actually came across a dead moose that was struck on the highway and lying on the side of the road. I got out, photographed it and put that photograph up on Facebook, asking about other such instances. It was only minutes later that stories and photos flooded in. In fact, it was only a few kilometres from that first moose in the morning that another moose was hit, maybe a half-hour later, by a friend of mine in his week-old Jeep.

Speaker, what we're asking for is that if this government cares about people's safety and cares about northern heritage, they should allow the proper number of moose tags to be issued.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Last month, on April 18, I hosted a hydro town hall in my riding of London West. What I

heard loud and clear was Londoners' strong opposition to this government's misguided sell-off of Hydro One.

I want to thank Ange Thompson, who attended the town hall and provided me with hundreds of signed postcards addressed to Kathleen Wynne which state, "Your government has no mandate to sell our public hydro system. Selling it off will mean even higher rates, making it even tougher to keep businesses open. Please stop now. Hydro One is not for sale!"

1510

Despite the fact that 80% of Ontarians oppose the sell-off of Hydro One, this Liberal government is plowing ahead with their privatization agenda. Since my hydro town hall, the Liberals have done even more damage, putting more Hydro One shares on the market and approving a \$45-billion borrowing scheme that will cause bills to soar even higher, a fact that was confirmed last week by the Financial Accountability Officer. Since the Liberals took office, hydro rates have gone up a staggering 300%. Under this Premier alone, rates have gone up 50%.

Kathleen Wynne simply doesn't get it. Ontario families are at a tipping point and can't take any more hikes to their hydro bills. Londoners have clearly told me that they want to keep hydro in public hands, and they not trust the Liberals to put the interests of the people of Ontario ahead of the Liberal Party when it comes to lowering hydro rates.

CAMP KOSCIUSZKO

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: This year marks the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Kosciuszko camp in Niagara-on-the-Lake, where thousands of soldiers of Polish descent from both Canada and the US trained for weeks prior to being shipped off to Europe to take part in the World War I effort and to free Poland from 123 years of occupation.

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the Polish community in Canada and the US began to consider ways to help Poland gain independence through military means. As soon as recruitment began, thousands and thousands of Polish Canadian and Polish American volunteers flocked to Niagara-on-the-Lake. The Niagara-on-the-Lake training centre was known in Polish as Camp Kosciuszko, but to Canadians simply as the Polish camp. These soldiers lived in the Niagara-on-the-Lake region for many weeks. Many were unable to speak English. Others were swept up by the influenza of 1918 and never left and were buried at a special cemetery at St. Vincent de Paul Church.

Regaining and holding Poland's new independence after World War I was due to soldiers—many of whom were trained at Niagara-on-the-Lake—in battles in 1918 on the Western Front and also in 1919-20, fighting the Polish-Bolshevik War.

Today we thank those Polish soldiers from Camp Kosciuszko and the community of Niagara-on-the-Lake for entertaining them and housing them, and we

remember those who selflessly laid down their lives for Canada and their homeland.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Sylvia Jones: As the school year is coming to an end and many children are receiving their report cards, I thought that I would provide a report card on the Liberal government's legislative session. So let's review the government's track record on their assignments.

Regarding the hydro crisis, a recently released Liberal cabinet document shows that the Liberals are playing a political game, not solving systemic problems, with hydro rates. On the hydro file, an F.

On the management of the mental health crisis, the government has again failed Ontarians. We continue to hear about long wait-lists and higher rates of hospitalization of our youth due to mental health. On the mental health file, an F.

I was hoping that the government would come to a decision on the GTA west corridor. It has been over a year since the advisory panel was established. Ontarians wait for a decision. Again, on the GTA west corridor file, an F.

Other outstanding assignments include restoring Auditor General oversight on government advertising, addressing the government's growing debt, and taking real action to address the lack of supply of housing in the greater Toronto area.

Overall, this legislative session has been a disappointment for families looking to address real issues that matter to Ontario families. All in all: incomplete.

WORLD MS DAY

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm really pleased to rise today to talk about World MS Day, World Multiple Sclerosis Day.

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic, progressive neurological disease involving damage to the shield of the nerve cells in the brain and in the spinal cord. The symptoms vary, but they may include numbness or loss of proprioception, impairment of speech, impairment of muscular coordination, blurred vision and, most of the time, severe fatigue. The symptoms come, then they go away, and then they come back, sometimes more severely.

People living with multiple sclerosis need access to diagnosis and treatment. Unfortunately, access is not equitable throughout the province. It is severely lacking in northeastern Ontario—the people that I represent.

But we do have the Rona Ramsey MS Centre of Hope. Rona Ramsey is an amazing woman from my riding. She lives in Naughton, and the Rona Ramsey MS Centre of Hope is in Coniston, also in my riding. It is a place where people can gather. They can socialize, and they can use a gym as well as a fitness instructor to try to keep them as fit as possible.

I will urge everyone to join this campaign to end multiple sclerosis in this lifetime. I think we can do this, Speaker.

For everybody living with MS, happy World Multiple Sclerosis Day.

Thank you for coming to Queen's Park. Thanks for the nice flowers.

RACONTEZ-NOUS VANIER

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: J'aimerais partager une initiative qui existe dans la circonscription d'Ottawa-Vanier que je représente. Il s'agit d'un concours d'écriture communautaire intitulé Racontez-nous Vanier. C'est un concours qui s'adresse à la population francophone et francophile de la région et dont le but est de produire un livre qui racontera Vanier à travers un ensemble de récits, d'anecdotes et de témoignages de gens qui ont vécu, qui vivent ou qui sont passés par Vanier.

This project is led by Éditions David, a French publishing house located in Ottawa that leads different projects that are aimed at getting the community to read and write.

Racontez-nous Vanier is a continuation of Écrire pour se raconter, which was a provincial project that permitted the publishing of four collections of short stories about the reality and the diversity of the French population of Ontario.

Pour mener ce projet, les Éditions David ont cherché l'appui de nombreux groupes communautaires, dont le Muséoparc Vanier, qui est un des partenaires principaux. Les organismes ont accepté d'offrir des ateliers d'écriture pour permettre à tout le monde de pouvoir écrire et de se confier dans le projet.

This project benefits from the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and it's a good example of the positive influence that certain artistic organizations, like Éditions David, can have on the quality of our cultural and community life.

Congratulations to all who will participate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their comments and statements. It is now time therefore for reports by committees.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption. I'm going to give it to page Gurjaap.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr66, An Act to revive SKAS Auto Services Inc.

Bill Pr67, An Act to revive Millar Wajer Holdings Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed. Carried.

Report adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CITY OF OTTAWA AMENDMENT ACT (BILINGUALISM), 2017

LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA VILLE D'OTTAWA (BILINGUISME)

Mme Des Rosiers moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 140, An Act to amend the City of Ottawa Act, 1999 in respect of bilingualism / Projet de loi 140, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 1999 sur la ville d'Ottawa en ce qui concerne le bilinguisme.

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.

1520

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: The bill amends the City of Ottawa Act, and it recognizes Ottawa's bilingual character. It requires Ottawa to make a bylaw for the bilingual administration of services, but it clarifies that the current bylaw does reflect this commitment to bilingualism. It's a celebration of the 150th anniversary of Canada by celebrating Ottawa as the bilingual capital that it is.

SEWAGE BYPASS REPORTING ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR L'OBLIGATION DE FAIRE RAPPORT CONCERNANT LA DÉRIVATION DES EAUX D'ÉGOUT

Ms. Jones moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 141, An Act to amend the Ontario Water Resources Act with respect to the public reporting of sewage bypassing / Projet de loi 141, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ressources en eau de l'Ontario à l'égard de l'obligation de faire rapport au public de la dérivation des eaux d'égout.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: The Ontario Water Resources Act already enforces the municipalities and anybody who's operating sewage treatment plants to report when there is a bypass. What is missing from the legislation is that we don't have to publicly notify the municipalities, and the

treatment facility operators do not publicly report that. I'm asking that the ministry, who already has the information, make it publicly available.

CONSTRUCTION LIEN
AMENDMENT ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LE PRIVILÈGE DANS L'INDUSTRIE
DE LA CONSTRUCTION

Mr. Naqvi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 142, An Act to amend the Construction Lien Act /
Projet de loi 142, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le privilège
dans l'industrie de la construction.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The Construction Lien Amend-
ment Act, 2017, would, if passed, modernize Ontario's
construction laws and support Ontario's construction
industry. This bill seeks to modernize the payment and
dispute resolution system in the Construction Lien Act
based on the report entitled Striking the Balance: Expert
Review of the Construction Lien Act. This bill, if passed,
will modernize the construction lien and holdback rules,
introduce rules around prompt payment and create an
adjudication process that will resolve disputes quickly.
This bill will also rename the Construction Lien Act to
the Construction Act.

Interjection.

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

ONTARIO FORESTRY INDUSTRY
REVITALIZATION ACT (HEIGHT OF
WOOD FRAME BUILDINGS), 2017
LOI DE 2017 SUR LA REVITALISATION
DE L'INDUSTRIE FORESTIÈRE
DE L'ONTARIO (HAUTEUR DES
BÂTIMENTS À OSSATURE DE BOIS)

Mr. Fedeli moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 143, An Act to amend the Building Code Act,
1992 with respect to the height of wood frame buildings /
Projet de loi 143, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le
code du bâtiment en ce qui a trait à la hauteur des
bâtiments à ossature de bois.

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. Victor Fedeli: The bill amends the Building
Code Act, 1992, to provide that the building code shall
not prohibit a building that is 12 storeys or less in
building height from being of wood frame construction.

This does not prevent the code from imposing require-
ments on, or prohibiting, specified classes of wood frame
buildings.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move that, pursuant to
standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45
p.m. to 12 midnight on Wednesday, May 31, 2017, for
the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of
the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

SERVICES FOR THE
DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a group of petitions here to
the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the integrated kindergarten program located
at the Holland Bloorview rehabilitation hospital is being
suspended; and

"Whereas through this inquiry-based program typical-
ly developing kids and kids with disabilities learn
together in an inclusive classroom to promote confi-
dence, self-advocacy and self-esteem, and to address
inclusion, stereotyping and discriminatory behaviour, re-
sulting in helping prepare students with disabilities for
successful entry into the public school system through
ongoing interaction with typically developing children; and

"Whereas the Integrated Kindergarten Program (IKP)
was started 21 years ago as a pilot program in a
partnership between the publicly funded Bloorview
School Authority (BSA) and the Jackman Institute of
Child Study (the lab school for University of Toronto's
Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE)); and

"Whereas while children with disabilities are publicly
funded, typically developing children must pay tuition
and have therefore declined in enrolment following the
introduction of full-day kindergarten, leading to the BSA
board of trustees' decision to close the program;

We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-
bly of Ontario to take necessary steps to ensure that this
world-renowned program is preserved at Bloorview
School Authority and expanded to all six section 68
schools in Ontario, while ensuring that the number of
funded spots for children with disabilities is not reduced
in the process."

Of course I am affixing my signature in support and giving the petitions to page Kenna.

SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am so proud to present this petition that was developed by London West Girls' Government, girls from Woodland Heights elementary school and St. Jude Catholic School. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas one third of Canadians have been victims of violence, including many who experience violence at the hands of a family member, and;

"Whereas the experience of violence or abuse can be devastating for victims, who often require both immediate support as well as long-term counselling, and;

"Whereas there is a shortage of community services to help victims of violence, and services that do exist are grossly underfunded and often not well-known in the community, and;

"Whereas there are over 6,500 children and youth waiting more than a year for treatment from community-based mental health services, which means that child victims of violence and abuse are not getting the counselling they need in a timely way.

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly direct the government of Ontario to:

"—immediately increase funding for shelters for victims of domestic violence and their children;

"—eliminate wait-lists for victim support services, especially services to help children;

"—improve access to peer support programs for victims of violence;

"—increase promotion of victim services through social media campaigns and by requiring police and other first responders to let victims know about community-based victim services organizations, and;

"—provide adequate funding to train and support the volunteers and peers involved in the delivery of victim services."

I couldn't agree more with this petition. I affix my name to it and will pass it to the page.

NANJING MASSACRE

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm now tabling another 20,000 signatures.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"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 Ontario is the home to one of the largest Asian populations in Canada, with over 2.6 million in 2011;

"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...;

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

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"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."

Mr. Speaker, I support the petition. I will give my 20,000 signatures to Jeremi.

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this and will pass it off to page Maddison.

LCBO OUTLET

Mr. John Vanthof: "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 couldn't agree more. I hand my petition down with Gabriel.

WATER FLUORIDATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition, and I send it to the Clerk with page Peter.

LANDFILL

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas many of the resources of this planet are finite and are necessary to sustain both life and quality of life for future generations;

“Whereas the disposal of resources in landfills creates environmental hazards which have significant human and financial costs;

“Whereas all levels of government are elected to guarantee their constituents' physical, financial, emotional and mental well-being;

“Whereas the health risks to the community and watershed increase in direct relationship to the proximity of any landfill site;

“Whereas the placement of a landfill in a limestone quarry has been shown to be detrimental;

“Whereas the placement of a landfill in the headwaters of multiple highly vulnerable aquifers is detrimental;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, humbly petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To implement a moratorium in Oxford county, Ontario, on any future landfill construction or approval until such time as a full and comprehensive review of alternatives has been completed which would examine best practices in other jurisdictions around the world;

“That this review of alternatives would give particular emphasis to (a) practices which involve the total recycling or composting of all products currently destined for landfill sites in Ontario and (b) the production of goods which can be practically and efficiently recycled or reused so as to not require disposal.”

I thank you very much for allowing me the time to present this petition. I affix my signature as I agree with this petition.

DISASTER RELIEF

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition. I'd like to thank Annette Lafontaine and thousands of people from Gogama and Mattagami First Nation. It reads as follows:

“Gogama Needs Help.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas at 2 a.m. on March 7, 2015, a Canadian National train derailed in Gogama;

“Whereas this derailment caused numerous tank cars carrying crude oil to explode, catch fire and spill over one million litres of oil into the Makami River; and

“Whereas residents continue to plainly observe oil and find dead fish in the Makami River as well as Lake Minisinakwa, despite the fact that the Ministry of the Environment has declared the cleanup complete”;

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario “that the Ministry of the Environment require CN to continue the cleanup of Gogama's soil and waterways until the residents are assured of clean and safe water for themselves, the environment and the wildlife.”

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

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Cambridge, Ontario, is a municipality of over 125,000 people, many of whom commute into the greater Toronto area daily;

“Whereas the current commuting options available for travel between the Waterloo region and the GTA are inefficient and time-consuming, as well as environmentally damaging;

“Whereas the residents of Cambridge and the Waterloo region believe that they would be well-served by commuter rail transit that connects the region to the Milton line, and that this infrastructure would have positive, tangible economic benefits to the province of Ontario;

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

“Direct crown agency Metrolinx to commission a feasibility study into building a rail line that connects the city of Cambridge to the GO train station in Milton, and to complete this study in a timely manner and communicate the results to the municipal government of Cambridge.”

I will sign this petition and send it to the desk with Katie.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with the power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians’ energy bills.”

I approve of this petition and affix my signature.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Sarah Campbell: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas peak hour hydro rates have nearly quadrupled in the last 10 years;

“Whereas time-of-use pricing has not achieved its policy goals, while punishing people with little flexibility over their hydro usage, such as seniors and stay-at-home parents;

“Whereas the Ontario Energy Board has raised rates after a mild winter, essentially penalizing Ontarians for doing ‘too good’ of a job conserving electricity;

“Whereas the delivery charges on northern hydro bills” have exceeded “the cost of electricity used, despite an abundance of locally generated electricity;

“Whereas northerners are now left feeling like we are in a ‘no-win’ situation when it comes to lowering our hydro bills, despite electricity being an essential service;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately return Hydro One to public hands; end the practice of paying for electricity Ontario doesn’t need; review and renegotiate bad private power contracts; end unfair rural delivery charges; re-examine the impact that density has on cost; cap private profit margins; end time-of-use billing and negotiate the permanent removal of the HST from electricity bills.”

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Charles Sousa: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 134, An Act to implement 2017 Budget measures, that the order of the House referring the bill to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be discharged and that the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That when the order for third reading is called, the Speaker shall put the question forthwith without debate or amendment; and

That no deferral of the vote on third reading of the bill shall be permitted 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. Paul Miller): Mr. Sousa has moved government notice of motion 34.

Mr. Sousa.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to stand in the House today to discuss Bill 134, the Budget Measures Act (Housing Price Stability and Ontario Seniors' Public Transit Tax Credit), 2017. Bill 134 supports measures contained in the 2017 Ontario budget, our first balanced budget since the global recession. Our path to balance was measured, realistic and responsible, while all along we've sought to help families, to create opportunities and to invest in our top priorities like health care, education and infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 134 contains items that are essential to continuing that work. It supports final components of our balanced budget plan at the core of our Stronger, Healthier Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2017, passed on May 17. With the Stronger, Healthier Ontario Act, we made a commitment to bring stability to our housing market and to provide more support for our seniors. We know these are vital issues for the people of Ontario. Ontarians' priorities are also this government's priorities.

Mr. Speaker, during this year's pre-budget consultations, we heard about how frustrated people were with the housing market and about how important it is for seniors to lead active and fulfilling lives. The 2017 pre-budget consultations engaged more than 80,000 people, a record number of participants. Together with the innovative budget talks online, it allowed the public to help shape policies and programs that will be part of Ontario's future.

Bill 134 reflects that input. That's why we owe it to every young family looking to buy their first home and raise their kids, and to every senior looking to maintain their independence and participate in their community, to make passing Bill 134 a key priority.

Bill 134 introduces an additional 15% non-residential speculation tax, also known as the NRST, on the purchase price of a residential property in the greater Golden Horseshoe by non-Canadian citizens, non-permanent residents of Canada or non-Canadian corporations and taxable trustees.

As you know, the cost of living has increased as our economy grows. For example, our strong housing market reflects Ontario's strong economy. Housing is essential. Everyone deserves housing choices that are affordable. Yet the rising costs of renting or buying are creating significant barriers for too many people and their families.

Bill 134 supports our Fair Housing Plan, a plan that features 16 comprehensive measures that would help more people find affordable homes in the province, increase supply, protect buyers and renters, and bring stability to the real estate market so that the people of Ontario can continue to put down roots in communities they love.

The NRST would directly address foreign speculation in our housing market. This proposed tax is about discouraging those who are capitalizing on the speculation

on homes, driving up prices, creating vacant homes and crowding out families looking to buy. If passed, the NRST would apply in addition to the Ontario general land transfer tax, and it would be effective retroactive to April 21, 2017. This means that if a binding agreement was signed on or before April 20, 2017, it would not be subject to the additional 15% tax.

We want to make sure that Ontarians have access to these important improvements as soon as possible. We can't afford to delay. To delay passing Bill 134 would mean further delaying housing market stability, creating even greater uncertainty at a time when certainty is sorely needed.

Measures in this bill focus on making everyday life easier and more affordable for the people of Ontario. It's unfortunate that the opposition decided to put forward a reasoned amendment to delay debate of this critical piece of legislation. While the opposition focuses on playing games on this issue, on this side of the House we're taking action.

Bill 134 also seeks to amend the Taxation Act, 2007, to bring in a new Ontario Seniors' Public Transit Tax Credit aimed at better supporting our seniors. Our government has a tremendous amount of respect for our seniors. They have played an instrumental role in making Ontario the great province it is today. It's why we want to do everything possible to help them lead full and enriching lives. One of the ways we plan to provide that is to make public transit more affordable.

The credit would be set out in the proposed new section 103.0.1 of the Taxation Act, 2007. It would be available to all Ontarians aged 65 and older. It would provide a refundable tax credit equal to 15% of eligible public transit costs for seniors, starting July 1 of this year. This tax credit is about making it easier for seniors to get out of their communities and to stay active and independent.

Right across the province today, seniors' transit fares are already discounted by many transit agencies, including GO Transit. We want to ensure that money isn't an obstacle for our seniors to get to where they want to go and to maintain healthy, active lives.

The number of seniors in Ontario will continue to grow. The demographics are clear. For example, as of 2015, more Ontarians turn 65 each year than turn 15. By 2040, that number is expected to double, to about 4.5 million.

That's why, with the 2017 Ontario budget, our government is supporting our seniors with funding for programs and initiatives like the Ontario Seniors' Public Transit Tax Credit, the Seniors Community Grant Program, Ontario's new dementia strategy, and greater access to affordable drugs. Helping our seniors stay active, engaged and involved in their communities is part of our plan to build a stronger and healthier Ontario.

However, Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

1550

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): If you want to have a group meeting, do it outside.

Continue.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, by stalling this bill, the opposition is indicating that they have no interest in making everyday life easier for the people of Ontario. Their alternative, to drag out debate on the bill, in essence, won't allow us to take advantage of the very things that we're trying to do to support our seniors, and our young families who are looking to buy into this real estate market.

We won't let that happen. We recognize the challenges that Ontarians are facing, which is why this bill addresses many of these challenges, and its passing will help make everyday life easier.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by saying that our government is taking action to bring more stability to the housing market and to help more families and individuals find affordable places to call home, through the NRST. Our government is also taking action to make it more affordable for seniors to get to where they need to go, and want to go, through the Ontario Seniors' Public Transit Tax Credit.

These are the changes proposed in Bill 134, the Budget Measures Act (Housing Price Stability and Ontario Seniors' Public Transit Tax Credit), 2017, a bill that continues to move forward our plan to build a stronger, healthier Ontario for people from all walks of life, in every corner of this fine province.

It's why I ask for the support of this House in passing this important legislation. It's critical to young families; it's critical to our seniors. It's important for us to move forward on greater initiatives for the benefit of our province. I look to all of us to work collectively and cooperatively in making it happen, so that they can benefit.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order, the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know you would want to be introduced to Anne Boucher, who came all the way from Timmins, who is a student at the University of Toronto, who is here today. I would like to introduce Anne Boucher.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'm glad to meet you, but the member knows that's not a point of order.

The member from Oxford.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I'm not pleased to rise today to speak to another time allocation motion from this government, especially on an issue as important as housing.

Over the last few years, I've often talked about the issue of affordable housing. Homeless shelters are full. The wait-list for social housing is 171,000 families, an increase of 45,000 families since this government was elected.

Housing prices across southern Ontario have jumped by 20%, 30%, 40% over the last year. In April, it was announced that prices in the GTA have increased by 34%. Earlier this month, it was announced that average

Toronto housing prices increased another \$44,000 since that 34%.

Multiple communities have vacancy rates of 1%. Developers say they are re-evaluating or halting rental projects because of the government's legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this crisis didn't develop overnight. It took years of bad decisions by this government. It was decision after decision that added red tape and restrictions to the building process, slowing down the supply and adding to the carrying costs.

It was decision after decision to add additional costs onto new homeowners, from increased development charges to inclusionary zoning, and most recently, an electric charging station.

It was decision after decision to implement policies without doing the proper research, and each time, it made the problem worse. They had time to collect the data to allow informed, evidence-based decisions but, again, they failed.

Maybe the time allocation motion is to stop us from talking about those bad decisions.

They put forward a proposal for a foreign homebuyers' tax despite the fact that they don't know how many foreign homebuyers there are in Ontario.

During the scrum at the housing announcement, the Minister of Finance said, "We know that the degree of non-resident investment in Ontario, or in this region, hovers around 8%" But the next day, when he was asked how many foreign homebuyers there were, he said 5%.

The Toronto Real Estate Board now says that less than 1% of homebuyers have a mailing address outside of Canada. It's clear that the Minister of Finance doesn't know how many foreign homebuyers there are in Ontario and doesn't want to talk about it.

Macleod's said in an article, "As for the underlying data guiding these policy decisions? About that, the government is less confident."

We believe in the importance of data and evidence-based decision-making, so I filed an order paper question asking the Minister of Finance for data relating to foreign homebuyers. The first asked for "precise data on the number of foreign homebuyers in Ontario each year for the past 10 years and the definition used to classify them." I received a response from the minister, but it didn't contain a single number. It didn't explain the minister's claim that it was 8% of the market, or his claim that it was 5%. It didn't even contain the definition of foreign homebuyers that we asked for.

I also filed an order paper question that asked for "all modelling and projections prepared during the last three years by the ministry or a consultant hired by the ministry of the impact of adding additional taxes on the sale and purchase of homes, including the impact on prices and volumes." Again, I received a response that didn't answer the question. I did not get a single projection or model. Does this mean that the Minister of Finance introduced new tax measures without doing any research at all, or does it mean that he has so little respect for the Legislature that he couldn't be bothered to answer the order paper question as required?

The answer referred to the land transfer tax rebate they implemented last fall but didn't provide studies for that either. Does that mean the Minister of Finance didn't bother to look at the impact before he announced it?

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of indications that the government now considers this measure to be a mistake. The Premier said that if she had a crystal ball, she might have done something different.

After the provincial Minister of Finance, the federal Minister of Finance and the mayor of Toronto met, they came out united that they would not implement any measures that would boost demand. In other words, they agreed that measures similar to what the government implemented last fall with the land transfer tax were the wrong approach. It is apparent that this government is managing crisis to crisis, and the people of Ontario are paying the price.

The minister also seemed to be confused on the funding for this plan. At the announcement, the minister was asked about the funding for the housing plan, which included \$125 million for development of rental units. He said that the plan was revenue-neutral. The next day, his office was asked, and they said that the new tax is expected to be revenue-neutral, and that the money coming in would be used to offset the decrease in revenue from the land transfer tax. There was no explanation of where the \$125 million was coming from.

A few days later, they released the budget, which showed the land transfer tax increasing, not decreasing. This is important, Mr. Speaker. The government is forecasting that housing prices will increase so much that next year, the government will earn an extra \$451 million on land transfer tax. That's not far off from the \$570-million increase last year when housing prices were increasing to crisis levels. That means that either the government doesn't expect their housing plan to work or the government has a \$451-million hole in their budget. I asked the Minister of Finance, but he doesn't seem to be able to tell us which it is—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Ernie.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Sorry, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Continue.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I asked the Minister of Finance, but he doesn't seem to be able to tell us which it is. Perhaps he doesn't know. No wonder they don't want to talk about it.

Since the government doesn't seem to have done any research about implementing this new tax, perhaps we should look at the Vancouver example. According to a May 2 news release from the greater Vancouver real estate board, the home price index benchmark for all residential properties in metro Vancouver is now \$941,100, an 11.4% increase over last year, 5% of which is in the last three months. That means that even after implementing the foreign homebuyer tax, prices are still going up.

Over the last three months, the price of condominiums has seen the largest increase at 8.2%, followed by town-

houses at 5.3%. The average price of an attached unit is over \$700,000, a 15% increase over last year. Clearly the foreign homebuyers tax has not had the expected effect on the Vancouver real estate market, and that's in an area where people believed that the percentage of foreign homebuyers was higher.

1600

The government also should have looked at the fact that the BC government is facing a lawsuit over the foreign homebuyers tax. According to the media report, the lawsuit says that the foreign homebuyers tax is unconstitutional because it violates equality rights by making an arbitrary distinction between those who are citizens and permanent residents of Canada and those who are not. It states that the tax "perpetuates prejudice and stereotyping on the basis of national origin." If the government proceeds with this tax, particularly with no research, what is to stop Ontario from being hit with the same lawsuit? The government doesn't want to talk about it.

I also want to point out that in British Columbia the government has allocated revenue from the foreign homebuyers tax to affordable housing. As the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada said in a recent release, "By directing any revenues generated from the speculators tax to the affordable rental housing supply, we can go even further to help those that are truly struggling to make ends meet."

Mayor Bonnie Crombie said, "In the interest of accountability and transparency, I strongly believe any and all revenue generated by new tax measures must go directly toward creating more affordable housing options and the building of transit, so we can build critically needed housing and allow people to more easily get to and from home." Apparently the government doesn't want to hear from people like them.

Clearly we have an affordable housing problem in Ontario. We have 170,000 families on the waiting list. Toronto Community Housing is closing an average of a unit a day because they can't afford to repair them. Instead of taking real action to address the problem, this government is taxing an unknown number of people, which will generate an unknown amount of money that will be used for unknown purposes.

In fact, really, in this bill there are a lot more unknowns. This bill adds a foreign homebuyers tax in the Golden Horseshoe unless the minister adds or removes areas by regulation, meaning that the area that is impacted is unknown. The bill adds a 15% tax unless the minister, by regulation, changes the percentages, in which case the amount of the tax is unknown. The bill adds a tax on property purchased by a foreign national or a foreign corporation unless the minister, by regulation, creates an exemption, and those exemptions are unknown.

The government announced a number of exemptions that they are intending to include, but not one of them actually appears in the bill. Let's be clear: There is nothing in this bill that exempts foreign nationals who are

coming to Ontario under the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program because they have a full-time job here. Nothing in this act exempts refugees. There is nothing in this legislation that rebates the tax to foreign students or people who become a permanent resident or a Canadian citizen, nothing that says that the tax will be rebated to people who work full-time in Ontario for one year. It may appear in government press releases, but it doesn't appear in this bill.

It has been a busy session, with this government ramming through legislation like this with time allocation motions, but members need to read the actual bill. Already we've seen a press release from one of the government members that is misleading. I don't believe it was on purpose, but they need to understand how little is actually in this bill. As it is written, this tax may apply to people who are living in their riding, and now these people won't even have a say.

Mr. Speaker, there should have been proper consultation on this bill, especially because the government has not done sufficient research before introducing it. There are a number of people and groups that have expressed concerns about a foreign buyers tax. They should get to speak to this bill at committee.

Look at the example of the city of Victoria, which passed a motion calling on their provincial government to include them in the foreign homebuyers tax. Then they held public meetings on the issue and reversed their position. Clearly public input on this issue is important.

The government announced this bill on April 20, almost seven weeks ago. They waited weeks and weeks to introduce it. People who will be impacted by this bill should not be denied the right to speak to it because the government waited until the last week before the summer.

Although there are no actual people exempted in this bill, the government provided some background information which makes it appear that people who are already permanent residents may still be impacted in some circumstances. For instance, if a permanent resident needs help with the cost of their home and buys it jointly with their parent who has not moved to Canada, the entire cost of the home will now be subject to the tax. Those people should get a chance to speak.

A real estate blog already raised concerns about cases where lenders require a parent to co-sign a mortgage and take a small percentage of the title, even 1%, to do so. It will make the entire home subject to the tax. This would create challenges for young people who don't have sufficient income to get a mortgage without help. The blog describes it as a "disaster."

That leads to another concern regarding the lack of data. The government is trying to point to foreign homebuyers as the cause of our housing crisis, saying that our housing shortage is the result of empty units that they have purchased, but there just isn't data to back that up. One study showed that only 10% of homes purchased by foreign homebuyers are actually vacant; 90% are occupied by the purchaser, family members including foreign students, or renters. By those estimates the number

of vacant units purchased by foreign homebuyers is around 0.1% of the real estate market.

Frank Scarpitti, the mayor of Markham, raised similar concerns about the fact that this tax will not solve the problem. He said that he had not seen signs that vacant homes were a significant problem in Markham, and that a tax on foreign buyers won't necessarily cool the region's real estate market.

What we do have evidence of is that this government owns residential properties in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area that are currently sitting vacant. The Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Infrastructure both admitted they own vacant residential properties; the Minister of Finance and the Attorney General, who is responsible for the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, refused to disclose whether they own any. The government should have an accurate count of their own vacant residential properties but, once again, we're missing the data—another thing they don't want to discuss. This should have been a first step, especially given all the experts who agree the issue is the lack of supply. The number of people coming into the region is greater than the number of new units we are building.

At the same time, a recent study by the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis found that families are getting smaller, meaning that the average number of people per household is decreasing and we need more units to house the same number of people. If we want to address the housing affordability crisis in the long term, we need to address the supply, including the red tape in the building process.

We've heard over and over that the approval process for new housing in Ontario now takes many years, so recently we put forward an amendment to Bill 68 which would have shortened 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 down the amendment. In their housing announcement, the government talked about cutting red tape, but when we gave them the opportunity, they blocked it.

Mr. Speaker, year after year, this government has made decisions that have created the housing crisis that Ontario is facing today. Their solution is to slap another tax on housing—a tax that may or may not be limited to the greater Golden Horseshoe, that may or may not be set at 15%, that may or may not apply to all foreign nationals and corporations. The government doesn't know what percentage of the market it will impact or what the revenues will be.

Based on what we've heard, it seems that confusion may now be impacting the real estate market. That is not a responsible long-term solution; confusing the market

doesn't address the fundamental problems and it doesn't provide a lasting solution. They either have done no studies on the impact of this tax or have so little respect for the Legislature that they didn't bother to properly answer the written order paper question.

1610

The government needs to stop managing from photo op to photo op. They need to actually do the research and base policies on data and evidence, and they need to stop ramming through legislation without listening to the people they are impacting; otherwise the people of Ontario will continue paying the price.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in the House and represent the people of Timiskaming-Cochrane today and, as always, represent my NDP colleagues.

What we're discussing today is a time allocation motion on a taxation bill, and I'd like to cover two subjects in the time I'm allotted. First is basically about the bill, and the second is why we shouldn't be time-allocating this bill.

This bill has got two portions to it. The first portion is, it's proposing a 15% tax on the sale of housing to foreign buyers, whether they be companies or individuals. The purpose behind this is to hopefully stop speculation by foreign buyers and then put some downward pressure on the housing market. There's no real data that shows this is going to work. There is also a large question on whether there's a difference between foreign speculation and domestic speculation. There are a lot of questions about this bill. That's the first part.

The second part is, there's a 15% tax credit on transit for seniors, and I don't think that's a bad thing. We are actually in favour of many of the principles of this bill. That's why it's quite disturbing that we're talking here about time allocation.

This time allocation—I have never seen this one before. The way bills are supposed to work: At first reading, we get to look at the bill; at second reading, we debate it in the House; and then—it was actually voted on this morning—it's directed to a committee where people usually come and make depositions. Then, after that period is over, the committee looks at it and the legislators make amendments to try to make the bill better. Then the bill comes for third reading and it passes. That's how it's supposed to work.

With time allocation, what we've seen before is that they shorten this process. Now, Speaker, with this motion there's not going to be any committee. There are not going to be any amendments or any third reading debate. With this bill, you cannot call this the democratic process anymore. The government thought up the idea—that's their prerogative. They have a majority government. They thought up the idea and now they're using legislative tactics to just take their idea without any input from anybody else and they're just going to put it through.

And why that's tragic, and truly tragic—again, the NDP supports the principles of the bill, but there are

things in the bill that are completely and totally—I was going to use a big word like “egregious.” I don't use big words very often, but they have completely forgotten parts of the province. We brought this up yesterday and we're going to bring it up today.

I'm going to take a quote from the Minister of Finance regarding this 15% tax credit for seniors for urban transit—great idea. I don't have a problem with the idea—fully supportive. But he said, “We have a tremendous amount of respect for seniors,” and that “all Ontarians over 65 could participate in this program.” That is untrue, Speaker. We said that yesterday. I'm glad the Minister of Transportation is here. I'm really glad.

I brought up yesterday that if a senior in Iroquois Falls needs to go to a doctor's appointment in Cochrane, there and back, to me, is transit.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's not public transit.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. It is public transit, and it doesn't qualify. We asked and we were—

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: To the Minister of Transportation: That is what the committee process is for. I fully don't expect the government to get it perfect right at the start. We may disagree on principles. We may disagree, but it is our job, as opposition, to put forward amendments to make legislation better. By time allocating this bill to not even allow committee time and not even allow deputations by the public—I'm sure there would be people from the public who would make some parts of this bill better. By not even allowing that, by not even allowing debate on third reading—each party gets 40 minutes to talk about this, and then it's done.

Again, I'll go back to northern transportation. I'm sure in northwestern Ontario there are people who use Greyhound as transit, because in northern Ontario and many parts of rural Ontario, going to a doctor is something you do on transit. Sometimes it takes an hour and a half or two hours, there and back, and the only public transportation is the bus. In some parts of the province, we used to have a train; that's gone. Yet the bus in northern Ontario—we specifically asked this question in the technical briefing. Greyhound was a no, and ONTC—in the technical briefing, they didn't really know what ONTC was. Again, this is something we could bring up in the committee process to make this bill better. This isn't about politics; this is about actually taking legislation and making it better.

Now, in the Minister of Finance's remarks, he mentioned that one of the reasons the government was pushing this bill forward, and so quickly, is because the opposition had put forward a reasoned amendment, and that delayed the bill by a day. Let's make this clear: The Conservatives put forward a reasoned amendment and delayed the bill by a day, but this government has been in power for 14 years. The real estate part of the bill—real estate has been increasing for quite a while. You could have introduced the bill three weeks before or a month before; that wouldn't have made any difference.

I stand here in complete shock that this government thinks so much of itself and so little of anyone else involved in this process that it says—and I can read the motion—no committee time, no depositions by the public and no debate. Really. I have stood here many, many times and complained, made comment that—I've been here five years, and I hear talk that the committees used to go across the province, and legislation used to be much more thoughtful, because it actually would take the opinions from people across the province. I've stood here many times and said—because they usually only hold committee meetings now in Queen's Park, and we've railed against that. My rural members and the rural members from the other opposition party have railed against that. We thought that was a new low.

This—this—is a new low. This is no longer—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm being heckled by the member from Barrie.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Wasn't she warned earlier today?

Mr. John Vanthof: Very well could be, Speaker.

And I would like to have an informed debate, but this is the first time in my five years that I have seen legislation go through without any committee, without any public participation and without any third reading debate.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: The backbenchers on the other side are proud of this. If this is the open and progressive government that we were promised three years ago, I'd hate to see what a closed government looks like.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: Oh, and the member—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock.

Certain individuals in this room are on the warning list. Certain individuals might want to be a little careful, because you know what the next move is.

Continue.

1620

Mr. John Vanthof: I hear heckles from the other side of the room that I'm complaining because there's not enough action. It's not our job as opposition to create action. It's not our job to hold back the government, necessarily. It's our job to hold the government to account. The government has the right to put forward legislation. They won a majority government. That's their right. We've not out to stop that.

But they also have the responsibility to make sure that legislation is thought through, and how that has been done for a very long time in our parliamentary tradition is to bring it to the Parliament to do the first reading, the second reading, go to committee and then go to depositions. Then the parties make amendments and bring it back to the Legislature. Yes, there's political wrangling involved, but that is the way it's done. It's not done like this.

This morning, after the bill was passed in this House on second reading, the minister directed it to a committee. That was at about noon today. The Minister of Fi-

nance directed it to, I believe, economic affairs, right? That's the way it should be done.

Then the committee could hold hearings, and I'm sure people involved in the real estate market would want to have their say. Homeowners, and young people who are looking to buy their first home, would like to have their say: "Here's what we think you could do to make this legislation better." They would like to have their say.

I'm sure that seniors in northern Ontario or seniors' groups that represent people in northern Ontario or rural Ontario—we mentioned it because I know where I'm from, but I'm sure this is happening other parts of the province—would have loved to have their say. Yet, for some reason—I can't think of any other reason beyond arrogance. I hate to say that because I have a very good working relationship with the ministers and with the members, but with this move to have a time allocation motion with no committee, no debate on third reading and no chance for amendments, the government is saying to me that "We are so good at this that we can create legislation the first time and it's going to work."

Now, either they think they're so good at this or perhaps—I'm speculating here because I've got no other tool but speculation in the few minutes I've got left—they don't really care if this is going to work for the whole province. Perhaps they just want to get the 15% speculation tax out there so that they can say they passed it; and they can get a 15% tax rebate for seniors so that they can say they passed it. That will be good for votes in the next election, but they don't really, deep down, care if the details work—because that's what committee is about: making sure the details work. It seems that this government has lost their way on that.

I can understand we're getting close to the end of the session and they want to get their agenda passed. I can understand that. I can't understand, I can't fathom that you can introduce legislation with no ability for amendment, even by yourselves. As the member from Hamilton Mountain has said a couple of times, on other bills, the government introduces many amendments themselves. That actually, technically, in reality, isn't a bad thing, because there's no shame in making amendments. There's no shame because government—it takes a while to get things right. That's why we always have to have governments. If the government a hundred years ago had gotten everything right, we wouldn't need to sit anymore, right? That's why we do sit, so we can all play our roles to make sure that the people of Ontario, across the province of Ontario, have the best legislation that we can create.

We might disagree on philosophy. We might disagree on how it's done. That's why we have elections: to put forward our platforms and allow the people to decide. The people decided, three years ago, to have this government. The people did not decide to eliminate our parliamentary process, and that is what is being done with this bill.

Speaker, it sets an incredibly dangerous precedent because, if they do it once, what's to stop them from

doing it again? In the budget process, on the budget bill—the member from Nipissing went through this as well, and I'm sure he will correct me if I get it wrong; I'm just doing it off the top of my head—we had the vote. Then we had committee hearings right after the vote—an hour after the vote—and then the amendments had to be in an hour after the committee hearings. So in reality, the people who made deputations—there was no way to get their views into the amendments.

We raised quite a ruckus over that—quite a big stink—because obviously the people of the province who made the trek weren't being respected. Why we raised that ruckus was so the government would back off and actually do things correctly and allow time so that the committee members and their various caucus colleagues could actually look at the deputations and make amendments to the process.

Instead of actually slowing down and looking at how to make the process work better, the government has gone the other way and said, "You know what? The way we were doing it before"—the way the Liberals were doing it before—"it was kind of a charade, to have people come and then an hour later have to make amendments, so let's just drop the charade and forget about listening; just show people that we're not going to listen to anybody else—just show them." That's what they're doing here. They're so arrogant that they have just basically eliminated the process.

A few ministers and a few people behind the scenes come up with this stuff. The rest of the process—at least in this bill, Speaker—is just for show. This day, in my five years here—and I've talked to members who have been here a lot longer—it's unprecedented. People outside this House might not be excited, but it is our job to be excited and it's our job to hold the government to account. What this government has done, a step-by-step process, in the last three years—particularly since Premier Wynne has been elected—they talk about being open and transparent, and this government has, step by step, been exactly the opposite.

I'm going to close, Speaker, with a quote. People quote people they really respect. I've quoted him before, and no one else quotes him—not Mr. Smith—because no one has spent as much time around him as I did: my father. My father was an immigrant who came here after World War II. He started from nothing, and he was very proud of everything he built. He taught me a lot of things. My father said, "If someone has to tell you they're honest, watch out for them. Because honest people don't tell you they're honest; they just act honestly."

People who are truly open and transparent don't have to tell you they're open and transparent, and this is proof that my dad was right.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Sadly, here we are again, talking about something that this government is force-feeding the people of Ontario: another closure motion. What that means is that they have presented a bill and they will not

let us have a debate about that bill. They just want to end debate. Bring it forward, have it pass, nobody gets to talk about it—that's what this government is trying to do to us.

1630

It's a little bit technical, part of what I want to say. The government has brought this bill for third reading, except there's no debate. It has passed second reading. It's the second time it has been talked about after a very, very, very brief discussion. It now goes, supposedly, to committee. They said it was going to committee. They sent it to committee and took it right out of committee. So we didn't even have a committee. As you heard the member from Timiskaming speak about it, this is something that—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'll wait, Speaker. I thought you were acknowledging—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): No, I'm not.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Oh, thank you, Speaker.

They sent it to committee and then took it right away out of committee, so there's no debate on this topic. We're going to have a few minutes to debate the closure of it, but we don't have any time to debate the actual bill.

Speaker, I can tell you why there's no debate on this. You heard the Minister of Finance begin his discussion by talking about the budget. They've presented a balanced budget, according to the minister. Well, earlier today, from the Financial Accountability Officer, we learned that this budget is actually anything but balanced. In fact, we learned about the dire predicament that our debt in Ontario is in and the deficits that Ontario is going to have.

You heard the finance minister. He stood there only a few minutes ago and talked about this great budget that he has passed that is balanced. Nothing can be further from the truth. So, Speaker, I say that that's why they've cut off debate. They don't want us debating the budget measures. What we're talking about today is closure on An Act to implement 2017 Budget measures. As I said, this budget is anything but balanced. We have said it. Our leader, Patrick Brown, has stood and said this. The day the budget was announced, we talked about this \$5-billion hole in the budget.

Our leader, Patrick Brown, went through all of the details. He talked about the fact that there are federal transfers that are being included, he talked about the asset sales that are being included, he talked about the sale of Hydro One that's being included and he talked about the fact that hundreds of millions of dollars of cap-and-trade are being included in the operating budget.

I remember the Liberal government scoffing at it: "No, that's wrong. Five billion dollars? You're wrong. You're wrong." Well, the Financial Accountability Office this morning presented the economic and fiscal outlook.

Now, lo and behold, we just got back a few minutes ago from the briefing. Well, Speaker, let me tell you, here's what the Financial Accountability Officer's team

had to tell us. On page 19 in his book, which was released to the Legislature this afternoon—the government will use temporary revenue, one-time revenue.

Federal transfers: \$1.5 billion. What did Patrick Brown say? They're going to use federal transfers—\$1.5 billion.

They're going to have asset sales of \$1 billion. What did Patrick Brown say? They're going to have asset sales of \$1 billion.

They're going to sell Hydro One and put that money in the operating budget. What did Patrick Brown say? They're going to sell Hydro and put that money in the operating budget.

And they're going to put the cap-and-trade money in the operating budget. In fact, they're putting \$400 million more this year than next.

That's why the Financial Accountability Officer came up with the number—this is before other one-time funds—of \$3 billion, just on page 19.

You put it all together, and you have got exactly the same hole in the budget that our leader talked about. It's shocking. Speaker, it's actually kind of upsetting to one's stomach to know the predicament.

Do you know what he told us? He told us today that we are going to add \$76 billion more to our debt over the next five years—\$76 billion, in just five years.

When this government took office 13 years ago, our debt was \$139 billion. It took 137 years to get it there. Now it is \$312 billion, under the Liberals, and just in the next five years—remember, it took 137 years to get to \$139 billion. In the next five years alone, they're adding \$76 billion more to our debt.

But it's going to get worse. I'll tell you about that in a moment.

Now we're at \$390 billion—\$390 billion is what the Financial Accountability Officer tells us—that this government is going to bury us.

I asked a question in the technical briefing. I said to the Financial Accountability Officer's team, "Just a few days ago, you came out with your commentary on Kathleen Wynne and what the Liberal government called a fair hydro plan. You came out with a commentary on that, and you told us that in the best-case scenario, this government will add a further \$45 billion in debt, to save \$24 billion."

I don't know which business or which family member would spend 45 bucks to get 24 back. There's nobody I know that would do that, but the Liberals are going to be doing that.

I asked if that money is included in this summary. Is that money included in the \$390 billion? The answer from the Financial Accountability Officer was no. The so-called fair hydro plan debt is not included in this summary, because of when it was produced—a few days ago.

What has happened in those few days is, the Auditor General attended the fair hydro plan committee meetings, the hearings, and said, "Hang on a second here. You're adding all this debt"—from the Financial Accountability

Officer, the low end of \$45 billion. If we have to borrow money—if we go into deficit and borrow money—it could be as high as \$93 billion, by the way, that they'll pay to save \$24 billion. If they have to borrow, it's now \$93 billion.

The Auditor General said that regardless of whether it's \$45 billion or \$93 billion, right now, what you've tried to do is put this debt on Ontario Power Generation's bill—OPG. You've put this debt on their bill. You've used them as the financing arm.

We disclosed this two or three weeks ago. We said that this smells. I stood right at this seat, and in question period, I said that this smells. You have co-opted OPG into your scheme.

There's only one reason why they would do that, and that's because OPG's books are separate from the province's books. They're not in what we call the consolidated financials of the province. They're not consolidated; they're not in the same pot as the province's finances. They stay across the street, in a separate set of books unrelated to the province. They're putting all this debt on their books.

We exposed that two or three weeks ago, much to the surprise of a lot of people in the financial world: Were they allowed to do that? Is that legal in Canada? Can you do that in Ontario? You could imagine Third World countries trying to pull a fast one like that.

I stood in this Legislature and said this morning that any business that would try to do that would never get away with it with their shareholders. In fact, those that tried and failed and got caught ended up in jail, and that's where they belong—

Interjection.

1640

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'm talking about the businesses; I was talking about the businesses.

Speaker, now we have the Auditor General, who said that this little scheme that you've concocted, where you've tried to put that debt over on OPG—she said, "No, no, no. You're caught. You can't do that. You must record this debt on the province's books." She's told the province that. They're on notice. They know now that they must put that debt on the province's books.

I asked the Financial Accountability Officer's staff this morning, "Is that \$45 billion to \$93 billion included in here?" They said that because the auditor just came up with that this week and informed the Legislature, informed the government, and they have not heard back from the government, that it's not a number they can put in yet. The refinancing—these are their words—now is still off-book. That means we still owe between \$45 billion and \$93 billion more, which will be added to that debt.

Speaker, just think of this now, one more little thing: The fact now that they have to add that—we know that's \$2.5 billion a year of deficit and \$26 billion that they need to add, minimum, on their debt. I know it's complicated, Speaker; hang with me. What I'm trying to say is, we now know the government will be in a deficit. I

realize the members here on the side of the government have (a) either no idea of what this refers to or (b) have known about it and prefer to continue to tell the people of Ontario one thing when the complete opposite is true.

According to the Financial Accountability Officer, we are going to have a deficit this year of \$2.9 billion. It grows every year until 2021-22, when it hits \$6.5 billion; that's just added deficit. So, now, tie that into his earlier report that said that if you're in a deficit, that debt from hydro comes to \$93 billion because you have to borrow. According to the FAO, our deficit gets bigger every year. That means we now have to borrow to pay that hydro debt, so it's not \$45 billion anymore; it will be \$93 billion. The Auditor General has told OPG across the street, "No, no, no. You don't get to bury this debt in OPG's books. You have to record that debt."

We're at \$390 billion in debt in five years. Now we add \$93 billion more. See where we're going with this? I think for one of the few times in this Legislature you're going to hear a new word: "trillion." We almost, then, will be at a half a trillion dollars in debt.

Now, I remember standing here—

Interjections.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: They mock. They scoff.

I remember standing here during the gas plants scandal. I remember where I was sitting and I remember doing the math. I was energy critic at the time. We'd done about two or three weeks' worth of math, and I stood in the Legislature for the first time and said—we were up to over \$890 million that it was going to cost the government to cancel the two gas plants and save the five Liberal seats. I remember standing here and saying, "I honestly believe that by the time all is learned, this will be a billion-dollar scandal." And I remember the uproar and I remember the former Premier standing up and saying, "Oh, why not make it \$2 billion? Why not make it \$10 billion? Why not make it a trillion?" I remember him mocking me. Well, it turned out to be a billion-dollar scandal.

Here we are now at \$390 billion in debt, according to the FAO. We're going to add up to \$93 billion more just on the hydro debt. That brings us dangerously close to a debt in Ontario, the largest subnational debtor on the planet, already today—we will be close to half a trillion dollars in debt.

Now, I know that this government doesn't want us talking about that, which is why they have invoked closure, why they're not going to allow, after the seven minutes that I have left, anybody else on our side to talk about it. The third party will have a few more minutes, and I know they'll want to speak to this. The government side doesn't want to talk about it because I know they're embarrassed by it. I know, Speaker, that they are embarrassed by this.

Mr. Robert Bailey: They told us.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: They told you?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Oh, yes.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: They should be. They should have told you.

So here we go. Just to wrap up, what the Financial Accountability Officer told us—look at his press release this morning. If this press release isn't enough for the members in the Liberal caucus to have a second thought here and just think—this is from the Financial Accountability Officer; this is his press release: "FAO expects steady deterioration of Ontario's budget deficit without additional government measures."

Hear what he said: "deterioration of Ontario's budget deficit." That tells us two things. Number one, he acknowledges we're in deficit. He does not buy what these guys are selling. They're telling the people of Ontario one thing—"We balanced the budget"—when all of the documentation from all of the officers and all of the people in the financial sector is acknowledging that we've got a fake budget here. It's only because of one-time revenue. His own press release, his own news release, should tell you.

If you can choke back through the headline that tells you we're deteriorating, then get into the body of his note. He talks about how it's a steady deterioration. This isn't just something new that's one-time. The revenue is one-time, but the deterioration is steady. It's ongoing. He says the balance is due to one-time revenues, which we have been saying year after year after year. And he says that "without significant fiscal policy adjustments," this is all going to continue.

As I said, he tells us we're going to hit more than \$390 billion by 2021-22. It results in "ongoing deficits"—which they say don't happen—"capital spending, and the AG's recommended accounting treatment for pension assets." That's a whole other topic that they don't want to talk about. They have an ongoing argument with the Auditor General of Ontario, the independent officer. She tells us one thing; they say, "No, we don't like that. We think it's something different."

That brings us to what we call our debt to GDP. Now, when this government took office, debt to GDP was a respectable 27%. Today it hovers around 40%. This government tells you they've got a great plan to bring it down, but on the pace that they have brought it down, from a little over 40% to just a little under 40%, it would take about 50 years to get it back to where it was when they took over office. The Financial Accountability Officer says now we're going the wrong way, now it will edge back above 40%. It's unbelievable that that is the damage that this government is going to continue to do to our economy.

Why should that matter to people, Speaker? What would somebody care if our debt to GDP was 40% instead of 27%? This is what this means to you. They know they need to get the debt in a manageable position. They know that it's based on (a) how your economy is growing and (b) how high your debt is. You put them together and you have a debt to GDP. That's how you come up with that. When it's not a good number and your debt is high and you've got deficits like they have, they start to try to look at areas they can control. That is exactly why they've cut 1,600 nursing jobs in Ontario,

including 100 in my hometown of North Bay. So when you wonder, “What does this debt to GDP have to do with me? Why do I care what the debt or the deficit is in Ontario?”, it’s because they fired 1,600 nurses to try to balance their budget. When that didn’t work, then they closed schools.

1650

Speaker, do you realize that this government and Kathleen Wynne have closed more schools in Ontario than any other government in the history of our province? Do you realize that, Speaker? This is an amazing statistic. They’re trying to balance the budget on the backs—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I’m only the temporary Speaker this afternoon. There’s a long list of members who have been warned already. I would remind them of that.

The member for Nipissing has the floor.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker.

They’re trying, they’re attempting, to balance the budget on the backs of front-line health care workers and on the backs of students. This is why debt and deficit matter.

Let me close by telling a story that I have told a few times in this Legislature. Nothing is more appropriate than telling it today, because this is the Ontario that Kathleen Wynne has created.

I go home every Friday and I meet in my constituency office with stakeholders and my staff. One stakeholder, whose home is about nine doors from the house I grew up in, had his energy cut off this past winter. His pipes froze, burst: no heat, no water. He shovelled snow into his bathtub every night so that in the morning he’d have water to bathe. This is Ontario I’m talking about. This is a real example of a man whose office is about six blocks from my office in downtown North Bay. That is the consequence of debt and deficit in the Ontario that Kathleen Wynne has created.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Second call: Further debate? Last call: Further debate?

Mr. Sousa has moved government notice of motion number 34, relating to allocation of time on Bill 134, An Act to implement 2017 Budget measures. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

Those against, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you, Minister. We have a deferral.

“Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on notice of motion 34 be deferred until deferred votes on Thursday, June 1.”

Vote deferred.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LE SOUTIEN À L'ENFANCE, À LA JEUNESSE ET À LA FAMILLE

Mr. Del Duca, on behalf of Mr. Coteau, moved third reading of the following bill:

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 / Projet de loi 89, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur les services à l'enfance, à la jeunesse et à la famille, modifiant et abrogeant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I believe the parliamentary assistant responsible for anti-racism will be making our third reading remarks later in the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: This has been occupying a lot of our time. I know the parliamentary assistant has been very involved in everything to do with this bill as well. We’re speaking today on Bill 89. It’s basically an overhaul of the child welfare system in Ontario for the first time in 32 years. That’s a long time, Mr. Speaker, to not really look at and overhaul the entire scope of what we do for children.

I want to start off by saying that, speaking of children, my youngest child of four is here today in the members’ gallery: Jennifer—we call her Jennie—Martow. I want to thank her for being here today. She was downtown and decided to come by and pay us a visit.

First of all, just to give some facts and figures on child welfare here in Ontario: We have 47 designated children’s aid societies. Nine children’s aid societies are aboriginal, indigenous agencies, and three are religious. Two of them are Catholic and one is Jewish Family and Child Service, which I know very well.

In the fiscal year of 2014-15—I don’t have more recent data, but I’m sure that we can correlate it—there were over 8,600 full-time-equivalent staff in children’s aid societies across Ontario. The highest number of referrals, in order, were from law enforcement; schools; other children’s aid societies, because they do refer to each other between regions and jurisdictions; the family unit—somebody from the family unit, the mother, father or the child; and community caregiver professionals.

The top five reasons for children and families becoming involved with children’s aid, also in order, are: requests for assistance from the family, child exposure to partner violence, a caregiver with a problem, physical force and/or maltreatment, and inadequate supervision.

More than 171,600 calls were made during that time period of 2014-15. There were calls and referrals made, 80,813 of which required investigations.

The biggest point that I wanted to make is that the youth who came and presented at committee overwhelmingly preferred foster homes to group homes. There are different reasons why children and youth are sometimes placed in group homes, but it is becoming a bit of a crisis in Ontario. The government didn't believe it when the foster families association told all of us at committee that in the last 10 years they've seen the number of homes willing to foster children in care decrease by approximately one half—between 40% and one half. That's shocking, Mr. Speaker, because we're taking more kids into care, partly because the population is increasing, but also partly because there are just more problems overall, for many reasons.

Also a big part of the bill, which is why we were so excited in the PC caucus to see it being presented, is that it's going to allow 16- and 17-year-olds who have never been involved in the child welfare system, to now—

Interjection.

Mrs. Gila Martow: That was my colleague right next to me, the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. He had a private member's bill, as did a previous member of our caucus, to address exactly that: to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to go into care. It is a big part of the bill, but—and I'm going to go into that further—it's problematic. It's problematic for many reasons, Mr. Speaker. For monetary reasons—this is actually an expensive cohort, even though for most families, they can't wait till their children turn 16 and they're at an age when they don't need, hopefully, as much supervision. Children in care of that age are an expensive age group to deal with when they have a lot of problems, and often they do have problems.

The last point I want to make on the child welfare facts is that 36% of adoptions were by the foster family the child had been living with. This is one of the things that really bothers me about the lack of foster homes, because if kids aren't placed in foster homes, that means that that potential to be adopted by that family does not exist. A group of children in a group home are not really being parented. The expression that one of the youth who had aged out of care said in committee is, "We're being kept alive. We're being fed, we're being housed, we're being shipped off to school and sent to some doctors' appointments and things like that, but we feel that we're just being kept alive."

That is no way to raise the next generation in Ontario. We all know that there's much more to children and youth than just being kept alive. That might work for a week or two, Mr. Speaker, but it shouldn't be our long-term plan. A group home is not the same as parenting; it's absolutely not. It's workers coming in—and I know they're doing their best. The member opposite who has worked in child welfare is nodding. They come in on a rotating basis, around the clock. We all know that a caregiver for an aging parent is not the same as having a daughter or a sibling visiting and taking care of you and advocating on your behalf.

We heard in the committee from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. Again, I want to com-

mend the workers in our children's aid societies who work so hard under often very difficult circumstances. In their report this past year that I have and that they had given to us, they spoke about increasing the overall child welfare funding envelope. They feel that additional demands from government on CASs through new rules and regulations—because that's what this bill is. It's telling CASs that they now have to take in a cohort of 16- and 17-year-olds—of course, on a voluntary basis but sometimes court-ordered as well. They must provide a service, yet there's no mention in the budget—and we just heard the member from Nipissing saying how the budget isn't properly balanced, and this is one of the reasons why the budget isn't balanced, in a way. They knew this bill was coming forward at the exact same—look at that: Back to back, we're debating the budget and this bill, and there's still no line in the budget for extra funding for the 16- to 17-year-old cohort.

The CPIN, Child Protection Information Network, costs for implementation were significantly higher than predicted. While some funding was given by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to the CASs—I think \$220,000 is what it said in their report, per agency—for deployment and to cover the costs associated with CPIN, they have spent as much \$4.5 million on deployment. Where does that extra money come from? Obviously, it comes from programming. Foster parents are able to apply to the worker—I know that they have workers who advocate on behalf of foster parents themselves. They're able to apply for special monetary compensation if they want to have the foster child, say, play hockey or needs equipment to play hockey. Obviously, they are hearing a lot more noes than they used to if the money is being spent implementing CPIN.

1700

The agencies also spoke about support for indigenous CASs, which we heard from as well at committee. Indigenous, Métis and Inuit communities want to be far more involved in the child welfare system and to administer their own policies, with the support of the government.

Then there was the issue, which I never really got a clear answer on from the government, of how they're going to be on the CPIN network when they don't have proper Internet infrastructure in their communities in a lot of parts of Ontario. I think that's one of the things that is hard for us to realize downtown in Toronto, when people are upset and saying that they don't have a good signal and they have to go to a window. They're so frustrated that they don't have a good signal. Well, you can go to every window in every building in some of these communities further north in Ontario; you're not going to get a signal just because you walked over to a window.

They spoke about needing resources to support the wider children's services sector, including children's mental health, adult mental health, and domestic violence and addictions treatment, which are all essential. That's really a big part, a big hole, that's missing in this legislation—something creative. I think I spoke about it

while speaking about another bill in the Legislature—a fantastic system that they have in the country of Israel, which I have visited quite a few times. They have the Na'amat centres. It's an organization that has chapters right here in Ontario that they raise money for. Basically what it is: Instead of just taking a child who's in a home situation that is maybe a six out of 10—I don't know how exactly they rate and decide who should be taken into care, but they recognize that it's not an ideal situation in the home. In Canada, that child would be placed in care. They recognize that there's that middle grey area where, if they provide support, services, training and treatment and the parents co-operate and bring the child to Na'amat centre, half the children are in need of this extra supervision and half are just paying full daycare costs and come for regular daycare hours.

The kids who need to be part of this bridge system come in at 7 in the morning in their pyjamas. They're bathed; they keep clothes there; they're fed three meals a day. The parents have to come for all kinds of training, programming and support, and support for the child as well. They have therapy rooms.

They say that about half of the children who go into the program are able to go back to their families in a safe and supportive manner, instead of being permanently taken into care, the way we do here in Canada.

There are other programs across the world as well. I didn't hear that they were given the support that maybe they should have been. There are a lot of organizations that would love to help and support in our communities, and they certainly aren't being consulted enough, in my opinion.

I want to talk about little bit about the fact that our caucus put forward about 40 amendments, none of which were accepted by the government. I'm not going to talk about all of them, but I am going to highlight a couple.

One is that we wanted to give more teeth to the provincial advocate because, while this bill is giving more power to the ministry to oversee the children's aid societies—and many of them have concerns about what exactly that is going to entail—we felt that there needed to be sort of a balancing act with the provincial advocate.

He is very well loved by the youth we saw who had aged out of care. Wow, is he ever well known. He really works well with youth, and I really trust his opinion on a lot of things to do with youth in care and aging out of care.

He would like to have—and should have, in my opinion and in our opinion—the ability to oversee the ministry overseeing the children's aid societies.

It's like the Auditor General here, that we talk about overseeing what the government is doing. It's supposed to be a non-partisan agency and an expert. Unfortunately, we often see reports that then get ignored. We can't just talk about transparency and accountability. We have to actually implement what we are mandating.

We know that Katelynn's Principle—the member from the NDP, from Hamilton Mountain, worked very hard to promote the voice of children and youth involved

in care. I think it was telling that there was no mention of Katelynn Sampson's name anywhere in the bill initially, although the preamble did talk about giving youth and children a voice.

The big problem with this bill—and I think the member would agree with me—is that the preamble did not match the actual bill. I spoke on that when we spoke on time allocation for this bill just a couple of days ago, which means that we're actually debating less than we would normally on a bill. But it's a majority government, and they're able to pass time allocation bills. We spent three days in committee, pretty much going through amendments. Again, my colleague next to me was there.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Two hundred amendments from the government.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Two hundred amendments from the government—basically, we were writing this bill with the government in committee.

I asked the question, and I was told by one of the Clerks that the government could have recognized, after the committee hearings, that the bill did not reflect what it was supposed to reflect.

I could see that you have two different offices, and you have one group—it's possibly even the parliamentary assistant—working on the preamble and what the bill should do. Everybody reads it and supports it at second reading. Then we come down to actually read the bill and hear from the experts, and we find out that this bill does not reflect what's in the preamble. Therefore, there were 200 government amendments, and about 70 from the third party, and we had about 40. None of ours were accepted.

The other point that we tried to make was that we needed better protection in this bill to prevent the sexual exploitation of children and youth and the human trafficking of children and youth in care, specifically, and to not just ignore the fact that there are human traffickers hanging out outside the group homes, knowing that there are very vulnerable youth living there and it's just easy pickings for them. There was nothing reflected in this bill to deal with that, and our amendments to strengthen protection for children and youth against child pornography were ignored when we went through amendments at the committee.

1710

We heard a lot about youth being put in isolation by the child care workers when they're being too difficult to handle. We all supported—all three parties—a maximum of 24 hours in isolation. It's really quite shocking when you imagine that, up until now, youth might be placed in isolation for 48 hours. They're not criminals.

A lot of times, I have a feeling they're in isolation because they're not getting mental health support. There is nothing in this bill to talk about some kind of system directed for youth in care and children in care for the mental health support that we know most of them need. There's no recognition that any child or youth taken into care right away is obviously experiencing some kind of emotional trauma. There's nothing in here, in this bill, about better training for child care workers in dealing

with mental health episodes. Maybe in the preamble, touching on it, but there certainly isn't a system that the government is implementing where, if a foster parent or a group home worker takes a child who is in care to a hospital or calls a mental health crisis centre or calls the police, they are somehow treated in, maybe, a bit of a special manner.

I would have liked to have heard from experts what could be done to provide better support, because too often we hear that until there is a crisis—even a suicide attempt isn't enough to get them the help they need. What I'm hearing in some of the communities is that unless a youth commits a criminal act, gets put in jail, gets apprehended—because now they're in the justice system, they get apprehended. Because now they're labelled a criminal, that's when they get the mental health support they need, when they're in a detention centre, in a jail.

Isn't that horrific? What kind of system is that? We recognize that the majority of youth and children in care need mental health support. Instead of giving them the support, we're allowing workers to get assaulted, children and youth to assault each other, self-inflicted injuries—all kinds of things go on which I think in the long run cost the taxpayers of Ontario more than if we just dealt with the problem in the first place. It's frustrating.

I mentioned previously Jane Kovarikova's report that she gave all of us, *Exploring Youth Outcomes after Aging-Out of Care*. Youth who age out of care have far worse outcomes than youth not in care. I bet that youth in foster homes probably do better than in group homes.

I just want to end by saying a few things about the PC caucus. Actually, the member from the NDP had also joined me in requesting that the Minister of Children and Youth Services appear before the committee to answer a number of questions, and he refused. I found that very disappointing—32 years to overhaul the child welfare system and we weren't able to directly ask the minister questions.

Our caucus recognizes the challenges in raising physically and emotionally healthy, educated children. We all supported—from all parties—the need to respect children's—not just their voice, but their culture, their family, their environment, their religion. Also, as the francophone critic, I have to mention their right to francophone services and workers and foster parents.

We want all children to grow up to be the best they can be, to be contributing members of society. I'm hoping that the government will do a study and monitor, because if we don't monitor the outcomes, we're never going to be able to get this right.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm going to start my remarks by putting on the record how discouraged I am that I've been time-allocated by this government and only given 20 minutes to speak to third reading of this bill, where I should have had 60.

I want to begin my formal remarks by speaking to the youth who worked so hard and put themselves and their

private lives on display for all to see in hopes of creating change. I want them to know that without them, without their voices, beginning with the Youth Leaving Care Hearings, none of this would be happening today.

I know that many of them were hoping for better results, but they can be proud of what they have achieved. I encourage them to continue to do the work and continue to advocate for real change to the system that one day will make a difference. I am so proud, and I am inspired by each and every one of you every single day.

Speaker, during second reading debate, I noted that I supported the direction that this new bill was taking, but also that I was concerned that it didn't go far enough and that the principles outlined in the preamble were not reflected in the wording of the actual legislation. This was echoed by many who were intimately involved in the system.

Katelynn's Principle, as presented in the jury's recommendations from the coroner's inquest into the death of Katelynn Sampson, offered a template for what this bill should include. To an extent, it was reflected in the preamble of the act, which says, "The government of Ontario acknowledges that children are individuals with rights to be respected and voices to be heard.... Services provided to children and families should be child-centred."

Another recommendation from that jury was that the Premier champion the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The UNCRC also got a mention in the preamble, but we needed to ensure that those principles were reinforced throughout the act with actual legislation. I have to say, I regret to report that while some of those changes were made, it still falls very short.

Sparrow Garlow presented to committee. She is 14 years old. She is a First Nations youth and identified herself as a crown ward. She freely admitted that she hadn't read the bill, but she did have life experience and she knew that she wanted to tell her story. She wondered aloud if this legislation was going to help other children and youth not to have the experience that she did.

Before she was 13, she was placed in a group home with other girls between the ages of 16 and 19, where she stayed, despite her requests to move, for 15 months. Here's some of what Sparrow said:

"This is what it's like to live in a group home: Being constantly watched—they wrote down logs that listed when I got up, if I left, what I ate, what I watched, who I talked to and if I completed my daily expectations. At the end of the day, they decided if I moved up a level and kept my privileges, or dropped a level and lost my privileges.

"I needed to ask for mouthwash, shampoo and hygiene products. They wrote down when I showered and when I brushed my teeth."

The experience that Sparrow describes sounds more like she was being detained rather than given a home. As an Ojibway youth, she feels more effort should have been made to get her out of the institutional setting and into a

home. Thanks to her own initiative, she made a video and she finally got a placement in a foster home. She described to us what that was like:

“Being a foster kid means having a lot of meetings, and I have no control over who attends these meetings. I just show up, and there are random people there. They could be social work students, coverage workers or whoever wants to be there. No one asks my permission. They openly discuss me and my experiences, even though I am not comfortable.”

Sparrow feels strongly that she was never listened to and her own Ojibway heritage was never properly recognized or supported. Against her wishes, a court order was signed giving her father access if she consented. She had to fight for an access order with her mother, who lives on reserve.

Records with children’s aid are inconsistent regarding her heritage. “No one asked me what I am,” Sparrow told us. “They asked my dad and believed him, even though he is not First Nation and has never supported my culture.... I am hoping no one else has to face these challenges when they ask for help.”

1720

Speaker, I wanted to share some of Sparrow’s words because they display so clearly some of the problems in this system and why it is so important that we get this right. She has shown great courage, not just in coming before the committee but through her time in care. Not every child in care would have Sparrow’s spirit and determination. Her resilience, I think and I hope, will see her through. But children and youth in care shouldn’t have to be exceptional to survive or succeed. We should make it possible for them all to succeed.

I don’t doubt that if we would have heard from many others, if we had taken a bit more time and if the committee had travelled the province, I think it would have been time well spent. This is a huge bill that rewrites the Child and Family Services Act, the act that puts in writing how the government of Ontario and agencies working on its behalf conduct themselves as guardians and protectors of our most valuable resource, our children and our youth. The importance of this bill cannot be underestimated. It is arguably the most important legislation that we can deal with. It deserved to be given adequate time to fully digest it, to fully understand its implications and the impact that it would have on children and youth, who will be and are our future.

We needed to hear from those people whose lives are affected every day by the words that we pass into law. We had an opportunity with this bill to build a system that truly meets the needs of children, youth, their families and our entire society. The “biggest game-changer ... in decades,” the minister called it. The Premier stated previously that maybe we should blow up the whole system. So we had an opportunity to be bold, to write a piece of legislation that was consistent with what we have learned over the past number of years, up to and including what we heard at committee.

As I look at what we have before us now, I think that we have moved in the right direction, but I can’t help but

know that this is an opportunity missed. We had an opportunity to put rules in place to fully respect the rights of a child, the opportunity to establish accountability measures that could build confidence in families, an opportunity to overhaul residential services and ensure children and youth got the care and treatment they needed. We could have legislated programs and policies that would properly address the evident overrepresentation of First Nations and black youth—a missed opportunity to remove the inequity in youth justice that allows two systems with different standards to run side by side, treating the exact same kids. But we failed.

While I welcome the changes that are being made, I say again that I believe we have missed an opportunity to do so much more. The fact that the government brought forward 150 amendments suggests it was rushed through the drafting stage. The government says they responded to what they heard, but let’s be honest: Many other amendments were written before we even started the hearings.

What about the opportunity that the public had to read and take in what this bill would actually do to the delivery of services? Again, this a huge bill. In many places, it pulls language from the existing Child and Family Services Act with no or only minor changes. In many other places, it had more significant changes. Due to reordering of various components of the act, comparison with the existing act was difficult.

My point here is that understanding this legislation was a challenging project, even for those of us who work with it every single day. Legislation is not written in a way that is accessible or in plain language to children, youth and families who are going to need to be able to read and understand this legislation. Children and youth who will be directly affected by these changes that we make are the very people that we needed to hear from. But it was made difficult when time was severely limited—no time to organize their thoughts and work out how best they might get important points across.

This is also true for those who work in the field. They are exceptionally busy people, pulled in all different directions, with very limited resources that they have to work with. The time between the end of submissions and the preparation of amendments was terribly inadequate to be able to do the job that needed to be done.

I don’t know why the government insisted on putting these constraints on time, but I do know that the quality of legislation before us has suffered as a result. This bill could easily have been split in two: one bill to amend the existing CFSA to provide protection to 16- and 17-year-olds, and another bill to enact the new Child, Youth and Family Services Act. The bill was already designed to enact these two different sections at different times, with the government not planning to bring the CYFSA into force until several months down the road.

Interjections.

Miss Monique Taylor: I really wish I could hear myself speak.

We could have taken care of the CFSA amendment now and have more time for the CYFSA, giving it the

attention it needs and deserves. Speaker, we could have worked over the summer to make sure that this was done and that the government had it done in the time frame they wanted.

With regard to the amendments that have been made to the bill, I do recognize that the government made some moves in the right direction. They were pushed, but they're in the right direction at the same time. In fact, some of the amendments were ones that we in the NDP had proposed as well.

Children and youth have been given the right not just to be consulted but also to participate in decisions affecting them. They will also now have a right to receive a response to concerns they raise. Physical restraints have been defined and restricted. There is consideration of the importance of extended family to a child or youth receiving services. Language has been further updated to remove terms like "apprehended."

Those are just a few examples. But as I said at second reading, I am concerned that this bill lacks teeth in the provisions to enforce the principles set out in the preamble.

In many cases, Speaker, amendments went in a similar direction, but the government members invariably chose to go with what I consider to be the weaker version. They chose to give the bill a few more teeth but not a full set—far from it.

I raised concerns that the bill was not robust enough, that it allowed the minister discretion in too many areas. Too often, the bill states that the minister "may" take a particular action. While a few of those "mays" have been changed to "shalls," there are still too many instances where there is no specific requirement of the minister to act.

I had also pointed out that there were too many provisions of the bill where the details were missing. They'd been pushed off to be governed by regulations. Of course, those regulations will never get discussed in this chamber, nor will the public ever have the opportunity to have input. This is a serious flaw of this bill, and it doesn't appear to have been corrected.

If you look at part XII of the bill, the part that deals with regulations, you can see that only one regulation has been deleted. The regulation that prescribed the standards and procedures for the use of physical restraints is now reflected directly in the act—a good move, no doubt, but it was a lonely journey as it made its way, alone, from regulation to legislation.

We could have done so much more to provide the details right in the legislation. Instead, we're not sure what this is going to look like after the regulations are written.

Let's take a look at a few recommendations that the government members rejected. One made reference to Katelynn's Principle—the right to be heard. While this act was described at its introduction as being consistent with Katelynn's Principle, nowhere in the act is Katelynn's Principle mentioned. I, as well as others, thought it would have driven home what we wanted to

achieve with this act: that the voice, views and wishes of the child must be given due consideration.

Think back to the sad case of Katelynn Sampson, think back to the words of Sparrow, and consider the difference this would have made to their experience.

1730

We heard from presenters, and we know from studies, that there are a number of factors that impact the likelihood of a child going into care. We know that a child will thrive better with their family, and we should provide supports to make that possible. That's why I brought forward an amendment that would require the minister to make resources available to support families and to ensure children are not separated from them or their community because of disability, lack of health care, educational needs, inadequate shelter or financial hardship. It would also have ensured that funding and support for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children would be comparable in quality and accessibility to that for other children. We heard all about "an ounce of prevention," but none of that is happening right now. This amendment could have done that. We could have done more to help families who are caught up in the system.

I suggested a system of independent family navigators to help families work within it, to benefit their child and their family.

We heard from representatives from a number of First Nations communities and groups. If it wasn't clear before, those groups certainly made us aware of the deep challenges that exist as we try to ensure adequate child welfare for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and families.

Let's remember what the preamble says: "The government of Ontario is committed, in the spirit of reconciliation, to working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to help ensure that wherever possible, they care for their children in accordance with their distinct cultures, heritages and traditions." Sadly, the provisions of the bill do little to enforce or reinforce this statement.

The part of the bill specifically dealing with First Nations, Inuit and Métis child and family services, part IV, is a tiny part of this bill, as it was before in the CFSA. After our hearings, there were two small amendments made: one to allow for funding for "persons or entities" and the other an update of language, the same as was done in other parts.

We have to do better, Speaker. Aboriginal youth are overrepresented, dramatically, in our child welfare system. We've heard over and over that our system is letting them down.

It hasn't been done with this bill. We must put a clear focus on our First Nations communities and assist them to build a system that works for them.

The African Canadian community is also grossly overrepresented. Their populations are way out of control when it comes to the number of children in the system, but we did nothing to address it at all. That's a huge inequity in this bill.

The work around this bill has been extremely frustrating for all involved. I met with those groups. They came

to me. By the time they got to me, it was too late in the process; there was no way I could put amendments forward for them. They didn't know the system. They don't know how it works around here. And when it's time-allocated, they don't even have a chance.

Speaker, I'm running out of time as quickly as possibly can happen, and I want to make sure I hit some really important pieces.

I need to address the act on personal information. The Information and Privacy Commissioner made an extensive presentation to committee. He commended the government for introducing the privacy protection for individuals who are involved, but unfortunately, none of that was covered. So what did the government have to do? Rewrite the entire legislation with about 45 amendments that were pages long to include what he needed to say.

Then I asked for the commissioner to come back to committee. The government denied the opportunity. I want to hear from the experts. There's no way I'm going to listen to the government say, "Trust me. This is what he wants." If they had listened to him in the first place, there's no way that he would have been left out the way he was. But, unfortunately, they did not let that happen.

In the last few minutes, I want to talk about funding. If we do not put the funding into the system, then this is all a shell game. Everything that we have done, everything that we have gone through and everything that people have put their hearts and souls into for this last probably year of extensive work and thought is all going to be for naught if the funding does not follow this legislation.

Once again, I'm totally disheartened by this process, and it's unfortunate that the government thought that the right thing to do was to ram this through—because it does not make it right.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to start by acknowledging that we are gathered on the traditional territory of the indigenous nations, and I would like to pay special recognition to the Mississaugas of the New Credit. I also want to recognize the long histories and significant contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to this city and to this province.

I'm proud to speak to the proposed Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act, which I will refer to moving forward as Bill 89. This bill focuses our attention as a province on children and youth: on their voices, their opinions, their goals, and not just the issues that they are facing. If passed, this legislation will set the course for bold system change to a range of Ontario's children and youth services. It will strengthen young people's rights so that they have a voice in the decisions that affect them.

As the MPP for Kingston and the Islands and as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children and Youth Services, it's important to me that we do everything possible to empower and support children and youth, especially the most vulnerable. They must reach their fullest potential.

We are committed to transforming the child welfare sector and to changing the culture within it. We're com-

mitted to giving children the best possible start in life. We're committed to helping our youth as they prepare for the often challenging transition into adulthood, to ensuring children, youth and families have access to the services and supports that they need. We take these commitments very seriously.

Promoting the protection and well-being of children and youth is not just our obligation as leaders entrusted to shape the future of this great province, but it is our duty and our privilege. That is why we have introduced this legislation, and that is why this legislation reflects the insight and calls to action that we heard from our valued partners—including children, youth and their families—during the consultation and public hearings process.

If passed and proclaimed, the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, or CYFSA, will replace the Child and Family Services Act, the legislative framework enacted more than three decades ago that currently governs many of the province's programs and services for our children and youth. This bill includes child welfare, youth justice, treatment programs, developmental services, residential services, community support, indigenous child and family services, and, of course, adoption.

The proposed legislation better reflects our society's values, diversity, and the needs of the children and youth of today and tomorrow.

We want to thank the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, Irwin Elman, and the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, as well as First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban indigenous partner agencies for the incredible work that they do on the ground supporting our children and youth in care. We want to thank our indigenous leaders and community organizations for their powerful advocacy and support of indigenous children and youth.

We have listened to families and leaders from indigenous communities across Ontario, and we understand that while we have come very far, we still have a long way to go. We're committed to reconciliation and to ensuring indigenous communities are respected and have greater control over the care that their children and youth receive.

I want to thank the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Ontario Association of Residences Treating Youth, the Ontario Residential Care Association, Children's Mental Health Ontario, the Canadian Union of Public Employees and UNICEF Canada for working with our government on this important legislation. I also want to thank the front-line support workers who have dedicated their careers to supporting and empowering our province's children and youth. I also want to thank the hundreds of other organizations across this province that work in the child welfare space and advocate for children and for reform, and have travelled great distances to share their perspectives during the committee process.

Mr. Speaker, I'm inspired by the tireless efforts of the many community agencies, advocates and front-line workers across this province who work diligently each and every day to improve the outcomes for children,

youth and families in Ontario. We thank them for compassionately and expertly guiding young people on their journeys to adulthood, and we thank them for helping to build stronger communities.

Most importantly, I also want to thank the children and youth with lived experience who courageously and articulately shared their thoughts and goals with us—youth like the 25-year-old man who spoke to our committee and shared his lived experience as a child who first came into care when he was only nine years old. He said that this legislation is not about the men and women who were in the room; it's about young people like him. "We have such an important mission ... a responsibility ... to youth and young people that this province of ours services.... It's so important we get it right"—and he was absolutely right.

This legislation will give our youth greater support and better outcomes. While this particular young man is no longer in care and does exceptional work supporting youth in care today, I know that this legislation is an important step forward for the children that we are responsible for today. We have a responsibility and a duty to protect, support and provide an environment where our children and youth like him can thrive.

The CYFSA will, if passed and proclaimed, put the focus where it belongs: on our children and youth. This government is taking bold action, and this is why we proposed Bill 89. The children and youth of this province have been waiting for these changes for many years.

If passed, this legislation will put children and youth at the heart of decision-making—with Katelynn's Principle, a principle strongly advocated by children and youth across Ontario and by the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. It will strengthen the requirement in law to give young people a voice in the decisions about their care and protection.

Under the proposed CYFSA, children and youth receiving services have the right to express their views freely and safely about matters that affect them. They have the right to have their views given due weight, in accordance with their age and maturity. They will be consulted on the nature of services they are receiving, and advised of the decisions made. They can raise concerns or recommend changes about the services that they're receiving, without fear of coercion, discrimination or reprisal. They will be informed of these rights and about the services provided by the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth and the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario.

1740

While our focus is on the future, our proposed legislation builds on the work of the past. Together with the support of our partners, we have implemented a number of incremental, beneficial changes that have made child and youth services stronger, more responsive to individual family needs and more accountable to the public. Today, fewer children and youth are coming into care, and youth have more supports when transitioning into adulthood.

While we are proud of our accomplishments, we know we must keep raising the bar for our children and youth, and that's what the CYFSA does. During our consultations, young people told us that we need to do a better job of listening. I know I told my own parents that. They told us they want us to better understand their rights, and they told us that they want their perspectives to be respected.

We heard from indigenous partners about the essential importance of respecting their autonomy and their own approaches to supporting their children and families in their communities and in a culturally appropriate manner.

We heard that the current legislation does not reflect the diversity of Ontario, and that services must be more inclusive and culturally appropriate for children and youth of all backgrounds and identities. We listened carefully, and we are taking action.

The proposed CYFSA aims to be consistent with and build upon the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It recognizes the importance of diversity and inclusion, consistent with the Human Rights Code and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It also recognizes the need to address systemic racism.

It introduces a number of changes focused on increasing transparency and accountability, and improving service quality across a wide range of child and youth services. It builds on the goals of Katelynn's Principle, which holds that every child needs to be seen, heard and respected. It empowers children and families, and it ensures that services are provided in a way that is child-centred for every child and young person receiving services.

Mr. Speaker, we are backing up our words with action. In the proposed budget, our government has committed an additional \$134 million over four years to support new initiatives in the child welfare sector. Supporting children and youth, helping them reach their full potential, is a critical part of our plan to build a stronger and healthier Ontario. I am proud that we have made a significant investment in this year's budget to help put our plan into action.

The CYFSA has numerous goals. Rights of children and youth need to be observed; they need to be listened to. We need to support First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, and respect their cultures, knowledge and traditions as well as their autonomy.

Our children's aid and indigenous child well-being societies are not currently allowed to deliver protection and other services to many vulnerable 16- and 17-year-olds. We know that older youth have been abused or neglected, and have an increased risk of experiencing homelessness, mental health issues, substance abuse, human trafficking and decreased employment prospects. We can't, as a province, afford to ignore these issues.

The proposed CYFSA raises the age of protection to 18, extending access to the existing range of child protection services to 16- and 17-year-olds and their families. If passed, this provision would bring Ontario in line with many other provinces and territories across Canada. This is the right thing to do.

The CYFSA affirms Ontario's commitment to diversity and inclusion, and to providing culturally appropriate services. It recognizes the need to address systemic racism and the challenges it creates for children, youth and families receiving the services. It paves the way for services that provide the best possible support to children and youth. It focuses on quality improvement.

The proposed legislation will provide new rights for children, youth and families, including the right to access their personal information from service providers. There will be new rules about privacy, protection and information-sharing between service providers, that are being proposed in order to help families, so that they only have to tell their story once.

Our government wants to improve the delivery of adoption services. We want children to find stability through permanent homes and through relationships that are meaningful to them.

If passed, the proposed legislation will give children a stronger voice in decisions about their relationships with their birth families.

To the members of this House: I ask that each of you provide all-party support for this important legislation, so that we can empower and support our children and youth. We want to help children reach their fullest potential to succeed. The children and the youth are at the heart of this legislation and continue to be at the heart of our actions, moving forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Second call for further debate? Third call: Fur-

ther debate? Seeing none, pursuant to the order of the House dated May 30, 2017, I'm now required to put the question.

Mr. Del Duca has moved third reading of 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, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Hold off. We have a deferral. Thank you.

Pursuant to standing order 28(h), they request that the vote on third reading of government order G89 be deferred until deferred votes on Thursday, June 1, 2017.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Minister McGarry has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1751.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
MacLaren, Jack (IND)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
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
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Soo Wong
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Lisa MacLeod
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