

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

No. 110

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

N<sup>o</sup> 110

2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
41<sup>st</sup> Parliament

Wednesday  
25 October 2017

2<sup>e</sup> session  
41<sup>e</sup> législature

Mercredi  
25 octobre 2017

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Speaker: Honourable Dave Levac  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Dave Levac  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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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  
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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

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## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 25 October 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 25 octobre 2017

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECTING A WOMAN'S RIGHT  
TO ACCESS ABORTION  
SERVICES ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 PROTÉGEANT  
LE DROIT DES FEMMES À RECOURIR  
AUX SERVICES D'INTERRUPTION  
VOLONTAIRE DE GROSSESSE

Mr. Naqvi moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 163, An Act to enact the Safe Access to Abortion Services Act, 2017 and to amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in relation to abortion services / Projet de loi 163, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur l'accès sécuritaire aux services d'interruption volontaire de grossesse et modifiant la Loi sur l'accès à l'information et la protection de la vie privée en ce qui a trait aux services d'interruption volontaire de grossesse.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Naqvi.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I really appreciate you acknowledging me to speak on this very important piece of legislation.

I rise in the House today to continue debate on a bill that would, if passed, send a very clear message that our government will always stand up for a woman's right to choose and that we will not accept any kind of interference or harassment aimed at limiting this right. I want to be unequivocal in this House that when I mention "women" and "patients" throughout the course of this debate, I include trans men and non-binary and gender nonconforming individuals in that definition as well. They too, often more than most, need and deserve the protections we are talking about today through Bill 163.

The choice to access abortion services is a deeply personal one. Patients have the right to choose to access abortion services with their privacy maintained, free from outside intimidation or interference. Clinic staff and health care professionals who provide abortion services must also be protected.

As I have mentioned before, over the past several months we have heard reports of heightened security risks and privacy concerns around clinics and facilities that provide abortion services across Ontario. In my

hometown of Ottawa—in fact, in my riding of Ottawa Centre—protestors at the Morgentaler Clinic have reportedly escalated. While I strongly support everyone's right to freedom of expression, our laws must balance that right with the need to protect access to abortion services, and to protect the safety, security, health and privacy of patients and the providers, because activities that jeopardize this are simply not acceptable.

After I heard the reports from the Morgentaler Clinic in my community in Ottawa, I began to ask, "How can patients and providers be better protected from these activities under the current law?" After looking into this very important issue, I learned that we do not have consistent protections in place across the province. In fact, I was personally surprised, because I assumed—as I believe many across our province did—that there had been protections in place for some time across the province.

In fact, most clinics in Ontario are not currently protected by the injunctions that were issued back in the early 1990s. There are also numerous other facilities in Ontario that offer abortion services, including hospitals and pharmacies, where protest activities are not restricted by any injunction in our province.

After learning this, I announced that the government would introduce legislation to protect patients, clinic staff and abortion service providers across the province—an announcement which, I think you'll all agree, was received with much welcome from advocates, activists, health care providers and women: that it is an appropriately right direction for us to go in.

We got to work right away. Over the summer, the Ministry of the Attorney General began looking at other jurisdictions like British Columbia, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador that have already enacted their own safe-access-zone laws in their own jurisdictions. All three of these jurisdictions introduced legislation in response to ongoing protests and concerns from clinics regarding patient safety.

I'm proud to say that our bill builds on these approaches and takes it a step further. Our bill would also cover medical abortions through the prescribing or dispensing of Mifegymiso. We recognize that the health care landscape is changing and the professionals that prescribe or dispense these drugs should be protected in the areas where they live and work.

The legislation we are proposing that is before this House would reflect the reality of how abortion services are provided in Ontario. I'm happy to say that Ontario will set a new standard, making us a leader in protecting access to abortion services. As I mentioned before, the laws in other parts of Canada provided a good starting

point for the development of Bill 163, but we needed to make sure the changes we're considering would be able to work in our province here in Ontario.

We asked a number of Ontario health advocates, legal experts and advocacy groups for their input and expertise. To strike the right balance between protecting freedom of expression and the need to protect the safety, security, health and privacy of women and providers, we needed to hear from a broad group of stakeholders. This included abortion clinics and anti-abortion advocacy groups, among many others.

We did not shy away from hearing and considering different views. Over the course of the consultations that we conducted in August, these groups provided information about the provision of abortion services in Ontario today and ideas about how this would look like in the future. We also heard about anti-abortion protest activity and its impact on women, staff and health care providers in our communities. I would like to once again thank them, because their input helped us to develop legislation that I think will make a significant difference in protecting women in our province. While I know that some may not agree with these changes, I believe we have struck the right balance between protecting the safety, security, health and privacy of people accessing or providing abortion services with the right to freedom of expression.

We continued to seek input on this bill at the committee. At the public hearings held last week, we received input from 17 individuals representing 14 different organizations. These individuals held diverse viewpoints on abortion services, and I would like to thank them for their deputations.

It was important that we hear their experiences with protest activity and their perspectives on the proposed legislation. After hearing from them, we determined that substantive changes were not required to this bill. But we want to thank all those who came forward and confirmed for us that we struck the right balance, and for their additional input in the deliberation process. The additional details that came forward at committee will help as we move to draft regulations and develop the application process for other health care facilities.

**0910**

Speaker, I would like to stress that this bill and the timing of it could not be more important. Women across Ontario deserve the assurance that should they choose to access abortion services, they will be able to do so privately, safely and securely. The bill that we are debating today would limit anti-abortion protest activities in designated areas. Our intention is to protect access to abortion services by putting distance between protesters and people seeking to access and provide these services.

In these designated areas, anti-abortion protest activities and interference and harassment of people accessing or providing abortion services would be prohibited. To start, there are eight abortion clinics in Ontario that would be automatically protected. They would have safe access zones of 50 metres, which could be increased up

to 150 metres by regulation. The proposed safe access zones would include the property on which the clinic is located and will start at the boundaries of that property.

I want to be clear that we are not denying people's right to protest. They are free to express themselves and engage in anti-abortion protests, but not in those designated areas around clinics, facilities and homes where doing so may prevent a woman from making a decision about her own health care out of fear for her safety, security, health or privacy, and where doing so intimidates clinic staff or health care providers coming into work in the morning or going home at the end of the day. The law would not prohibit anti-abortion protest activities that take place outside safe access zones.

We know that there are staff and patients who provide or seek abortion services outside of the eight abortion clinics in Ontario, such as hospitals, pharmacies and community health centres. To ensure that these facilities are adequately protected, we are proposing to make available a process that would allow these facilities to apply for safe access zones of up to 150 metres. This means that locations where Mifegymiso is prescribed or dispensed would be eligible to apply for safe access zones. It is now available at no cost to women who need it, thanks to the work that my colleagues the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister of the Status of Women have done.

Safe access zone protections would also be extended automatically to the homes of all clinic staff and health professionals who provide abortion services. They would automatically receive a safe access zone of 150 metres.

Finally, the proposed legislation includes a general anti-harassment provision to protect providers of these services, wherever they are, from harassing conduct directed at them. Under the proposed legislation, they would be protected, whether they are at home, at work or picking their kids up from school.

Speaker, I have often been asked, just by way of reference, what 50 metres is. I think the best analogy I can give that people understand is that an Olympic-size pool is 50 metres in length. That's the distance one is looking at.

It is my steadfast belief that every woman, every patient in Ontario has the right to make decisions about her own health care and that she deserves to do so freely, without fear for her safety, security, health or privacy, without fear of being threatened with violence, harassment or intimidation. No woman should ever have to take such things into account, and neither should clinic staff and health care professionals, who are just trying to get to work in the morning like the rest of us.

The legislation before you today is about protecting women's safety, security, privacy and health. It's about protecting and defending the right to choose.

I thank all the members for their support. I look forward to the passage of this bill as early as this afternoon, hopefully with the support of all members,

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I rise today as women's issues critic for the Ontario NDP caucus to express the strong support of our caucus for this bill, the Protecting a Woman's Right to Access Abortion Services Act. It is our hope that it will be put into place as quickly as possible to enable Ontario women and non-binary and trans people to access abortion services without fear of harassment, bullying, intimidation or shame, whether at a clinic or a hospital, at a doctor's office or a pharmacy, or at any other facility that offers this legal, OHIP-covered health care service.

Equally important, the bill will also protect the homes and offices of the health care professionals who provide abortion services, which was emphasized by many deputants who spoke to the committee about the bill as essential to expand the number of physicians, nurse practitioners and pharmacists who are involved in prescribing and dispensing the abortion pill Mifegymiso.

Despite the political hiccups of earlier this month, I want to express my thanks to the Attorney General for bringing in this legislation. I want to thank the official opposition for their support of this bill, which I suspect required a lot of behind-the-scenes discussion and negotiation. It is rare but encouraging to see such a swift and solid consensus across party lines.

Most of all, I want to thank the organizations and individuals who provided input to the bill while it was being drafted over the summer or during committee hearings this week, especially the Association of Ontario Midwives, the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, Planned Parenthood Toronto, Planned Parenthood Ottawa, the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada, Ottawa city councillor Catherine McKenney, Unifor Ontario regional women's committee, Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights, Defend Choice: Ottawa, the National Abortion Federation, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, the SHORE Centre in Kitchener-Waterloo, and the Ontario Medical Association, all of whom strongly supported this bill.

In January 1988 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the abortion provisions of the Criminal Code were unconstitutional and the law was struck down. I remember the ruling well. I was working as a staffer on Parliament Hill in Ottawa in the office of MP Marion Dewar, who was a former mayor of Ottawa and also women's issues critic for the federal NDP.

As a young feminist, the struggle for abortion rights, for a woman's right to autonomy over her own body, was one of the first issues that mobilized me politically. For me and for so many others, the Supreme Court's decision was a vindication of what could be achieved through political advocacy. It signalled that change is possible if we push hard enough, and it was all I needed to remain committed to political action for the rest of my life.

Since 1988, despite efforts to bring in new abortion laws, abortion has been legal in Canada. It is a reproductive health care service that is guaranteed to every woman and every non-binary and trans person in our province and in our country. The bill that is before us

today, Bill 163, does not change that basic right. What the bill does do is ensure that women can exercise that right without interference, without being judged and without having disturbing images and unwanted messages thrust upon them.

As Carolyn Egan of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics said during public input, "The right to abortion is an illusion if we are not able to access the facilities that provide it without fear of intimidation and harassment. No one should be subject to this type of abuse. All Ontarians should be allowed to access any health service with their head held high, confident that their rights will be protected."

#### 0920

The committee heard, during public input, about the phone line operated by Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights, which receives more than 2,400 calls a year from across the country. Virtually all of these calls—97%—are about the barriers experienced by people in accessing safe abortion services. These include difficulty finding a nearby clinic or hospital and the requirement to travel out of their community—sometimes hundreds of kilometres to the nearest urban centre—because there is no local service or the local service is limited in the procedures that can be performed.

Barriers also include the costs of travel and accommodation when you have to go out of your community. You have to arrange for child care and take time off work. When you encounter anti-choice protesters at the clinic, you may be delayed in accessing your service. We heard about women who leave, who go home, who don't make their appointment because they are intimidated.

Most often, people call Action Canada's phone line asking about the protesters, asking if they could be hurt or harmed by picketers in front of the clinic. They want to know if there is a way to get an abortion without being harassed or shamed, without having their photograph taken, their licence plate recorded, or intimidation by picketers outside the facility.

What does the experience of violence or even the threat of violence do for a woman who is thinking about terminating an unwanted pregnancy? We know what it does to women after they have had their abortion. There is a growing body of research about the post-abortion impact of protesters on women's physical health and the medical complications that can arise when women experience picketing as they arrive to access services.

Peer-reviewed research studies have shown that exposure to anti-choice protesters before an abortion causes distress, anger, fear, anxiety and guilt, and is a significant predictor of depression immediately following the abortion. An Australian study showed that women were distressed just by the mere presence of protesters. Even if they were just standing there silently, it is very intimidating for the woman who is going in to access the service, and it creates a shaming atmosphere.

The physiological risks and psychological harm to women that are associated with anti-choice activity outside an abortion clinic were part of the court's reasoning

when the 1994 injunctions were issued that limited protesters at three Toronto clinics and four hospitals in London, North Bay and Brantford. At the time, the court stated:

“A woman who is traumatized by protesters as she approaches an abortion clinic may, as the evidence indicates, remain in this emotional state after she enters the facility to receive medical care. This is particularly likely when the patient realizes she will encounter the protesters upon her departure. Medical staff at these clinics state that protesters leave patients crying and in great distress. This stress complicates counselling, increases the health risk and prolongs recovery times.”

When we heard the input into the bill, several presenters talked about the difference between these legal injunctions that were put in place in 1994 and the safe access zones that are available in Bill 163. First, Bill 163 will make safe access zones automatic for every clinic in Ontario, which removes the requirement for clinics to have to go through the cumbersome and costly legal process of obtaining a court injunction. Bill 163 protections will also cover the homes of the staff of the clinics, as well as other facilities where abortions are provided, such as family physicians and pharmacies that dispense Mifegymiso.

The bill also offers the flexibility to extend the legislative protections of the bill to other health care professionals who are not currently involved in the provision of abortion services but who plan to be in the future. This was very important to the Association of Ontario Midwives, given their expectations that midwives will be involved in abortion care within the next year or so, as well as Planned Parenthood Toronto, which plans to dispense Mifegymiso.

As the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada stated to the committee, “The legislation works better than court injunctions, which are very expensive and difficult to enforce and they don’t have much enforcement teeth in them.” Bill 163 ensures “that if the law is breached, there are penalties in place that will deter the protesters and ensure that that safe atmosphere is maintained.”

During the input to the committee, we heard a lot about what had happened in Ottawa. Ottawa city councillor Catherine McKenney told us about the stories she had heard from many women across the city about accessing health care services at the Morgentaler Clinic. She said they all told a very similar story of being verbally abused and harassed by some protesters as they approached the clinic; how they were routinely intimidated and followed into neighbouring businesses if they attempted to walk away, and often were yelled at in public. She goes on to say, “The stories were all very, very similar,” and in more than one instance she heard from women that they were spat on as they attempted to enter the clinic. “So, in short,” she says, “women were being routinely and publicly assaulted and harassed on a downtown sidewalk in the capital city of Canada, in the shadow of Parliament.”

The representative of the Unifor women’s committee also lives in Ottawa and said that some protesters have

gone so far as to write the home addresses and names of doctors and nurses on their protest signs. She said that it has gotten to the point where the clinic has started to pay for private security to be at the door and they are escorting women or anybody accessing the services, as well as staff, in and out of the doors of the clinic.

It’s important to remember or to recognize, Speaker, that even though this harassment and intimidation that was occurring in Ottawa was the impetus for this legislation, it was not an isolated occurrence. We heard very clearly that anti-choice protesting is on the rise across the province, particularly in the wake of the election of Donald Trump. The National Abortion Federation of Canada indicated that the number of picketers reported outside abortion clinics in Ontario has doubled since 2014, just over a two-year period. As a result, abortion clinics have been hiring security guards and even installing bulletproof glass in their offices.

Planned Parenthood Toronto told us about anti-choice picketers who have entered the clinic on multiple occasions, who have posted threatening signs on the building, and who have told staff they deserve to be hanged for the work that they do. This increase in anti-choice activity led Planned Parenthood Toronto to work with police on developing a security plan. They installed cameras, they have a new lock system, and they have regular safety drills for staff.

Certainly, we heard not just about the safety of women, but many of the deputants who spoke to the committee talked about the safety of staff. In this province, we have new legislation to protect workers from harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace, yet staff who work at Planned Parenthood agencies or staff who work at an abortion clinic often face harassment on a daily basis as they arrive to do their jobs. Planned Parenthood Toronto says, “It’s imperative that the providers feel protected under this legislation, that they know that”—just think about this, Speaker: that staff know that if they’re dropping their child off at child care before they go to work, if they’re going out somewhere at night after they have completed their job or if they are with their co-workers at a work function after work hours—they need to know that they can be free of intimidation, of harassment, of any kind of public shaming for the work that they do, which is legal and safe and an approved medical procedure.

When I spoke to this bill at second reading, I talked in detail about the fact that although abortion is legal in Canada, it is far from accessible. In almost 30 years since the Morgentaler ruling, Ontario women and trans people continue to experience significant barriers to accessing this medically necessary service. These barriers are generally considered to fall into three categories: geography and socio-economic status; lack of abortion service providers; and, finally, the stigma, intimidation and harassment associated with obtaining an abortion. With Health Canada’s approval of Mifegymiso, and with full OHIP coverage for the abortion pill, Bill 163 is the essential third element to help reduce, either directly or indirectly, all three of these main barriers.

0930

Many of the presenters who talked to MPPs said that the bill would provide reassurance to physicians who were worried that prescribing Mifegymiso would jeopardize their practice if they became a target for protesters.

Carolyn Egan said that she was talking to physicians in Barrie who wanted to provide abortion services because there are no local services available, and yet hesitated because of what it could mean to them personally. She told us about a physician at a clinic in Toronto who was the subject of leaflets that were distributed in the neighbourhood around the clinic that identified the doctor as an abortion provider. She also told us about signs posted outside a clinic that stated, "Murderers inside." Planned Parenthood Ottawa reinforced this point and said that in their discussions with doctors about the abortion pill, security was definitely one of the prime issues.

Speaker, I want to highlight one of the recommendations that was made by several presenters—even though there were no amendments brought forward to the bill. I urge the government to take note of this concern—and that is that the application process to expand the area of the bubble zone from 50 metres to 150 metres and the application process to become covered as a facility under the legislation have to be easy for people to engage in. Planned Parenthood Toronto said that the ability to apply for a safe access zone without needing a legal team and needing a lot of money, without having to prove a certain level of protester activity before you're considered eligible, without having to wait a long time for your application to be approved—all of these are going to be especially important for rural providers, in particular, who want to start prescribing Mifegymiso. Several of the other presenters who spoke to the committee emphasized the same concern.

There has been opposition to this bill, not surprisingly, and much of that is based on the view that Bill 163 represents an infringement on freedom of speech. As the Attorney General pointed out, however, similar legislation in BC has survived legal challenges three times since it was first put in place in 1995, and it was found to be constitutional by the BC Court of Appeal in 2008. At the time, the court ruled that the law infringes only minimally on freedom of expression and was justified to protect a women's right to medical services.

Anti-choice protesters will still have the right to protest outside of the bubble zone. They will still be able to exercise their freedom of expression by protesting in other places, just not in front of the clinic. They will still have the right to express their views on abortion, but they do not have the right to prevent a woman from accessing abortion services, whether through so-called sidewalk counselling, whether through the display of gruesome and disturbing images, or even whether standing in silent judgment.

Before I close, I just wanted to reinforce a couple of the points I made during second reading debate. At that time, I framed my remarks within a reproductive justice

framework. I talked about the need to have a broad range of supports in place to ensure that women are able to choose when and if to have a child and to be able to parent the children they have in safe and healthy environments.

I talked about the need to look at quality affordable child care, ending violence against women, closing the gender wage gap and providing the supports that families need in order to be able to raise their children.

I also talked about access to contraception, which is key to preventing unwanted pregnancies in the first place. This Liberal government's OHIP+ plan, its so-called pharmacare plan, leaves out hundreds of thousands of Ontario women in their childbearing years who may not be able to afford birth control pills and will not be covered by OHIP+ because they are over the age of 25. We need a real pharmacare plan in this province that ensures that every person, every Ontarian, is able to afford the prescriptions they need.

With those comments, I want to close by reiterating our caucus's strong and unequivocal support for this bill and our hopes for its very swift enactment.

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

**Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I'd like to thank the Attorney General for sharing his time with me today for this very important initiative before the House. I also want to thank him for his tireless advocacy and work on Bill 163, the Safe Access to Abortion Services Act, 2017.

Speaker, this is an important and urgent piece of legislation for Ontario. It's important because, if passed, Ontario would protect a woman's right to choose; because, if passed, it would protect a women's right to choose abortion services without fear of interference, intimidation, bullying or harassment; and because, if passed, it would protect the safety, security, health and privacy of women and health care providers.

This bill would allow for safe access zones to be established around clinics and facilities that offer abortion services. These safe zones would also protect the homes of clinic staff and the homes and offices of regulated health professionals who provide these services. The bottom line is, providers of these important services for women would no longer feel like they are at risk because of their work. That's important. And women in our province would no longer feel they are at risk because of their health care choices.

That's why this proposed legislation is an important step forward and it is an urgent step forward, one of many our government is taking to strengthen the rights of all women in Ontario. Our government is committed to ensuring that women and girls in Ontario are strong and successful and that they enjoy equal opportunities. Our government is committed to ensuring that women and girls are safe in Ontario. Our government is committed to ensuring that women have the right to make their own decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. This is a human right and one our government wants to protect.

The Safe Access to Abortion Services Act, 2017, if passed, would create safe spaces around clinics and facilities where activities such as advising a person to refrain from accessing abortion services or protesting or engaging in activities that intimidate or interfere with access to abortion services would be prohibited.

Safe access zones around homes would also prohibit activities directly targeted at clinic staff or health professionals around their homes. In fact, this legislation would also prohibit harassing conduct anywhere in Ontario directed at clinic staff and regulated health professionals who provide abortion services.

The proposed act would allow Ontario hospitals and doctors' offices or pharmacies that dispense the abortion pill Mifegymiso to apply to create safe access zones. This follows on our government's important new decision to make Mifegymiso available across Ontario and help every woman access abortion services. Providing Mifegymiso free of charge means more equitable access to abortion for women across Ontario.

Speaker, Ontario must take steps to protect women who are exercising their right to choose. They should not be harassed, bullied or intimidated for making that choice. I want you to know that our government is committed to removing the barriers to sexual and reproductive health. Our government is committed to protecting access to abortion services and protecting the safety, security, health and privacy of patients and providers. That's why we introduced the Safe Access to Abortion Services Act. That's why this legislation is urgent and we want to get it right.

**0940**

Women should no longer have to fear accessing abortion services. That's why we need to understand that denying women choices about their own bodies and their own lives denies women their equal place in our society.

While it's important to protect everyone's fundamental right to freedom of expression, our laws must balance that right with the basic right to keep people safe. Activities that jeopardize the health, safety, security and privacy of patients and providers are not acceptable. I believe we have found a balanced way forward. Freedom of expression is important, and so is the right to protest and voice your own opinions, but those rights must be balanced. They must be balanced with the need to protect access to abortion services and to protect the safety, security, health and privacy of patients and providers. At a moment when a woman is making one of the most private decisions she will ever have to make, she needs to be able to do so without fear of being threatened, harassed or intimidated. I believe that policies like this are so important.

Ontario is playing a leading role in increasing empowerment for women. We've made key investments and worked hard to improve the security, equality and empowerment of women and girls, to overcome barriers on the path to greater economic security and personal fulfillment, and to end sexual violence and harassment against women and girls in our province. The women of

this province and this country have fought long and hard—long and hard—for their reproductive rights and justice. I am proud that we are delivering on our vision for women and girls in this province. It's the right thing to do.

I want to thank all of the members who spoke before me in support of this very important bill. And I want to say that the work on Bill 163 is important. It's an urgent piece of legislation, and it is an honour for me to stand here and speak in support of it because, if passed, it would protect a woman's right to choose abortion services without fear of interference, intimidation, bullying or harassment.

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

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's my pleasure to join the debate today on a very important public safety issue in the province of Ontario, and that's Bill 163, the Protecting a Woman's Right to Access Abortion Services Act. I want to thank all my colleagues, too, in the Progressive Conservative caucus for supporting this bill and supporting my public comments and also my desire to have expedited this piece of legislation.

I would just like to point out that a couple of Thursdays ago I rose in the House and said, "Let's move this: first, second, third reading. Let's expedite it," just to make sure that by that Thursday afternoon, by lunch, all women in Ontario would have safety precautions put in place for them if they went to try to receive or were going to receive a legal medical procedure in the province of Ontario, which is funded.

That didn't happen. The Liberals, I think, wanted to play a couple of little political games in order to create some divisions. But that was okay, because we said, "That's fine. If you want to pursue this, we'll still support it, and if you want to come forward after the break, we would be happy to engage in an expedited process."

So I will note this before I continue my remarks: Despite extra debate and bringing folks to Queen's Park, even by teleconference, there were no amendments to the bill. We're all supporting the bill as it is and as it was laid here in first and second reading. I wanted to point that out: that, despite deciding to lengthen this process by an extra couple of weeks, nothing has changed in this bill whatsoever. That, I think, is very important.

The second thing I must say, and I'll be very open about this: I have received a bit of criticism for supporting this piece of legislation from people who are pro-life. My colleague, I thought, made a really great point—my colleague Peggy Sattler, who said, "We respect their views," and I certainly do, Speaker. I certainly respect their view of being pro-life. I happen to be pro-choice. I'm not overly enthused about abortion, but I do believe that a woman has a right to choose. I fundamentally believe that. I fundamentally believe that if that is her choice, to choose an abortion, then she should be safe in doing so, that she should not fear for her security and that she should not fear harassment or intimidation.

I also don't view this as a pro-choice or pro-life narrative. I believe it is a pro-women's safety narrative to

access something that is perfectly legal in the province of Ontario. I have received criticism and I have been called less than a Christian. I have been called less than a Conservative. But I can tell you fundamentally, good Christians respect other people and good Conservatives respect other people.

I will tell you, Speaker, I am proud to stand and speak on this bill as a Christian and a Conservative. I'll have nobody ever challenge me on either of those points, and if they do, I suppose—just like one of the ladies who lives in Ottawa Centre said she was going to run a Conservative against me—good luck with that, really good luck with that. We're standing here today on a fundamental issue of safety and security for women. The last time I checked, Conservatives stand for law and order. The last time I checked, I've always stood for law and order, and this is a law and order bill put forward by the Auditor General. I'm supporting law and order. I wanted to be very clear about that today.

The one other thing I wanted to point out today is that I had the opportunity on the weekend to, as many of us did, be part of a number of different events in our communities. I typically like to go to about 14 events on the weekend; no exception on Saturday, when I started my morning at about 8:30 and coached hockey. I left there and I went to an opening of a realtor's office; there were about 100 people there. I then spent two hours canvassing in Half Moon Bay in my constituency of Nepean. After that, I went to—I'm going to list them all—a Diwali event. And then I went to the Amazing People Gala. I went to the Barrhaven Scottish Rugby Football Club. There's a point to all this, Speaker. I left there and I went to a food cupboard event. Then I finished my night off at a Diwali event. I ended up getting home at 11:30.

Why am I telling you this? Because for all of those trolls on social media who decided they were going to attack me and have these fake names, my constituents applauded me for taking a stand: a lot of men, because they have daughters or they have a wife; and a lot of women told me they had been in that same situation one time before and they had been harassed. They thanked me. They thanked me privately, off in a corner, where they gave me a hug and a kiss on the cheek.

For anybody who wants to make this an issue and try to be polarizing, sending vitriol over this issue—you're not really thinking about other people. You're trying to intimidate them. So for all the people I saw from 8:30 in the morning until 11:30 at night on Saturday, which was probably several hundred people—all I had were people thanking me for taking a stand because they thought that this bill is about common decency. In fact, one would argue, if we were actually decent to one another, we wouldn't need such a piece of legislation, but we do. We know, for example, in the city of Ottawa, which I represent, there has been a common issue of continued harassment against women who are seeking a legal procedure which is funded by our government.

This is not up for debate. The safety of every person in our society is fundamentally why we are here, for law

and order. If people or individuals want to challenge that law and order, then we must as a society and we must as a Legislature put parameters in place to protect people. That is why we are here today, and that's why I'm pleased to support this piece of legislation. That's why, when people want to challenge me on this, I remind them that being decent is something that I want to pursue.

**0950**

I read on the weekend something that was very important to me when I was younger. I grew up as a young Progressive Conservative in the province of Nova Scotia. My dad was elected for 30 years and he was a campaign manager to many Conservatives over the years, including the former Premier John Hamm, and was a regional organizer for my cousin and his cousin, Donald Cameron, who was Premier of Nova Scotia. He ran campaigns for Peter and Elmer MacKay.

My mother is an elder in the Presbyterian Church. That's something we're quite proud of. In fact, she's an elder with my cousin, Donald, who was the Premier, and now they go to this church, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Glasgow, Nova Scotia.

Growing up, my father was a very proud Progressive Conservative. He reminded me, over the years—and he has passed now, for 10 years—that he was the youth chair for Robert Stanfield. His first convention ever was to support Joe Clark in the 1970s. Many years later, in Joe Clark's second trip around the sun, I got to work for him from 1998 to 2000.

In any event, I want to digress for a moment because I was provided with a copy of what it means to be a Conservative. It was written by Robert Stanfield and it was comments to the Conservative caucus of the day. It was provided to me by a dear family friend, Senator Michael Forrestall, who has now passed and whom my husband worked for for over a decade. Michael, obviously, was from Nova Scotia and knew my family quite well. He was the executive director of the Progressive Conservative Party when Robert Stanfield was Premier. My great-uncle was also in that cabinet.

I read it. It talked about, as Conservatives—and I think this is really fundamental for anybody that's watching this—it's fundamental, as a Conservative, to build a party that doesn't polarize or pit groups in society against one another. No, in fact, what Robert Stanfield effectively said in this memo is that a Conservative caucus must represent all facets of the country, all facets of a province, people from all walks of life. We do not polarize against and pit one another against each other.

I must say, and I think it's important as we speak to this bill: For too long, I think there has been an eager desire on the part of the left to use abortion as a wedge issue for Conservatives, to divide us. I'm here to actually counter that and say that that is an old tactic that was used by Jean Chrétien in 1997. It was really perfected during the time of the Canadian Alliance with Stockwell Day. The Liberals were able to manipulate that. Here we are 25 years later, and I think that the current government's motivation on this was to do just the same.

But I'm here to tell you that regardless of whether you are on the social conservative aspect or you're on my side, which is the Progressive Conservative aspect, there's a voice for everyone in this party. That's why I'm very pleased that our leader, Patrick Brown, has adopted that mentality. That's why we're here today talking to people. It doesn't matter who you love, where you're from; it doesn't matter where you worship: You have a home here.

This debate is very important because it allows for me, as a female Progressive Conservative who has been in the party since I was born, basically as a Progressive Conservative from the red Tory tradition of Atlantic Canada, to stand alongside those who may not share my views. We are Progressive Conservatives. None of us are less so because we share different ideas on some social issues. I think fundamentally we all agree on the issues of fiscal conservatism, law and order. We believe in accountability. The attempts to divide us, I think, were woefully inadequate in this particular regard, and I think my caucus colleagues would agree.

I think too, when we have this discussion, it's important that we always are mindful of the people whom we're trying to protect here. The people we're trying to protect here and the person that I think of in my mind is the 18-year-old girl who may not have access to abortion in her community, may have to drive two hours, may have to use a circle of her friends in order to get access to this and is too ashamed to tell her family that she got pregnant. So she may have to travel by bus for two hours to get access, and she's probably terrified. She's effectively a young child herself at 18 years old, and without the protection of her mum or her dad or perhaps even her partner. She is walking through to try to access something that is perfectly legal—not illegal; perfectly legal, government-funded—and trying to walk into a clinic only to be harassed by somebody who doesn't know her, doesn't understand her story, doesn't understand where she came from or how she got there. They don't understand a thing about her. They just want to harass her.

Their views are perfectly fine, but they're not fine if you're going to intimidate another person. They're not fine if you're harassing someone. They're not fine if you're scaring somebody who is already vulnerable.

That's why I supported this bill, and without hesitation supported this bill, and spoke to our party. I'm just pleased that my caucus colleagues—in particular, my leader—took my position, took my view and believed that's what we're here to do. We're not trying to encourage people to have abortions. We're not trying to discourage people from having abortions. We're simply saying that if you choose to have an abortion, you should be safe in trying to access that perfectly legal medical procedure. That's what this bill is about.

I'm happy to stand on the floor of the assembly and have that conversation. I'm happy to join the debate. I'm a woman. I'm a mother. I have a daughter. I coach an all-female girls hockey team. I sit in the assembly with about 30% women, where we have female leaders, female

deputy leaders and female heads of committee. If we can't have this conversation without breaking into a fight, then—well, we shouldn't be breaking into a fight. I think it's common sense. It's common decency. That's the tradition that I have grown up in. It's certainly the tradition I have been part of on the floor of this House.

I would urge, though, caution in the continued polarization and volatility in matters where we know there will be emotion-based responses. I've seen it twice in the last two weeks. I've had the privilege of being able to stand in the assembly on what shouldn't be controversial issues, but they end up being controversial issues because the government believes that they can wedge my party and drag us—and then, of course, by speaking out and being somebody, then I get harassed.

But the thing is, the difference between me and the 18-year-old girl I'm talking about is that I don't have to put up with the harassment. I'm strong enough to put people in their place. I'm not afraid of hitting the “delete” button or the “block” button. I don't need to return phone calls from people who harass me. I have a good circle of people who can support me. I have a loud enough voice and a strong enough voice that I can fight back.

But there are girls and women in this province who don't have the support that I do. So if they decide they want to do something that might be deemed controversial or something that they don't necessarily want to talk about, then it's all up to us, in bills like this, to say that we will stand firmly behind them and we will put the necessary precautions in place.

Now, I know that when I go up to my office, I'll have a couple of emails. I'll probably be nailed on Facebook and Twitter, too—just bring it, right? Seriously. I know that what we're doing here is the right thing, for the right reasons. It's unfortunate that the bill didn't come from that place; it became a source for wedge politics, but that's fine. We're going to continue to make sure that we stand up for vulnerable people, whoever they are. As Robert Stanfield once wrote, “We will stand up for people from all walks of life, regardless of where they come from, because a true political party”—I would urge the Liberals to listen to this too; they should also welcome the views of an entire spectrum of people.

So with that, I want to thank my colleagues who sat on committee, because I was unable to attend committee. I was pleased to have my leader in my community, so my colleague Lisa Thompson as well as my colleague Gila Martow carried the ball in committee, and I appreciate them doing that work because most people know that in the Legislative Assembly a lot of the work that gets done isn't really necessarily on the floor of this assembly. It is done by the hard-working people who sit in the committees as MPPs, and, of course, the people on our staff.

I'd also like to say thank you to my constituents who told me unequivocally this weekend that it was the right thing to do. I can tell you, Speaker, it didn't matter if they were a young rugby player; it didn't matter if they were an elderly farmer; it didn't matter if they were a mum on a hockey team. They really got this; they understood it.

Maybe it's because, in Ottawa, it's very prevalent, so we were hearing about it on the news for over a year.

Maybe it's because this issue has spoken to people. People don't regularly walk around saying, "Oh, I had an abortion." They don't. If they did, they are holding that in. They might feel shame, they might feel remorse; I don't know, but they don't often just go up to you and say, "It was me." So I don't know, when the people came up to me this weekend, if there was personal experience. It's not my place to ask. But I certainly can tell you that for those who are seeking to access these services, they should be able to do so, not only protecting their privacy but also protecting their personal safety.

With that, Speaker, my time is limited. I just wanted to say that of course we will be supporting this today. I'm pleased that I had the opportunity to have this conversation. Perhaps, now that we've had a reasonable discussion on this in the Legislative Assembly, we can all be better people with respect to these issues of social conscience and we can respect one another.

The final thing I want to say is when I was in university, one of my classmates, who I thought was always much more intelligent than I, much brighter, once said, "I was taught to respect, not necessarily accept, another person's point of view." Speaker, when it comes to these issues of social conscience, I think that we would all be better to understand we all come from different places and we must respect the other person, but we don't have to accept their point of view.

In this debate, I hope that those who disagree with me and my colleagues who have spoken on this bill will respect that we have a different opinion than them, but they don't have to accept our opinion of pro-choice or pro-life. I would just like to leave an olive branch for everybody on all the different sides of this just to understand that there is respect, not necessarily acceptance.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 16, 2017, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Naqvi has moved third reading of Bill 163, An Act to enact the Safe Access to Abortion Services Act, 2017 and to amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in relation to abortion services.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

This will be dealt with after question period.

*Third reading vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Orders of the day. Minister?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** No further business, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Since there is no further business, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

*The House recessed from 1003 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Today in the House, in the Speaker's gallery, as part of a group that have come to pay tribute to a deceased member, are Mr. David Warner, the former Speaker of the House during the 35th Parliament, and Mr. Robert Alan Eagleson, MPP for Lakeshore in the 27th Parliament.

Welcome, gentlemen, to the tribute.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** As part of the Lymphoma Canada Queen's Park day today, I want to introduce Robin Markowitz from Lymphoma Canada; Kelly Gorman from the Canadian Cancer Society; Jilda Lazer from CanCertainty; and Sharon Dennis, who is a patient.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Today I'd like to introduce, on ECE appreciation day, Kim Gilbert, Christina Gilligan, Jessica Mustachi, Jennifer Miller, Yuchen Wang, Dayoung Kim, Feena Dougherty and Nancy Santos.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** It's Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day, so I'd like to welcome the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario. Here with us today are Sheila Olan-MacLean, Laurel Rothman, Carolyn Ferns, Erin Filby, Lyndsay Macdonald, Suzanne Parker, Martha Friendly, Lori Huston and Janet Borowy. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to introduce Robert Bick from CanCertainty; Joanne Di Nardo from the Canadian Cancer Society; Elizabeth Lye from Lymphoma Canada; and Daniel Glazerman, a patient.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Just before I move on, I would also like to introduce another former member, in the members' gallery: Jane McKenna, the member for Burlington in the 40th Parliament.

Welcome, Jane. Thank you for being here.

Further introductions?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** In the members' west gallery, I'd like to introduce, from the riding of Peterborough, Sheila Olan-MacLean, president of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and executive director of Compass Early Learning and Care.

And a member of my staff, Ivana Spasovska, is celebrating her birthday today.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I wish to introduce two local residents from Silver Hill who are here, in the members' gallery: Ian and Kim Grant.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I'd like to introduce Stephane Hamade. He's the president of my riding association.

Welcome to Queen's Park, Stephane.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I would like to welcome, from CAHO: Dr. Gianluigi Bisleri from the department of cardiac surgery at Queen's; Dr. Ben Glover, assistant professor of cardiac electrophysiology at Queen's; Roger Deeley, vice-dean of research at Queen's; and all of the representatives who are here from Providence Care

Hospital, from my riding of Kingston and the Islands. Welcome.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'd like to welcome all those here with Innovative Medicines Canada and their member companies. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** Today the Baha'i community are celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of their prophet, Baha'u'llah. They're having a reception in room 228. I invite all colleagues to attend that reception at lunchtime.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'd like to introduce Dorothy Sanderson in the gallery, coming down to observe Queen's Park today from the riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** It is my pleasure to welcome page captain Asma Siddiqi's parents, Ruquaiyeh and Azfar Siddiqi; and sister, Eiliyah Siddiqi. They are in the public gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** We all welcome the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario. I wish to welcome in particular CAMH, my former employer for 20 years.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I believe we have some students from Stephen Lewis Secondary School in my riding of Thornhill here today, and if it isn't them, then they'll be here soon.

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** I'm very pleased to rise to welcome all the ECEs who are here today and thank them for the great work they do in all of our schools and child care centres.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'd like to welcome Patrick Dalzell and Taylor McKenna from Bruce Power—providing 30% of Ontario's emissions-free electricity.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I'd like to address page captain Sheldon Kilroy today and his mother, Helene Boissonneault; father, Jim Kilroy—friends of mine from North Bay—and his aunt and uncle Christine and Christopher Hart, who are here today in the gallery.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I would also like to welcome, from my riding of Kingston and the Islands, Bill Bishop, who is a wonderful patient advocate with our CAHO hospitals.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'd like to introduce Jacqueline Dobson, a political enthusiast and a good friend.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We also have some special guests in the Speaker's gallery on my left-hand side. We have the consul general of Japan at Toronto, Takako Ito. Welcome. She is accompanied by the deputy consul general, Mr. Tetsuya Yoshimoto. Welcome.

Thank you for being with us.

#### GORDON CARTON

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would now entertain a point of order from the House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to recognize a former member of provincial Parliament from Armourdale, Mr. Gordon Robert Carton, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to pay tribute. Do we agree? Agreed.

The member from Windsor West.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** As MPPs immersed in the cut and thrust of partisan politics, our focus on the now and the current demands of life as an MPP often doesn't leave us with a lot of opportunities to focus on the history of this place and the tales it has to tell. If this chamber could talk, I can only imagine the things it would have to say about those who have gone on before us and gave of themselves in pursuit of a better Ontario.

When Gordon Carton passed away earlier this year, the memorials and articles written about his life wasted little time getting to the bold stand he took early in his political career, and rightfully so. It's not often that government MPPs openly speak out against government initiatives, let alone first-term, rookie MPPs. Even for the most seasoned veterans, the usual play is a campaign of quiet diplomacy and backroom conversations designed to sway opinion. Yet, with just about a year under his belt, Gordon took to his feet in this chamber and criticized the Robarts government's plans for compensating property owners affected by the construction and expansion of provincial highways. Because the story had a happy ending—the Robarts government reversed course—the story became a legend instead of being a cautionary tale.

Gordon wasn't afraid to take risks if it meant standing up for what he believed in. Whether as a backbencher or cabinet minister, he understood that being loyal sometimes meant speaking out, that giving voice to alternate perspectives is often the key to arriving at the best possible decision.

Ironically, many believe it was a disagreement over highways that led to the end of his political career. As Minister of Transportation and Communications, Gordon openly pushed for the installation of sound barriers along provincial highways to minimize traffic noise, a stance that put him out of step with his government. Despite his demotion from cabinet in 1974, the Davis government would adopt the sound barriers, which remain an element of Ontario highway construction to this day.

#### 1040

Gordon's decision to retire in the lead-up to the 1975 election opened the door to a successful second act in the private sector. He also continued to serve on the boards of several charities and not-for-profits, including York University, Community Living and the Toronto YMCA, to name a few. And, as always, Gordon took risks for the things he believed in, most notably, at the age of 95, when he embarked on his last commercial venture, Happiness Is Inc., a casual clothing company inspired by his passion for Canada and a desire to inspire Canadians to celebrate our moments of happiness together.

To Gordon's family and friends who are here with us today, we thank you for sharing this incredible man with the people of Ontario. Those of us who have the privilege of serving in this chamber realize the challenges that our public lives often present to those closest to us. We are

grateful for the sacrifice and support that you provided in helping Gordon make our province a better place for all of us.

Thank you, Gordon, for a life well lived. Ontario is a better place because of your service.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Before we move to the next tribute, I apologize to the House: I missed one of my chores, which was to introduce the guests that are here to pay tribute, so I will do that now.

With us to celebrate Gordon Carton, MPP for Armourdale in the 27th, 28th and 29th Parliaments, are his wife, Sharon; daughter Jan Woods and her husband, Christopher; granddaughter Vikki Scaini and her husband, Richard; granddaughter Andrea Armstrong and her husband, David; grandson Gordon Woods; and many, many family and friends. We welcome you to the House for this tribute. Thank you for being here.

Further tribute?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I did not know Gordon personally; however, I did some research about his life and his accomplishments so I could speak about a person who lived such a rich and meaningful life.

Gordon was passionate about politics from an early age. It eventually led to and culminated in his political career; he sat here in this Legislature for 12 years. But despite his passion for politics, I did hear that his jump into politics needed some convincing. It turns out that, while he liked to help people and candidates win political races, he preferred not to run himself. However, the Conservative Party eventually convinced him to run for the very new riding of Armourdale. He became its first MPP in 1963, and he represented that riding until 1975. Gordon was passionate about Armourdale. Portions of the riding are now incorporated into the riding of Willowdale, and hence, I'm honoured to do the tribute.

Gordon listened to and supported his constituents all the time, especially, as the member from the third party has just referenced, during the contentious construction of the enormous, at the time, 12-lane highway which cut through his riding. That was to become Highway 401. In 1964, Gordon stood up for his constituents, bravely, against his own party and called for the protection of property rights for those impacted by the highway's construction. He was dubbed at the time "the rebel with a cause." With that passion, he advocated for sound barriers to be installed along the highway, separating it from the properties of those who called the area their home. Those same barriers are still standing, between Yonge Street and Bathurst along the 401, and they have made life to this day better for all concerned.

While on the back benches at Queen's Park, Gordon sat on numerous committees, including the Standing Committees on Procedural Affairs, Private Bills, as well as Education and University Affairs. In particular, he was Chair of the select committee that introduced and modernized Ontario's Business Corporations Act. Under then-Premier Bill Davis, Gordon was appointed to various cabinet positions, including financial and commercial affairs, transportation and communications, and labour.

But, Speaker, Gordon was more than a politician. He was a navigator with the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II. He practised law for many years before entering politics. And, humbly, he rode the subway back and forth to work every day.

While working in the private sector, he oversaw the introduction—and I was quite taken by this because I am a devotee of ice cream. He introduced the Baskin-Robbins ice cream franchise to Canada. That is one of the many reasons why I will remember him.

Gordon sat on multiple boards. He sat on many charities and non-profit organizations, such as Community Living and Participation House, two non-profits that work with people with physical and developmental disabilities. In 1971, he arranged for various people—a significant number—to pledge \$30 a mile. That was a lot of money in 1971. And for that pledge, he ran 32 miles to raise funds for Cerebral Palsy Participation House.

Well into his nineties, his love of Canada led him to start Happiness Is Inc. It's a Canadian-made clothing company that celebrates the happy moments of being a Canadian. About the starting of Happiness Is, Gordon said, "I believe we all have moments of happiness that we seek and appreciate and wish to share."

These are just a few of his many accomplishments.

Speaker, there's a very personal story that I want to share with the House. It was a story about his dedication to 95 of his classmates from his former high school, Vaughan Road Collegiate Institute. It's now known as Vaughan Road Academy. Those 95 classmates of his died in World War II. On a visit to his high school, Gordon was shocked one day to see all 95 names on a memorial plaque in the school. It moved him, and he said, "I vowed they would never be forgotten." He made that comment in a publication in 2016, a magazine called InFormer magazine. It's published by the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians, in which he played an active role over the years.

Years later, a group of business associates wanted to establish a scholarship in his name at Vaughan Road Collegiate. Gordon said yes, he would do that; he would agree to that, on one condition. He insisted that, henceforward into perpetuity, the names of those 95 classmates had to be printed on every graduation ceremony pamphlet. And that remains in effect today. If you go to the graduation ceremonies this June, those 95 names will be there.

I did not know Gordon personally, but after reading about his passion and integrity, I wish that I personally would have had the chance to know him, to have a conversation with him, and to seek his advice also. Gordon served his country, his friends, his province and his constituents. His was an exemplary life.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further tribute? The member from Vaughan.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** Thornhill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thornhill.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I'm honoured to have the opportunity to speak about Mr. Gordon Carton, a man with

many talents and many accomplishments, an inspiring Canadian who truly loved life, and, from what I've been told by some of the members here who knew him, a really nice guy.

Gordon Robert Carton was born in Toronto on July 14, 1921. He attended Vaughan Road Collegiate Institute and grew up as a sports enthusiast and physical fitness buff. In high school, Gord was the captain of the football team and played on the all-star team.

**1050**

In a 1970s news article about Mr. Carton, it mentions that back in school, Gord won the 100-yard, 200-yard and half-mile races; came in first for pole vault; and came in second in the mile—all in one day. The article continues to discuss how Gord was probably the only minister in Premier William Davis's cabinet who ran the mile in five and a half minutes.

Gord was a World War II veteran as a navigator in the Royal Canadian Air Force before he pursued his education in the field of law. We just heard from the minister that 95 of his classmates from Vaughan Road Collegiate lost their lives serving alongside him in the Second World War, and they should never be forgotten.

Gord received his bachelor of arts degree in 1946 at Victoria College. By 1949, he had obtained his law degree from Osgoode Hall and began working as a lawyer. The firm was called Carton Richardson.

Gord got active in politics in his teen years, like many of the members here, I guess. His first political campaign was in 1942 on behalf of the first Co-operative Commonwealth Federation MP elected in Canada, Joe Noseworthy. I think you will all agree that the name "Noseworthy" is a pretty good name for a candidate.

He had worked in 11 elections in all roles, from poll canvasser to campaign manager, and even served two terms as president of the York Centre Progressive Conservative Association before he finally made his first bid for public office in 1963.

Mr. Carton was first elected to the Ontario Legislature as a Progressive Conservative member of provincial Parliament representing the riding of Armourdale. He served as an MPP for 12 years, during which time he sat on numerous committees and was appointed by then-Premier Bill Davis to various cabinet positions, including labour, financial and commercial affairs, and transportation and communications.

Mayor John Tory, who worked with Mr. Carton in the years when Bill Davis's Progressive Conservative government ruled Ontario, said:

"Gordon Carton was part of a breed of politician that doesn't exist anymore. A true gentleman. You can keep looking and you won't find anybody that didn't like him."

"If he had a point of view, you knew about it. He had his opinion on things and stood up for his people."

Davis assigned him to various cabinet positions, and I want to quote Bill Davis: "Gordon Carton has left a lasting legacy in Ontario in many areas. During the years Gordon and I worked together at Queen's Park, I

developed a very high regard for his intelligence, commitment and work ethic."

Gord was famously known as "the rebel with a cause" for defying his government on behalf of his constituents, protecting the property rights of those affected by the construction of Highway 401 and spearheading the erection of sound barriers to separate property owners from the highway. These sound barriers still stand today, and recently we were discussing safety barriers on the 401 just west of the GTA.

Last week, I asked the member from York Simcoe, who we affectionately refer to as Lady Munro, if she remembers meeting Gord Carton. She told me she remembers him—and I quote—as being "very good-looking." This was backed up in a news article where Gord Carton was described as a tall, dark, handsome and affable Toronto lawyer.

After former Premier Davis won the PC leadership, he appointed him as Minister of Labour from 1971 to 1972, and then he moved on to some of the other adventures that I mentioned.

Just before he passed away in April 2017 at the age of 95, Gord founded a clothing line that we heard about, Happiness Is Inc., and it was to celebrate Canadian nationality and solidarity while also creating comfortable, easy-to-wear clothing. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, starting a new business venture at the age of 95.

On the website, Gord is described as a "hero and a passionate Canadian who believed that happiness is all around us."

The website describes clothing with a supremely soft feel on the inside and outside, and I'm sure there's also a little bit of softness from founder Gord Carton's heart to bring a little extra happiness to all who wear these clothes.

Gord obviously believed that happiness is about giving back since he arranged for 10% of the net proceeds to go to Trans Canada Trail, a not-for-profit working with donors, partners and volunteers to create the Great Trail, an epic trail of trails and a sustainable gift from Canadians to Canadians that fosters unity, collaboration and connectedness.

He was obviously connected to fitness and the great outdoors and was also clearly connected to his family as his granddaughter is determined to continue the legacy of this new business venture.

He is survived by his wife, Sharon, his brother, Donald, and his daughters, Heather Carroll and Janice Woods, as well as his four grandchildren.

Thank you to all of you who are here today to celebrate the life of Gordon Carton, and for sharing your husband, your dad, your grandfather and your friend with all of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I apologize to the member from Thornhill. I've done that twice to you now, and I'll resist the temptation to make it three.

I would like to thank all the members for their very kind, thoughtful and heartfelt comments. We're at our best when we pay tribute to our former members, as a non-partisan tribute to all members.

To the family, we thank you for the gift of Gordon, and we'd also like to indicate to you that we'll provide you with a DVD and Hansard copies for you to have as a keepsake, as a testimony of our affection for Gordon. Thank you very much for the gift of Gordon.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Since you decided you want to start, we're starting with warnings, and I will immediately use them.

Please start.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. Yesterday, the government had an opportunity to apologize for their latest attack on the—

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** You should apologize.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Finance is warned.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, clearly the government doesn't like to talk about the Auditor General's report.

Instead of doing the right thing and supporting our motion yesterday, they voted it down. I want to give the Liberals another chance. To the Minister of Energy, will the government apologize to the Auditor General for what was a blatant attempt to discredit her office? It wasn't right, they know it wasn't right, and they should apologize.

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** I'm pleased to rise today—  
*Applause.*

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** Thank you.

**Interjection:** A belated happy birthday.

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** Thank you for the birthday wishes.

Mr. Speaker, I remember March 2 very well. That was the day on which our government announced the fair hydro plan, which has lowered electricity bills by an average of 25% for all residential customers and half a million small businesses and farms. That was 237 days—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Huron-Bruce is warned. Sorry; I'm thinking "Bruce." I'm a little backwards today. The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound is warned.

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** That was 237 days ago, Mr. Speaker. Shortly after that, the leader of the official opposition promised to release his own energy plan sometime in the coming weeks.

But here we are, Mr. Speaker, over half a year later, almost halfway through the fall session, and in those 237

days, a lot has happened, but nothing has happened on that side. That's the party that should be apologizing for—

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

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again to the minister: The question was about the way this government has discredited the Auditor General. The Auditor General said that the way they're doing this hydro scheme will cost Ontarians \$4 billion more than necessary.

I get that it's the Liberal talking points today to applaud the Minister of Energy, but what we're talking about is \$4 billion that Ontario families are going to have to pay because of this government, and rather than acknowledging the Auditor General's report and saying, "We're going to try to fix this," they discredit the Auditor General.

Mr. Speaker, 10 times out of 10, if I am to choose who to believe, the Auditor General or this Liberal government, I'm going to choose the Auditor General. So I will ask the question again: Will the Minister of Energy apologize to the Auditor General for the way his office, his ministry, has discredited her office?

**1100**

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** We continue to work with the Auditor General. As the President of the Treasury Board says, 99.9% of the time we always agree with the Auditor General and implement her recommendations.

In this instance, Mr. Speaker, we agree that this is an accounting dispute. We have KPMG, we have EY and we have Deloitte. All of these peers of the Auditor General agree: What we have brought forward is a plan that is going to actually reduce rates by 25% and meet the Canadian public sector accounting standards.

But I know the point is that the Conservatives are refusing or even unable to come up with any ideas or a plan of their own, Mr. Speaker. We've helped families by lowering their rates by 25%. We've helped families by raising the minimum wage to \$15. We protect tenants from unfair rent increases. What do they have on that side? Zero.

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

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again to the Minister of Energy: I'm glad that the minister is now saying he agrees with the Auditor General, because the Auditor General has said that their energy policy is a house of cards; that after the election, energy rates are going to skyrocket. The Auditor General has said that they make up their own rules. The Auditor General has said that they're going to blow \$4 billion unnecessarily. So if you all of a sudden agree with the Auditor General, how are you going to fix that problem and not simply discredit her?

Mr. Speaker, it was written in an article yesterday that the Ministry of Energy went so far as to personally contact journalists the day before her report was released to say that the Auditor General's interpretation was flawed. Calling the day before the report to discredit the Auditor General is not working with the Auditor General; that's attacking the Auditor General. So, once again, will the government do the right thing and apologize to the Auditor General?

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** Again, Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with the Auditor General on an ongoing basis. We will continue, as a government, to be open and transparent with the Auditor General and with all independent officers of the House. It is important for us to continue to have that working dialogue. As the President of the Treasury Board has said over and over again, we will continue to do so.

This is an accounting dispute. We believe, and so do her peers and so do all of the bureaucracy accountants, all believe that the way that we have done this—by keeping the assets of the electricity system in that sector—meets with the Canadian public sector accounting standards.

We'll continue to work forward, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to advocate for the people of this province, unlike the opposition, which has nothing on offer and never will.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again to the Minister of Energy: The Liberals, according to the Auditor General, have been accused of making up their own accounting rules. Let me repeat: making up their own accounting rules. What worries me is what else they may be hiding, Mr. Speaker. They seem to be making up their own record retention rules on the fly. They certainly don't seem to be keen on releasing emails to the Auditor General. We are still waiting on those.

Here is another chance. Since they don't want to apologize to the Auditor General for this blatant attempt to discredit the independent legislative officer, at the very least will they do what they said they would do: be transparent, release the emails, stop hiding 99% of those emails? Will they do the right thing and release the emails requested?

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** It is our government's commitment to continue to work with the Auditor General, to continue to be open and transparent, and we're going to continue to co-operate with her office.

It's important for me to say, Mr. Speaker, that I've just been informed by my ministry that as of Monday, October 23, the ministry has provided 30,126 records to the Auditor General. That's in addition to the 1,200 from the IESO, the hundreds from OPG and the over 3,000 from the Ontario Financing Authority. I know that the President of the Treasury Board and the Treasury Board

have provided thousands of records. Additionally, the ministry has told me that we're continuing to release additional information to the Auditor General. We're doing this because we understand the importance of providing the auditor with everything that she has asked for. The ministry will continue to regularly provide the Auditor General with additional responsive documents each week until this process is finished.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again to the Minister of Energy: Yesterday, the Minister of Energy said "he doesn't expect a 'ticker tape parade' for how the Liberals have handled the hydro file." That's a stretch. That's certainly no surprise. They can't line up for a parade because they're lining up for food banks right now in Ontario, and unemployment insurance. People can't afford to pay their hydro bills. People are living in energy poverty, and right now the Liberals—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Agriculture is warned.

Finish, please.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Right now the Liberals laugh when I say people are living in energy poverty, but the more I travel in this province, the more I hear examples of people who are struggling—beyond struggling—to pay their hydro bills. It's not a laughing matter. This latest \$4 billion is just the cherry on top of their hydro crisis—a crisis you created, a crisis this government created.

My question is, when are we going to get meaningful hydro relief, not more spin? When are we actually going to get meaningful hydro relief for the families you're laughing at right now?

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** It's obvious they'll never get any relief under that party, which has no idea what to do and no plan. It's ridiculous that they continue to come up, shake their fists and talk about doing something for the people of Ontario, but instead, they vote against real relief. Real relief is 25% off every single household in this province. They voted against it.

Yesterday we announced the \$100-million Affordability Fund. This is going to help tens of thousands of people in this province. Do you know who voted against that, Mr. Speaker? That member and that party. You know what, Mr. Speaker? We know that the only people who are lining up to see something are their members, to find out what they're going to do. They have no idea.

We have talked about things we have been doing in the 237 days that they've offered nothing. We are introducing a minimum wage increase which they voted against. All prescriptions for people 25 and under, they voted against. The only people who are waiting in line are people—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. When I stand, you sit, Minister.

Final supplementary.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again to the Minister of Energy: Deleting emails is not a plan. Borrowing is not a plan.

Hiding debt is not a plan. The relief that Ontario families want, they are not getting, and the government's spin about this latest \$4 billion they're wasting doesn't add up. The government continues to tout that accounting firms support this Liberal scheme.

What they fail to mention is that the government hired those firms. They contract out to get the answers they want. They are beholden to the government. The Auditor General is not. She isn't in the pocket of the Liberals. We get the truth from the Auditor General, while the taxpayers foot the bills for millions for Liberal spin.

Mr. Speaker, my question is very specific, and hopefully I can get an answer. How much did the Liberals spend to fight the Auditor General's report? How many dollars did you put into this fake spin?

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** What's appalling is that the Leader of the Opposition will sully the names of world-class organizations like KPMG, Deloitte and EY. I know all Conservatives from the past are rolling over in their graves, hearing that coming from that party.

At the end of the day, we've ensured that we've talked with world-class organizations that have looked at our accounting standards. Government standards are prepared in accordance with the public sector accounting standards and will continue to follow these standards for the transactions resulting from the fair hydro plan in 2017, 2018 and future years.

In relation to rate-regulated accounting, PSAB is silent and does not prohibit the use of rate-regulated accounting. Maybe that party should actually do a little research and talk with some of these firms before they accuse them of what he just did. That is shameful.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Every day, we hear horror stories from vulnerable seniors and their families about what they are going through in long-term-care homes across the province. Conditions are putting our seniors at risk, and we have a wait-list in Ontario that tops 32,000 people.

Now we hear that there are as many as 14 homes in Toronto looking to pick up and move. Since the Minister of Health has to personally approve any proposal for a home to relocate, will the Acting Premier promise right now that none of these homes will be allowed to leave the city?

1110

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

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** We appreciate the hard work that the operators of our long-term-care homes across this province do. The not-for-profit homes, municipal homes and for-profit homes, collectively, are absolutely committed to providing the highest quality of care for their residents, and that includes here in Toronto.

I can say categorically that we have not received any applications from the 20 long-term-care homes that were referenced in the media over the past couple of days. We

have not received, the ministry has not received, and I have not received any applications or proposals that entertain or suggest or would even imply that beds and homes in Toronto would be anywhere else but in Toronto.

We have very good examples of how successful redevelopment is happening in the city of Toronto. I'm happy to speak to that in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** The well-being of 1,800 seniors is up in the air right now. Families are worried they may not be able to visit their parents or grandparents as often as they need. Seniors have loved ones, friends, doctors and many other ties to the cities.

They need the Premier's word that no home in Toronto will be allowed to relocate away from their neighbourhoods under her watch. Will the Acting Premier give residents of long-term care and their families that comfort?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** As I said yesterday, not only have I received no applications, but I personally, in writing, have to approve every new redevelopment. Whether that is even within the same community, in the same location, I need to approve it in writing. Certainly when it comes to moving or any proposals to moving beds from a location, the first step that I take upon review and with the advice of the ministry is to send it back to the community to have a fulsome community conversation and consultation overseen by the ministry and by the LHIN, so we can have a clear understanding of the importance of those beds, of that home in that community.

I have worked tirelessly across the province, not just in Toronto, to ensure that those beds and those homes do remain in the communities where they are, and I will continue to do that.

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

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** The fact that relocation is even a consideration for these homes just goes to show how much the government is willing to ignore the problems that face our long-term-care-home system. I'm sure the Premier and her Minister of Health have had many, many meetings with home directors, staff, long-term-care associations and families with loved ones in care. They must have heard many times, by many different people—and not just the opposition members like myself—about the state of our long-term-care system.

Has the Premier just chosen to ignore these concerns, or is she that out of touch with the needs of our vulnerable seniors in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Well, here's who's out of touch. It's that party, because here they go again. I was absolutely categorical yesterday in saying no applications whatsoever have come forward to the ministry or to me that suggest anything of what they are doing. They are fearmongering once again. They are instilling fear in the residents and the families of those long-term-care homes. I certainly hope that they are not suggesting that those homes should not be redeveloped, because those homes

need to be redeveloped to provide that highest quality of care.

I have to approve every single bed, transfer and home redevelopment. I am working tirelessly across the province, including Toronto, but I am not fearmongering and I'm not suggesting, as they are, that these individuals, these residents should be afraid, because they can be assured that I will work to maintain those beds here.

*Interjections.*

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

New question.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is back to the Acting Premier. When the health minister gets that defensive, you know you've hit a nerve. Long-term-care homes—

*Interjections.*

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

The member will identify who the question is for, please.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I did, Speaker, but I'll speak up.

To the Acting Premier: Long-term-care homes in Toronto and across the province are struggling partly because of the Liberal government's failure to keep its promise to redevelop 35,000 long-term-care beds. Ten years ago, the Liberals promised to update these beds, but by 2014, they had only completed 5,000. The Minister of Health confirmed yesterday that 13,500 beds have now been redeveloped.

Does the Premier plan to keep her Liberal government's promise and complete the other 21,500 by December 31, or were the 35,000 beds just another stretch goal?

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

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** We are absolutely committed to redeveloping 30,000 beds across this province. We have already redeveloped 13,500 of those beds. We're working with organizations such as Re kai here in Toronto, to give that example, where they are redeveloping a long-term-care home in downtown Toronto; in fact, in the West Don Lands—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Get busy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Carry on, please.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** —a not-for-profit in downtown Toronto, a new redevelopment, 220 beds, a specialized unit for those with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, a whole host of supportive care surrounding that, right across the road from the "Y". It is a fantastic example of what can be done when proponents and operators work together with the LHIN and the Ministry of Health for redevelopment, including in downtown Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** The Premier's stubborn refusal to even consider expanding the scope of the Wettlaufer inquiry into long-term care means that broken promises like this one can be swept under the rug. I guess that's convenient for the Premier when an election is on the horizon, but seniors in the province deserve better. Seniors deserve a government committed to finding and fixing each and every issue that threatens their well-being.

When will the Premier show Ontario seniors and their loved ones the respect they deserve and agree to expand the scope of the Wettlaufer inquiry?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, let me do this. Redeveloped beds: 13,500 in Ontario already, including 63 at Chateau Gardens in London; 170 at Extencare in London; 60 at Versa-Care Elmwood Place in London; 243 at Dearness Home in London; 141 at McCormick Home in London—in fact, an additional 19 at McCormick Home in London; 157 at McGarell Place in London; 32 at Kensington Village in London, an additional 80 at Kensington in London, and an additional 16 and 32 at Kensington—different phases—in London.

There is a long list here of 13,500, but I hope the member would agree—I don't think she's suggesting we shouldn't redevelop or that we're not redeveloping in her city, because we are.

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

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** In the long list of numbers, the minister forgot to add 32,000 people on the wait-list for long-term care; 21,500 beds have yet to be redeveloped by this government. There is a severe shortage of front-line staff. We've heard horror stories of neglect and abuse regularly from every corner of this province, and there are 14 homes in Toronto that may leave the city.

If a broad inquiry that will find and fix the systemic issues in our long-term-care homes isn't what the Premier thinks we need, what is her plan to make sure our parents and our grandparents are able to live their golden years with dignity?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Toronto: 192 redeveloped beds at Kipling Acres; 98 redeveloped beds at True Davidson Acres; 108 redeveloped beds at Copernicus Lodge; 89 redeveloped beds, again, at True Davidson Acres; 88 redeveloped beds at Vermont Square; 174 redeveloped beds at Chester Village; and 29 additional beds at Chester Village in Toronto.

**1120**

What the NDP is doing here is they're fearmongering; they're inciting fear among residents of our long-term-care homes. That's not to say we don't have specific instances where improvements need to be made. We are addressing those through inspections, restrictions on admission and other important punitive measures. But to

suggest that the situation is anything close to what they are saying is reprehensible, Mr. Speaker.

#### PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Minister of Health. According to Life Sciences Ontario, the innovative pharma sector invests over \$1 billion in research and development each year. They contribute over \$3.8 billion to the Canadian economy each year, and approximately 45% of that investment is directed within Ontario. Life Sciences Ontario's sector report from 2015 noted the pharmaceutical sector contributes 12,800 indirect jobs and 7,700 direct jobs in Ontario.

We understand that these investments are currently at risk. There are impacts from the proposed federal changes to the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board that could directly impact the research investment and associated jobs in Ontario.

My question is, what is the province doing to ensure these investments and jobs stay in Ontario? Have they contacted their federal counterparts, and what assurances do we have for these jobs?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Economic Development and Growth will want to take the supplementary, but on this issue of pharma, I want to say that we had, last week, our federal-provincial-territorial Ministers of Health meeting. Due to the leadership of our Premier and the leadership of Ontario, we were able to have fulsome discussions on the Thursday and on the Friday—in fact, breakfast as well on the Friday morning—that were wholly about the issue of pharma and about creating a strong pharmaceutical industry, but most importantly, steps to take for national pharmacare.

All health ministers—every province, every territory and the federal health minister—agreed now to get down to the work, to scope out what a national pharmacare program would look like in terms of timelines, costs and the framework. I'm very proud of that work.

*Interjections.*

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

Supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, my hope was that the question I asked could be answered. A different question was clearly—maybe someone misheard what I said.

What I was asking about is the proposed federal changes to the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board. Some 7,700 direct jobs in Ontario: This is a significant investment. These are important, well-paying jobs we want to protect in the province.

Again to the minister: During these discussions they had with the health ministers and the federal government, did you get assurances that these proposals—what accommodation is there going to be for Ontario? How do we protect the jobs here? And if you're not concerned about the new federal regulations, explain to this House why these changes aren't going to affect the province of Ontario. These are jobs we have to protect here.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Growth.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We agree that we need to protect those jobs here. We agree that we need to stand up for jobs in our innovation economy.

That's why this government worked so hard, when MaRS was having challenges, to invest in MaRS. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? What kind of help did we have from the other side? They tried to shoot down every effort we ever made to build up our innovation economy in this province at MaRS.

Just last week, we announced something that's very, very important to this sector. The most important thing we can do for our innovation sector is to build that pipeline of young talent that we're providing in this province. We're providing those companies with the best talent anywhere in North America today. Last week, we announced that we're going to be extending by 25% the talent available to this sector in the STEM area. What have we heard from the party opposite?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Nothing.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker. They're nowhere on energy, they're nowhere on the minimum wage and they're nowhere when it comes to the new—

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

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Acting Premier. This government keeps insisting that it must spend an extra \$4 billion on a complicated alternative financing scheme because it is the only way to keep ratepayer and taxpayer costs separate. But nearly 20 years ago, the government established the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. as a way to separate taxpayer and ratepayer funds.

The problem for this government is that the OEFC debt stays on the government's books, and this government wants to keep deficits and debt off the books to make the Liberal Party look better. Will the government admit that it is wasting \$4 billion in ratepayer money for no other purpose than to help the Liberal Party?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** I'm very pleased to rise and talk about the policy decision that we made as a government. We all know that the fair hydro plan is actually reducing the rates by 25% for every single household in this province and for 500,000 small businesses and farms. That policy decision made sure that we actually looked at where the borrowing was coming from, and then made sure that the borrowing stayed within the electricity system.

We actually did pull costs from the rate base and put them onto the tax base. Those were the social programs. The Affordability Fund, which we announced yesterday, is a \$100-million fund which is going to help tens of

thousands more people in this province with their electricity bills. We're going to continue to work for the people of Ontario and continue to provide the relief that we know they wanted and asked for.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Again to the Acting Premier: The government could have used normal public sector accounting to achieve exactly the same policy goals, and it would have cost ratepayers \$4 billion less. They could have used the OEFC to administer the program and keep ratepayer and taxpayer funds separate.

The only reason to use this \$4-billion alternative financing trick is to hide the true cost of the government's hydro borrowing scheme from the public. Will the government help ratepayers instead of the Liberal Party and stop this needless waste of \$4 billion today?

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** In regard to the OEFC, it is still involved. As the member may or may not know, during our recent transaction to broaden the ownership of Hydro One, it paid down OEFC debt, in order to accommodate our work.

Furthermore, we inherited a stranded debt of almost \$28 billion from the opposition, which was not a marketable opportunity, unlike what is happening here in this instance.

As we proceed forward, we are taking a proportionate amount off the tax base and we have taken a proportionate amount off the rate base, as is normal under these circumstances. OEFC is engaged, and it's doing its part.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. This spring, our government took a big step forward in ensuring that our clean and reliable electricity is affordable to everyone in Ontario. The cost of electricity had become a concern for many communities, and I know that people in Ontario were eager to see the government take action.

The fair hydro plan passed last session is a 25% reduction on average for all households in this province—no loopholes, no exceptions; just a significant relief for this important household expense. But that wasn't all. The government also included new and expanded support programs for low-income Ontarians, as well as a program to help those with the highest delivery charges in Ontario.

Additionally, we introduced a new program called the Affordability Fund. Could the minister please update us on what this program does and when it will begin to support Ontario families?

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** I want to thank the member from Barrie for that question and, of course, for her tireless work for her constituents in that area.

1130

I'm delighted to update the members on the launch of the Affordability Fund. Yesterday, I was in Hamilton to announce this exciting new program. The Affordability

Fund is designed to help people improve the energy efficiency of their homes while reducing their bills and their carbon footprint. The new \$100-million fund will support the free installation of energy-saving LED light bulbs, power bars, improved insulation, energy-efficient air conditioners, refrigerators and many more pieces of equipment. The Affordability Fund is designed to help people who do not qualify for low-income conservation programs and who are unable to undertake energy efficiency improvements without support.

This fund, managed by an independent trust, is being supported by Hydro One, and I want to thank that leadership team for their vision. We're going to continue to focus on helping the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** Thank you, Minister, for the answer. This program is welcome news for the families in my riding who need extra help with their electricity bills. I'm pleased our government is taking action to support those that don't have the means to pay for household upgrades.

In addition to cutting residential hydro bills by 25% on average through the fair hydro plan, we are delivering even more savings to Ontario families through the Affordability Fund. I heard you say many times in this House that for every dollar spent on conservation programs, we save two dollars. That's a very wise investment. By providing electricity customers with the tools to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, we're helping reduce pressure on their pocketbooks and protecting the environment.

Minister, can you please explain how electricity consumers can sign up for this program?

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** I thank the member for the good question. Electricity consumers can find out if they are eligible for the program by going to the program's website: [affordabilityfund.org](http://affordabilityfund.org). On this website, electricity consumers can see what support they may be eligible for and sign up for this program.

Whether you rent or own, live in a house or an apartment, you may qualify for more savings on your electricity bill. Electricity bill savings for households participating in the program will obviously depend on the types of measures installed, but a home energy kit with two LED light bulbs and a power bar can help save about 10 bucks. An energy-efficient refrigerator can help save about \$90 in annual electricity costs. I encourage all members' constituents who are looking to make energy efficiency upgrades at home, who might not have the disposable income to afford these upgrades, to check out the website and see if they're eligible.

Our government has a plan to make sure everybody in Ontario has the opportunity to share in the growth of our economy, and measures like this plan and the fair hydro plan make it fairer.

## NATURAL GAS WELLS

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** To the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry: Two years ago, I contacted your

office and the petroleum division regarding a Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry natural gas relief well along Big Creek. Ian and Kim Grant from Silver Hill, here in the gallery today, were notified that this relief well was releasing hydrogen sulphide and toxic water into Big Creek and had to be capped.

Apparently, the well was capped in the 1960s, so the ramifications of this go back five decades. Now, pressure built up over two years, with another well erupting this June on the Grants' property, plus another well down the road after MNRF assured the Grants and my office that they would be monitoring the problem.

The Grants have suffered damage to their business, their property, possibly their health. Minister, why has it taken so long to act?

**Hon. Kathryn McGarry:** Thank you to the member for the question. I want to start off by saying that public health and public safety are really our government's and our ministry's sole focus in this area. We know that there are abandoned wells along the shores of Lake Erie, for instance, and in the other areas, that need recapping.

I know the place that the member is talking about; we were notified early on. We expedited the process to ensure that ministry officials were there to provide advice to the municipality and ensure that the well was being capped. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry always can provide technical advice to support any municipality. We'll be continuing to work with the municipal control group to assess the situation and determine the next steps. We, again, want to assure the public that public safety is my ministry's top priority.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Back to the minister: That was two years—going on five decades, really—with little action.

In August, Norfolk county and the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit stepped in. They closed roads. They evacuated the Grants. They evacuated five other families in the area.

Finally, the wells have been capped.

But the question is, what is the minister doing to ensure that history does not repeat itself again? What about these environmental impacts, possible health effects?

Will you compensate Norfolk county, importantly, for loss of business and damage to plant and equipment, health. Why won't you compensate Kim and Ian Grant?

**Hon. Kathryn McGarry:** Again, thank you for the question.

We continue to work with the municipality and the local health units.

I understand how distressing it is for individuals to have to be either evacuated from their home or have impacts to their businesses or their homes because of that.

Recently, we continued to look at areas where there are potential wells that will need to be capped. In the coming months, my ministry will be reaching out to municipalities to discuss the planning and the emergency

management scenarios related to petroleum hazards and risks. This is a multi-government approach, and we continue to provide technical advice in these situations. The education and outreach work will help to clarify roles and responsibilities to allow municipalities to plan ahead by better understanding the risks. So we will continue to provide that advice.

## CHILD CARE

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is to the Acting Premier.

The government talks a lot about investing in child care. However, current policy and promises are not backed up by action. Case in point: Organizations like Owl Child Care Services in Waterloo region are left asking, "Where's the money?" Owl is opening a new child care centre, and the government of Ontario promised to pay for the capital costs, including furniture and equipment. Owl has now been told by this government that there isn't enough money for the furniture or the equipment.

Child care spaces in my community are at risk because of chronic underfunding, and families are left to pay the price through higher child care fees.

Will the Acting Premier commit to providing the promised funding to Owl Child Care Services in Waterloo region?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The minister responsible for early years and child care.

**Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** Thank you to the member opposite for this important question.

Speaker, I want to you know that, absolutely, we are doing everything we can to make sure that we are transforming the way we deliver child care, and part of that promise and that pledge is to make sure we're moving funding forward.

Right now, we have increased funding. We are now moving funding forward to \$1.4 billion when it comes to operating costs. In addition, we've moved forward with an extra \$200 million. We have also moved forward and are taking applications right now for \$1.6 billion in capital expenditures and costs. So we're building actual spaces.

What I'm trying to say is that the money is moving forward.

We don't directly fund child care centres. What we do is fund municipalities, and we leave those decisions to the local district service managers, to decide where that money goes and where the allocations go.

I would be more than happy to look into this instance of what is going on, but I think it would be advisable for the group to loop in with the local district manager.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Again to the Acting Premier. People in this province, whether they are college faculty or early childhood educators, deserve equal pay for equal work. In Ontario, two ECEs with the same education and the same qualifications can receive vastly different

wages. If they work for a school board they can make up to \$30 an hour, but if they choose to work in a licensed community child care they may make as little as \$11.25 an hour. Many ECEs don't even make enough money in the system to put their own children into the child care centres they work in.

In Ontario, we need good jobs and we need fair wages for everyone, including ECEs—which is, I must point out, a predominantly female-oriented field.

Why won't the government commit to providing early childhood educators with equal pay for equal work in the province of Ontario?

1140

**Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I'm proud to rise today and speak about this issue, especially since it is Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. I want to thank the workers who are here today for being right here with us at Queen's Park.

Child care workers and ECEs play a critical role in our child care system. They provide children across Ontario with a strong foundation in learning to help them get the best possible start in life. Absolutely, the need for better wages and compensation for this early years and child care workforce is something that we heard throughout our consultations and is a priority for this government. That's why we're doing so many things, Speaker, on so many different levels.

So, absolutely, we've raised the minimum wage from \$11, going to \$14 an hour starting in January. Many of the child care workers out there are making minimum wage. We are also bringing in a workforce strategy which is looking to do a deeper dive. We also have a wage enhancement of \$188 million to take up the—

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

New question.

#### GREEN POWER GENERATION

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, Ontario electricity costs are the highest in almost all of North America. The unfair Green Energy Act provides massive subsidy payments from Ontario ratepayers to out-of-province wind and solar electricity producers for electricity that we do not even need. We do this while we shut down Ontario water- and nuclear-produced electricity that costs six cents per kilowatt hour. The Green Energy Act is impoverishing Ontario homeowners. It is driving businesses and jobs out of Ontario. The Green Energy Act has reduced a once-prosperous Ontario to a have-not province.

Minister, it is time to show respect for the people of Ontario. Will you do the right thing and repeal the Green Energy Act?

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** I want to thank the member for the question. When it comes to the first part of his question, Mr. Speaker, we have dropped rates by 25%. I know the honourable member knows that, because the constituents in his riding will have seen a reduction of 25% on their bills.

When it comes to renewable energy, this sector has created tens of thousands of jobs in our province, creating economic benefits for communities from Windsor to Ottawa to Sudbury to Sault Ste. Marie, all the way up into the northern part of our province, into Thunder Bay and right across up there into Kenora and elsewhere.

The Green Energy Act has brought forward about 18,000 megawatts of renewable power to our province, Mr. Speaker. These megawatts are actually making sure that we have a diverse supply mix, a supply mix that has made sure we no longer have to worry about smog days in this province, which is a savings, again, to our health care system and to the benefit of all people in this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** Again to the Minister of Energy: The Green Energy Act has cost Ontario people billions of dollars, first with the sole-sourced contract for \$7 billion with Samsung, and then with countless out-of-province subsidized wind and solar contracts. You could have chosen to buy water-powered electricity from Quebec. It would have been cheap. It would have been as required instead of as produced. It would have been Canadian. It would have been a good deal.

If your objective was to redistribute Ontario wealth to other nations and to lower our standard of living in order to reduce consumption of resources, as preached by Maurice Strong and his Agenda 21, then I applaud you; you have been successful. Why did you choose the most expensive plan possible?

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** Again, I'm pleased to rise and talk about the system that we've built in Ontario. It now benefits from a 90% emissions-free electricity system. It is clean and it is green, Mr. Speaker. It will allow the trillium flowers to grow in this province, from the honourable member on that side.

Since 2003, Ontario's clean energy initiatives have attracted billions of dollars in private sector investment, generating over 42,000 jobs at over 30 solar and wind manufacturers operating in communities across the province. Ontario ranks first for installed wind capacity in this country, and renewables were an important element of our government's plan to close all of Ontario's coal plants by 2014. That year, Ontario became the first jurisdiction in North America to fully eliminate coal-fired electricity generation.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** My question is to the minister responsible for early years and child care. As the members of this House know, today marks the 17th annual Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. I want to welcome all the ECE workers that have joined us here today.

It is important that we recognize the hard work and value of those who are shaping and caring for our youngest learners. As a mother of two young boys, I know how important this is. It's equally important to

make sure we retain the hard-working professionals who are already doing this crucial job.

Speaker, let me give a shout-out to all the great ECE workers in Davenport.

They are the front lines of our children's path through education. Can the minister tell me more about what she is doing to help recruit and retain early childhood educators in Ontario?

**Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** Thank you to the hard-working member from Davenport for this very important question. We are creating a strong foundation for our young children so they can thrive. We're investing in the people who work hard every day to provide high-quality, licensed child care programs for Ontario kids.

Included in our framework to build quality, affordable, accessible child care is our commitment to develop a workforce strategy to support Ontario's early years and child care professionals. It's so important, Speaker. Support in key areas like compensation, professional development, hiring, retention, and education—that work is under way.

We also announced that the government is going to host two professional development events a year starting in 2018, and we're creating regional centres of excellence for early years and child care educators. With our five-year expansion plan, it's estimated that we're going to need 20,000 more ECEs. The work is under way, and we're doing everything we can to recruit.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** Thank you to the minister for that answer. I have heard from many ECEs that they are concerned about the low wages in the field and worry that they may not be able to pay for their expenses, including their own family's child care needs. It is true that average salaries for ECEs have increased over the past five years, but they are still lower than the average salary, making recruitment and retention of ECEs difficult for child care operators. For someone who is pursuing their passion of being an ECE, this can be discouraging.

As we just heard from the minister, we plan to increase the number of ECEs here in Ontario. Can the minister tell me what is being done to address wage concerns and ensure we retain those who are pursuing this important career choice?

**Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I'm pleased to answer the member's question. I've heard about the challenges ECEs face when it comes to low wages. That's why we are investing in the professionals who work tirelessly to deliver high-quality child care programs. In fact, our government is supporting a wage enhancement for eligible professionals working in licensed child care, because this help is vital for these workers.

For 2017, we allocated more than \$188 million to support the wage enhancement and the Home Child Care Enhancement Grant. Just think about that. Eligible staff and home child care providers can now receive a wage enhancement of up to \$2 an hour, plus 17.5% in benefits.

An eligible home child care provider could receive a grant of up to \$20 a day.

Through the wage enhancement and this new job creation, we can help close the gap between RECEs and other child care program staff. Speaker, these investments are part of Ontario's plan to modernize child care.

## CANCER TREATMENT

**Mr. Bill Walker:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Today at Queen's Park we have three large organizations advocating together on behalf of cancer patients: Lymphoma Canada, CanCertainty and the Canadian Cancer Society. They are upset about Ontario's two-tiered cancer care system that forces patients to pay for life-saving medications once they leave a hospital. Unaffordability and lack of access to drugs leave patients like Daniel Glazerman worried that his cancer may return.

Mr. Speaker, you may be surprised or even outraged to hear that Ontario is lagging behind other provinces in funding cancer therapy. Will the minister please explain why he discriminates against cancer patients while Alberta, Manitoba, BC and Saskatchewan do not?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Of course, our government is absolutely committed to creating a world-class evidence-based cancer system. In fact, Ontario is a leader in cancer care.

I want to welcome CanCertainty, the Canadian Cancer Society and others here to Queen's Park today. They know that Ontarians who get cancer have one of the best chances of survival anywhere in the world, according to the Cancer System Quality Index.

**1150**

But we've recognized, absolutely, that access to cancer drugs is a critically important issue. In the last five years, we've added 68 new cancer medications, and 28 of those, under ODB, are oral cancer drugs. It's important to know that 89% of individuals in this province who access and who require cancer medications are seniors. That 89% of the population is already covered by our ODB Program.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary? The member from Thornhill.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** Again to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: Mark Silverstein lives in York region and asked me to share his story. Mark is fighting lymphoma for the third time and is now trying Venclexta. His doctor wants to add Rituxan to improve his chances. This combination is funded in most provinces, yet Rituxan is only funded for one treatment in Ontario. He was already on Rituxan on an earlier regimen, so Mark is forced to pay tens of thousands of dollars for medication because this government has decided to only fund it once.

Mr. Speaker, we are joined today by renowned hematological oncologist Dr. John Kuruvilla. He wants to share his frustration with Ontario's woefully deficient cancer funding. Dr. Kuruvilla speaks at conferences

across Canada and sees first-hand the far more comprehensive cancer funding in other provinces.

Will the minister please explain why Ontario's cancer patients are forced to pay out of pocket?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** As I mentioned, 89% of the individuals who regrettably get cancer in this province are our seniors, and they're already covered for both injectable and oral cancer drugs.

Of the other 11% of the population, I'm proud to say that as of January 1, a significant number of those—all children and youth up to their 25th birthday—will be absolutely and fully covered for access to oral and injectable cancer drugs, absolutely free of charge: no up-front fee, no copayment, no annual deductible. That's a significant improvement. That ability to provide child and youth pharmacare is a significant movement forward to providing that coverage.

We're working closely with Cancer Care Ontario. We've established a pharmacy task force. CanCertainty is a member of that pharmacy task force, which, among other things, is informing us on how to further enhance the take-home cancer-drugs delivery model in Ontario. We're working on this.

#### CANCER TREATMENT

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est également pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

Lymphoma Canada, the CanCertainty Coalition and the Canadian Cancer Society are with us at Queen's Park today, and their message is quite simple: Take-home cancer drugs have emerged as a standard treatment option for many cancers, but outside of hospitals, working adults have to pay for those take-home cancer drugs, the very medication that they need to get better and, sometimes, to stay alive.

Those people are here today, and they want to know: What is this government going to do to help working Ontarians with cancer access the life-saving cancer drugs that they need?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** This is why it's so critically important to support Ontario's and the Premier's leadership on national pharmacare. It provides—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Ha.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** You laugh at that, but the NDP's plan for pharmacare didn't even include cancer drugs. It completely excluded them. It was only 120, roughly, essential medications.

It's important that we work on all fronts. We're adding 28 more oral cancer drugs. They're available to our seniors. They're available to those on Ontario Works. Those oral cancer drugs are available to those on disability. And shortly, on January 1, they're going to be available to four million more Ontarians who are between the ages of zero and 25.

Support us on those efforts, and support us at the national level on pharmacare, because universal national pharmacare will provide the answer that I believe we're all looking for.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Here's how it works in Ontario right now, Speaker. If the cancer treatment is given in a hospital or a cancer treatment centre, it is free. It is publicly covered. But if the cancer treatment is given at home, people have to rely on private insurance, wait for months and get through the paperwork with Trillium, or pay out of their own pocket. Worrying about how to pay for medication is the last thing that a person diagnosed with cancer and their family should have to go through.

Dan Glazerman, who was diagnosed with a rare form of lymphoma, and Sharon Dennis, who was diagnosed with leukemia, are here today because they want answers from this government. When will this government do something to help cover the costs of take-home cancer drugs for adult Ontarians?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Well, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, 89% of people in this province who get cancer are seniors. They have access to oral cancer drugs. For the other 11%, we're taking a massive leap forward January 1, when four million more Ontarians between zero and 25 will have access to oral cancer drugs.

I hope CanCertainty and the Canadian Cancer Society and the lymphoma society know that the NDP's pharmacare proposal did not include cancer drugs, so they are speaking for something that they themselves, in their own efforts, completely ignored and excluded.

We're adding more oral cancer drugs. We have the pharmacy task force, which CanCertainty is a member of, that is looking to provide us with that important advice on how we can further add more eligibility and access. Of course, we have the Trillium program as well, and we've made, together with our partners, including the Canadian Cancer Society, important changes to Trillium to streamline that so it's better for patients. That Trillium is available for the 11% of people in Ontario under 65—

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

New question.

#### HEALTH CARE

#### SOINS DE SANTÉ

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. As I know in a parliamentary, professional and personal capacity, our government is committed to ensuring that all Ontarians have access to health care as close to home as possible. I want to thank the Minister of Health and the Premier for the \$400-million expansion that's currently going on at Etobicoke General Hospital. Whether it's the new cardio, respirology, neurology or dialysis wing, you're actually doubling the footprint of Etobicoke General Hospital.

This is, of course, happening across the province of Ontario, the expansion and amelioration of hospitals, in-home and community care and long-term care.

Notre gouvernement a annoncé un investissement de 140 millions de dollars pour améliorer la capacité de soins de longue durée.

My question is this: Will the Minister of Health please inform this House how this \$140-million investment will improve long-term health care across the province?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** We worked very closely with the Ontario Hospital Association, with Home Care Ontario and all our stakeholders and partners in the health sector. Yes, two days ago I announced 40 million additional dollars to be injected into home- and community-care service this fiscal year, and, importantly, \$100 million that will go to our hospitals to create more than 2,000 beds and spaces. We're creating 1,200 new in-hospital acute care beds across the province, Mr. Speaker. That's the equivalent of six medium-sized hospitals that we're injecting into the hospital system.

But we are doing more than that. We're providing 503 transitional spaces, including here in Toronto at the former Humber River site at Finch and at the Hillcrest site here in downtown Toronto, so that people can get out of hospital and be reactivated and make that important transition and rehabilitation to get them back home quickly. And we are providing 207 affordable housing units for seniors—together, more than 2,000 new spaces, 1,200 hospital beds that we worked together with the hospital association—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. The time for question period is over.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Haldimand–Norfolk has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry concerning natural gas wells. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

#### DEFERRED VOTES

PROTECTING A WOMAN'S RIGHT  
TO ACCESS ABORTION  
SERVICES ACT, 2017  
LOI DE 2017 PROTÉGEANT  
LE DROIT DES FEMMES À RECOURIR  
AUX SERVICES D'INTERRUPTION  
VOLONTAIRE DE GROSSESSE

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

Bill 163, An Act to enact the Safe Access to Abortion Services Act, 2017 and to amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in relation to abortion services / Projet de loi 163, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur l'accès sécuritaire aux services d'interruption volontaire de grossesse et modifiant la Loi sur l'accès à l'information et la protection de la vie privée en ce qui a trait aux services d'interruption volontaire de grossesse.

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

*The division bells rang from 1159 to 1204.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Earlier today, Mr. Naqvi moved third reading of Bill 163, An Act to enact the Safe Access to Abortion Services Act, 2017 and to amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in relation to abortion services.

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

#### Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Forster, Cindy	Moridi, Reza
Anderson, Granville	French, Jennifer K.	Munro, Julia
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Arnott, Ted	Gretzky, Lisa	Naqvi, Yasir
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras
Baker, Yvan	Harris, Michael	Pettapiece, Randy
Ballard, Chris	Hatfield, Percy	Potts, Arthur
Barrett, Toby	Hoggarth, Ann	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Patrick	Hunter, Mitzie	Romano, Ross
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Sandals, Liz
Chiarelli, Bob	Jones, Sylvia	Sattler, Peggy
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kiwala, Sophie	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Lalonde, Marie-France	Smith, Todd
Coe, Lorne	Leal, Jeff	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Tabuns, Peter
Coteau, Michael	MacLeod, Lisa	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crack, Grant	Malhi, Harinder	Taylor, Monique
Damerla, Dipika	Mangat, Amrit	Thibeault, Glenn
Del Duca, Steven	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina	Vanhof, John
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Martow, Gila	Vernile, Daiene
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Walker, Bill
DiNovo, Cheri	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Fedeli, Victor	Milczyn, Peter Z.	Yakabuski, John
Fife, Catherine	Miller, Norm	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Miller, Paul	

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

#### Nays

MacLaren, Jack

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker):** The ayes are 86; the nays are 1.

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

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

*Third reading agreed to.*

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

*The House recessed from 1207 to 1500.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I'm very pleased to welcome once again to the Legislature, in the members' gallery, a

family from Thornhill: mum Elise Zaracoff and her daughters Jenna and Jordyn. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** It's a great pleasure to welcome members of the Baha'i community of the greater Toronto area—actually, from Ontario—visiting the House today on the occasion of the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Baha'u'llah. Please join me in welcoming them.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome. There's not a person up there who looks younger than 150—we're looking at 200 years' celebration.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** Today I would like to welcome the president and CEO of the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network, Jackie Manthorne.

**Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I'd like to welcome the College of Early Childhood Educators as part of Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Education Appreciation Day. Here today with us are Melanie Dixon, Lisa Sorge, Marina Bulgakova, Tara Noel, Jené Gordon and Jhosselyn Bustos-Cha. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### BROADBAND ACCESS

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** The problem of lack of access to broadband connectivity is a key concern in my riding of Nipissing and across northern and rural Ontario.

The council in the municipality of Callander is seeking provincial action on this important issue. They note in a recent resolution, which they sent to me, that availability of broadband that is on par with larger urban areas in Canada is essential for northern Ontario to achieve economic viability and social well-being. They also note that the cost of providing the required service is unaffordable without provincial and federal help.

They're requesting that the provincial government work with the federal government and advocate for a target broadband service. They are asking for 50 megabytes per second download and 10 megabytes per second upload speeds for northern Ontario, consistent with CRTC recommendations.

Proper broadband access can be a great economic equalizer for northern Ontario, and that's why it's in our party's policy proposals being voted on in the near future. This needs to be a priority for the provincial government.

### PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Physiotherapy was delisted by the Liberal government in 2013, with new criteria for who would qualify for government-funded physio. I have an 80-year-old man in Welland who is on a two-year wait-list for a Parkinson's rehab program. It would help him to maintain his mobility; otherwise, his condition deteriorates. It's \$45 a treatment privately in for-profit physio.

Why the wait-list? This program, through the Hotel Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre, operates solely on the basis of private donations from the Steve Ludzik Foundation to cover the operating expenses, as well as staff. That means the annual budget of only \$150,000 determines the number of participants. They're doing a great job; 220 people have been helped since 2013.

Steve had a successful career in the NHL and was 39 when he was diagnosed with Parkinson's. It quickly became his goal to start a rehab clinic to help individuals like himself deal with the symptoms.

I am asking the Minister of Health to ask the local health integration network for Niagara to work with the Steve Ludzik Foundation and the Hotel Dieu Shaver CEO Jane Rufrano to look at additional funding for the Parkinson's rehab program. Just doubling what the Steve Ludzik Foundation provides each year would go a long way to shortening that two-year waiting list.

## CANADIAN CANCER SURVIVOR NETWORK

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** Tomorrow afternoon, I have the honour of hosting the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network reception here at Queen's Park for the fourth year. As a survivor myself, I would have appreciated having access to this wonderful resource when I was going through treatment.

The CCSN works to empower collaborative action by cancer patients, families and communities to remove barriers to optimal care. They promote health by providing individuals living with cancer, and their caregivers, with access to related counselling, information and support group programs.

This year, they are bringing awareness to cancer-associated thrombosis. Roughly 20% of the 200,000 Canadians diagnosed with cancer this year will develop blood clots during their course of treatment, and approximately 2,300 die as a result every year. Unfortunately, far too few cancer patients are aware of secondary complications such as these. I myself was not made aware of this when I was going through cancer.

Many mistake symptoms of thrombosis as being normal side effects of cancer treatment and do not seek out early life-saving intervention. Bringing awareness to these little-known aspects of cancer is an example of the important work done by the survivor network.

Please join me in congratulating the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network for all the great work they do. I invite you all to come by their lunchtime reception tomorrow in room 228.

## LYMPHOMA

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I'm so pleased to rise and talk about another great family from my riding of Thornhill. We've got the Zaracoff family here. Elise is the mom, and her daughters are Jenna and Jordyn. They are here to

help us participate with Lymphoma Canada, CanCertainty and the Canadian Cancer Society because they are doing lymphoma advocacy day today at Queen's Park. Later on in the afternoon, everybody is invited to their hockey-themed reception here in the building.

They had a fantastic event; they called it A Night to Remember: In Memory of Stewart Zaracoff—who is the dad who passed away from lymphoma 10 years ago—on October 22, 2017. It was at the Riviera Parque banquet hall. A friend of Stewart, Richard Serour, spoke about him. They had pictures projected on the wall. There was an Elvis impersonator, Brent Freeman, Magic Moments DJ, InStyle Activities, JStixx on the drums, and Double Chocolate helped sponsor as well.

It was just wonderful to see all their friends and family all dressed up, dancing and enjoying all together a wonderful meal, a wonderful silent auction. In fact, I purchased a Zach Hyman hockey jersey from the Maple Leafs to wear at the hockey-themed reception later on today.

The Zaracoffs are here today in the members' gallery. They will be there at the reception so that everybody can come over and ask them about all the fantastic fundraising they're doing for Lymphoma Canada.

#### CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCACY CENTRE

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Tragically, in Ontario today, one in three girls and one in five boys will be sexually abused before they reach adulthood. These children have lost trust in the people who were responsible for their safety. They are vulnerable and fragile.

Investigations into physical and sexual abuse are intimidating and traumatizing for children and youth, and support services have long been fragmented and difficult to navigate.

In Kitchener–Waterloo, the Waterloo region Child Witness Centre recently launched their Child and Youth Advocacy Centre. The centre provides a safe space for children who have been abused, offering them support through these traumatic investigations.

With their streamlined investigative approach, the centre also offers a much-needed and less traumatic alternative to traditional investigations. Children are supported by specially trained professionals in a comforting and child-friendly space. They have to share their stories with fewer people and are given access to the services they need to begin the healing process.

Waterloo region's Child and Youth Advocacy Centre is a collaboration between the Child Witness Centre, Waterloo Regional Police Service, Family and Children's Services, the crown attorney, Lutherwood and the Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Centre at St. Mary's General Hospital. Unfortunately, the centre has not received any funding from the government of Ontario. Instead, this vital service for vulnerable children and youth is being funded through the Child Witness

Centre's "Safe Hands-Strong Futures" campaign with a \$2-million fundraising goal.

Thank you to the whole team at Waterloo region Child Witness Centre and the Child and Youth Advocacy Centre for the difficult but necessary work that you do for children, youth and their families. This is such an important issue. We need to fund it, Mr. Speaker.

1510

#### ROHINGYA MUSLIMS

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Earlier this week I had the opportunity with our Premier, Kathleen Wynne, and the mayor of Kitchener, Berry Vrbanovic, to sit down with members of the Rohingya Muslim community in Kitchener. There were about 40 people who were at this meeting. We gathered to hear their concerns regarding tragic events now unfolding in Myanmar.

The words being used to describe the situation are "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing." In the past couple of months, 600,000 Rohingya have fled Myanmar to neighbouring Bangladesh to escape persecution. We heard disturbing first-hand accounts of how the Rohingya are facing gross violations of human rights. We heard from women, men and youth, who pleaded with us to step up and take action, and, Speaker, I'm pleased to tell you that we are taking action.

Today, our Premier just announced that Ontario is directing \$1 million to two organizations: \$500,000 to the Canadian Red Cross to provide shelter, food, water, hygiene, sanitation and prevention against gender-based violence; and \$500,000 to Médecins Sans Frontières for medical aid, emergency sanitation and mental health services. We are also very supportive of the federal government's commitment of \$12 million in humanitarian aid, and we applaud the appointment of the Honourable Bob Rae to act as special envoy to Myanmar.

When people in crisis need help, there are no boundaries. Ontarians will heed the call and step up.

#### SUSAN GRANGE

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I rise today to celebrate the life of a Caledon great, Susan Grange.

Sue made her name as one of the premier breeders of show jumping and racehorses in Canada, and was known for being a hands-on and hard-working breeder and owner.

In 1975, Sue and her husband, John, bought Lothlorien farm in Caledon and transformed it into a world-class training centre. Their hard work has left an amazing legacy in the equestrian community, not only in Caledon but across Canada and the world.

Canadian Olympic show jumper Ian Millar has ridden many of Sue's horses, including In Style, the horse with which he won a silver medal in 2008 Beijing Olympics. Many other notable riders include Caledon's own Olympian Yann Candeale, and Irishman Conor Swail.

Sue's hard work has been recognized on many occasions: She won the Jump Canada Owner of the Year Award in 2005 and 2008. The accolades and successes of the horses bred and owned by Sue are almost endless.

On behalf of Dufferin–Caledon and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, I want to offer my condolences to the Grange family. Sue leaves behind a tremendous legacy that will continue to be felt across Dufferin–Caledon, Ontario, Canada and indeed the world for years to come.

### TURKISH CANADIAN COMMUNITY

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I am thrilled to rise today in celebration of the 94th anniversary of Turkish Republic Day.

On October 29, 1923, the newly recognized Turkish Parliament proclaimed the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, formally marking the end of the Ottoman Empire. On the same day, Mustafa Kemal was unanimously elected as the first president of the republic.

This week, communities from around the world are coming together from coast to coast to celebrate Turkish heritage and the many accomplishments of its people. Today I rise not just in celebration of the Turkish independence but more importantly to recognize the contributions of Turkish Canadians.

Turkey and Canada have a long-standing relationship with one another. To date, Canada welcomes a vibrant community of nearly 60,000 Turkish Canadians, thousands of whom chose Ontario as their new home. Their impact runs deep and is widespread. You can see it in art shows exhibiting some talented artists; you can hear it the sounds and rhythm of Turkish musicians; and the Turkish food is not too far behind in many restaurants around the city. From the economy, academics and across every aspect of life, Turkish Canadians will no doubt continue to enrich our vibrant multicultural fabric and history.

I would like to extend my warm thanks to all of those who came to the Turkish flag-raising on Monday.

Happy birthday to the National Republic of Turkey: Dogum gunun kutlu olsun.

Chok tesekkurler, merci beaucoup, meegwetch.

### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Michael Harris:** They say the key to quality child care is the child care worker and early childhood educator. The fact is that while they are the key, and while caring for and educating infants, toddlers and preschoolers requires knowledge and skills as complex as teaching older children, it pays much less.

We have so many great providers in the Waterloo region: Owl Child Care, Pluto Day Care, Sunny Day Care, Creative Beginnings, Sweet Pea Early Years, Tadpole Daycare and, of course, YWCA childcare—and I have to mention Lynda and the great folks over at the JW Gerth child care centre. They devote themselves to the care and education of children right across the region.

I also think of Erin Flynn, who spends her days looking after and caring for my three infant children which, I can tell you from experience, is very rewarding but not an easy task.

As our providers brace to meet the goals and focus of the government's pay equity direction, there are serious questions being asked about where the government's direction is on supporting providers to achieve that equity. The fact is, Speaker, that child care fees are already unaffordable for most families—often more than rent or a mortgage payment. Meanwhile, costs continue to rise for child care operators due to the impact of regulatory changes.

As they say, the government can't have their cake and eat it too. They can't demand pay equity for educators and expect lower child care fees without coming to the table. Speaker, today I stand for the underpaid ECEs and child care providers who do amazing work despite the lack of recognition. On behalf of parents like myself across our province, we owe our thanks to you for keeping our children safe and providing a quality learning atmosphere.

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

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Ms. DiNovo from the Standing Committee on Estimates presents the committee's report as follows:

Pursuant to standing order 61(a), the following estimates, 2017-18, are reported back to the House as they were not previously selected by the committee for consideration and are deemed to be passed by the committee:

Office of the Assembly, 201, Office of the Assembly—

**Interjection:** Dispense.

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

Pursuant to standing order 61(b), the report of the committee is deemed to be received and the estimates of the offices named therein as not being selected for consideration by the committee are deemed to be concurred in.

*Report deemed received.*

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### BAHA'I COMMUNITY

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** Allah-u-Abha. It is my pleasure to rise in this Legislature today and extend my warm greetings to the Baha'i Community of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the Baha'i community is celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Baha'u'llah, the prophet and founder of the Baha'i faith. Baha'u'llah was born on October 22, 1817, in Tehran, Iran.

I had the pleasure of attending two events in York region celebrating the bicentenary of Baha'u'llah's birth. These celebrations have been going on around the world. There are now more than seven million Baha'is around the world who revere Baha'u'llah as one of history's most recent messengers from God.

This anniversary serves as a wonderful opportunity to pay tribute to the Baha'i community. The fact that this bicentenary is being celebrated globally is a reminder of the transformative impact of Baha'u'llah's teachings on the lives of individuals, families, communities and neighbourhoods, across Canada and worldwide.

The Baha'is have been persecuted in Iran, the birthplace of the Baha'i faith, but this has not stopped the community from spreading globally and establishing communities in almost 200 countries, with thousands of localities in this country alone, our wonderful country of Canada.

#### 1520

In Canada, the Baha'is can be found in every province and territory, from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds, from indigenous peoples to multi-generational immigrants to Canada.

As I have said many times, I feel very privileged to live in a province where there are a number of distinct religious and cultural communities who live and work in harmony with one another. The success of our province is rooted in the diversity of our people. We speak many languages, respect all faiths and have ties to every part of the world. Our multiculturalism is among our greatest assets and has given us an enriched worldview. The Baha'i community of Canada is representative of this rich diversity and has helped to make this province and our country—Canada—even stronger.

The Baha'i faith is a perfect example of the wonderful teachings and values about humanity, equality and diversity that add to the social fabric of Ontario. Humanity—this common identity that we share—is the benevolence that pushes us to help others and to treat them with kindness and respect. Equality is the belief that we are all the same and deserving of the same treatment, opportunity and wealth, equal among genders, races, cultures and nationalities. Diversity is the ideal that it is good for us all to be different, that we are all unique in our own way and we should be celebrated for that. These values mirror those of Ontario and of this Legislature.

Each member of this Legislature wakes up every morning hoping that in some way they will be able to improve the lives of Ontarians. That's why I choose to rise in this Legislature today and deliver this statement on the Baha'i faith and to mark this occasion, because I see their values represented here every day, within this Legislature and out of this Legislature. I see these values in our community centres, in our neighbourhoods, in our middle schools, in our higher learning institutions and the re-

search institutions. I see them in our small businesses and I see them in the faces of those sitting around this chamber right now.

Keeping these values in mind, I would now like to turn to the history of the Baha'i faith so that the members of this Legislature can spread these stories and values into their own communities.

The Baha'i faith came into being in 1844 when a merchant living in Shiraz, Iran, began to teach a new interpretation of Shia Islam.

It wasn't long before this merchant, known as Siyyid Ali Muhammad, proclaimed himself the Bab—roughly translated as the “Gate”—and garnered a large following. The Islamic clergy immediately recognized this new interpretation as a threat, and acted quickly. The followers of the Bab were persecuted horribly, while conflicts between the Islamic clergy and the followers rose into military skirmishes.

The Bab was eventually captured, imprisoned and executed in 1850. An early follower of the Bab took the title of Baha'u'llah, and conflicts between the Baha'is and the clergy continued as more and more followers were drawn to the faith. Baha'u'llah became their leader, whose teachings included his vision for a peaceful, prosperous and united society.

In 1853, Baha'u'llah was placed in a notorious prison in Tehran known as Siah Chal, meaning “black hole,” where he indicated that he received visions of the Maid of Heaven, who stated that he was the one anticipated by the Bab. Later, he was freed and expelled to Baghdad, then under the rule of the Ottoman Empire.

As his influence continued to grow, upon pressure from the clergy and a request from the Iranian king, Baha'u'llah was sent into exile far from the Iranian borders, first to Constantinople—Istanbul today—then to Adrianople and later to a prison in Akka, at that time Palestine, but Israel today.

In 1863, while leaving Baghdad, Baha'u'llah declared his claim to a divine mission to his family and to his followers. Over time, the officials of Akka prison began to treat Baha'u'llah more hospitably. Though he was still an official prisoner of the state, he was allowed to live the remainder of his life in relative comfort. Perhaps they came to realize that Baha'u'llah was truly a man of peace and deserved to be treated with the same respect he used to treat others.

Baha'u'llah died in 1892, still imprisoned in Akka. His resting place today is Bahji, and Baha'is turn in that direction for prayer each day.

Unfortunately, the persecution of Baha'is occurs in Iran, where the Baha'i faith was founded. Members of the Baha'i community in Iran have been subjected to unwarranted arrests, false imprisonments, beatings, torture, executions, confiscation and destruction of property, denial of employment, denial of government benefits, denial of civil rights and liberties, and denial of access to education. On this very occasion, I urge the Iranian government to lift all those unjust restrictions

imposed on Baha'is and allow them to enjoy freedom of worship, among other civil rights.

Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, members of this Legislature, please join me in wishing the Baha'i community a memorable and a meaningful bicentenary celebration and much ongoing fulfillment and success. Please bring these stories and teachings back to your own community so that you may enhance the lives of other Ontarians.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Merci beaucoup. Meegwetch. Again, Allah-u-Abha.

### CHILD CARE WORKER AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR APPRECIATION DAY

**Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I'm pleased to rise today in support of the 17th annual Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. Again, I want to recognize the College of Early Childhood Educators, who are here today in the gallery.

Today, we recognize the people who have dedicated themselves to educating and caring for our youngest learners. These early years professionals are passionate, devoted and committed. They are hard-working, knowledgeable and skilled, and they are vital to our world-class education and child care and early years systems. They give our children the tools they need to learn, grow and feel valued. Above all, they are giving our children the best possible start in life. This valuable head start ensures our youngest learners are set on a path for lifelong success.

1530

But that's not all. These early years professionals and registered early childhood educators also give parents peace of mind. Think about that. Parents are able to head off to work every day, confident that their children are being cared for by trained, capable professionals.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to travel to cities and towns across Ontario, and I have witnessed first-hand the incredible work our early childhood educators perform on a daily basis in child care centres. Early years professionals and early childhood educators are using their expertise to provide valuable guidance, support and encouragement to our little ones. They know that children are born to learn and are rich in potential. They know that our youngest learners are full of promise and great possibilities and that they just need someone to help them achieve their dreams. Our child care and early years workers also know that by recognizing a child's individual strengths and abilities, they can help their young minds flourish. This is what allows a growing child to thrive.

These early learning professionals work closely with parents and families to support a child's growth and development. It's about partnerships—coming together to provide our kids with a solid foundation in life. They give them the confidence they need to grow, learn and reach their full potential.

Every parent knows that a child's first day in child care, an early years program or a full-day kindergarten class is a momentous occasion. It marks the start of an important new journey in life, one that sets them on a path to success. That journey will be filled with hope, challenges, joy, some tears and some milestones. And right from the beginning, Ontario's early years professionals and early childhood educators are right there. They're making sure our children have the tools they need to thrive. That's because we know how important a child's formative years are in creating a solid foundation for the rest of their life. That's why, in Ontario, we offer a variety of programs and services for children and families.

Early years and child care professionals provide their expert services in a number of settings. They care for children in child care centres, private home child care settings, full-day kindergarten classrooms, child and family programs, before- and after-school programs and more. But wherever they are, early childhood educators use their skills, knowledge and expertise to prepare our children for the future.

In Ontario, we recognize the vital role that they play in children's lives and the incredible work they do through several initiatives, so earlier this year we committed to ongoing, annual funding for the wage enhancement program to help attract and retain the best possible child care professionals—so important.

In addition, this summer we released a renewed framework and expansion plan. It's a blueprint for the work we're doing and plan to do ahead. As part of this transformational plan, our government has committed to helping 100,000 more children aged zero to four access licensed child care over next five years. And we're on track.

We know that to make this plan a reality, Ontario will require an additional 20,000 ECEs. Just think about that: 20,000 jobs. That means we need to attract more people to this important profession. That's why our wage enhancement funding is so important.

Our renewed framework also committed to developing a number of initiatives for ECEs, including a workforce strategy to ensure they are well supported. I'm pleased to say that that work is already under way.

In our renewed framework, we also announced that the government will host two professional development events a year, starting in 2018, to support learning and leadership opportunities for our early years and child care staff. We're creating regional centres of excellence to encourage professional development opportunities and supports to help people upgrade their qualifications.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, I've travelled across this great province of Ontario, and it has given me the privilege of seeing in a very personal way the great work performed every day by Ontario's early years professionals and early childhood educators. And what I've seen has been truly amazing. I am confident that because of the incredible work performed by our ECEs, our youngest are on track to become remarkable citizens.

These early years and child care professionals are the champions of our youngest and most precious Ontarians. They want to change their lives for the better, and they want to help make Ontario a better place for everyone. We must remember to thank them for everything that they do for our children, our families and Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that all children in this province have the right to a brighter future. And all children deserve the best possible start in life. I know that everyone in this House feels the same, so I urge all of you today to rise in support of these dedicated professionals who are making sure every day that our children are on track, are able to thrive, are able to flourish and are able to reach their full potential in life. Rise today and say thank you for the important job that they do to support our children and to put them on a path to lifelong success.

It has been a pleasure and an honour to rise today in support of this very special appreciation day of our ECEs.

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

#### BAHA'I COMMUNITY

**Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho:** I'm honoured to rise today in recognition and celebration of the 200th birth anniversary of Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Baha'i community and worldwide faith movement that his life and teachings inspired.

Born Mirza Husayn Ali Nuri on November 12, 1817, Baha'u'llah spent four decades of his life imprisoned and in exile, but refusing to silence the voice that was within him. He spent this time recording his teachings in letters, books and poetic verses. His spiritual teaching shaped and formed the peaceful and pluralistic faith that has been touching millions of lives.

Ontario's Baha'i community shares our deepest and most cherished values: our respect for human rights, our defence of freedom, our striving for unity, and our championing of pluralism. Mr. Speaker, these are the values that unite Ontarians of all backgrounds, and are reflected in the teachings of Baha'u'llah.

Ontario's Baha'i community traces its ancestry to nearly every corner of the globe, from Africa and the Middle East to Europe, Asia, and beyond.

The Baha'i faith in Ontario is reflected in a variety of cultures that are as diverse as Ontario itself. Our diversity is a major part of what makes our province so special. Our Baha'i friends and neighbours are a vital part of that diversity and our province's remarkable multicultural fabric.

On behalf of Patrick Brown and the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, I congratulate the Baha'i community on this important and historic milestone, and wish all of our Baha'i friends and neighbours across the province a happy and enriching celebration of the life and legacy of Baha'u'llah.

#### CHILD CARE WORKER AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR APPRECIATION DAY

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I'm pleased to rise today to do a response to the minister's statement for the 17th annual Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day.

We had a breakfast hosted by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care this morning, and it's very clear that more needs to be done. We need a modern solution to our child care crisis—a solution that's high-quality and affordable. After all, we have some of the highest fees in the country for child care. It's really, I would say, a crisis at this point.

**1540**

Early childhood educators and child care workers aren't just here today to hear thanks from the minister and thanks from me—although we do say our thanks—they're here to hear what we are doing to improve the situation in Ontario. They have been waiting a long time. The government has had 14 years. This minister can't keep saying that she's new to the portfolio. It's not enough to offer two professional development events in 2018. It's not enough to talk about task forces and studies. I think that we have the information at hand.

What we need is this government to offer some solutions, some concrete solutions, for the fact that early childhood educators and child care workers are professionals. They need to be compensated as professionals; they need to be respected as professionals and appreciated as professionals. They need to be able to support themselves. This isn't a part-time job to add to a main salary. This isn't volunteer work. This isn't an internship of some kind. This is a career, a professional career, and it needs to be treated as such. I think that, possibly—there has been a lot of talk about pay equity. The question comes down to: Is this because it's somehow women's work and undervalued for that reason?

I just want to mention that I have done a lot of study of—I mention often in here Israel. There is a fantastic Na'amat program in Israel where kids are taken into day care if they're from vulnerable families. Instead of being taken into foster care, the family gets training at the day care. I would like to ask this minister if she has looked into this type of programming and told her government to stop wasting money—billions of dollars in scandals—and instead focus the money on our youth, the next generation.

#### BAHA'I COMMUNITY

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Thank you to the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science for the opportunity to respond to his statement today, on behalf of Ontario's New Democrats, in recognition of the bicentenary of the birth of Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Baha'i faith. Baha'u'llah's life and teachings have inspired millions

around the world, and today we recognize his impact on the 200th anniversary of his birth.

I would like to welcome and recognize the members of the Baha'i community that have joined us here today. I would also like to recognize Dr. Mehran Anvari, who joins us. In 2016, Dr. Anvari became the first Ontarian of Iranian descent to receive the Order of Ontario for his work and research. Welcome to all of you.

One of the central teachings of the Baha'i faith is the essential worth of all religions and the unity and equality of all people. So it is fitting for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to be recognizing this today. We are proud that in Ontario all faiths are welcomed and respected.

This bicentenary is being celebrated by millions worldwide, including more than 35,000 members of the Baha'i community living here in Canada and 180 affiliated communities around the globe. The Baha'i faith has had a presence in Canada dating back to 1898 and includes francophones and anglophones, and more than 18% of its members come from First Nations and Inuit backgrounds, making it a truly diverse community.

My riding of Oshawa is home to an incredibly active Baha'i community. Regular feasts, gatherings and activities are open for anyone in Oshawa to attend, and the Baha'i community makes a point of being active in a variety of community organizations in Oshawa. To the members of the Baha'i faith in Oshawa, I thank you for your continued contributions to our community.

Finally, one of the greatest privileges of being a member of provincial Parliament is that we have the opportunity to meet with and learn from the many varied and diverse groups that compose our province. Earlier this afternoon, I was fortunate to be able attend a reception hosted by the Baha'i Community of Canada in celebration of this momentous occasion. It was a wonderful event, and I thank the organizers for inviting me to take part in the festivities along with interfaith leaders from across our communities.

While today we recognize 200 years since the birth of Baha'u'llah, the Baha'i community recognizes every day the timeless values of the oneness of humanity, of equality, of peace and unity.

Speaker, again, I congratulate members of the Baha'i faith in recognition of this bicentenary, and I look forward to continuing to work with the Baha'i community for years to come.

#### CHILD CARE WORKER AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR APPRECIATION DAY

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I'm proud to stand up in the House today to mark Child Care Worker and ECE Appreciation Day. Early childhood educators are the backbone of Ontario's child care system. Without their hard work, our province would stop working—imagine the chaos of a day without child care. In fact, many of us in this House should have become activists when we

found out how hard it was to access affordable, quality child care.

Despite their hard work, though, and dedication to educating our youngest Ontarians, there is still a lot of work that can be done to improve working conditions for ECEs. In Ontario today, 24% of registered early childhood educators earn less than \$15 an hour, and because of the low wages, 40% of the registered ECEs are forced to work in other fields. In Ontario, two ECEs, with the same education and qualifications, can receive vastly different wages. If they work for a school board, they can make \$30 an hour; if they work in licensed community care, they can make as little as \$11.25 an hour. New Democrats feel strongly that child care is a public good not a commodity that should be traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange. It's time that workers in the sector were treated like they were providing a public good, because they are. ECEs' wages should not be tied to child care fees.

ECEs provide quality programs for our children. Don't people who educate our children deserve professional pay and equal pay for equal work? We feel strongly that they do. This is just one of the ways we can improve our child care system. When we begin to pay ECEs a fair wage, we can build capacity in our system.

The child care system in our province is in crisis, and it's time for bold change. Tens of thousands of children are on waiting lists for care in a provincial system that has the highest child care fees in the country. Frankly, it's unacceptable that parents can pay more for their children's child care than they would for their university tuition. It's time to commit to strategically investing in the system. This means ensuring that equal pay for equal work for ECEs happens. This means investing in a system with an affordable fee scale. This means investing only in not-for-profit child care on a go-forward position.

Ontario families deserve access to quality, affordable and accessible child care. I thank the early childhood educators in the province for building the system and holding it together. Let's move forward in a progressive manner.

## PETITIONS

### CANCER TREATMENT

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I have a very long petition for metastatic breast cancer so I'm not going to read all of it.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas metastatic breast cancer is when the cancer has spread from the breast and has been found in other parts of the body;" and I'm going to skip over the other "whereases" and go to:

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

"To ensure the voice and the values of women with metastatic breast cancer are included in the process by which decisions about access to metastatic breast cancer treatments are made, and that this process is both

transparent and held accountable to timelines so patients are not left waiting and in the dark.

“Women with metastatic breast cancer need their voice and values included in the process which affects their health outcomes. Specifically:

“—We need transparent information regarding the role, mandate and process of the Canadian Association of Provincial Cancer Agencies’ Cancer Drug Implementation Advisory Committee (CDIAC) and how this new committee adds value to the way women with metastatic breast cancer are treated in an equitable and effective way;

“—We need a clear understanding of the selection process for patients, caregivers and the public for CDIAC and the terms of the role they will have.

“Women with metastatic breast cancer need specific and transparent timelines by which both pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance and pharmaceutical manufacturers are held accountable to when negotiating the price of cancer medications and signing a letter of intent.”

Of course, I agree with this and give it to Thornhill page Max.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It’s always a pleasure to present this petition that comes from all over the province, and it reads as follows:

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

“Whereas over the last 10 years 50% of Ontario’s hospital-based complex continuing care beds have been closed by the provincial government;...

“Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in long-term-care homes keeps pace with residents’ increasing acuity and a growing number of residents with complex behaviours...;

“Whereas there is extensive evidence that a care standard can result in increased staff levels, which translates into improved quality of care for residents;

“Whereas for over a decade several Ontario coroner’s inquests into nursing home deaths have recommended an increase in direct hands-on care for residents and increase in staffing levels;

“Whereas the Ontario Liberal government first promised a legislated care standard for residents in the province’s long-term-care homes in 2003 but in” 2017 “they have yet to make good on their promise;

“Whereas the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) empowers the provincial government to create a minimum standard—but falls short of actually creating one;”

1550

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“(1) An amendment must be made to the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) for a legislated care standard of a minimum four hours per resident each day...;

“(2) The province must increase funding in order for long-term-care homes to achieve a staffing and care standard...;

“(3) To ensure accountability the province must make public reporting of staffing levels at each Ontario” long-term-care “home mandatory;

“(4) The province must immediately provide funding for specialized facilities for persons with cognitive impairment...; and

“(5) The province must stop closing complex continuing care beds....”

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

#### DENTAL CARE

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** I have a petition here that is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I want to thank Gabrielle for dropping these off in my office.

“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.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and will send it to the table with page Rochelle.

#### MINIMUM WAGE

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current mechanism for increasing the minimum wage was introduced in 2014 and received the support from all three recognized parties, and because it

is tied to inflation results in these increases occurring in a predictable way free from political manipulation;

“Whereas as recently as January 19, 2017, Premier Wynne defended the current system by stating, ‘We’ve got a really good process ... that actually depoliticizes the increases to the minimum wage.... It is very important to me that we have a predictable and sustainable way of seeing increases.’ Before doing an about-face on this issue for cynical political calculations;

“Whereas individuals and small businesses were not properly consulted about these changes, leaving many to state that they will have to cut back on staff or close their doors entirely; and

“Whereas the Financial Accountability Officer released a commentary on Bill 148 noting that it will result in a loss of approximately 50,000 jobs, will disproportionately impact small businesses, and is actually an inefficient policy tool for reducing overall poverty;

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

“To call upon the Wynne government to conduct an independent economic impact analysis before Bill 148 comes into effect so that workers, businesses and policy-makers know all the ramifications of this piece of legislation.”

I agree, sign my name and give it to page Jacob.

#### PHARMACARE

**Miss Monique Taylor:** It always gives me great pleasure to read this petition.

“Universal Pharmacare for All Ontarians.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas prescription medications are a part of health care, and people shouldn’t have to empty their wallets or rack up credit card bills to get the medicines they need;

“Whereas over 2.2 million Ontarians don’t have any prescription drug coverage and one in four Ontarians don’t take their medications as prescribed because they cannot afford the cost;

“Whereas taking medications as prescribed can save lives and help people live better; and

“Whereas Canada urgently needs universal and comprehensive national pharmacare;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support a universal provincial pharmacare plan for all Ontarians.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this. I’m going to affix my name to it and give it to page Ryan to bring to the Clerk.

#### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas podiatrists treat foot pain and deformities in women twice as often as foot disabilities in men, often due to having to wear high heels in their workplaces;

“Whereas Ontario podiatrists see far too many patients with injuries in the workplace that are entirely avoidable and are caused by wearing footwear that is inappropriate or outright unsafe;

“Whereas clinical evidence demonstrates that wearing high-heeled shoes causes a much higher incidence of bunions, musculoskeletal pain and injury than those who do not wear high heels;

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

“To put their best foot forward, and take swift action to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to protect workers from dress codes that mandate unsafe footwear in the workplace.”

It’s coming to you via page Andy.

#### SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is in support of Bill 120, the Mandatory Sexual Assault Law Training for Judicial Officers Act.

“Whereas according to the YWCA only 33 of every 1,000 sexual assaults are reported to the police;

“Whereas sexual assault survivors need to have faith in the judicial system;

“Whereas recent examples of comments made by judges in Canada erode confidence of sexual assault survivors in the judicial system;

“Whereas the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment provided 67 recommendations to address the issue of sexual violence and harassment in Ontario including providing training to judges to address systemic problems in our province;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to adopt Bill 120, Mandatory Sexual Assault Law Training for Judicial Officers.”

I support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Thomas to take to the table.

#### SERVICES DE SANTÉ MENTALE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J’aimerais remercier Annick Aubert pour avoir signé la pétition, une pétition pour un ministère de la santé mentale et des dépendances.

« Entendu que le Comité spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances a livré son plan d’action il y a sept ans; et

« Entendu que moins de trois des 23 recommandations du comité spécial ont été mises en place;

« Entendu que la principale recommandation du comité est la création de Santé mentale et dépendances Ontario, une organisation chargée de superviser le système de santé mentale et de dépendance de l’Ontario;

« Entendu qu’une crise des opioïdes continue de se propager dans notre province; et

« Entendu qu’une stigmatisation existe toujours autour de la santé mentale et la toxicomanie, ce qui empêche les

gens de chercher des soins et ceux qui cherchent un traitement attendent trop longtemps pour des services. »

Ils demandent à l'Assemblée législative : « de consolider tous les programmes et services de santé mentale et de dépendance pour toutes les régions de la province dans le cadre d'un ministère autonome de la santé mentale et des toxicomanies. »

J'appuie cette pétition. Je vais la signer et je la donne à Ryan pour l'amener aux greffiers.

#### ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE

**Mr. Han Dong:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas we've seen rapid growth of vertical communities across Ontario; and

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

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

"Whereas the unreasonable delay of repairs for elevator services across Ontario is a concern for residents of high-rise buildings resulting in constant breakdowns, mechanical failures and 'out of service' notices for unspecified amounts of time;

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

"Urge the Ontario Legislature to support Bill 109, the Reliable Elevators Act, 2017, that requires the repairs of elevators to be completed within a reasonable and prescribed time frame. We urge the Legislature to address these concerns that are shared by residents of Trinity-Spadina and across Ontario."

I support this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Sheldon.

#### HUNTING AND FISHING LICENCES

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** "Whereas many fledgling enterprises and/or outdoor enthusiasts are being negatively affected by the current moratorium that MNRF has placed on the ability for outlets to be able to process requests in paper format for hunting and/or fishing licences; and

"Whereas the moratorium on the appointment of new licence issuers has inconvenienced hunters and fishermen/fisherwomen that do not have access to the necessary Internet services to be able to apply online and are unable to get to a business that has the capability to submit a request via hard copy; and

"Whereas this has delayed and/or prevented sales for the ministry for said licences, and hindered the enjoyment of the sports of hunting and fishing for some as well as inconvenienced businesses trying to promote the sports in their given area;

**1600**

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislature to call on the government to cease the moratorium and allow for newer business operations to issue hunting

and/or fishing licences through paper application until the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has decided how they will alter the licensing processes."

I agree with it and give it to page Swetlana.

#### ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that comes from all over Ontario, but I would like to thank Rochelle McCann from Val Caron, in my riding. It reads as follows:

"Whereas:

"—In the past 10 years in Ontario, 86% of all movies with on-screen smoking were rated for youth;

"—The tobacco industry has a long, well-documented history of promoting tobacco use on-screen;

"—A scientific report released by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit estimated that 185,000 children in Ontario today will be recruited to smoking by exposure to on-screen smoking;

"—More than 59,000 will eventually die from tobacco-related cancers, strokes, heart disease and emphysema, incurring at least \$1.1 billion in health care costs; and whereas an adult rating ... for movies that promote on-screen tobacco in Ontario would save at least 30,000 lives and half a billion health care dollars;

"—The Ontario government has a stated goal to achieve the lowest smoking rates in Canada;

"—79% of Ontarians support not allowing smoking in movies rated" for children;

"—The Minister of Government and Consumer Services has the authority to amend the regulations" on film classification;

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"—To request the Standing Committee on Government Agencies examine the ways in which the regulations of the Film Classification Act could be amended to reduce smoking in youth-rated films released in Ontario;

"—That the committee report back on its findings to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and that the Minister of Government and Consumer Services prepare a response."

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

#### ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas we've seen rapid growth of vertical communities across Ontario;

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

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

"Whereas the unreasonable delay of repairs for elevator services across Ontario is a concern for residents of high-rise buildings resulting in constant breakdowns,

mechanical failures and ‘out of service’ notices for unspecified amounts of time;

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

“Urge the Ontario Legislature to support Bill 109, the Reliable Elevators Act, 2017, that requires the repairs of elevators to be completed within a reasonable and prescribed time frame. We urge the Legislature to address these concerns that are shared by residents of Trinity–Spadina and across Ontario.”

I agree. It’s signed and envoyed to you by Asma.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### STRENGTHENING PROTECTION FOR ONTARIO CONSUMERS ACT, 2017 LOI DE 2017 SUR LE RENFORCEMENT DE LA PROTECTION DES CONSOMMATEURS ONTARIENS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 23, 2017, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 166, An Act to amend or repeal various Acts and to enact three new Acts with respect to the construction of new homes and ticket sales for events / *Projet de loi 166, Loi modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois et édictant trois nouvelles lois en ce qui concerne la construction de logements neufs et la vente de billets d’événements.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The last time we addressed this, the Liberals had the floor. We’ll have to move on to the official opposition.

The member from Nipissing.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to Bill 166, the Strengthening Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, 2017.

This is a broad act that affects five different areas—four predominant areas, and some consequential and what I’ll call housekeeping amendments to other acts. But the four main ones are the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, the Travel Industry Act, and the Ticket Speculation Act.

We can start with the real estate portion, the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act. Certainly, we support additional disclosure requirements for realtors and brokerages representing two different parties to a transaction. I think anybody who has purchased a home realizes, as our stakeholders have pointed out, that the changes are being made following consultation with the industry and the government, and they struck a balance in this particular case.

I think a good realtor should know the people in their community, and it’s not unreasonable to expect the same professional to enjoy the trust of both the buyer and the seller. A good real estate transaction is when a buyer finds the home of their dreams at a price the seller is happy to accept. Good realtors have a chance to make

that happen. It is important to preserve their ability to do so while giving consumers the confidence that the highest standards of ethics and trust are followed.

I’m going to read a little bit, maybe a couple of paragraphs, from OREA, the Ontario realtors association, but I do want to just speak briefly about the experiences that I’ve had. When Patty and I were first married, we bought a home together, back in 1986. We were young. We had never purchased a home before, and we did have a trusted realtor involved in what was at that time the biggest transaction of our lives. You do need the confidence in the real estate system in Ontario to know that you’re being handled properly and that all is good.

When, 10 years later, we sold that home and moved to the house that we live in now and for the last 21 years, again the people who were involved made that easier for us. We had great respect for the people involved. We found them to be professional.

I have to say, my wife’s friends—she has friends who are realtors. Karen Foster is a great friend who is a realtor. I have a great friend, Terry Doyle, who has been a realtor for years and has always been of really good counsel to me.

I have met in my office with OREA, the real estate association, frequently. My office on Main Street in North Bay is close to many of the realtors, and so we get together when there are issues. In this particular case, OREA is, I think, appreciative of Bill 166 and the changes, especially the mandatory designated representation, or MDR, model. This will tackle the conflict-of-interest situations and consumer confusion that can arise in the current multiple representation system, and that’s the system that we have today.

Their association president-elect, David Reid, said, “These new rules are some of the strictest in North America when it comes to transparency and consumer protection.” This MDR, the mandatory designated representation, “will set a North American leading standard for greater transparency, enhanced clarity of the duty and obligations of realtors, and tougher consumer protection.

“The province has also committed to allowing consumers to work with the realtor of their choice as an impartial transaction facilitator under a strict set of rules. The facilitator model would only apply to instances where both clients involved in the transaction consented in writing to the arrangement. Consent would come through a simple, plain-language document that clearly outlines the duties and the obligations of the realtor to the consumer with much higher fines for those who break the rules.” This is a real tightening up of an area of real estate and a true improvement, Speaker, which is why we support that aspect.

Ontario realtors, I understand in speaking to them, are also pleased, actually, that the proposed legislation doubles the fines for breaches of the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002, code of ethics, and they mandate new disclosures in real estate forms, both of which OREA has advocated for as part of this whole review process.

So Speaker, I think it's important that we acknowledge that this one particular section—the real estate section—is now something that I think everyone involved is pleased to see.

**1610**

With respect to the changes that came to the travel industry, in summary, there are categories of travel seller and wholesaler that are merged now. They reflect today's marketplace.

There are new powers to inspect non-registrants who may be carrying out activities for which registration under the act is required.

There is new power to impose mandatory continuing education on travel sellers who have had complaints registered about them or who have breached sections of the act in the past, and there are other administrative penalties available.

We are tightening up—cleaning up—the act. The act hasn't been reviewed, Speaker, since it was brought in by the last PC government, so it's time. It's time to have that review.

It's interesting. Times are changing. I'm going to talk a little bit about technology in a moment, but there are still bricks-and-mortar travel agencies in our communities. North Bay, my hometown, certainly still has several traditional bricks-and-mortar agencies. But many people today opt for online purchasing, so it's important that our rules catch up to the technology that is in place today. It's difficult to regulate foreign travel service providers or force them to comply with Ontario rules. What we're seeing put in place here now is starting to tidy up some of these various areas with new acts.

With respect to the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, that's a far larger section. Certainly, there's going to be a new authority—what they call the delegated authority model—and that's non-profit and arm's length. This is all for home warranties now. This will have Auditor General oversight. You're going to have senior staff salary disclosure. That will be in accordance with the minister's regulations. Consumers only have to prove the symptom of a defect, rather than its cause, to be able to make a claim. These are all major changes and improvements.

The authority—that new delegated authority I spoke of—may make alternative dispute resolution available. This is all trying to speed things up and get you to some level of satisfaction.

The builders are prevented from being a party during that warranty appeal at the Licence Appeal Tribunal, unlike today, where the consumer faces Tarion and the builder. Quite frankly, these are changes that are long waited for, Speaker.

There's still going to be a new authority—or a Tarion continued, basically; that's still to be determined—and a new mandatory data disclosure requirement. Basically, that is an enhanced builder directory. So we're going to see transition at Tarion, with the consumer onus of proof reformed during the proclamation. There will be minister approval now—actually, the minister gains immediate

approval power over Tarion's regulation-making initiatives. And the final piece is that there's new power to appoint an administrator over Tarion in exigent circumstances.

Those are a little bit technical, but quite necessary. I think that this bill will implement long-overdue reform of home building and new home warranties in Ontario. It splits the roles of the builder regulator and the warranty provider. That's really what this is going to do.

Sadly, though, the bill still fails to implement the most sweeping and meaningful changes that Justice Cunningham recommended. That's how a lot of this started: under a report from Justice Cunningham. He had recommendations to allow new home warranties to follow a competitive market model, as in Alberta, BC and Saskatchewan. But we are really pleased to see some of the changes here, especially having the Auditor General oversight and a mandatory internal ombudsperson. That's also something that's going to take place that's very important to see.

There are others. The government admitted that Tarion's powers to make regulations had become too sweeping, so this bill restores mandatory ministerial approval to Tarion and their new agency, and those regulation-making initiatives. So there is obviously some good tightening up of the regulations at play here.

The minister will also have the provision to appoint an administrator in a very limited set of circumstances. We see some of these as very, very important changes and important developments.

Justice Cunningham issued 37 recommendations regarding new home warranties, but this bill, as I said earlier—they were sweeping. There are not enough of them; there is only a fraction, actually, of Justice Cunningham's report.

A couple of other concerns: The key reforms, that splitting of the builder regulator and the warranty provider, might not come into effect until 2020. The bill does not clarify whether appeals on warranty decisions will continue to rely on competing expert evidence rather than having an independent adjudicator hire an impartial expert. That was Justice Cunningham's recommendation. So there are still areas, Speaker, that need to be updated.

There's another one: the Ticket Speculation Act. I think everybody here in this Legislature would agree that there's no room in the marketplace for ticket-buying software that bypasses a legitimate means by which ordinary consumers would buy tickets. Getting a ticket to a concert is not a speculative security. You don't buy it expecting it to appreciate; you buy it expecting to use it. I think it's fair for consumers to see the full price they will pay for a ticket to an event at the point of choosing to buy rather than at the point of choosing to pay.

We've seen these types of changes come into play when you book an online airline ticket now. The full bore—it's shown right up front, not at the end when you're about to pay, but when you're first looking at it online. These are the kind of changes—and I think that's very, very important.

Speaker, I said earlier that I wanted to talk about technology. Here we go. We're looking for a well-regulated secondary resale market because that's necessary to ensure that consumers don't resort to scalpers. But I talked earlier about ticket-buying software, and I just want to use that for maybe one minute to talk a little bit about high tech in Ontario, because it is such a concern.

We go back to some of the other topics that I talked about in terms of the realtors and the travel industry, where you buy online now as opposed to going to bricks and mortar. I talked about this the other day, and I had a few people ask me, "What were you talking about?" because I introduced the word in the Legislature for the first time: "blockchain." It's a little bit of technology that can be utilized in the kinds of things that I'm talking about for the travel industry as well as the ticket industry. So blockchain—I'll repeat what I said the other day to make it clear—is an innovation that promises to bring transparency and efficiency to industries like health care, financial services, logistics, construction, arts and entertainment, and education.

**1620**

There are people in Ontario that I have met in my office: Vitalik Buterin, the founder of Ethereum; Anthony Di Iorio and Michael Perklin, who met with me here in my office at Queen's Park. These people are leaders in the development and promotion of blockchain technology. Ontario can become a world leader in nurturing further development by implementing clear and measured regulation in the blockchain space, and I would call on the government to study the approach—not to be afraid to talk about this in the Legislature—taken by Switzerland in this regard. Many Canadian firms have already relocated overseas, and we need to take action soon to encourage them to come back to Ontario and perhaps look to Ontario.

There are technology solutions to a lot of the things that are here, Speaker, with respect to the travel industry, as I said, buying online, and with respect to ticket speculation where there is ticket-buying software today that bypasses the legitimate means for ordinary citizens who are buying tickets.

I think that if we go back to ticket sales—I'll finish my discussion there. Consumers may direct complaints regarding ticket sales to the Ministry of the Attorney General. The sale, distribution and use of ticket-buying bot software is prohibited. Ticket-selling businesses must maintain an address in Ontario or be incorporated under the laws of Ontario in order to conduct business. Sales above ticket face value are permitted only if certain prescribed conditions are met. And an all-in ticket price is to be displayed to consumers throughout the entire transaction: Again, start at the beginning, rather than showing them the price at the end, after they've gone through all the transaction and realized, "Wow, look at all the other things that have been added." It's got to be up at the beginning, much like we see in the airline and other industries that I mentioned earlier.

There are also new powers to impose administrative monetary penalties on businesses contravening the act, and mandatory disclosure of how many tickets have been made available to the general public as opposed to those sold presale.

We understand why this is here. There have been issues with some of the larger sellers where people have been disappointed or learned of the bots, as they're called, that are doing the ticket sales and resales.

So this Bill 166, although, as I said, in the one section under Justice Cunningham maybe is not sweeping enough and doesn't pick up all or many of Justice Cunningham's 37 recommendations regarding the new home warranties—certainly the home warranties, it's a big step. The Real Estate and Business Brokers Act: OREA, the realtors, are pleased. I think consumers will be pleased at what's here.

The Travel Industry Act: It helps to modernize it and clean it up a little bit.

The Ticket Speculation Act I think is a major change to it.

Again, there are some consequential and housekeeping amendments to the other acts as well, and we would look forward to hearing from many of these people I spoke about when this does come to committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to comment on the 20-minute hit on Bill 166. Listen, I think the consumers in the province of Ontario have just been so desperate for something to be done, particularly on Tarion, but I would like to remind people that Bill 166 enacts some but definitely not all of the recommendations that came forward through Justice Cunningham's recent report, and nearly all of the details of how the new regulatory authority will function are left up to the regulations or the administrative agreement that the new authority must enter into with the minister. Ministry staff, if folks have had a briefing, said they currently have not decided on an administrative agreement for the new authority or a new model for the new regulatory authority or the new warranty authority enacted by schedule 2 and have no transition plan in place.

So here we are. We have a very problematic independent organization that has such power over new homeowners in the province of Ontario. I think it's worth noting that even in schedule 1, which the member referenced, enacting the New Home Construction Licensing Act—the general problem with schedule 1 that we will be expanding on is that it does not do what the name of the bill says it will do. It does not actually strengthen protection for Ontario consumers.

Why would this government, after having this report, after paying for the report, after listening to finance committee delegations, for at least the last five years, consistently come forward and plead with this government to fix Tarion, bring forward a piece of legislation which does not actually do that? It makes small incre-

ments to 2020, after the next election. Mr. Speaker, there's so much more that needs to be done.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. James J. Bradley:** Indeed, much of that will be done, first of all, through regulation and, second of all, through further legislation that may come before the House. Not all the recommendations can be implemented at once; some require much more study. The opposition is anxious to see some of those recommendations implemented, understandably. Not to say that they will never be implemented, but if they were to wait and do further consultation, we would not be proceeding with this bill.

The Travel Industry Act is going to be changed, as the member mentioned, and that's going to be important because there have been extensive complaints that have arisen from some about certain practices that have taken place in the travel industry, where people have been left out in the cold, so to speak, as a result of not sufficient regulation or legislation. There are many people who don't like regulations, or they say that publicly, that they dislike regulations. Yet when we find the industry we're talking about, the various industries, we require those regulations, and sometimes they are even requested by those who are being regulated so that they're on a level playing field.

With regard to ticket speculation, most people—well, almost all people—are annoyed when they know that there's a special event on, whether it's sports or other forms of entertainment, and they try to obtain tickets. Mr. Speaker, remember when you and I would have to line up for hours, perhaps camp overnight—I never did that—to get tickets for something? Nowadays, it's done electronically. These bots—I think they're called bots—get at the tickets, they take most of the tickets away, then they resell them at an exorbitant rate. We know the crooks will find some way to get around this, but this goes a long way to solving that particular problem, and the member made mention of that appropriately.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** We have been debating this bill, and rightfully so. Over the years, since I got elected in 2011, I think Tarion has been one of the major complaints that we have received.

Of course, an investment into buying a home is probably one of the largest decisions that people have to make, and some of them at the time are not experienced. When you purchase that home for the first time, you want to make sure that that home is going to deliver on the services or the essentials that you paid for.

Tarion was the corporation, of course, or the body, that held that trust for those buildings, for homes, and it was failing. People would call and complain about workmanship—their basements were leaking; their roofs were leaking; there was structural damage—and they would get denied. They would get denied and they would have

to fight Tarion to actually get what they were expecting out of that warranty.

It wasn't happening, so it's good to see that this government has brought that forward so that we can actually deal with the real problems. Yes, they are changing some of the oversight and breaking down the regulatory bodies; that is extremely important. I think part of the problem—we all know when the fox is looking after the—

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Hen house.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** —hen house, that is a huge problem.

**1630**

When we have legislation, we have to be mindful when we create it what's going to happen at the end of that legislation. What is the outcome? I think sometimes we forget that. We make all this great legislation, regulations and laws, but it isn't practical. It's not helping the people it's intended to. So I hope this new bill will fix the problems that Tarion had in the past.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ross Romano:** I want to thank the member from Nipissing for his very thoughtful comments on the matter. I think the greatest takeaway is that when it comes to the Tarion program, some of the recommendations from Justice Cunningham have been taken into consideration, but there's still room for improvement. That is something that we want to spend some more time on. I will be spending considerably more time discussing that matter in the future.

When it comes to the ticket sales, I think, as well, this is a system where, when we look at the technology that we have right now, we need to be doing more. Certainly, it's a movement in the right direction, but there's more that can be done. We need to really examine that and use the technology that we have available to us to come up with a better system, given the volume of revenue that is being lost and the unfairness of that system as it currently stands. Something needs to be done.

Again, very similar comments with respect to the travel industry: Technology has changed the way we look at doing our trips and so on and so forth now. We have to utilize the technologies that are there and examine better ways to do business in that fashion. I'll speak a little bit more to that in very short order.

Again, thanks for those comments. It's a start; I can say that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Nipissing has two minutes.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I want to thank the members from Kitchener–Waterloo, London–Fanshawe, Sault Ste. Marie and the chief government whip.

It was interesting, as one of my fellow MPPs said, to hear the chief government whip talk about bots—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Well, it was. It was kind of interesting.

I spoke for 20 minutes about the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, the Travel Industry Act, the Ticket Speculation Act and, as I mentioned, there were some consequential and housekeeping amendments to other acts.

Certainly, on the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, we heard loud and clear from the realtors, who are pleased with the changes that have been delivered. We heard about the Ticket Speculation Act and those bots that the member spoke about as well and why these changes are necessary. We heard about the travel industry and the fact that some of it is now—some may argue, a majority of it is now being done online as opposed to in bricks-and-mortar buildings, and the changes that are needed to accommodate that. We heard mostly about the new home warranty. In that, of course I was critical of the fact that Justice Cunningham's 37 recommendations were not enacted or at least discussed.

We look forward to the opportunity at committee to hear from all of these groups who will have much more input.

#### ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim):** The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to amend the Representation Act, 2015 and certain other Acts / Loi modifiant la Loi de 2015 sur la représentation électorale et d'autres lois.

An Act to enact the Safe Access to Abortion Services Act, 2017 and to amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in relation to abortion services / Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur l'accès sécuritaire aux services d'interruption volontaire de grossesse et modifiant la Loi sur l'accès à l'information et la protection de la vie privée en ce qui a trait aux services d'interruption volontaire de grossesse.

#### STRENGTHENING PROTECTION FOR ONTARIO CONSUMERS ACT, 2017 LOI DE 2017 SUR LE RENFORCEMENT DE LA PROTECTION DES CONSOMMATEURS ONTARIENS

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to join the debate on behalf of the good citizens of Kitchener–Waterloo. Before I start, though, I just want to mention and give a shout-out, a sign of respect, to former member Rosario Marchese, who served this House for many years, many terms, and was passionate about reforming Tarion. He was a fierce, fierce advocate for consumer rights with

regard to the lack of oversight—in fact, the monopoly of Tarion as a warranty, and a private corporation, actually, created by the government. Also, Jagmeet Singh, the former member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton: He brought forward a similar bill. In his capacity as the critic for consumer protection, he was also a fierce advocate. So I do want to give a shout-out to both of those folks.

Also I want to thank my OLIP intern, Ana Qarri, for her support in doing some of the research and digging up some of the stories, because part of our goal here and part of our job as members of provincial Parliament is to relay the truth and the reality and the lived experiences of Ontarians and bring those voices to this place.

Before I start to delve into Bill 166, the Strengthening Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, and all of its weaknesses, I do want to reference why we are here. I did mention, in the two-minute hit prior, that folks have been coming to the finance committee for years now and they have been fighting to be heard.

This is one of the couples. Actually, I want to thank the Toronto Star, because the Toronto Star has actually done a very good exposé of how Tarion, as a private corporation that has a mandate of trying to protect new homebuyers in the province of Ontario, has consistently failed those people. This story stems from 2015; it's entitled, "Couple Fights Tarion for Home Warranty...."

"Unhappy homebuyers came to Tarion's annual meeting June 1 to get answers. Some people felt they were not heard.

"When Jeffrey Ferland and Aleksandra Ferenc moved into a new house in Mississauga, they found the cement floor wasn't as thick as what the builder promised. Nor did it comply with the Ontario building code," something that should have been enforced.

"They complained to Tarion Warranty Corp., the private company created and overseen by the Ontario government to protect new homebuyers.

"Tarion asked the builder to fix the floor and, when the builder did nothing, it promised to charge the builder for the repair cost, the couple says in a petition aimed at updating Ontario's new home warranty act.

"Later, Tarion decided not to help. Ferland and Aleksandra appealed to the Licence Appeal Tribunal, where they spent a grueling 30 days giving testimony at the forum that handles compensation claims in a quasi-judicial way.

"The couple did not hire a lawyer, but faced a Tarion staff lawyer and a top Bay Street lawyer acting for Tarion, plus the builder's lawyer. They now await the tribunal's decision, expected shortly.

"It's a hostile environment for a consumer,' says Barbara Captijn, who became a volunteer consumer advocate after buying a defective new home and losing her own case at the tribunal."

This is just one of the thousands of stories, Mr. Speaker, that have come through this Legislature to our attention.

I do want to say that it has been long time coming, the one part of schedule 1 which would enact a new piece of

legislation, the New Home Construction Licensing Act. This act creates a new regulatory framework for new builders and the vendors in the province. Currently, both the regulation of new home builders and vendors and the management of new warranty programs in Ontario are under the Tarion Warranty Corp. The New Home Construction Licensing Act creates a new authority to regulate new home builders and vendors while leaving Tarion to manage Ontario's home warranty program.

#### 1640

But the general problem with schedule 1 is that it does not do what the name of the bill says it will do. There is no oversight for Tarion, a private corporation, so it does not fix the problem. The bill is meant to strengthen protection for Ontario consumers, but this act does not solve the consistent problems that new homebuyers face in this province. Tarion is a private corporation, and time and time again it has demonstrated to new homebuyers that it does not have their best interests in mind.

How will this vague piece of legislation strengthen protection for homebuyers? This is the ultimate question. The government itself commissioned the report from the Honourable J. Cunningham but hasn't implemented his recommendations to end Tarion's monopoly.

Not only is the legislation severely lacking in details, we also don't have a firm commitment from the government to enforce it any time soon. The minister herself has said it could be as late as 2020 before it comes into effect.

The questions that are still outstanding: What about the homebuyers who have been failed by the current system—because there are still many in the queue? Who is taking care of those complaints? Who is watching out for new buyers in the meantime?

The theme for us is that Tarion has failed and it will continue to fail homebuyers under this legislation as it is currently crafted.

Tarion is meant to be a corporation that protects new homebuyers against untrustworthy builders and defective house construction. Tarion's warranty program is supposed to give new homebuyers peace of mind as they make the single biggest purchase of their lives, and yet it has failed to do that. Let's remember, Mr. Speaker, that every new homebuyer pays a fee into the new home warranty program, which can be as high as \$1,500. And time and time again, Tarion has failed to provide real value for new homebuyers, while continuing to take in fees for every single home purchase. We have heard many stories, as I've mentioned, from homebuyers who have been let down by Tarion and by this government.

Currently, in Markham, in Toronto, in Hamilton, homebuyers are being forced to take possession of homes that are not ready. Those builders did not honour their contracts. You have people who have dreamed about buying a new home, who have saved, and they're forced to move into a home that is not ready. The developer and the city say these houses comply with the Ontario building code, but the code only speaks to the minimum requirements. It doesn't mean that the house is habitable,

has proper workmanship, or is even safe for an Ontario family. Toronto has received over 500 complaints about these developments. Some of these houses have no sinks; they have no countertops; they've got water in the basement; they've got cracks in their foundations. Some of them don't even have CO<sub>2</sub> detectors. These houses aren't safe, and they are not meant to be moved into. So where is Tarion when these homebuyers need it the most?

I'm going to tell you another story. This is, again, from the Toronto Star, from 2015. This was a legal battle which pushed a Vaughan homeowner into poverty.

"Every weekend, Sydney Walters spends hours mowing the lawn, and cleaning up the yard of a home he owns but hasn't lived in for years.

"His family fled the semi-detached home in Vaughan four years ago, when mould spread in his home due to the missing insulation in the attic. But he returns to the home every few days, to keep it looking habitable.

"I don't want it to look unkempt," said Walters. "It's a beautiful house from the outside, but inside it is hell."

"The Vaughan resident says it breaks his heart when he sees the neighbours near his home ... sitting on their decks, enjoying the weather....

"That should be me. That should be my family," said Walters. "But instead, we are on the verge of losing everything."

"For Walters, 'everything' refers to the home he bought in 2004, in the hopes of giving his family a taste of the suburban dream. But it's a dream that has become entangled in a web of lawsuits, that Walters says have brought him to the brink of bankruptcy and will soon cost him the only asset he has."

This stems from the fact that the builder did not put insulation into the attic.

"According to his claim, the family began to have health issues, and specialists and doctors advised Walters and his family to move elsewhere. Even now, he says he enters the home only if he's wearing protective gear."

It has been confirmed that there was no attic ceiling insulation ever installed, Mr. Speaker.

The Toronto Star started this article when Mr. Walters was camping in a tent in his backyard because he could not move into his house. It was not safe, and he had been failed, both by Tarion and by the local municipality, and was just left to fight for his own home and his rights as a homebuyer in the court system in this province.

Now, I want to point out that we do have some data on the fees that Tarion does collect. It collects homebuyer warranty fees. Clearly, the value for those fees is not seen by the people of this province. Tarion currently has \$542 million in investments from collected warranty fees—\$542 million. This number is 60 times higher than the amount of money that Tarion paid out to homebuyers last year. But Tarion does spend a lot of money fighting homebuyers in court when they want the payout that they deserve.

Another story that came across our desk is the Patinios family, who saved for more than 10 years to build their own home in north Toronto. When the development was

completed, they discovered hundreds of defects and building code violations. After the developer failed to fix these deficiencies, Tarion stepped in to fix some of them, but still left the couple with over 200 defects in their home. After a lengthy lawsuit, Tarion settled. Tarion settled for \$35,000. By that time, the Patinios family had spent more than \$50,000 on legal fees. This is not a just system.

The question remains, why is it that Tarion spends more money and time fighting new homebuyers in court instead of doing what it was created to do: protect them against shoddy, poor construction? Does Bill 166 address this issue? It does not. Bill 166 is too weak. It fails to protect consumers. It does not address the long-standing problems with Tarion. It does not fix the problem of the lack of oversight over this private corporation. The government says that the intention of this bill is to strengthen protections for Ontario consumers, but the New Home Construction Licensing Act is nothing more than a delay tactic for this government. This government has essentially just pushed this down the line.

They had the opportunity. They commissioned the report. They've heard for years of a broken homebuyer protection system. What have they done? They've crafted a piece of legislation with huge gaps in it—huge. They are putting off giving new homebuyers real accountability, real solutions and the security that they need as they make the biggest investment of their lives.

Think about this: Tarion's board of directors does not have a single consumer advocate. This is unacceptable for a company that is tasked with protecting new homebuyers. Tarion is a corporation that has shown homebuyers that it doesn't have their best interests in mind. It looks out for the builders and the developers, with no oversight from the government and no incentive to improve the warranty program.

Ontario homebuyers deserve better, Mr. Speaker. The purchase of a home should be the beginning of a new and happy chapter in the lives of Ontario families. The current system does not protect these homebuyers. Tarion is a private corporation that has and will continue to put Ontario homebuyers at a disadvantage. We can do better.

I have to tell you that some of the stories that have come across my desk over these years have truly been heartbreaking. It speaks to a lack of confidence, I think, that people have in this government. They definitely do not feel that this government has their back, is in their corner and is willing to go the distance to actually support them. This lack of trust and this level of cynicism that the people of this province have with this government affect all of us in this place, because once you compromise trust on the part of the electorate, it's so hard to engage them in our democracy.

As I've mentioned, this government had the ability within this piece of legislation to truly create oversight, to truly create accountability. The question remains, why? Why is this piece of legislation before us, and why is it so weak? I think there will be many consumers, particularly here in Toronto where new condo owners have

had multiple issues—you just have to walk around just outside of this building to see the new builds, and the problem, of course, for those new condo owners is if they complain, then they undermine the value of their own property. They are in a corner; they need an advocate, and they need leadership on the part of this government. Instead, we have a piece of legislation which will not in fact do what it's supposed to do.

**1650**

Obviously there's schedule 1 and schedule 2 around the Protection for Owners and Purchasers of New Homes Act, in which, as I've pointed out, nearly all the details are left up to regulation and the administrative agreement. As I've mentioned, ministry staff, to date, have no transition plan in place, leaving consumers in limbo.

Schedule 3, though, enacts the Tickets Sales Act, 2017, to replace the Ticket Speculation Act. Anyone who sells a ticket on the secondary market at a price that exceeds the face value of the ticket—the seller must be able to guarantee a full refund under certain circumstances and confirm that the ticket is valid. This obviously is something that we should all be supporting. Quite honestly, I'm surprised it has taken so long.

I think it's important to note that the government has had 14 years to fix Tarion and has consistently and repeatedly refused to do so, despite countless consumer complaints. There is no reason to believe that this detail-free, enabling piece of legislation will result in changes that will finally give new homebuyers the protections they need and deserve. It's important to note that the previous speaker had mentioned that OREA had come in. I have a lot of respect for OREA. I meet with them often. I haven't had a chance to discuss this piece of legislation with them. They are so desperate for some action, for some progress to protect homebuyers in Ontario—it's a huge leap of faith. For some people it's easier for them to do that leap of faith because they haven't seen, year after year, a lack of progress.

This is what I have always said about this Liberal government. You've commissioned the study; you've spent money to have Justice Cunningham review; you had 37 recommendations before you, and many of those recommendations were substantive, but what happens? We get a piece of legislation which, once again, has a really nice title—I don't know who's writing the titles of these pieces of legislation, but they're clearly very talented people. We want to be able to support this piece of legislation. We do, because we want to see consumers protected against shoddy construction. But the question remains, will this fix Tarion? We say no. The bigger question is, can Tarion even be fixed? That's the bigger question; right, Mr. Speaker? Does Bill 166 address some of the key complaints that have come before us, from my perspective on the finance committee for the last five years? It certainly does not.

The core issue that Rosario Marchese and Jagmeet Singh had brought—

**Mr. Todd Smith:** God bless.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** God bless to Rosario Marchese—that they had brought to the floor of this Legislature is that there's no oversight. You literally have a private corporation that can make its own regulations. In what world is that in the best interests of the consumers that they have a mandate to serve? There are some serious issues with this piece of legislation, and I don't see how any member on the government side of the House could deny the fact that having this private corporation with a lack of oversight and not addressing some of the key issues that we have heard over those years is somehow going to be fixed by Bill 166.

I'm going to leave it at that. I'm looking forward to some of the commentary from the government side. I will say that we have so much evidence before us, and so when a problem is presented to us as legislators, we have a responsibility to, at the very least, do our due diligence.

I will leave with: In 2013, a Toronto Star investigation found that Tarion does not disclose its records of risky builders to consumers, even as it advises consumers to use its builder registry to evaluate builder risk. In response to the Star investigation, the provincial government promised—a promise from the Liberal government—to make Tarion improve the registry information. But in January 2014, Tarion's new and improved Ontario Builder Directory was worse than useless, which was revealed in Justice Cunningham's report and review.

So, literally, the problems are right in front of you. You had a chance to fix them. This will require a lengthy amendment process for us on this side of the House, and hopefully for the PC Party as well. I'm interested in hearing what you have to say about Bill 166, because it could be a lot better and a lot stronger.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I just want to add a few comments. Let me start off with a general observation that consumer protection in any jurisdiction is an ongoing process for government. Consumer patterns—the way consumers interact with sellers or with manufacturers—change almost month to month, and certainly year to year. For instance, think of how consumers now deal with sellers of goods. A few years ago, online sales and online purchases were non-existent. This is a whole new world. This is just evidence of how consumer practices change, how consumer expectations change over the years.

That is why it is incumbent on any government to, from time to time, review its consumer protection legislation and make the various and necessary adjustments that are required to keep up to date with modern consumer practices, consumer expectations and so on.

Specifically, Bill 166, if passed, is going to introduce a series of rules. They're really to cover four or five areas.

We want to deal with protecting consumers when they're buying travel services, because all of that now is done on the Internet, essentially. When is the last time anyone here has gone to an old-style travel agency? It's something from the past.

Similarly, buying event tickets is all done online. A number of years ago, that just didn't exist.

Buying and selling real estate: A lot of purchases and sales of real estate are initiated online, and back and forth, particularly the building of new homes. So the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** It's a pleasure to bring up a few comments on Bill 166, the so-called Strengthening Protection for Ontario Consumers Act.

I thought the member from Kitchener–Waterloo did an excellent job of bringing some of the issues to light, specifically around the Tarion issue.

Of course, there are a number of different acts that are affected by this bill, including the Ticket Speculation Act, which I've spent a lot of time talking about. I've also spent a lot of time dealing with the Ontario Real Estate Association on some of the issues that are brought forward in this bill.

Because the member from Kitchener–Waterloo spoke for most of her time on the Tarion issue, I think I will as well. She's quite right; Justice Cunningham's recommendations have largely been ignored by this government when it comes to this piece of legislation. There are opportunities here to fix a system that is badly, badly broken. The Tarion warranty system for new homebuyers is a pathetic excuse, actually.

I can tell you that we have a builder in my region whose reputation is so poor that no one will ever have this individual build a home. So they set up at home shows in Toronto, and they get these folks who want to move to Prince Edward county or the Bay of Quinte region and build a beautiful home, and of course they have no idea about the reputation of this builder in my riding. They get this home partially built and then they're stuck with it.

I thought the member from Kitchener–Waterloo detailed some of those issues that she has heard about—but these issues exist right across the province. Of course not every home builder is a bad apple, but there are those bad apples out there, and we should know who they are and there should be some kind of warning for them, so we don't end up with victims like we talked about here this afternoon.

1700

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** It's always a pleasure to be able to comment to the member for Kitchener–Waterloo and her very in-depth depiction of what Bill 166 looks like, and the unfortunate lack of changes that it will make going forward to ensure that we're protecting homebuyers on probably the largest purchase that they make in their life. When you're buying—I know in my city of Hamilton, a house is ranging between \$300,000 and \$600,000, in my riding. That's a large purchase. So not to have the proper warranty attached to that home is quite frightening for folks. Unfortunately, many of our resi-

dents just don't understand that. They don't understand the "buyer beware" when it comes to purchasing new homes.

This bill is something that New Democrats have been calling for for years, under the former member for Trinity–Spadina, my colleague Rosario Marchese, and then Jagmeet Singh, the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, who had been calling for oversight mechanisms to ensure that there was accountability when it comes to the Tarion board. For 50% of the board to actually be made up of builders and to not have consumer advocates on the board is frightful—it's frightful. That's a completely outweighed board in favour of the builder, and does not protect the consumer. So that's a major problem. We're sorry that we see the government bring forward this bill that had all the options in front of them, 37 recommendations from Justice Cunningham, that could have been used to make this bill better, and yet the government refused to do that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question or comment.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Of course, in support of Bill 166, Strengthening Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, I'm very pleased to see some of the modern vocabulary coming from the members opposite, referring to, for example, things like blockchain from our whip, about bots, and from the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation. I think all of us need, as the government is doing, to adapt to the new, modern, on-line workplace and consumer world. That's why, of course, we're bringing forward this protection against bots.

Speaker, you'll be interested to know that the word is actually derived from "robot." It's kind of a software script or software device. It's an application that can exist on a server or an individual computer. Of course, it gets very nasty when zombie computers, meaning computers that have been either infiltrated by viruses with or without the knowledge of the end user and they're networked and linked and then will create what's called a botnet—and this is, by the way, apparently, as we're told, what the Russians and, I guess, Russian troll factories and so on instituted with Internet bots, Twitter bots, web crawlers and so on to apparently influence the American election, because we hope that the Americans, being of the right mind, wouldn't have elected the current individual that they would have.

We, of course, are attempting to bring that kind of understanding to bear on this whole idea of ticket speculation. It is, of course, very frustrating when individuals, whether it's, you know, Springsteen or U2 or the late Gord Downie or whoever that folks are coming after, and instantaneously, because it's an automated, script-based application process—

**Mr. James J. Bradley:** Elton John.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Yes, or Luciano Pavarotti, or whoever individuals are after—once upon a time, I saw him in Boston, by the way—but able to get it free and fair.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I return to member for Kitchener–Waterloo for her reply.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues for their commentary on the 20-minute debate on Bill 166. But I noticed that the member from Etobicoke North didn't comment on my modern vocabulary, which included "inadequate," "insufficient," "inefficient" and "a weak piece of legislation," which is what Bill 166 is, as it pertains particularly to Tarion.

No member in this House has gone throughout this term and not had a complaint about the weak consumer protection that Tarion provides. And let me leave you with this: Around Tarion, the consistent mismatch between fees collected and claims paid has led to an astonishing and unexplained surplus. Tarion is now holding over \$542 million in investments meant to cover future claims during Tarion's seven-year warranty coverage period, but Tarion's warranty liabilities representing the estimated value of these future claims is just \$239 million. In other words, Tarion has banked more than twice as much homebuyer money as it thinks it needs. Even worse, based on Tarion's actual payouts, it doesn't seem to need even the \$239 million. In fact, Tarion's current surplus is over 60 times greater than the amount of net claims it actually paid out last year.

Mr. Speaker, one has to ask, is Tarion is far more interested in collecting money from homebuyers than honouring its claims? According to its own records, in 2016 Tarion collected over \$53 million in enrollment fees last year, which are ultimately paid by consumers. Meanwhile, it paid out only \$13 million in claims, of which it recovered \$4 million from builders, for a net outflow of just \$9 million.

The minister herself has said that this legislation will most likely not be implemented until 2020, which possibly makes Tarion very happy, but it does nothing—nothing—for the consumers and the new homebuyers in the province of Ontario. Epic fail.

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

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I will be sharing my time with a member from Trinity–Spadina, as well as the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

I have to start out by saying how pleased I am to have the opportunity to speak to this bill, Bill 166, because it includes what was my private member's bill on the Ticket Speculation Act. As many of you know, that private member's bill was created because of the tremendous callout that happened after the Tragically Hip had their last concert. It was being held in Kingston, and tickets were sold out in a matter of minutes.

The member from Etobicoke North brought forward some very comprehensive points and details about the technology behind ticket bots, but the one thing that he didn't mention, and what I learned during the process of creating the private member's bill, is that ticket bots, the actual software that can buy these tickets, can make

120,000 attempts to buy a ticket every second. There's no human being who can punch in numbers in a computer that fast. It's impossible. That's not the reason why artists, whether they're musicians or whether it's a play, create their art. They are creating art for fans to take part in it. Culture should be accessible to many more people. It's not meant to be an elite industry, but that's what it has become as a result of ticket bots. We wanted to change the rules and we wanted to make sure that fans had a really fair chance at buying tickets at prices that were affordable so that they could take their families.

I was stunned, as a matter of fact, when the Hip concert happened and people were calling my office and people were emailing me. They were very, very upset, and I knew that this had to change.

After hearing about the issues with ticket sales from across the province, we launched an online consultation that gave fans a chance to provide input on how they'd like to see those ticket laws changed. We used the input and advice of over 34,000 residents from across the province. We asked for their input. We had a consultation in Kingston and the Islands as well, and one in Toronto. It was very informative on some of the suggestions that they brought forward, as well as understanding the impact.

The proposed changes would prevent unfair and excessive markups in the ticket resale market. It would increase transparency in the ticket industry. It would prevent further ticket fraud and other deceptive activities in the ticket industry, and it would strengthen the enforcement of Ontario's ticket laws. The proposed changes would protect consumers by making the buying and selling of tickets much more fair and transparent.

**1710**

The online consultation that we did in between February 28 and March 16, 2017, was a very short period of time. In that time, we had 34,715 individuals who participated, making this the most popular online survey that was ever completed by our government. It was amazing. In the first 48 hours, I believe we had in the neighbourhood of 20,000 participants in that survey.

Every single stakeholder that reached out to us—and this happened within hours of the presentation of my private member's bill—including Ticketmaster, StubHub, MLSE, Live Nation, the symphony, Mirvish etc. They came to us, we had consultations with them, and we hosted 90-minute sessions with detailed questions. There were pre-meetings and post meetings. It was really clear that the people of Ontario and the industry are engaged with us on this important issue. They're ready to see—they need to see, they want to see—real changes when it comes to buying and selling tickets.

Fans all across the province understand that we need to have better laws around ticket sales. They've been very appreciative that this legislation has come forward and that the Attorney General decided to take on this bill as a government bill.

Thank you very much. I'm appreciative of the time to speak on this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Trinity–Spadina.

**Mr. Han Dong:** I'm very pleased with the opportunity to speak to this very important consumer protection bill, Bill 166.

I was listening to the member for Kitchener–Waterloo while she was making comments on her perspective on Tarion. I do agree with some of her frustrations around Tarion. I've heard at my constituency office some stories about consumers not being protected as expected under the current act. But I think our role as elected officials, other than being critical of the status quo, is also to make suggestions and offer constructive input when it comes to finding solutions.

I just want to explain a little bit about what this bill does on the Tarion front. The Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act has not been substantially reviewed or amended since 1976. An independent public review of the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act and the Tarion Warranty Corp. was completed by the Honourable John Douglas Cunningham in December 2016. The Honourable John Douglas Cunningham, in his report, noted that there is a perceived conflict of interest in the current structure of Tarion that leaves homeowners vulnerable.

Structural changes are needed to address this challenge. A new home purchase is a significant investment that needs a stronger home warranty program and a strong new home builder and vendor regulator. I think that's a very useful, very good direction to go in. Over and over again, we hear about deficiencies in the current structure.

I also want to talk about what this bill actually does. The bill proposed, if passed, would strengthen confidence in Ontario's new home warranties and protections, promote properly built residential construction and enhance consumer protection. The proposed changes, if passed, would:

- provide for two administrative authorities, one to administer the new home warranty program and one to regulate new home builders and vendors;

- make the dispute resolution process easier for homeowners if they discover a problem in the construction of their new home;

- strengthen the regulation of new home builders and vendors;

- give government the responsibility to make rules and set standards; and

- introduce modern oversight measures to improve accountability and transparency.

Speaking of which, I also want to cite additional elements included in this bill. The ministry's proposed legislative amendments would modernize the governance, accountability, transparency and oversight structures for the proposed new home warranty administrative authority and new home builder and vendor regulator by aligning them with those of other modern AAs, including, among other things:

- enabling the minister to appoint a chair of the board;

- enabling the minister to appoint a minority of board members;
- requiring an administrative agreement to address governance, reporting obligations and information sharing, among other things; and
- allowing for an audit completed by the Auditor General.

I think these are very important additions to the current structure. I sure hope to see more suggestions going to this bill, not just during the debate but also during the third reading and at committee as well. I'll look for suggestions and constructive amendments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

**Hon. Kathryn McGarry:** It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon and add a few comments to the debate, on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge, regarding this very important bill, Bill 166, the Strengthening Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, 2017.

Speaker, we all want Ontarians to be well protected and well informed in the marketplace, whether they are purchasing a much-anticipated vacation, buying tickets to see their favourite band, or buying or selling a house. Our government is committed to protecting Ontario consumers. That's why we created this comprehensive piece of legislation that, if passed, would strengthen consumer protection.

We all work hard and we all look forward to any vacations that we are looking forward to, so the Travel Industry Act, which hasn't been updated since 2002, was a particular reason why we decided to focus on this. Ontario has introduced legislation that, if passed, would strengthen protections for consumers buying travel services and reduce the burden on travel businesses.

If passed, proposed changes to the Travel Industry Act, 2002, would strengthen consumer protection by enabling the creation of new rules for representation, such as advertising by out-of-province travel sellers who target Ontarians, and creating new registration requirements for individual travel salespersons. This legislation, if passed, would lessen the burden on travel businesses by creating a new class for travel sellers so that businesses would no longer need to register as both a travel agent and a wholesaler. This legislation, if passed, would also improve compliance with the rules by enhancing enforcement tools, such as administrative penalties.

Also, should the bill pass, the ministry plans to consult with stakeholders on proposed regulation changes, including strengthening consumer protection by requiring registered travel sellers to disclose additional information to consumers so that they can make informed choices, and require continuing education for travel salespersons.

Speaker, I had somebody in my office a little while ago. They had saved and saved and saved for a particular vacation that they were finally able to go on and take their family with them. Unfortunately, due to an unscrupulous travel agent, they ended up not getting what they had paid for. Not only did they not get what they had paid for, it ended up a mess of a vacation. They were

overseas and ended up not getting the room that they had booked, they didn't have enough space, and the list went on. It ended up that there were out-of-pocket expenses that they weren't intending to be out of pocket for. It really did discolour their view of things. So ensuring that we have extra education for the consumer, as well as the travel agent, would really help.

**1720**

This legislation, if passed, would lessen the burden on travel businesses too. The majority of them are small businesses. That would be by updating requirements to reduce red tape for travel businesses, such as financial reporting and security deposits. This consultation would take place during the regulation development phase. The proposed changes to the Travel Industry Act, 2002, are based on a multi-phase consultation process that included input from the public and the travel industry stakeholders.

Today, a lot of things have changed since 2002. The Travel Industry Act does not reflect changes to Ontario's travel marketplace over the last decade, such as an increase in online shopping. Many, many people are now using online services and they need to be protected. Fraud by a travel salesperson was the number one complaint received by the Travel Industry Council of Ontario in 2015-16 and represents a significant issue for the travel industry.

Currently, the Travel Industry Council of Ontario has a limited ability to track or prevent travel salespersons employed by registrants from operating if they're suspected of committing fraud, so they can continue going on with their fraudulent ways, and we know that Ontario consumers want to be protected from that.

Overall, Speaker, we are really looking forward to seeing this act passed not only to protect Ontario consumers but also to reduce the burden on the travel industry. With that, I'll complete my comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

**Hon. Chris Ballard:** I really appreciate the time I've been given to speak to a very important bill. Consumer protection has been something that, for many years, has been near and dear to my heart. I can say that when it comes to consumer protection, it's not just consumers who are being protected by enhanced laws, enhanced regulations. It really is also about protecting the good operators, the good businesses. Oftentimes I have found that who I hear from in my day-to-day life, especially in the real estate industry, is from other agents who are upset about the behaviour of a few bad apples. I'm pleased to see that this legislation is going to do a number of things to make sure that people can have more confidence in the real estate industry.

From a very high level, what Bill 166, the Strengthening Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, will do is continue our focus on building that fairer, safer and informed marketplace for Ontario consumers. An informed consumer is a protected consumer. We want all Ontarians to be well protected and well informed about

the marketplace, whether they're making a small or a large purchase. That's why we've created this comprehensive piece of legislation that's going to enhance and improve consumer protection.

The area I just wanted to focus on in my time is around the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act. I come from a riding, Newmarket–Aurora, where there is a significant turnover of housing every month. People are very interested about their agents and about being protected. We've introduced new legislation that, if passed, is going to enhance consumer protection through a number of new measures to address the conflict-of-interest scenarios that arise in multiple-representation situations. If passed, the legislation is going to enable the creation of stronger, clearer rules in cases where one real estate professional or brokerage represents more than one party in a real estate trade. This is part of the government's Fair Housing Plan first announced back in the spring of 2017. The proposed legislation will also allow for heavier fines for code of ethics violations by salespersons, by brokers and by brokerages.

The ministry also plans to consult, during the regulation development, on some new requirements for consistent and plain-language clauses in existing forms to make it easier for consumers to understand their rights and their responsibilities when they're buying or selling a home. So this is the first part of a larger review of real estate rules to improve the consumer protection and professionalism in the industry.

But let me just talk for a minute about RECO, the Real Estate Council of Ontario, and its new role that's envisioned under this proposed legislation. It is, as you know, Speaker, the administrative authority established by government and responsible for enforcing the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act. Under the legislation, if passed, RECO is expected to take an active role of informing both consumers and real estate professionals about changes and their impacts on consumers and the industry.

In addition to this education role, RECO will be responsible for enforcing the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act and all of its regulations. So if a real estate professional, for example, doesn't comply with the new rules, those new rules that we're looking to approve, RECO could take appropriate disciplinary action. Let me tell you, Speaker, that the proposed legislation increases maximum fines for code-of-ethics violations from \$25,000 to \$50,000 for individual salespersons and brokers, and to \$100,000 for brokers.

The question I have, Speaker, is, when will this be happening? The proposed legislation's amendments which will increase fines for a breach of the code of ethics would come into force immediately on the day it's passed; the multiple-representation situations will come into force once supporting regulations are developed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'm pleased to rise and make a few comments on Bill 166. I think I've spoken on this

maybe at second reading, but anyway, I'm up today again.

Just as a little summary, there are five acts that are going to be affected by this bill. One thing we take some pleasure in is that the new authority will have Auditor General oversight and a mandatory internal ombudsman. So that is something that we're quite pleased with.

Under the new home warranties, there is a long-overdue reform of home building and new home warranties in Ontario by splitting the roles of the builder regulator and warranty provider.

The bill does, as one issue, fail to implement the most sweeping and meaningful of Justice Cunningham's recommendations, which is to allow new home warranties to follow a competitive market model, as is the case in BC and Saskatchewan.

We are pleased, however, to see that new authorities will have Auditor General oversight—I guess I've already said that. It's easing the onus of proof currently on homeowners when they have an issue.

The legislation banning or abolishing the Tarion monopoly and implementing a separate regulator and warranty provider may not be proclaimed for some years. The government admitted that Tarion's powers to make regulations had become too sweeping. This bill restores mandatory ministerial approval to Tarion's and new agencies' regulation-making initiatives.

Under ticket speculation, which affects a lot of viewers and listeners out there in my riding, as well as others, this would maybe go some way to protecting consumers who wish to go to a concert or a music event and have been squeezed out by some of these multinationals. So we support that, for sure. It's only fair for consumers to be able to go to some of these concerts and not be squeezed out by the big guys.

Anyway, I guess I'm out of time, so, Mr. Speaker, we'll catch you on the next round.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Member from Welland.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I'm just going to kind of focus in, on Bill 166, on the Tarion piece. I'm somewhat concerned that Tarion is still going to be in charge of the warranty program.

I'll tell you a story about a condo build that I was involved with. I was on the board of the condo development. It's called Seaway Pointe in Welland, and the builder was Pointe of View. They have now changed their name because their reputation was so bad in Ontario that they were run out of the province. They are back in Alberta, and I think their name is now the Carlisle Group.

In any event, there were many, many thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars of deficiencies in the building, but thankfully we had a board member who was a specification writer for an architect, and he had done a lot of kind of Walmart buildings. Speaker, he picked up on the fact that the supports for our four-storey wood-frame building—when they were doing some landscaping work—weren't even sitting on the concrete below them and that the concrete wasn't even deep

enough into the ground, and that our building probably would have tumbled down a few years from now.

**1730**

It took us a long time to actually get Tarion on board to do that. At the end of the day, I think the cost to replace those eight footings to support that building was somewhere near \$400,000 that we, as condo owners in a building with only 70 condo owners, would have been on the hook for if we hadn't had that guy who had the experience and the know-how on the board—which many condos don't have—to actually know that there was a deficiency and to actually go after Tarion.

Tarion really should have picked up on that right from the beginning, because we had Tarion in that building probably a dozen times earlier on for many more deficiencies.

I'm happy to have had the opportunity to speak to this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. James J. Bradley:** I thought the speakers outlined very well the positive aspects of the bill, as we would anticipate they would. Usually there is a reluctance, particularly on the part of opposition and some other observers, to pass a bill that is called an omnibus bill. This bill could be called that in the strict terms of saying it has many components to it.

I think in this case, because they're all tied into consumerism, there's probably less concern about a bill of this nature being before the House. It does deal with areas that people have—and we all have had people complain to our offices about consumer issues.

We've gone through already—and there has been legislation passed—the door-to-door people who bully people into signing contracts that they're sorry they signed off on, and they're senior citizens who are very trusting people or they're others who may not be aware of some of the tricks these people play. They get their foot in the door, they disguise themselves as people from the government or from a reputable agency, and then people end up signing long-term contracts which put them out of a lot of money.

This adds on to it in terms of the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act. We had extensive consultation, and good brokers and real estate people are going to be in favour of this. With the new home warranty program—again, the builders are going to be pleased with this. We know that there's more work to be done, as our members have mentioned when they have spoken on this.

In terms of the travel industry, again, people have encountered some significant problems over the years. The good players out there in the travel industry will welcome this, because it will mean that it levels the playing field and puts them in a better position to combat those who are not trustworthy in the business.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Dufferin–Caledon: two minutes.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I'm happy to make a few comments on Bill 166. I want to focus in on the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act because, as you know,

Speaker, I'm not a huge fan of regulations. Regulations can be passed by two cabinet ministers. It doesn't even have to be debated at the cabinet table, and they can be done very quickly with zero or very little public consultation.

In the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, changes that are being proposed, cabinet can make regulations banning the same broker or professional from representing two parties to the same transaction unless certain requirements are fulfilled; in plain language, that means when you have a real estate agent representing both the buyer and the seller. I get concerned about that, and frankly, I've had a number of emails and—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** A little loud in the third party area there.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Sorry, Speaker; my apologies.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thanks.

Go ahead.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you, Speaker. What I was saying was, with regulations, I get concerned about them. There's no public consultation, there's certainly no legislative debate, and it can be changed very quickly.

My question to the government is, what is the hesitation with making the legislative change? You specifically highlight the fact that you want to regulate when a buyer or seller are represented by the same agent, and yet you don't go into the details of how you want to do that.

We have lots of other examples in other jurisdictions. We have many people complaining about that process, particularly when the real estate market was so hot that things were happening very quickly. It's frustrating, and I would love to have, in the two-minute response, perhaps one of the Liberal members explain the justification for the regulation instead of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Kingston and the Islands has two minutes.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I would like to thank all of the members who have spoken today: the member from Trinity–Spadina, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, the member from Sarnia–Lambton, the member from Welland, the member from St. Catharines and the member from Dufferin–Caledon.

This is a very comprehensive bill. There are a lot of pieces to this bill. I do want to acknowledge, however, the member from Trinity–Spadina, who I hear very frequently talking about what I'm going to call the nitty-gritty that's going on in his riding. You have done a wonderful bill on elevator maintenance.

These are the kinds of stories that we have heard from all parties about the intricacies in our daily lives that exist in our ridings, whether its ticket speculation and the challenges that we experience buying tickets; or whether it's the business brokers act, and you just heard the member from Dufferin–Caledon bringing forward some great points there. This is a very comprehensive piece of legislation, and all of the members have brought forward

some very, very good points on it. I'm very pleased, a little bit selfishly, that the Ticket Speculation Act is there and that it's going forward.

I think that it's incumbent on responsive government to look after these details of consumer protection and fairness, and making everyday life better. And as the member from the third party noted in her story about the individual who had to live in a tent outside of their home because it wasn't safe, the environment in the home was not safe, this is an important bill. I'm happy to lend my support to this bill.

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

**Mr. Ross Romano:** With respect to Bill 166, I'll go act by act and try not to summarize at the end again. I'd like to begin with respect to the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act. I think, by and large, the system that we currently have—and everyone's already touched on this. Clearly, the situation we presently face is problematic. We do receive a lot of complaints in each one of our respective ridings. It is a current nightmare of a problem for homeowners. Given that our home, especially in today's market, is probably the most expensive investment we will ever make in our lifetime, the level of concern that we ought to have as people in legislative roles to ensure that that process can be streamlined and safe for Ontario families has to be really paramount. We're not talking about, obviously, minor purchases here.

I think that it also has to be recognized that when people experience dealings with a builder and something goes wrong in their home, they often don't get to know about it for long periods after the fact. So the issue could be one that they may not learn about for months, if not years, down the road, and the difficulty is already significant in order to chase those types of issues down, chase builders down, and get effective remedies in place. We don't need to make the situation any more difficult by having a system such as Tarion that seems to have more—greater difficulties, at least, given that they're representing both sides in a situation. It really needs to be something that gets improved. And I think that while the current proposal with respect to this is better than what currently exists, there are still a lot of improvements that need to be made.

1740

In looking at all of Justice Cunningham's recommendations, I think that more of them could have been taken into consideration and would have done more to give Ontario families greater safeguards for their investments. Again, the investments are so significant when we're talking about home purchases. Their livelihood is at stake, and more needs to be done. But certainly it's a step in the right direction, and it's better than what we presently have in the province.

Under the current structure, enforcement of building standards and safety regulations for living and for the builders themselves are essentially the same process, and operating in this fashion makes it virtually impossible for

Tarion to effectively resolve consumer disputes. When you look at the type of a system we presently have, in my eyes, really, it's no different than allowing students to weigh in on their final grades whenever they do their exams or their assignments in class.

Again, I can't say that I like every aspect of what is on the table right now with respect to these amendments, but it is better than what we presently have.

Given my former profession as a lawyer, I understand the importance of having a fair and impartial ruling. I'm happy to see the situation now where we will have someone overseeing this process and the removal of a monopoly of authority. But the requirement for new homes to be registered with the home warranty plan leaves absolutely no room for competition. Given that builders are already paying for private insurance, we really need a system that allows Ontario to have a competitive market and to have set and enforced minimum standards.

Companies are now going to have to compete with one another to either provide better services at a lower price or—ideally, they will have to do both. That is obviously how other businesses operate, so why wouldn't that be the case here? Having regulation for the sake of regulation is a bad thing, but when it serves a purpose like it would here, Ontario would benefit.

The complaints, obviously—and everyone has cited this—about Tarion procedures are not new. It is a costly claims process for everyone involved. At least, though, by having them made through an independent body, consumers and warranty providers alike will be assured that the adjudicator process will bring an objective and balanced approach where there has not been one before.

Just to summarize on that legislation: I'm in support simply because it's better than what we currently have, but I think that a lot more of Justice Cunningham's recommendations ought to have been put into effect, and I think that work still needs to be done. But in order to protect consumers to at least have an objective and balanced approach, for the time being, to the claims process and have an independent body in effect now—I'd be prepared to support this legislation solely because it improves one of those areas that is very much in need immediately.

With respect to the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, I actually just want to make a quick plug here for my community. I was just at an event for a company that opened up in Sault Ste. Marie last week, StreetCity. They're a new real estate brokerage that just opened up in Sault Ste. Marie. It was good to attend that event. There were a lot of people there; a lot of fellow real estate companies were present at the event.

The specifics with respect to this bill I think are, wholly, very much positive. The major benefit, obviously, is the requirement that realtors and brokers must disclose to their prospective clients or to their clients of a transaction where they are acting on both sides. I think this just makes common sense. I think realtors would understand that. It seems fair under the circumstances

that if I am a consumer and I am out buying a home, I should have the right to know whether my realtor represents the seller. Then I can make an informed decision on whether or not I want to proceed with my realtor or find someone else. I think it's only fair under the circumstances that the consumer should have that right. There are certainly situations where as a consumer you may be of the opinion that of course you want to keep your realtor. A lot of people have relationships with their realtors within their communities, and it would certainly be up to them to make that decision. But they need to at least be informed to be able to make that choice.

Under the current regime, the room for foul play is present. I'm not suggesting that foul play would necessarily occur or that everyone should be painted with that brush in the industry. Certainly, I can recall many experiences, again, within my profession as a lawyer where I knew that realtors were acting on both sides and wholeheartedly disclosed it anyway to the consumer. But to force that requirement ensures that that level of foul play isn't there. I think that that is very important under the circumstances, and I think that those involved in the industry would agree.

In a perfect world, obviously, we wouldn't need to mandate this—but we don't live in a perfect world, sadly—and every transaction would have a buyer finding their dream home and the seller accepting a price that makes them just as happy. A good realtor can make that happen. Having to disclose this information, in my opinion, does not impinge upon the realtor's job and what they have to do. It certainly allows the consumer to have all the information before them and be able to make an informed decision—again, when they are going to be spending money on what will be probably the largest investment they make in their life. So with respect to the amendments to the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, I can say that I support that legislation as well.

With respect to the Ticket Speculation Act and the reselling of tickets, I'd like to share, just briefly, a few experiences I've had that I think are examples of ways we can improve upon this system. First and foremost, again, we all know it's a problem. It's clearly an issue. The bots—a term that I didn't know I was going to use, but everyone seems to have used the term “bots” today, so I suppose I'll join and use the word “bots” as well. But it's a problem. It's a major issue. People are overpaying. It's unfair to the consumer, and it's unfair to the venue putting on the event.

We need something better, and what I've seen here really does not seem sufficient. Again, it may be better than what we have today, but it's missing the mark. I think there are a lot of ideas out there that could be utilized, and I think we only need to look to other markets.

**1750**

I can draw on an example of my own. I recall, a number of years ago—it might have been in 2007 or 2008—I had been in Italy with my wife. We were on a little tour, and we went to see a soccer game in Firenze, Italy,

between Fiorentina and Juventus. I won't tell anybody what team I was cheering for because I could get yelled at in my home riding, but I was at this soccer game, and it was so interesting.

We were looking for tickets for days while we were there, and we were finally able to locate tickets at a confectionery store. In that jurisdiction, you could buy your tickets from any licensed provider, and the licensed provider would have something similar to a lotto machine that we have here, right within their store or establishment or whatever it is that they sold from. When you went to buy your ticket, you had to turn over your passport. You couldn't buy a ticket without a passport. I'm not suggesting that we would have to use passports; it could be any other form of proper identification. But you would give them your passport, your passport would get scanned into this machine and when you bought your ticket, it would print out your passport number right on your ticket. Your ticket was personalized to you, and only you could use that ticket. There was no way for you to turn around and give that ticket to someone else or sell it to someone else. When you went into the stadium when it was time to go into the event, you would also have to present your passport along with your ticket. It was all an automated system at the doors, and you would go in.

I think of that system, and I remember thinking at the time how impressive it was from the perspective of ensuring that you resolved an issue with scalpers, and also ensuring that, from a safety perspective and a security perspective—there were some serious advantages there, as well. Let's say, for instance, that a camera catches somebody in section such-and-such doing something, but they couldn't pinpoint who the person was and the video wasn't strong enough. You know who's sitting in that seat or thereabouts.

That causes some issues. I agree with things like maybe I want to gift a ticket to a friend, or I want to buy, for a loved one or a friend, tickets to a game. You could have requirements in place, though, that allow someone to have so much time to submit their passport or whatever it is so that that information could be included. That would really resolve a lot of the issues with the scalping or reselling of tickets.

Another experience I've had that I think could also be utilized is that if you want to be able to permit those who hold the venue to have that opportunity to have such things as bots—I'm a huge Green Bay Packers fan. I'm not afraid to admit that. Sault Ste. Marie is very close to Green Bay, and I've managed to go to a lot of Green Bay games. They have a system there with licensed scalpers. They hold the certificates with them, and they're permitted. They use it as a business.

You could have a combination of different ideas that allow for these things to be happening, to try to satisfy all areas of the market. It gives protections to the consumer. It gives protections to the venue. It allows for some business to operate with respect to the reselling of tickets outside of the establishment itself, and it provides additional security measures, as well.

I think that when we're looking at some of these areas, we don't need to reinvent the wheel; we can look to other jurisdictions for support and help. But the problem we face here in our province is obviously a very real one with the reselling of tickets. The costs just get extraordinary, and something does need to be done.

I don't feel that what is on the table right now is sufficient, but is it an improvement over what we currently have? Yes. So I have to agree that while it is better, I think that there is still so much more room for improvement. We have the technology available. I think we need to start looking at utilizing the technology and, like I said, not reinventing the wheel. I don't think there's anything wrong, when there's a good idea, to acknowledge a good idea and that someone else is doing it well. There's nothing wrong with adopting that.

With respect to the Travel Industry Act, again, this is another industry that has been affected significantly as a result of the changes in technology and the improvements we've seen in the technology sector. This is not an act that has been looked at for quite some time. I think, if I'm not mistaken, it has been since the PCs held the government, a long, long time ago. I think it's something that it's good that we are looking at it now, because we're not talking about the same type of environment, where we don't have the brick-and-mortar buildings anymore that people typically used as their travel agencies. A lot of people nowadays want to use the online services and are willing to do so. I think we still need to foster the fact that some people out there still like to use the bricks-and-mortar. My wife and I just recently were looking at holidays, and we still like the idea of going to the travel agency. But for those people out there who want to use the New Age method of doing things on the Internet, we do need to effectively legislate and look at ways to make it easier to conduct business in that fashion.

Again, I think there could be additional improvements to the legislation. I think there could be more done that would give consumers a greater set of protections and a greater arena to work and play in. Given what we have today, and given the need to improve the situation today, I would be prepared to support this legislation on that basis, but I would like to see some amendments to make it more effective.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### NATURAL GAS WELLS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member for Haldimand–Norfolk has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. The member has five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

The member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate this extra time to expand on some questions that I previously raised with respect to compensation for natural gas well damage down in Norfolk county.

It was back in September 2015 that I met with Ian and Kim Grant from my constituency. They run a home decor business out of their residence in the Silver Hill area. In March 2015, the Grants were notified that a Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry natural gas relief well along Big Creek had been capped. The Grants were advised that this relief well was releasing toxic water with high levels of hydrogen sulphide into Big Creek and had to be capped.

I'm told that this well had been capped back in the 1960s, with other developments that caused them to re-open the well at some time in the past. I feel that MNRF believed that further issues could potentially occur.

My office contacted the minister's office and contacted the petroleum operations office. MNRF was aware of the situation and assured my office and assured the Grants that they would be monitoring pressure buildup. In June of this year, the well located on the Grants' property—this is another well—plus another well in the area began to spew heavy amounts of hydrogen sulphide into the air, and sulphur water spilled onto their property and into Big Creek.

### 1800

As a result of an action by the MNRF, in my view, the Grants, along with five other families in the area, were ordered by the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit to vacate their primary residences on August 18, 2017, due to the fluctuating, unpredictable concentrations of hydrogen sulphide. As well, another 16 families in the area were put on alert. There was an order from Dr. Malcolm Lock, our acting medical officer of health, and I'll quote from the order: "The medical officer of health for Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit has determined that the fluctuating and unpredictable concentrations of hydrogen sulfide gas ... which are escaping from an abandoned gas well, have been measured in the ambient air to reach levels above what is considered safe for human health."

As of today, both wells have been capped but, again, only after the county stepped in and the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit stepped in and called on the government to do something.

Norfolk County Mayor Charlie Luke wrote an urgent letter on August 31 to the Premier and to the minister, and I quote, "The MNRF is not fulfilling its statutory obligations to the residents of Norfolk county. The MNRF is not sharing data in any forthright manner and taking a narrow legalistic approach with respect to both expenditures and public safety in relation to well number T008725. Section 7.0.1 of the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act provides an MNRF inspector with the authority to order a well to be capped where it poses a hazard to the public or environment. Inexplicably, this has not occurred, notwithstanding the fact six residences have been ordered evacuated by the medical officer of health."

That's the end of that letter, August 31.

It's certainly been covered by local media. Norfolk Today had an article titled, "Gas Leak Causes Nightmare of a Situation for Local Family." That was September 23. In the Simcoe Reformer, August 28, I quote, "Evacuation Of Homes Could Prove Lengthy." The people who were evacuated didn't return for something like 133 days. I'll have to check the number on that. That's quite a long time, obviously. The Spectator covered this.

Again, to summarize my questions earlier: Will Norfolk county be compensated for their municipal time and resources to deal with this? Will the Grants, Ian and Kim, be compensated by the province for loss of business, damage to their property and equipment? And I raise the issue of any long-term health impact on this couple. Again, we ask what the MNRF is doing to ensure this situation doesn't keep occurring as it has for so long over the number of years.

We know there's a precedent for compensation in situations like this, and again, if it's required, we request that compensation be forthcoming.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry has five minutes.

**Hon. Kathryn McGarry:** Thank you, Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise this evening and discuss the member from Haldimand-Norfolk's concern that he raised earlier today. I would like to reiterate that public health and safety is extremely important to our government. Any time a family is evacuated from their home or impacted by situations that are beyond their control, it can be extremely distressing, and I certainly understand that.

This is one of the reasons why my ministry has taken steps to solve these problems related to the management of petroleum gas wells in our province. In the coming months, my ministry will be reaching out to municipalities to discuss planning and emergency management scenarios related to petroleum hazards and risks. The education and outreach work will help clarify roles and responsibilities, and it will also allow the municipalities, whose main responsibility it is, to plan ahead by better understanding these risks.

However, that was still not enough for my ministry. More research does need to be done before we take a course of action, which is why we have also assembled a multi-ministry technical team to help us better understand the geology and subsurface gases in southwestern Ontario.

Under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, municipalities are responsible for emergency management within their geographic areas. The Ontario government is responsible for emergency management on crown land and unorganized municipalities.

There have been incidents involving leaking or old petroleum wells, improperly abandoned wells or contaminated water wells in southwestern Ontario, located in the Norfolk, Leamington, Port Burwell and Big Creek areas. If a leak occurs, the local municipality can choose to initiate an emergency, the local health unit can issue evacuation orders, and our ministry can provide technical advice to support the municipality and the health unit. In

all petroleum-related situations, my ministry works with the municipality and the local health unit by providing technical advice and support.

So I'd like to reiterate, once again, that it's the local municipal government that has the primary responsibility for incident and emergency management. However, in certain circumstances my ministry can assist landowners, through our Abandoned Works Program, for high-priority wells. This is something I want to elaborate more on.

The Abandoned Works Program is meant to assist landowners with costs associated with legacy wells on their property that they were not commercially responsible for. MNRF treats each request on a case-by-case basis, and in limited cases assists the landowner with the costs of plugging a leaking well. These decisions are made based on the risks to public safety and degree of environmental contamination. However, let me be clear: The landowner is ultimately responsible for wells on their private property.

In the situation referenced earlier, my ministry came in under the Abandoned Works Program and capped the well in question. I'm happy to explain the steps.

In 2015, three visits by my ministry indicated that H<sub>2</sub>S readings varied between 0 and 17 parts per million, depending on weather conditions and measurement distances.

On July 18, 2016, I sent Mr. Grant and the member's office a letter and a report from Matrix.

In July 2017, Mr. Grant informed the MOECC of a change in the status of his well.

An inspector was sent to reassess the site on July 26, 2017, and as a result of that visit, the Grants were notified the next day that MNRF would immediately start the process to plug the well under the Abandoned Works Program.

Under this program, the first step in the process of plugging the well includes tendering the project with qualified vendors and the creation of a contract between the landowner and the contractor.

I want to highlight the fact that my ministry expedited the tendering process significantly in this situation, and the cost associated was \$200,000. Speaker, we can all agree that's a lot of money, so let's be clear here: Without this program, Ian and Kim Grant, the private landowners, would have normally been responsible for those costs.

I understand the Grants had requested compensation for their situation, particularly cost-recovery for the business in the area, but unfortunately, Speaker, my ministry is not able to pay for municipal costs or the economic losses. However, we did step forward, we saved the landowner over \$200,000, and we have capped the well, so that their health and safety will be assured from there forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1808.*

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Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
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