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Mercredi
15 novembre 2017

Speaker: Honourable Dave Levac
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Dave Levac
Greffier : Todd Decker

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 15 November 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 15 novembre 2017

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

MEMBER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Ted Arnott: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order: the member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to rise and correct my record.

On October 31, I delivered a statement in the Legislature informing the House that the town of Halton Hills had been recognized as Canada's most patriotic town because 57,073 Canadian flags were proudly flown in Halton Hills on Canada Day.

I only had limited time for my remarks, and I wish I could have added reference to the enormous contribution of the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce tourism committee to the success of this wonderful initiative. I also wish I had mentioned Cheryl Cardon for spearheading the concept to completion.

I want to thank Kathleen Dills of the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce for helping me to correct this oversight.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I accept the member's thanks, but correcting a record—and let's make sure that we put this on the record—is simply changing something that you said, instead of adding to it.

I would like to remind all members: Correcting the record means something that you actually correct. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 14, 2017, on the motion for allocation of time on 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 Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I understand that this is a time allocation motion on Bill 166, the Strengthening Protection for Ontario Consumers Act.

Speaker, we've seen this time and time again from this government, where bills that are up for debate are time-allocated. What that means is, they are stopping the debate. They don't want to hear from elected representatives anymore. They figure, "We've had enough. We've heard enough from you. We don't want you to have an opportunity any longer to stand here in the Legislature and debate these important issues." That's what time allocation means. It's a fancy word; it sounds like a fancy expression. It sounds like normal, everyday government business: It's being time-allocated, so that means everything's fine. Well, everything is not fine, Speaker. Time allocation truncates our debate. It cuts off debate. You're going to notice a little later on today, as a matter of fact, that we're going to see another bill time-allocated.

In the three minutes and 43 seconds that I have left to speak, I will also refer to Bill 166, the Strengthening Protection for Ontario Consumers Act. We're going to have a vote, I presume, just after question period, and then this afternoon, Bill 148 is going to be time-allocated. That is the minimum wage bill. We've heard from so many groups on that bill as well. The government—they don't want to hear anything anymore. They want this debate cut off. They don't believe in the full use of democracy; they believe that the opposition should be silenced.

When I look in this chamber and I read the sign carved into the wall, "Audi alteram partem"—"Hear the other side"—that's what we're here for. We are here to bring all aspects of the debate. There will be some good points; there will be some not-so-good points. But, carved into the walls here, 100 years ago, is, "Hear the other side." That's what this group does not want to see. They do not want to hear from us because we've got the highest electricity rates in North America, and we may interject that in our discussion. They don't want us to talk about that. They laugh at that, as a matter of fact, if you can hear the chuckles on the other side. They don't like the fact that we can disclose these things. Facts do matter. We can continue to disclose things like: We have the highest portions of our tax rate in all of Canada, when it comes to employee wage taxes. These are the things this group doesn't want to talk about. That's why they heckle; they don't want us to be able to stand here and talk to the people of Ontario about things that matter.

Sergio Marchionne, the chairman and CEO of Fiat Chrysler, has told the Premier that she has created the most expensive jurisdiction in all of North America in which to do business, which is why thousands of companies have left Ontario, and many more will. I look at Google, who just announced they're opening their first-

ever data centre in Canada—but where? They're opening it in Quebec. Why? High energy rates; that's their reason.

They don't want us here talking about these types of things. They would rather silence us and not give us the opportunity to debate Bill 166, on strengthening protection—or this afternoon, when they truncate Bill 148, the minimum wage bill. They don't want us to be able to talk about these things that are important to the people of Ontario. They do not want to hear the other side. They want us to stand here and just be shut off—cut off all debate, all discussion, and just listen to them. Whatever they do is right, and we have no right to speak up and offer any other alternative.

That's what I find so reprehensible about bringing in time allocation. If it were once or twice in the six years that I've been here—but it's every week; it's every month; it's every year. It's non-stop with these Liberals, and I find that reprehensible. I look forward to voting against this.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Time allocation is really a tool that's used by this government to shut down debate. One thing we don't agree with on this side of the House is shutting down debate and not allowing each member to have a full opportunity to voice their constituents' concerns and, quite frankly, have insight into bills so this government can take on productive ideas of how to make legislation work better for this province.

There have been many, many times in this House where this government has decided to time-allocate because they have an agenda. There's an election coming on the horizon, and they want to push as many bills through as they can so that they look like they actually are working for the people of Ontario. That's not the case, Speaker. That's not the case.

Now that their backs are up against the wall and in six months or seven months, when there's an election coming, they have proposed and announced everything under the sun. That's why we're doing time allocation: because they want to make sure that they give that impression, that perception, that, "Hey, we have a majority government and we're so productive and we've worked really hard for you and we're supporting Ontarians."

That's not the case. Time-allocating debate isn't a way to get the job done. Time-allocating debate is a tool to use to shut people down. We don't agree with it. We will be voting, of course—and many times we have; we have voted against time allocation.

Interjection: Always.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Always, in some cases. It has always been that way. And I think, again—

Interjection.

0910

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes, always voted on time allocation, against it.

The tool that this government uses is outdated, and they need to get on board with what's really happening in Ontario.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: I was up early this morning. I had a nice walk downtown, had a good breakfast and a good meeting this morning already, talking about electricity rates in Ontario. I walked back up from downtown to Queen's Park, and I thought when I came through the doors here at the Legislature today I was going to be talking about a substantive piece of legislation that the government has brought forward that's going to make the lives of people in Ontario better. Instead, I'm here debating another time allocation motion. This government has brought in more time allocation motions than any government in the history of governments. It's remarkable how this government is unable to manage its own legislative schedule. They bring in time allocation motions for every piece of legislation.

So here we are. Bill 166 is the consumer protection bill. I haven't had the opportunity, as the member for Prince Edward–Hastings, to speak to the substantive portions of this bill that will impact the residents of Prince Edward county and Belleville and Hastings county, because the government is bringing in time allocation. They're killing debate on this bill. We're going to send it to committee, sure. I would like to believe, Speaker, that some good things could happen in committee, where the government would listen to some very good ideas and possibly accept some amendments from the opposition parties. I'm sure the members of the third party have some amendments to pieces of this legislation that they'll be bringing forward. I know that we will, as members of the official opposition, have amendments that we'll be bringing forward to strengthen this bill, to make it a better bill for the people of Ontario so that it does actually do what it's intended to do. Right now, it doesn't do that. It could be a better bill.

There are five different aspects of this bill. The Ticket Speculation Act is something that I brought to light 18 months ago, I think, in the Legislature. It was an issue that needed to be addressed. The member from Kingston and the Islands, shortly after I brought this issue to light, brought in her own private member's legislation. At the time, I was critical of some aspects of her bill that weren't addressing the actual problem in Ontario. Now it has become a government bill, and the Ministry of the Attorney General is championing this now, finally, after their government changed the Ticket Speculation Act to reward some donors to the Ontario Liberal Party. That's what started this whole mess a couple of months ago. This was never on the radar of the former Attorney General. I've spoken with many stakeholders in this sector. This was not something that was on her radar. This was a change that was made in the Premier's office in July 2015 that changed the way tickets are sold online here in Ontario. It basically made scalping legal online. That's what this change did—not what this bill did—what the change in the act was back in July 2015. Now the government is trying to fix it, because it did make a change that was not for the better. We want to ensure that

people, when they have an opportunity to go to a concert or a sporting event, are protected. I understand that that's the intent of this bill, but the bill could go further.

Interjection.

Mr. Todd Smith: Yes, you can get Belleville Senators tickets through Ticketmaster. You should come down, Minister of Agriculture. I'd be happy to take you to a game sometime. They're doing quite well so far, even though most of the team is injured right now.

On the Taron home warranty side, there are so many other amendments or changes to this piece of legislation that could be made to strengthen this bill. I had to laugh, actually, when I saw one of the things that this government is bringing in when it comes to the new home warranties program. We're pleased to see that the new authorities will have Auditor General oversight. It's remarkable for me to see this, because this government has done nothing but remove the oversight powers of the Auditor General and the independent officers of the Legislature. And you know it's true, whether it's the electricity sector, the Hydro One sale—boom, the Auditor General can no longer comment on the Hydro One sale. We had all eight independent officers of the Legislature join together to hold an unprecedented news conference saying that this government continues to strip the authority of the independent officers of the Legislature.

Now, in this, they're providing some oversight again, so good for them. But every time the Auditor General comes out with a criticism of this government, what does this government do? They try and undermine the independent officer of the Legislature, the Auditor General. I can speak specifically to the recent fair hydro plan, where the government completely undermined the Financial Accountability Officer and the Auditor General of the Ontario Legislature.

Even when they bring in added oversight responsibilities for the independent officers of the Legislature, they laugh them off as inconsequential, and that's wrong. It's also wrong that they're bringing in time allocation and silencing so many members of the Ontario Legislature who want to speak to this bill.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm pleased to speak on the time allocation debate on Bill 166. Speaker, as you may know, Bill 166, if passed, would introduce rules to better protect consumers buying travel services, event tickets, and buying and selling real estate, including buying newly built homes. This is a comprehensive piece of legislation proposed by our government, which, if passed, would help to make a real difference to consumers engaging in a range of areas in the marketplace.

Speaker, you and I have heard debate many times in this House and petitions presented by members on issues that they have seen their constituents go through when it comes to deficiencies in our consumer protection legislation. I have often heard members talk about the unscrupulous practices around door-to-door sales. In my community of Ottawa Centre, I myself have heard from many seniors where they were forced to buy furnaces,

hot water tanks and these kinds of devices that have a huge impact on them. They end up signing contracts that, frankly speaking, were not in their best interest. So there was this ask on the part of the government to bring legislation to make sure that there is strong consumer protection.

Similarly, Speaker, when it comes to real estate, we know that probably the biggest purchase any Ontarian makes is when they buy their first home. We need to make sure that that particular sector, that particular industry, has all the safeguards in place that will protect buyers.

Personally, I had the opportunity to work on the issue around tickets for sporting events and concerts. This is an issue which is dominating news headlines right now and something that we have heard about often, that you've got tickets that reappear on resale websites for 200%, 300% or 400% more than what the actual face value has been. There has been huge demand by our constituents to regulate that particular marketplace to ensure that there's appropriate consumer protection.

We have brought, perhaps, the most comprehensive piece of legislation around ticket sales, which is part of Bill 166, that will ensure that we are putting caps on the resale of tickets at 50%; that there are more enhanced transparency requirements when it comes to ensuring that there is all-in pricing on tickets so consumers know exactly what they're paying; that there is an inventory disclosure so you know how many tickets have gone on sale when something comes into place; and, also, of course, to put a ban on tickets bought by bots or being resold when they are purchased by bots. That's a comprehensive piece of legislation.

All of these things together in Bill 166 will further strengthen our consumer protection legislation. That is why it is important that we pass this legislation as soon as possible, so that these protections that will benefit everyday Ontarians come into force and come into law as quickly as possible.

0920

That is why I urge all the members to support this time allocation motion, because this is legislation that is going to really ensure that there is stronger consumer protection for Ontarians in the travel sector, in real estate, in event and concert tickets, in building and buying new homes and in door-to-door sales. These are the kinds of things that our constituents want us to work on. It would only, I think, benefit Ontarians if we pass this legislation as soon as possible, so I urge all members to support this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Second call: Further debate? Third and final: Further debate?

Seeing none, Mr. Chan has moved government notice of motion 38 relating to the allocation of time on 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. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I definitely heard a "no."

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

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

This will be dealt with after question period.

Vote deferred.

SAFER ONTARIO ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017

POUR PLUS DE SÉCURITÉ EN ONTARIO

Madame Lalonde moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 175, An Act to implement measures with respect to policing, coroners and forensic laboratories and to enact, amend or repeal certain other statutes and revoke a regulation / *Projet de loi 175, Loi mettant en oeuvre des mesures concernant les services policiers, les coroners et les laboratoires médico-légaux et édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant certaines autres lois et abrogeant un règlement.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Madame Lalonde.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: It is my honour to begin second reading of the Safer Ontario Act. I will be sharing my time with the Attorney General, who will speak to our proposed changes to police oversight.

First, I would like to acknowledge the presence of some of our officers who are here today and thank them for all the great work that they do every single day keeping our communities safe.

The nature of policing and community safety has changed dramatically since the Police Services Act was first introduced in 1990.

Les problèmes auxquels font aujourd'hui face les services policiers et leurs membres sont beaucoup plus complexes qu'ils l'étaient lorsque la loi a été créée.

This is a pivotal time for law enforcement and community safety and well-being. With the increased complexity of crime, rapid acceleration of technology and increased interactions with vulnerable individuals, we are witnessing substantial new pressures on our police officers and police services. This is exactly why our government is introducing change that will result in the largest transformation of policing in a generation. We know that community safety starts in the community. Our modernization is rooted in a proactive approach that focuses on well-being, because community well-being is the cornerstone of public safety. It is a shared responsibility.

Our government is proud to propose measures that will support the shift to a community-based safety and well-being planning model. We plan to accomplish this through an array of legislative measures that include:

- a new collaborative approach to community safety and well-being, where municipalities take a leadership role. Municipalities would work with police and other community partners to create plans that address local needs and issues;

- introducing a new era of police accountability and oversight, not only for police services but for the police services board who oversee them and set priorities;

- outlining police responsibilities and community safety service delivery. This includes, for the first time, enshrining in legislation the duties that can only be performed by a sworn police officer;

- supporting the sustainability of First Nations policing by enabling First Nations to choose their policing service delivery model, including the option to come under the same legislative framework as the rest of Ontario.

We're also proposing a number of other legislative changes to build a safer Ontario that include:

- modernizing the Coroners Act to make inquests more accessible and supportive for the families and loved ones involved. This includes mandatory inquests when use of force by a police officer, special constable or other officer is directly linked to the cause of death;

- introducing Ontario's first Forensic Laboratories Act to accredit forensic labs and set consistently high standards, to ensure that legal processes are not vulnerable to discredited practices and flawed forensic procedures;

- supporting police to respond to missing persons investigations effectively and rapidly while balancing concerns for individual privacy. This was a key recommendation of the inquest into the deaths of seven indigenous youth in Thunder Bay. It also fulfills a commitment our government made in the Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women.

The Safer Ontario Act has been more than five years in the making. It has been guided by a comprehensive, province-wide consultation and online survey and is supported by years of research of evidence-based solutions and best practices.

Lorsqu'on les considère en totalité, les mesures proposées moderniseraient notre approche à la sécurité communautaire et supporteraient notre objectif de répondre aux besoins actuels et futurs des services policiers.

J'aimerais maintenant aborder quelques points saillants du projet de loi que notre gouvernement propose.

Let's talk about community safety and well-being.

Ontario is not a one-size-fits-all province. We are a collection of large urban centres, rural communities and indigenous communities. For example, a community that is vulnerable to human trafficking has a different set of priorities and a different expectation of support from the province than one that is combatting an increase in opioid addiction and overdoses. It would be impossible to build a single model for policing that would be appropriate for a province as vast and diverse as Ontario.

We must shift from a reactive model, which relies too heavily on emergency police response, to a model that is proactive and focused on crime prevention. And it must engage all community partners, including the police. This is the foundation upon which community safety and well-being plans will be built.

In order to be effective, everybody must play a role: the police, who would remain at the heart of community crime and law enforcement initiatives; the crisis worker

and health care professional, who have the experience and insight to assist police responding to an emergency 911 call involving a person with mental-health- or addictions-related issues; and other public safety personnel, such as special constables, who also play a strong supporting role in maintaining community safety and who would take some of the ever-increasing pressure off of our police services.

The challenges have been in how to formally bring these groups and others together. It is proposed that municipalities will be mandated to develop and implement community safety and well-being plans. Police services boards would be involved in this planning and would align their own strategic plans with the broader municipal plan.

These plans would identify local risk; implement evidence-based, collaborative strategies to address these risks; and develop and implement preventive programs and strategies to address risk before an emergency response is required.

A wide range of approaches are needed to address the diverse needs of Ontario's vulnerable populations, including those with mental health concerns and individuals with addiction issues.

By bringing together municipalities, the police, the public, and social services providers such as medical professionals and case workers, those who are in need of help will receive the right response at the right time and by the right service provider. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that vulnerable populations and those in crisis are connected with the resources and services they need—when and where they need them most—by the providers best suited to help them. This kind of forward-looking planning would help communities bend their cost curves not only for policing but for all emergency services, which is why several Ontario communities—such as Halton, Lanark county and my hometown of Ottawa—have already started to develop community safety and well-being plans.

0930

Now let's look at our proposal for police accountability. The new Police Services Act proposes significant changes to how municipal police services and the Ontario Provincial Police are governed in order to ensure continued public trust and confidence. If passed, the Safer Ontario Act will establish an Inspector General to independently oversee and monitor police services and police services boards. The Inspector General would have a mandate to ensure the delivery of adequate and effective policing across the province. These changes are essential in making police services and their local police services boards more representative and accountable to the communities they serve.

Establishing an Inspector General will also increase our capacity to monitor, investigate, inspect and audit police services to ensure they are meeting the standards for the delivery of policing as defined in the proposed act. They would also have the powers to inspect police services boards to make sure they are meeting their legislative and regulatory requirements. Finally, they would

handle complaints against police services boards, board members and police services with respect to their official functions.

On the advice of the Ontario Human Rights Commissioner, the Inspector General would also ensure that policing is delivered in compliance with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Under our proposed legislation, police boards will change in a number of ways in order to strengthen civilian governance and enhance public confidence. We will:

- ensure all municipalities policed by the OPP have access to local OPP police boards;

- allow each municipality to determine the size of its police board based on local needs; the minimum and maximum municipal board sizes would increase to five and nine, respectively;

- require that all board members complete mandatory training, including in areas such as human rights and systemic racism.

We will also expand the list of individuals prohibited from being board members to include former police officers. These officers would be permanently prohibited from serving on the board of their former police service.

We'll also require each police board to prepare a strategic plan detailing how the board will ensure the delivery of adequate and effective policing to meet local needs.

In addition, Speaker, the Safer Ontario Act introduces changes to the police disciplinary process, such as giving chiefs of police the ability to suspend officers without pay under limited circumstances when not performing their core duties. Suspension without pay is an important interim measure in all other provinces in Canada and a tool that we are now making available to police chiefs in limited circumstances.

We know that in order to keep our communities safe, police officers are often put in difficult situations that require them to make split-second decisions, with lives hanging in the balance. When police officers are carrying out their duties in good faith, they are exposing themselves to an increased risk of liability by the very nature of their duties. When an officer is in one of these situations, whether or not they will continue to be paid should not be a factor in their decision-making process. That being said, the numbers involved are very small but result in a heavy burden on police budgets and have a substantially negative impact on public trust and confidence in the oversight of police officers.

The decision to suspend a police officer without pay is something that should not be taken lightly. That is why the proposed legislation allows for this extreme measure to be used only in the most egregious cases. In all cases of suspension without pay, there would be a review process to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of the officer and their family.

Ontario is already one of the safest jurisdictions in North America. Since 2007, Ontario's crime rate has dropped by 29%; the violent crime rate has gone down

by 27%. Ontarians are safer in their homes and on the streets and are less exposed to violent crime.

This doesn't happen by accident. Excellence in policing plays a major role. That doesn't change under our proposed legislation. The police will always be at the centre of community safety. When you call 911 and you need a police officer, rest assured that a highly trained police officer will respond to your call.

The model for policing is constantly evolving as criminal activity changes. Changing technology can both restrict and create opportunity for crime. When the current Police Services Act was first introduced, fewer than two in five Canadian households had a home computer, and far fewer had access to the Internet. Today, incidents of cyber crime have increased exponentially with the use of computers and smartphones. Other criminal activities such as identity fraud, child pornography and human trafficking have become more prevalent and more difficult to track.

The relationship between police and marginalized and vulnerable communities has evolved as well. We are asking more of our police services than ever before. A Police Services Act that is over 25 years old can no longer provide a policing framework that can fully respond to new realities in policing. As members of the public, we must finally come to terms with the question: Are we expecting too much of our police? As legislators, we have a responsibility to ensure that policing remains sustainable without compromising public safety.

The new Police Services Act would deliver clarity by defining for the very first time the core duties of police services. In doing so, we will set parameters for using alternative service providers like special constables to provide non-critical services where a threat to public safety does not exist. This will allow our highly trained police officers to focus on core law enforcement responsibilities.

Some would like to frame this as the privatization of policing, Mr. Speaker, and they would be wrong. We are not breaking new ground here. In its current form, the Police Services Act already outlines a number of public safety areas where alternatives to a traditional police officer may be used. This includes forensic support, crisis negotiation and crime analysis.

Furthermore, our proposed legislation prevents for-profit business corporations from delivering police functions, except in highly limited circumstances. This includes highly specialized areas where expertise may not exist within any police service across the province. This addresses a key concern of both police and the public when it comes to identifying alternative service options.

As our government gives communities the flexibility to tailor services to their needs, we're also taking the necessary steps to ensure a consistent approach to policing across the province.

The proposed legislation will establish consistent education, training and standards for all police services. Ontario's 3,115 special constables will also be subject to enhanced education and training. The Safer Ontario Act

is about ensuring that our highly trained and professional police officers can focus on the important work we need them to do. By finding appropriate alternative service delivery methods, we will help our police officers perform their jobs even more effectively.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about sustainability of First Nations policing. Communities want a greater voice in determining how they are policed, and this includes our First Nations communities. The new Police Services Act will introduce a framework that provides First Nations communities with choice in determining a model of policing that fits with their needs. I am proud of the fact that, for the first time, First Nations will be able to choose whether to establish their own police service boards. Those that do not wish to do so will have the ability to continue with their current policing frameworks. This means that First Nations police service boards will be required to meet the same provincial standards and oversight as those governing other police services in Ontario.

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Our government has worked together with indigenous communities, political territorial organizations, and First Nations police services for a long time to bring this transformation forward. These changes will ensure that First Nations receive culturally responsive, sustainable, accountable and equitable policing that has the flexibility to address specific community needs on their own terms.

The proposed legislation will also enable municipalities and their policing partners to manage change more efficiently and more effectively. This includes developing an outcomes-based funding model that will better support all partners involved in reducing crime and building safer and healthier communities.

By increasing collaboration at the local level and across all sectors, this new model will:

- result in a more efficient use of resources;
- reduce unnecessary duplication between services;
- encourage cost reduction in emergency-response expenses; and
- maximize the effectiveness of all community safety and well-being services.

Our government is reviewing existing grant programs to ensure the focus is kept on supporting collaborative partnerships that will include police and other sectors such as health care, social services and education.

Speaker, a new Police Services Act is the largest piece of our government's public safety legislative package, but it is not the only piece. As the honourable members know, we're also proposing to introduce Ontario's first Forensic Laboratories Act, introduce Ontario's first Missing Persons Act, and update the Coroners Act.

Let's talk about the Forensic Laboratories Act. There are many forensic laboratories performing forensic services in the province of Ontario. Clients must have confidence in the quality and consistency of testing results. Our government is firmly committed to holding forensic laboratories to a high standard. Nobody wants

legal proceedings jeopardized because of discredited tests or other flawed procedures.

If passed, any laboratory that conducts forensic tests that will be used in legal proceedings, or that aid in an investigation that may result in legal proceedings, will have to be accredited. Ontario would be the first province in Canada to have legislation of this kind. This will further cement Ontario's place as a national leader in the oversight of forensic laboratories.

To become accredited, laboratories must confirm that they have an effective system of quality management, including proficiency testing, internal audits, surveillance visits, and a code of conduct, all in order to competently perform forensic tests. Accreditation would also lead to greater oversight by introducing a system of inspection and compliance for laboratories.

Given the rapid advances in forensic sciences, it is essential that our government creates a path for the future. This proposed legislation would make sure we keep pace with changes in forensic science and research by establishing an advisory panel made up of experts from the fields of law, health, forensic sciences and child protection. This expert panel would make recommendations to ensure forensic laboratories across the province meet advancing standards and oversight requirements, research emerging trends and best practices, and identify potential gaps in future oversight.

Speaker, we all know that swift action is critical when a loved one goes missing. Currently, when there is no evidence that a crime has been committed, police cannot obtain court orders to allow access to the type of essential information or powers that may locate a missing person faster—things like mobile phone records and banking data. This places missing persons at an unnecessary risk. Our police services must be given the tools and supports they need to effectively and rapidly resolve missing person cases.

This is why our government is supporting police across the province when it comes to locating missing persons with Ontario's first Missing Persons Act. The Missing Persons Act would remove barriers by giving courts the power to grant court orders to police to access personal information and enter premises for the purpose of searching for a missing person. This act will, for example, assist with our efforts to combat human trafficking and locate indigenous women at risk of violence. We have worked hard to ensure that the appropriate safeguards are embedded into the proposed legislation in order to protect the privacy of missing persons. For example, the act considers persons who may not desire to be found because they are leaving or attempting to leave a violent or abusive situation behind.

I want to talk to you about the updating of the Coroners Act. The Office of the Chief Coroner plays a vital role in keeping Ontario's communities safe. Recommendations from coroners' inquests help to prevent a similar death from occurring in the future. This often provides comfort to grieving families who have tragically lost a loved one. Our government is committed to im-

proving the inquest process and making it more accessible to family members who rely on an inquest to answer the question "why?"

Among the changes, our government proposes that inquests be mandatory when use of force by a police officer, special constable or other officer is the direct cause of death. Currently, this is not the case: Inquests in these circumstances are held at the coroner's discretion, something that the chief coroner himself has asked be changed. This amendment also addresses recommendations from Justice Tulloch's Independent Police Oversight Review where he called for greater support for family members whose loved one died in a police-related incident.

In conclusion—before I ask my colleague to speak—policing is more than law enforcement. Community safety is a shared responsibility. The Safer Ontario Act lays the foundation for this reality. It represents a generational transformation that is more proactive than reactive. It sets new standards of transparency and accountability.

Cela nous permet d'avoir des services policiers durables partout en Ontario, y compris dans les Premières Nations, pour assurer la sécurité de toute notre collectivité.

This legislation, as I said, is the culmination of over five years of work. I want to thank everyone who has helped make this happen for their hard work and dedication. This is an exceptional example of collaboration between a broad array of officials, stakeholders and everyday Ontarians. I strongly urge all my colleagues in this House to support our legislative package.

Minister Naqvi, our Attorney General, will now speak to our government's police oversight reforms.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Merci, Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It's a great honour for me to speak on Bill 175, the Safer Ontario Act. I would like to thank my colleague the honourable member from Ottawa–Orléans, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, for her tireless work on this very important piece of legislation. As she mentioned in her remarks, this legislation is years in the making. There's a lot of work—a lot of conversations and consultations—that has gone on and that has resulted in Bill 175.

I'm honoured to rise today to speak about our government's proposed changes to strengthen policing oversight in Ontario that are part of Bill 175. These proposed changes are a part of the government's landmark legislation, the Safer Ontario Act, which represents the largest policing transformation that our province has seen in 25 years. These changes, if passed, would help shape what effective policing and police oversight should look like in Ontario.

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I want to acknowledge many of our brave police officers who are in the gallery here today. As we know, Speaker, day in and day out, they protect us and our communities in the line of duty. They are sworn to serve us and to protect us, and I want to take this opportunity to

thank every single one of them and their families for the great service they provide to us in our great province of Ontario.

I feel very privileged and honoured to have had the opportunity to work with our police officers very closely in developing this legislation, and other work we have done. I want to acknowledge my good friend Bruce Chapman, who is the president of the Police Association of Ontario, for being here and working closely with the government on this legislation and other very important initiatives as well.

In addition to working with our policing community we have also worked very closely with our communities across the province as well, making sure that their points of view and their perspectives are very much part and parcel of the work that we have done that has resulted in Bill 175.

Speaker, you may have heard me say this before: I strongly believe, but I think we all know, that in order for communities to be safe there needs to be trust and respect between the police and the communities they serve. In fact, if you look at the principles of Sir Robert Peel, who is considered to be the father of modern policing, he very clearly said that the police and the community are one and the same; they are a reflection of each other. That is very true to this day.

Therefore, in order for us to have safer communities, in order for us to ensure that we have peace and harmony in our communities, we need to make sure that there's always trust and respect between our police and the communities because they reflect each other. We need to restore and build up the confidence that people have in the police who serve them. That sense of trust is critical if people are to feel safe in their communities and if police are going to be able to do their jobs effectively.

As members may be aware, there are currently three police oversight bodies in Ontario: the Special Investigations Unit, the Office of the Independent Police Review Director and the Ontario Civilian Police Commission. Taken together, these three agencies are responsible for investigating incidents between the police and citizens while also overseeing police services such as police complaints about officers and the police disciplinary processes.

To ensure that trust in our policing oversight system is maintained and enforced, we are proposing a number of improvements to these bodies. These changes range from minor changes such as changing the names of the bodies to more comprehensive changes like how the way the policing oversight system operates.

Some of the most important modifications we are proposing in Bill 175 include:

- strengthening the obligation of policing officials to comply with oversight investigations and making it a provincial offence for failure to do so;
- eliminating the ability of a police service to investigate public complaints about its own officers;
- equipping police oversight bodies with more tools to tackle racism, including training for employees that

promote recognition of and respect for the diverse multicultural character of Ontario;

- authorizing policing oversight bodies to collect personal information, which would include race-based and other demographic data; and

- expanding the Ombudsman's jurisdiction to all three police oversight bodies.

Speaker, before I go into more detail about these changes, I would like to take a few minutes to speak to you about my appreciation for the work and service that police officers provide to all of Ontario.

Every day, over 26,000 men and women risk their lives to help keep us safe, and their jobs are not to be taken lightly. These men and women often have to make difficult decisions in life or death situations in order to keep our communities safe. It's thanks to these efforts that Ontario is one of the safest places to live.

Like any profession that serves the public, it is important to ensure that the appropriate checks and balances are in place so that it can continue to maintain the public's trust because, at the end of the day, if a police officer acts in a way that is inappropriate and unjustly causes a citizen harm, then we must ensure that they are held accountable. To do that, we must have an open and accountable police oversight system.

That is why, last year, the government appointed Justice Michael Tulloch to help us develop a framework for that change. In 2016, Justice Tulloch conducted an independent review of our policing oversight system, specifically looking at ways to improve its transparency and accountability.

This past spring, I had the honour of announcing the release of Justice Tulloch's report, which outlined a number of recommendations—129, to be exact. These recommendations called on the government to make a number of sweeping changes to improve policing oversight in our province, and that's exactly what we are proposing here today through Bill 175.

Speaker, I rise to tell you that our government has taken Justice Tulloch's advice and, as a result, has introduced legislation that will implement 118 of the 119 recommendations directed at the Ministry of the Attorney General.

I just want to be very clear that the 119th recommendation is being partially implemented as well. We are just going a step further and making sure that the full appeal rights are available. So, in essence, we're implementing all the recommendations that were geared towards the Ministry of the Attorney General in Justice Tulloch's report.

I should also note that the process of arriving at these recommendations was no small feat. They were based on Justice Tulloch's consultations, which gathered input from more than 1,500 people from across Ontario. In addition to that, the Ministry of the Attorney General also sought feedback from indigenous communities as well as a wide spectrum of community partners—many of which fought tirelessly for policing oversight reform—including civil rights and community groups; legal and human rights

experts; affected families; policing organizations and municipalities.

I would also like to thank those communities that have experienced some of the same tragedies that my community has faced, who provided very important insight throughout this process to bring to light the need for enhanced transparency, enhanced accountability and enhanced independence in the oversight system, all of which has helped shape the changes that are part of Bill 175.

Since we received Justice Tulloch's recommendations, we have not been waiting to implement some of his most critical recommendations, as we took action right away. In fact, to meet Justice Tulloch's recommendations on transparency, the Ministry of the Attorney General began posting, on our website, reports from the Special Investigations Unit where a police officer who was a subject of an investigation has not been charged.

These reports include a detailed narrative of the events, a summary of the investigative progress, reasons for not laying charges against the police officer, and any relevant video, audio or photographic evidence, subject to privacy considerations.

This is critical information that has never been shared with the public before. Most importantly, it gives the people of Ontario a better understanding of why the Special Investigations Unit has not laid charges against an officer in a particular matter.

In addition, we are working to fulfill our commitment to release all past Special Investigations Unit reports from 2005 to 2017 which involve police interaction where a fatality occurred. These additional reports will be posted on our website later this year.

This is just one of the many changes we have begun to make to improve police accountability. I would now like to explain to the members about the other changes that are yet to come and are part of this legislation, all of which will give the Special Investigations Unit greater capability when it comes to adequately holding police officers accountable for their actions.

Under the Safer Ontario Act, we are proposing to revitalize the Special Investigations Unit by expanding its mandate and equipping it with more tools to strengthen its role. For starters, we will be making this organization its own independent agency, separate and apart from the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Under the proposed legislation, the new independent agency, which would be renamed the Ontario Special Investigations Unit, would have an expanded mandate that would not only include the investigation of police officers, but also special constables, special constables of private employers such as the TTC or universities, and volunteer members of a police service. This is a fundamental change, because it means that the men and women who help maintain public order on our transit systems and in universities and colleges would now have to be held to the same high standards of accountability that we set for our police.

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The mandate of the new oversight agency could also apply to First Nations police services that help protect the indigenous men, women and children living on-reserve. Currently, there is no independent body that looks into complaints made against a First Nations police service. Under our proposed legislation, First Nations may choose to opt into Ontario's policing framework, which would then include them under the purview of the Ontario Special Investigations Unit. The legislation also permits the negotiation of agreements between the Ontario Special Investigations Unit and those First Nations policing services choosing not to opt into the new policing framework that is outlined in the Bill 175.

For too long, Ontario's policing legislation has failed to respond to the on-reserve realities and needs that indigenous communities have communicated, including systemic abuses of policing powers and unequal justice services. By creating one potential tool to hold officers accountable for their actions, this new legislative reform would help advance access to justice for indigenous people living on-reserve.

In addition to investigating police officers or other officials in incidents involving serious injuries, death or sexual assault, the Ontario Special Investigations Unit will also be able to investigate all incidents involving the discharge of firearms, regardless of whether an injury or death occurs. This is a massive change that will transform policing oversight in our province.

I want the members here today to take a moment and consider what this change will mean for the people of Ontario. What we are proposing to do here is to fundamentally change the way the Ontario Special Investigations Unit operates, as it now would have far greater powers than it has ever had before. For example, allowing the Ontario Special Investigations Unit to lay charges related to any criminal offence uncovered during the course of an investigation, even if it is not related to a civilian death, serious injury or sexual assault, will go a long way in creating a more accountable oversight system in Ontario and will undoubtedly help rebuild the public's trust in our policing oversight system.

I would also like to point out that the Safer Ontario Act, if passed, would require the Ontario Special Investigations Unit and the Ontario Policing Complaints Agency to collect information and publish reports for the purpose of evaluating and improving the policing and policing oversight systems in Ontario.

More importantly, the government would now have authority to prescribe specific types of personal information that these two bodies may collect for this purpose, like race-based data, for example. While this may seem like a minor modification, this is, in fact, a significant change that will help the oversight bodies better identify patterns of concern in relation to complaints or investigations within their mandates and will be a powerful tool for the oversight bodies to use in their public reporting.

Another important feature of this bill is our proposal to clarify the Ontario Special Investigations Unit's man-

date to investigate incidents involving former police officers as well as off-duty officers in certain circumstances. This is a critical change that would clarify that any off-duty officer who exercises his or her power as a police officer would fall within the agency's jurisdiction. Notifying the SIU of an incident is a pivotal piece to ensuring that the oversight system is operating effectively and protecting the people of our province.

Speaker, we have taken the extra step of ensuring there is a duty to notify the SIU, even if there is doubt of whether they should be notified; and if they do not, it would constitute professional misconduct. It could allow the Ontario Special Investigations Unit to lay Criminal Code charges for obstruction of justice. This is a change that is long overdue. This is a change that will have a direct impact on the way policing officials and their employers are held accountable for their actions. Sometimes, the appropriate oversight body may not be notified of an incident involving a civilian because police services are not always certain if an off-duty officer has identified—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'd appreciate, since your member is speaking, to take it down a notch. Thanks.

Continue.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Speaker.

Let me start that sentence from the beginning just so that I can complete that thought. Sometimes the appropriate oversight body may not be notified of an incident involving a civilian because police services are not always certain if an off-duty officer has identified themselves as a police officer. Our proposed changes would bring clarity to the duty that police services have in these types of circumstances by creating a "when in doubt" rule which stipulates that the Ontario Special Investigations Unit should be notified under any circumstances where it cannot be determined whether or not a policing official was exercising policing powers at the time of an incident. It is my hope that this new rule will help to ensure that any police officer who invokes their powers while off duty would be held accountable just as if they were on duty.

We are also taking bold steps to tackle systemic racism and discrimination. One of the best ways that this can be accomplished is by ensuring that staff at police oversight bodies are able to better understand how racism and inherent bias play a role in the actions of policing officials during their investigations. To do this, Speaker, we are proposing that the directors of the Ontario Special Investigations Unit provide training for all employees at the organization which is focused on recognizing and respecting the diverse, multicultural society that we live in.

This change is especially important for the black community and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Ontario, because at the end of the day we know that despite living in the largest, most diverse province in Canada, we still encounter many different forms of racism such as anti-black racism and discrimina-

tion against indigenous peoples. It is my hope that these changes will help staff and oversight bodies recognize the racial disparity in their investigations.

Now, in the event that a policing official is investigated for his or her actions, it is important that the investigators who look into a case are—and are perceived to be—independent and unbiased. That is why part of our reforms includes limiting the number of investigators who are former police officers, as this will help diversify the investigative teams and help ensure investigations are more independent. Under the proposed legislation, there would be authority to limit the number of former police officers who could be assigned to an investigative team at the Ontario Special Investigations Unit. What, exactly, the number will be capped at has yet to be determined. To ensure that we get this number right, we will be seeking further advice from our partners and would make this decision during the regulation-making process, in the coming months.

In addition, this bill will help to ensure that we have investigators who are well trained to do their jobs by establishing requirements and qualifications for oversight agency investigators. Because while we recognize that former police officers have specialized investigative skills and knowledge, and certainly have expertise on police techniques such as witness interviewing, scene preservation and forensics, we must ensure that the need for investigative expertise in the policing oversight bodies is balanced with the need for complete independence, to maintain fair and unbiased decision-making throughout the investigative process.

Finally, I would also like to bring your attention, Speaker, to a key change we are making to improve the investigative powers of oversight bodies. Currently, during the course of an investigation, police officers are asked to co-operate with investigations into their actions. The proposed legislation will change this by mandating that police officers have a duty to comply. That goes for all policing oversight investigations, including the ones that are completed by the Office of the Independent Police Review Director. In fact, should a policing official fail to comply with either policing oversight body, they could face a penalty of up to \$50,000 or imprisonment for up to one year, or both.

These changes should leave no doubt in anyone's mind that we are serious when it comes to reforming policing oversight in our province and ensuring that police oversight bodies have access to all of the information they need to conduct robust investigations.

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Speaker, now I would like to take a moment to talk about some of the key changes we will be making to the Office of the Independent Police Review Director, also known as OIPRD. If our proposed legislation is passed, the agency would be renamed the Ontario Policing Complaints Agency. It would become the sole investigative body of all public complaints, but not just about police officers. Like the Special Investigations Unit, the mandate of this body would also be expanded so that it would

also investigate complaints made against special constables and, in some cases, First Nations police that have opted into Ontario's policing framework.

To help reinforce public confidence in police oversight, we are also proposing to improve the independence of investigations into public complaints about a police officer or a special constable. Currently, most complaints about police officers are referred to their respective police service to resolve, which could make it appear to the public that police are simply investigating themselves. As such, we are proposing that within five years, all professional misconduct investigations will be performed by the new Ontario Policing Complaints Agency in all but the most exceptional circumstances. If a matter is in the public interest, the agency would have the power to investigate police officers or special constables without having a public complaint filed. I am confident that these changes would go a long way towards growing the public's confidence in policing oversight in our province.

Before closing, Speaker, I would also like to highlight a few key changes that we are proposing for the Ontario Civilian Police Commission. Under the proposed legislation, this independent tribunal would be dedicated to adjudicating disciplinary matters involving police officers and special constables. As such, we find it fitting to rename this agency the Ontario Policing Discipline Tribunal so that its title more accurately reflects the work it would do.

Currently, disciplinary hearings resulting from public complaints about a police officer are heard by the relevant chief of police or their delegate, and the prosecutor is selected by the chief of police, which is something that I feel is simply unacceptable in this day and age. That is why we are proposing that all hearings resulting from a public complaint be heard by independent adjudicators at the Ontario Policing Discipline Tribunal. In addition, independent counsel at the Ministry of the Attorney General will be able to conduct these hearings if they are in the public interest. These changes would go a long way to making the work of police oversight bodies more independent.

If, after all of these proposed changes, the public still has a concern about a police oversight matter, we would ensure that they have a point of recourse. Currently, the Ontario Ombudsman only has limited jurisdiction over some of the oversight bodies. We are looking to change this by proposing that all three of the police oversight bodies—the Ontario Special Investigations Unit, the Ontario Policing Complaints Agency and the Ontario Policing Discipline Tribunal—become subject to the jurisdiction of the Ontario Ombudsman.

In closing, I just want to say that the changes we are proposing here today will have a profound impact on policing oversight in our province. If implemented, they will transform the way we hold police officers and other policing officials accountable for their actions and ensure that the decisions that are made about their actions are made public at every available opportunity.

If passed, this bill would play an integral role in bridging the gap between police officers and the public by making more information about the work of police officers accessible. The public would have a better understanding of the actions taken by police officers in often life-threatening situations.

We know that these proposed changes are what many in the policing community and advocates have been calling for for years. I'm proud to join my colleague the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services in proposing these sweeping changes to policing and police oversight, and I urge all members here today to provide their support for this historic bill.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I would like to introduce Steven Brown, Peter Brunette and Darcy Wall from the North Bay Police Service, who are here today.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm delighted to introduce Jared Scratch, from Trinity-St. Paul's Centre for Faith, Justice and the Arts, who is visiting today.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: It's a thrill to introduce Braeson Holland today. Braeson started in my ministry office today and has worked in my constituency office previously. I just want to say a big welcome to Queen's Park, Braeson.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: It gives me great pleasure to introduce two guests in the gallery over here: Bill Oprel, a candidate for the Trillium Party in Brampton Centre, and John Grant, a candidate for the Trillium Party in Brampton South.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'd like to welcome all the members from the Police Association of Ontario here today, including president Bruce Chapman and executive director Stephen Reid; and from my riding, Shawn McCurdy, Jason DeJong and his dad, Harry DeJong.

I'm meeting with Michael Duffy and Jim Glenna later on. I want to welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. James J. Bradley: The page captain today is Javeriar Laskar. His mother, Sabreena Mamtaz, and father, Masudur Laskar, are here in the public gallery.

Also, page captain Iman Kirefu and her parents, Saira and Husein Kirefu, are going to be in the public gallery today.

Finally, page Devon Kisob and his mother, Winnifred Kisob, are in the gallery today.

Welcome to all of them.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I would like to introduce Brad Durst, Colin Goodwin, Tim Morrison and Jamie Brama from the Durham Regional Police Association; also, Joel Willett, Ariana Chasse and Abdullah Mushtaq from the College Student Alliance. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would also like to welcome members of the Durham Regional Police Associa-

tion: Brad Durst, Colin Goodwin, Randy Henning, Tim Morrison, Keith Aubrey and Jamie Bramma. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to welcome some members of the Rohingya community and their friends who are visiting Queen's Park today from Kitchener. My colleague Daiene Vernile and I had the pleasure of meeting many of them in Kitchener a few weeks ago. Please welcome Mohammed Faisal, Mohammed Rasel, Jannatara Begum, Ruma Ruma, Saifullah Muhammad, Kalima Noor, Abdul Karim, Michael Lublin, Christopher David and Ovais Iqbal. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'd ask all members to help me welcome Erica He and her husband, Eric Love, here to Queen's Park to witness question period. They're members of Professional Engineers Ontario.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm pleased to welcome students from Pathways to Education from Kitchener: Xalima Ali, Shams Saab, Tasnim Faraah, Tay Dibaba. Tyrone Russell is a staff member, as is Raas Siddiqui. They're going to be job-shadowing me today. I'm so pleased to welcome you to Queen's Park.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to welcome the Police Association of Ontario to Queen's Park for their lobby day today. We are joined by PAO president Bruce Chapman, executive director Stephen Reid, policy and legal counsel Michael Duffy and other members.

On behalf of the Ottawa caucus member, I would also like to welcome Matt Skof, president of the Ottawa Police Association.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to introduce to you and, through you, to the members of the Legislative Assembly a constituent from my riding of Leeds-Grenville who is here with the College Student Alliance. She's a student at St. Lawrence College in Brockville: Ariana Chasse. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to welcome some people who will be joining us. That's the grade 5 students from Joshua Creek Public School in Oakville.

Also, from the PAO are Sarah Diamond, Dannielle Goddard, Barry Hughes and Samantha Keenan.

Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I would like to give you a very specific example of what happens when you've served for 10 years: My adult son, Dawson Gillies, has joined me in the Legislature today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

The member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to extend a very warm welcome to all the members of the College Student Alliance who have joined us today, in particular the president, Joel Willett, and others.

I would also like to welcome OSSTF vice-president Rob Gascho to Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I have three different introductions. First of all, the parents of our page Aditya Deshpande, Sushama and Ameet, are here. Welcome. We're very proud of your son.

The second thing is, I'd like to welcome guests from Pathways to Education. I am delighted that several of those members are here, including their CEO, Susanne Gillespie.

And let me add to those who have already welcomed the College Student Alliance—a great bunch of students.

Mr. Robert Bailey: To you and, through you, to the members of the Legislature, I would like to introduce representatives from Sarnia-Lambton from the Police Association of Ontario: Miro Soucek, Johann Lewis, Carole Mariuz and Deb Thibert.

Mr. James J. Bradley: I would like to introduce, from the Niagara Parks Police, Chris Gallagher and Lance Dobbin.

Mr. Ross Romano: I would like to welcome some visitors from Sault Ste. Marie today, as well as board and staff members from the Invasive Species Centre, seated in the gallery to the left.

The Invasive Species Centre was formed by collaborative agreement between Ontario and Canada in 2011, and joins us today with their many partners to thank members for their support and efforts in raising awareness about the significant issues of invasive species and how we can work together to protect Ontario from the devastating impacts.

We do have a reception this afternoon at 5 p.m. in room 228-230. I hope to see you all there.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It gives me great pleasure to welcome Cam Gough, Sean Bambrick and Graedon Schuale from the Kingston police association.

I would also like to welcome the College Student Alliance from Kingston and the Islands and, of course, Howard Brown.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome members of the Belleville Police Association: Anne Brennan-Walsh, Kosta Brindakis, Paul Fyke, Adam Donaldson and Pat Comeau. We welcome them to Queen's Park today.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to introduce the page from Welland, Allan Buri. His grandmother Linda Saxon is here today, somewhere in this packed gallery.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I'd like to welcome Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation vice-president Rob Gascho.

Also, I am so pleased to welcome to the Legislative Assembly Susanne Gillespie, who is the president and CEO of Pathways to Education; and Scott Turnbull, the coordinator of government partnerships; as well as all of the high school students who are here today, and Pathways staff, especially the team that has come down from Scarborough Village, in my riding of Scarborough-Guildwood.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Today I would like to welcome to the Legislature Cliff Priest from the Niagara Regional Police Association.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'd like to welcome a few guests to the Legislature today. I'd like to welcome the family of page Iman Kirefu. Here with us today are her father, Husein Kirefu; her mother, Saira Kirefu; and Aminah Kirefu, her sister and a former page. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Also, I'd like to welcome employees from Cole Engineering: President Mohsen Mortada, vice-president of water infrastructure Jamie Witherspoon, project manager

Fady Shweihat, and Christina Cholkan, who is a project manager with Cole Engineering and a constituent of mine in Etobicoke Centre. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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Mr. Joe Dickson: It's an honour to introduce David Fischer, father of page Emma Fischer. He will be in the public gallery this morning and, indeed, bumped into me three times in the hallways.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It gives me great pleasure to introduce—I believe they've just arrived—Gino Cucchi and Alicia Vianga from After Breast Cancer from my riding of Davenport.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to introduce members of the Guelph Police Association that I met with this morning: Matt Jotham, president; Phil Perrins, treasurer; and Allie Johnston, special constable.

I don't know whether you had a chance to introduce him, Speaker, but Mark Baxter from the Brantford Police Association is also here with us today. Welcome.

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

Mr. Grant Crack: The best for last. I'd like to welcome Catherina Blair from the village of Maxville in the great riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. Welcome, Catherina.

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

Thank you for your patience. I would like to acknowledge Mark Baxter from the PAO from the riding of Brant.

I also have with us today a very special guest: The Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda, His Excellency Sir Dr. Rodney Williams, and his wife, Lady Sandra Williams, have joined us all the way from the islands. As well, joining them is Ms. Ann-Marie Layne, consul general of Antigua and Barbuda.

I'm sure that on behalf of the Legislature, we wish all of you a good recovery from the tragic storm that took place. I know the recovery has already started, and we offer you our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At this time, it's time to introduce the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, who is going to do a point of order.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to wear pins for the Shine the Light on Woman Abuse Campaign, and also offer a reminder to all members that there will be a photo on the main staircase immediately following question period.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is seeking unanimous consent to wear pins and also for all of us to have our picture taken. Do we agree? Agreed.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now I will ask us to assemble to greet our new set of pages.

From Simcoe North, Abigale Goneau; from Mississauga South, Adam Muinuddin; from London North Centre, Aditya Deshpande; from Oakville, Alisha Ahmed; from Welland, Allan Buri; from Davenport, Amely Su; from Parkdale–High Park, Andrew Stevenson; from Kitchener–Conestoga, Davis Gates; from Mississauga–Streetsville, Devon Kisob; from Ajax–Pickering, Emma Fischer; from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Erion Keka; from Etobicoke Centre, Iman Kirefu; from Guelph, Isabelle Funk; from Toronto Centre, Javeriar Laskar; from Scarborough Centre, Katrina Yee; from Oak Ridges–Markham, Natalie Conrad; from Willowdale, Olivia McCormick; from Burlington, Sean Reynolds; from Halton, Vathmie Widyalkankara; from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Zunairah Gangat.

These are our pages for this session.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is therefore time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

POLICE OFFICERS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Premier. Last year, this Legislature unanimously passed Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act, which recognized the increased risk of serious disability that our police officers across Ontario face. Yet in Bill 175, the same government is attempting to gut the employment rights of disabled police officers.

This bill overrides police collective agreements that protect members from discrimination and limits the human rights of disabled police officers. Section 115 gives police employers a fast-track to firing disabled police officers regardless of whether their disability is temporary or permanent, without regard to how serious it is.

How does attacking disabled police officers build stronger and safer communities?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the minister is going to want to comment in the supplementary, but please let me add my voice to all of those who have welcomed police officers here to the Legislature today, and just say that we have worked in partnership with first responders, with police officers in particular, to make sure that we do everything we can to create the safest Ontario possible.

I want to acknowledge the work of police officers and the organizations that have worked with us. We value their advice, but more than that, we value their service to the people of Ontario every single day.

Interjections.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It was a very specific question: section 115.

In 2015, London Police Service revealed that mental health calls account for 15% of their entire budget.

Windsor police report they respond to eight mental health crisis calls a day. This is a common story in our cities and towns across Ontario.

Ontario's police have become the de facto front-line mental health workers, but they don't have the resources necessary. Why does this government fail to provide police with the means necessary to deal with mental health issues in our communities?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, I'll tell you, one of the best things I've ever worked on in this House is when we came together for our first responders and we got unanimous support to do much better on PTSD for first responders: to bring in presumptive legislation to make sure that the people who are on the front line, who go and do the jobs that we don't want to do, who deal with the situations that we sometimes prefer not to deal with—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): My resolve is the same as yesterday. You will signal to me when it happens. Carry on.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Bruce Chapman of the PAO, police officers, firefighters, corrections and paramedics came forward and said, "We need better coverage for post-traumatic stress disorder for our members." We delivered on that. I am proud of that legislation. We should all be proud of that legislation.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: We are. That's why we passed it unanimously.

The Liberals are also underfunding our court system. It's another slap in the face to police officers and the justice system. It means more stayed cases and more dangerous criminals, free to roam our streets.

Since the landmark Supreme Court Jordan decision, more than 200 criminal cases have been tossed out across Canada. Earlier this year, it was reported that over 70 have occurred here in Ontario.

It's completely unacceptable that charged criminals are walking free. We need individuals who have been charged to actually go through the justice system. Can the Liberals explain to the police here today why they've underfunded our court system?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, to the Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I appreciate the member asking a very important question. Since the Jordan decision came by the Supreme Court of Canada last summer, we have been working very actively to ensure that we make our justice system faster and fairer—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: And 70 cases have been tossed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin-Caledon, come to order. That may indeed get us to warnings, but I'll check.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do you have a complaint, member from Renfrew?

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, no.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No? Good.

Carry on.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, in order to make our justice system faster and fairer, in response to the decision by the Supreme Court of Canada, last December we announced an investment of \$25 million per year in our justice system, hiring more new judges, more crown prosecutors, more defence attorneys, more staff to make sure that we make our system effective.

But we have not stopped there. We are making structural changes in our system as well, both here in the province by changing our bail policy, but also working along with the federal government.

1050

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. The fall economic statement presented yesterday in this House is nothing more than a pre-election—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport will come to order. The next one gets us to warnings.

Finish, please.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: This is a pre-election house of cards. As we dig deeper into the numbers, it's clear that the Auditor General and the Financial Accountability Officer are absolutely correct not to believe them.

By the government's own admission, the economy will underperform many private sector forecasts for 2017, which had growth at 3% or higher. Despite the government's narrative, it doesn't line up with the fact that growth is slowing as we speak. Yet they're still predicting a \$10-billion revenue increase this year. None of that adds up.

To the Premier: Why do they continue to thumb their nose at the Legislature's independent experts, who say that the budget is not balanced?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here are the facts that we are dealing with in Ontario.

Our economy has grown faster than all G7 countries over the past three years, and 800,000 net new jobs have been created since the recession.

Our unemployment rate is at a 16-year low, and it has been below the national average for 31 straight months.

We've beaten our deficit targets eight years in a row, and our debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to fall from around 40% to 37.8%.

The fact is that Ontario is doing very well. We are leading economic growth in this country.

What the member opposite fails to acknowledge is that there is more to be done, which is why our plan to raise the minimum wage, to ensure equal pay for equal work—those are the pillars of a fair society that apparently the member opposite is not interested in supporting.

Interjections.

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

Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Well, again, none of that is agreed to by the Auditor General or the

Financial Accountability Officer. By almost every metric, this government has underperformed since the 2017 budget. Revenues are up only \$115 million—nowhere close to their forecast—yet expenses are up \$215 million since the budget. Personal income tax and health premium revenue is down \$1.8 billion since the budget, yet they still say that revenue will increase by \$10 billion this year.

We have rosy, glowing predictions from the government, but in reality the numbers just aren't there. The truth does not fit with their narrative.

Why does it always take the Auditor General, the Financial Accountability Officer or the OPP to get to the truth in this government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The reality is that corporate revenue is up. The fact is that our economic growth is leading the country.

Yesterday, this party across the floor promised that they would roll back the \$15 minimum wage. They would kick the increase to \$15 over a four-year phase-in—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Your decision is made. We're in warnings.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: They would kick the increase to \$15 an hour down to a four-year phase-in, which is tantamount to denying that increase. It is tantamount to not allowing people to catch up. The fact is that, although the province is doing well, not everyone in the province—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the member from Leeds–Grenville are warned. If you don't get the message, I'll give it to you.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: The experts have been clear that the government has been using one-time revenue to fluff up their budget numbers.

Money from the Hydro One sale? That's over now. From land transfer tax? The housing market is cooling. From federal transfers? That fluctuates every year.

Now, without these massive, one-time revenues, the government still says annual revenue growth will be 4% over the next four years, but the Financial Accountability Officer says it will average just 3%. It doesn't sound like much, but those are billions of dollars apart. None of what they're saying adds up whatsoever.

Speaker, if the independent legislative experts don't believe this government's numbers, why should any Ontario families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite maybe didn't read this fall economic statement, because we revised our numbers from 2.3% real GDP to 2.8% real GDP, which is lower than independent economists predict for the continuing growth of our economy and for the province of Ontario. In fact, HST has gone up, showing consumer confidence. Business investment is going

up, showing business confidence, Mr. Speaker. Our accumulated deficit over the past 25 years is lower today than it has ever been, and our debt-to-GDP is improving.

The member opposite is making reference, but he is not acknowledging that the independent economists, the independent review and the investors are showing confidence in our province because we are winning and we are supporting opportunity at the same time, creating fairness so that every individual in this province does get a fair wage and businesses get their fair share. We are all improving our economy and we are working together, Mr. Speaker.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier and her Liberal government followed the NDP's lead and agreed to our motion to address the hospital overcrowding and hallway medicine in Brampton. The Premier voted to provide William Osler Health System, which operates Brampton Civic Hospital and Peel Memorial health centre, \$30.2 million to address urgent overcrowding issues.

My question is, will the Premier tell us when exactly the money is going to flow to those facilities?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We were happy to support the motion of the member opposite because we were already there. We're already making those investments, Mr. Speaker. We had already taken action. I appreciate the leader of the third party coming along and recognizing that what we were doing was what needed to be done: \$41 million already invested over the last couple of years. We are expanding the beds. We are making further investments in the William Osler health centre.

We understand that there is more to be done, and the fact that the leader of the third party understands that as well is a good thing. We can move ahead together.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Brampton Civic Hospital, I might remind this Premier, has two operating rooms that have never even been used, not because there aren't any patients that need them but because, on the day that it opened, Brampton Civic Hospital was already underfunded by this Premier and her Liberal government. The Liberals never provided the funding for those two ORs, leaving people to wait longer for the care that they need.

Now that the Premier has finally taken some responsibility for the mess that she has helped create in Brampton, can she tell us when those two ORs are actually going to be opened and operating, Speaker?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We added \$10 million to the operating budget of William Osler hospital this year and \$41 million over the past two years. I had the honour and the opportunity last week—I was at Peel Memorial, the wellness centre, the urgent care centre that the Premier opened up earlier this year, and I was proud to announce with the community there, with the mayor of Brampton,

with many councillors, with the political leadership and the health care leadership, our commitment to fund phase 2 of that wellness centre of Peel Memorial where we will be adding well in excess of 100 beds and all the necessary supportive care to support those patients, those in-patients. They will be patients who require support on rehabilitation, patients who require complex continuing care. That was an important announcement.

On top of that, I was able to announce 37 new beds immediately for Brampton Civic Hospital that will be available and active this calendar year.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Notwithstanding what the health minister says, it was just weeks ago that the ask for \$30.2 million came from Brampton Civic Hospital, Speaker. That hospital has already been forced to call code gridlock—this year, from January to April, they called code gridlock eight times. To the tune of about 62 days in those four months, that hospital was in code gridlock.

1100

The hospital needs this money immediately to help families with loved ones receiving their medical care currently in public hallways, with no dignity, with no privacy, with no confidentiality. I don't think anybody in this Legislature would like to see their loved ones getting treatment in hallways in their hospitals.

My question is this: Will the Premier guarantee that this urgent funding that was asked for a couple of weeks ago, that the Liberals voted for just yesterday afternoon—will she guarantee that that urgent funding will reach the hospital immediately?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I am so happy that the NDP yesterday, along with the rest of the Legislature, unanimously supported and endorsed our investments in Brampton Civic Hospital—41 million new dollars in the last two years; 37 new beds announced just last week that will be active this calendar year—and a brand new phase 2 at Peel Memorial Hospital with well in excess of 100 beds, an investment worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

I have to say that I'm gratified, particularly given their record of closing, during their tenure as government, 9,600 acute care beds; 13% of all the mental health beds in the hospitals—323 beds; 24% of all the acute hospital beds in the province. And they decreased hospital funding and they decreased health funding in their last year of government.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. Peel Memorial is dealing with a \$19.2-million budget shortfall. When it opened, administrators said that they needed a \$50-million operating budget increase because it was projected that the urgent care centre would see 50% more patients than it was originally funded for. Well, Speaker, the Premier flatly said no and instead only provided \$31 million, falling far short of what was required to run a facility that is in such demand.

Now, less than a year later and under intense political pressure to act, the Liberals have finally agreed to make up the shortfall. When will Peel Memorial actually see that money?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I'm still trying to figure out—they ask for a solution, and we provide a solution. Remember the former Humber River site at Finch, where we provided a solution of more than 150 beds to relieve some of the pressure on six GTA hospitals? They were against that. Then last week, we announced phase 2 of Peel Memorial, to great—there was tremendous support in that room, at every level: the health care providers; the political leadership; the mayor of Brampton; many councillors were there. It was exciting to be part of that announcement, where we're going to be adding well over 100 beds to Peel Memorial itself, in addition to the 37 beds at Brampton Civic.

I'm still trying to understand: We offer solutions, we implement solutions, and they still aren't happy. They ask for us to make these investments; we make these investments. I'm not sure what they want us to do, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here's what I'm trying to figure out: Yesterday morning, this health minister accused myself and the NDP of fear-mongering when it comes to Brampton Civic Hospital, and by 6 o'clock they were voting for our motion. I guess they had their spin doctors take a look at their activity.

It took months and months of relentless pressure from the NDP, months of sharing horror story after horror story after horror story of what families have been dealing with at Brampton Civic Hospital, tireless advocacy from the Brampton mayor and dedicated activists from that community before this Premier actually woke up to the serious overcrowding issues at Brampton Civic Hospital.

Why will this Premier only act when she and her Liberal colleagues are under political threat? Why?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, here's where I draw the line: when the leader of the third party says—and anybody can check Hansard—that dozens and dozens of hospitals in this province are in ruins. I draw the line when she says that patients are in emergency rooms stacked up like cords of wood. When she uses that terminology, I have to draw the line. When she creates a narrative to suggest that every single long-term-care home in this province is unsafe and the residents there are unsafe, I draw the line.

Mr. Speaker, I work hard every single day, as does this Premier, as does this government, to provide the highest-quality health care, which independent third parties recognize that we have. I have to draw the line when she disparages our health care system.

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, I draw the line when 4,352 patients in one year are receiving their medical care in a hospital in a public hallway, with no dignity and, yes, lined up like sardines, like cords of wood—because that's how they feel.

This health minister and this Premier need to listen to the families in Ontario who have told their horror stories. All he has to do is look at the Hansard to find those horror stories—

Interjections.

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

The member may finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Look, families in Brampton deserve better health care. They deserve health care that they can count on. I'm glad that this Liberal government has finally followed our lead and agreed to invest in this community, but I want to remind the Liberal government that there are people in London, in Sudbury, in Peterborough, in Toronto, in Hamilton, in every corner of this province who are also suffering the consequences of decades of Conservative—

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: With great respect, Mr. Speaker, we're not talking about somebody's broken elbow. We're talking about one of the best health care systems in the entire world. We're talking about—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture is not helpful.

You can finish your answer.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We're talking about thousands upon thousands of exceptionally talented and hard-working health care professionals across this province who are doing their best in a health care system that is ranked among the best in the world. The Auditor General speaks of our cancer care as the best in the world in terms of outcomes. We have among the lowest stroke mortality in the world. We have among the shortest wait times in the OECD for almost every operation and procedure. We have among the lowest wait times in our ERs across the entire country, Mr. Speaker.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Minister of Labour. For months now we've heard from individuals and small businesses about the negative impact Bill 148 will have on jobs and the economy due to the Liberals' rushed implementation of a \$15 minimum wage. To make matters worse, the long-promised relief in the fall economic statement yesterday was nothing more than an exercise in Liberal political spin rather than the real relief small businesses need to keep everyone on their payroll.

The Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis says the number of jobs at risk would decrease by three quarters if the minimum wage is gradually increased to \$15 over five years instead of the next 14 months. A slightly slower rollout of the \$15 minimum wage would get

employees their pay raise and save their jobs and the businesses they work for.

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Speaker, will the minister move beyond his crass political calculations, put in a more phased-in implementation date and save the workers' jobs?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, we've spent the past two and a half years in dialogue with the people of Ontario. They came forward. They came forward with ideas to change the Employment Standards Act and they came forward with ideas to change the Labour Relations Act.

One thing became very, very clear: About a third of the people in the province of Ontario currently make less than \$15 an hour. Half of those people are between the ages of 25 and 64. They're trying to raise families. They're trying to buy groceries. They're trying to buy shoes for their kids. They're trying to pay their rent. We on this side of the House think it's time for those people to have an increase in their pay. We do not believe that anybody in this province should work 35 or 40 hours a week, sometimes at two or three jobs, and not be able to afford the basics in Ontario.

We disagree wholeheartedly with the Conservative Party. We disagree with Patrick Brown. If you're going to deny this increase—

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

Interjections.

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

I also remind the minister that we use either titles or ridings.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I apologize, Speaker.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Back to the minister: A job not lost means a worker can still put food on his family's table. The tens of thousands of people who will lose their jobs just because the minister wants to use the minimum wage for crass political gain will be denied any income.

To quote the minister from earlier this year, "When you dig down a little deeper into the issue, though, you realize it's got ramifications that go beyond that first initial political appeal. There is actually an awful lot of economic forces at play."

As recently as May, he knew that the right thing to do was not play politics with the province's minimum wage, but I guess re-election comes before anything else for the Liberal Party of Ontario. Speaker, I ask the minister again, will he save workers' jobs by implementing a reasonable timetable to a \$15 minimum wage?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I will answer the honourable member's question again and say that hard-working Ontarians deserve to be paid a decent wage. It's that simple. That's what we support on this side of the House.

Speaker, we went out and we talked to economists. Economists came back to us, and they told us that the right thing to do is exactly what we're doing. People who earn at the lower end of the income scale spend their money. When they get their paycheque, they spend it that

day. They spend it that week. They put it back into small business. They go to the Shoppers Drug Marts. They go to the Sobeys. It cycles through the economy. This isn't money that's taken offshore; this is money that goes right back into the local economy.

It's time, I would hope, that all parties in this Legislature would stand up for all Ontarians, Speaker. We've been counted on this issue: January 1, \$14 an hour; January 1, 2019, \$15 an hour. It's the right thing to do. They should be supporting this.

Interjection.

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

New question.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. Today college students will be demonstrating at Queen's Park for a tuition refund, and yesterday a class action lawsuit was launched on behalf of the 500,000 Ontario college students whose classes were cancelled because of the strike. The lawsuit seeks to recover damages related to tuition as well as meal plans and residence fees when students are not getting what they paid for.

Speaker, this Liberal government's failure to fund the college system appropriately and its failure to lead during this labour dispute has created a hot mess. If the class action lawsuit is successful, there will be almost nothing left for the announced hardship fund when students are reimbursed for lost tuition and fees.

What kind of reimbursement does this government plan to offer to students who have to pay to repeat courses, who are unable to get the placement hours they need to graduate, who have to turn down jobs they had lined up? How will their financial losses be compensated?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member for her question.

We are joined today by several members of the College Student Alliance. This is the voice of students. They've done an outstanding job in bringing the voice of students to this strike situation. Students are caught in the middle of this. They are talking to individual students at their colleges and have brought those stories of hardship forward.

It is thanks to the members of the College Student Alliance and other student groups that we have required that colleges set aside the net savings of the strike and return that money to students. We're consulting with students about how best to do that.

We acknowledge that students are the ones who are paying the price for this strike. We acknowledge that. We have tremendous respect for the student leaders who are

here today. I can assure you that the Premier, myself and our government are focused on getting students back in the classroom, where they deserve to be.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Again to the Premier: Many of the representatives of the College Student Alliance who are here today were also at Queen's Park for the November 2 launch of the action plan on student mental health. The plan was developed through an unprecedented collaboration across the post-secondary sector because of this Liberal government's failure to deal with the crisis in student mental health, with rates that have more than doubled over the last five years.

As this strike drags on with no end in sight, we are hearing alarming stories of even more students being diagnosed with depression and anxiety. These students feel despair as they watch their futures slip away. They worry how they will ever manage the increased debt they will have to take on to complete their programs.

What specific plans has this government put in place to support the thousands of college students who are suffering and whose mental health has been compromised because of this strike?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: There is no question that the number-one issue that I hear about when I travel to colleges and universities is mental health. Whether I'm talking to students, whether I'm talking to faculty or whether I'm talking to administration, everybody is saying the same thing: that the demand for mental health services has increased tremendously. That's exactly why we have increased funding for mental health services on campus from \$9 million a year to \$15 million a year. We're focused on improving the quality of mental health care and mental health services on our campuses.

Again, it's the voice of the students that is the most compelling. When students from the College Student Alliance and other student groups have said that we need to do a better job supporting students, we have been there to answer that call.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

PROGRÈS DU GOUVERNEMENT

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: My question is to the Minister of Finance. All Ontarians, I think, can be encouraged by yesterday's release of the fall economic statement, which demonstrates that our government is working to create fairness and opportunity during this period of rapid economic change.

It's also clear that our path to balance is on track. Most importantly, unlike the approach of other parties, this is not being achieved by slashing and burning the services that people depend on, and it's being supported by a thriving economy.

As you will know, Speaker, businesses have created more than 800,000 net new jobs since the 2008 recession, and 300,000 jobs are expected by 2020. Real GDP is now forecast to grow at a healthy 2.8%, a very substantial increase from the previous budget projection.

A balanced budget allows for more money to invest in things that matter to everyone in Ontario: schools, hospitals, roads, bridges and more.

To the minister: Est-ce que vous pouvez élaborer sur le travail et les mesures que notre gouvernement fait?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you for the question from the member from Etobicoke North. Our government is delivering a balanced budget. We've beaten our fiscal targets for the eighth year in a row. Net debt to GDP has improved to 37.3%. Our strengthening investments continue to attract private and foreign direct investment.

The numbers show that our policies are working. Real GDP growth is above projections. In fact, over the last three years, Ontario's real GDP growth exceeds that of all G7 countries. Our businesses have created over 800,000 net new jobs, as indicated, bringing our unemployment rate below the national average for 31 straight months. We've managed growth in program spending, making Ontario the leanest government in Canada.

1120

Mr. Speaker, Ontario has come out of the recession stronger but we know there is more to do. We want to ensure everyone in Ontario benefits from our strong economy. That's why we're taking steps to support workers and their families to create more fairness and opportunity for all hard-working Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Minister. I think it's clear that our growing economy, together with a balanced budget, is creating more and more opportunities for businesses and individuals across Ontario.

On the ground in my own riding of Etobicoke North, this is reflected, for example, by the \$400-million expansion of Etobicoke General Hospital which, I would respectfully remind the House, is also part of the William Osler system.

We know, Speaker, that policies which build our people up are what matter most to Ontarians. That's why I'm proud to stand with a party that's increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, coming up shortly. We know that hard-working people are struggling to put food on their tables and they cannot wait for years for this pay increase.

We know that students—over 200,000 of them—will be benefiting from free tuition.

And Speaker, as a doctor, I have to support OHIP+, the greatest expansion of pharmacare in a generation, as was mentioned.

Speaker, we know our historical investments to infrastructure—\$190 billion over 13 years—will spur economic growth. Can the minister please detail more of these initiatives?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you again for the question. We're building a stronger, fairer Ontario. We're designating another \$155 million in supports for our seniors strategy, so our seniors can live independent, healthy and active lives. We're helping to build more competitiveness in our business environment by

providing another \$500 million in new initiatives for small business. We're cutting WSIB costs and reducing red tape further. It includes more incentives to businesses to hire young people—\$124 million over three years—as well as new grants to encourage employers to hire apprentices, up to \$19,000 per apprentice. Mr. Speaker, we're creating the third pillar to our post-secondary education system to support our indigenous institutes. We've also announced \$5 million in extra dollars for the north through our Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund. This is our balanced approach to create fairness and opportunity for the people of Ontario.

ONTARIO TREE SEED PLANT

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Mr. Speaker, the government has unilaterally decided to close the Ontario Tree Seed Plant in Angus without any consultation. It was only after the government announced the closure that the ministry held a public meeting and then another meeting between stakeholders and the deputy minister. Those working in the industry urged the government to delay the closure for three years to five years to allow them time to transition. Despite this advice, the ministry is going ahead with their closure dates in nine months' time.

The minister is on record stating that the government will work with its partners to ensure a smooth transition, and yet tree growers and others in the industry say the closure date does not give them enough time. In fact, plans to sell Ontario's irreplaceable and priceless seed inventories are already under way.

Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a disconnect here. Will the minister commit to working with these growers and other experts to find a solution that won't destroy yet another thriving industry in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: We continue to work with Rob Keen from Forests Ontario as well as all the partners around the Ontario Tree Seed Plant. We have continued to consult, not just in my ministry office, but they met recently with my ministry team in our offices.

We did not start consultation until we had been able to have a discussion with the employees. It was not appropriate to bring a public consultation ahead of time where the employees knew that there may be some changes down the way.

Speaker, we continue to move towards a more efficient and modern seed archive. During this transition, we'll be encouraging new market opportunities for Ontario's nurseries to provide native seeds to grow trees for the industry, as well as the public. I want to let you know that there will be significant savings to Ontario taxpayers through reduced operating and capital costs as we transition to the new way of doing things.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the minister: The minister is assuming that the private sector will be able to take over immediately. That means the private sector, in nine months, has to build infrastructure, acquire an array of

specialized equipment, hire and train technical staff to run the facility, all with a price tag of over \$1 million.

Growers in my riding tell me this simply isn't possible. These growers are the largest suppliers to tree planting programs across southern Ontario and they are calling the ministry's plan both unreasonable and irresponsible.

In Leeds–Grenville, On October 13, the Ontario Tree Seed Coalition submitted a transition proposal that they've yet to receive a response to. Growers and the coalition are asking the government to accept the transition proposal and immediately establish a stakeholder group to work alongside ministry officials.

Minister, you talked about significant savings to the taxpayers. With the billions of dollars you guys do in scandals, this thing is costing you \$1 million a year. It's an irreplaceable, priceless collection of seeds. Some of these plants are extinct. Why are you trying to destroy that?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I'd just like to point out to the member opposite that it was his party that, in 1996, opened our province's provincial nursery program for privatization and put the Ontario Tree Seed Plant in this position in the first place.

We have had two recent public meetings in that community to talk about all options going forward. All options continue to be on the table to make sure that we are moving from a facility it makes no sense to continue to operate as it's such a large one. We will be transitioning new market opportunities for Ontario's nurseries.

As I said, all options continue to be on the table. We do continue to consult. We've had two recent public meetings. We are developing new policies like the new seed zone policy and creating a modern seed archive that will continue to make sure that we can continue to provide the seeds for Ontario's forests moving forward.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is for the Premier. Workers who sort produce for the Ippolito company at the Ontario Food Terminal have been on strike for the last nine days. They do the back-breaking work that starts at 2 a.m. to distribute produce to our local grocery stores and restaurants. They make less than other workers at the terminal. They don't have sick days. They don't have job security. What they're seeking is simply a fair first contract—a situation, sadly, all too common, where employers drag out this process, hoping to rattle newly unionized workplaces.

New Democrats proposed first-contract arbitration that would help ensure that negotiations don't drag out and become strikes or lockouts. Sadly, the Liberal government voted that down.

Will the Premier stand up today with the Ippolito workers and support first-contract arbitration for all workers in this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I thank the honourable member for her question and for the concern about the

dispute that is taking place. What we try to do at the Ministry of Labour, obviously, is to promote a very stable and a very constructive labour relations regime and have productive workplaces in the province of Ontario. What we do, Speaker, is we enforce the labour legislation. Some of that will be changing, should this House support Bill 148. There are regulations and programs that will follow that.

In Ontario, we've got an excellent record of dispute resolution. About 98% of all agreements in the province are reached without strikes, and they're reached without lockouts. When the two parties approach the table in a meaningful and significant way, we know that the best agreements are those reached at the table. I will expand on that in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Back to the Premier: The majority of those workers on strike are Tibetan. I know them to be hard-working, incredible assets who both live and work in my riding of Parkdale–High Park.

Ippolito Produce is a multinational company with sales of more than \$130 million each year. Last year, Ippolito Produce received \$1.7 million from this Liberal government to retain more than "250 good jobs." The Liberal government is subsidizing bad labour practices.

What about these workers? Even when Bill 148 passes, they will not be guaranteed a first contract. I repeat: Will the Premier today stand up with the Ippolito workers and support first-contract arbitration for all workers in this province?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

1130

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, it doesn't matter to us at the Ministry of Labour where somebody comes from. People come to this province from all four corners of the world, and they get treated, under the Labour Relations Act, the Employment Standards Act—they get equity. That's why they move here in the first place. The fact that these folks happen to be from a certain country doesn't apply in this matter.

Ninety-eight per cent of all agreements are reached without a lockout, without a strike. We've got some of the best mediators, the best arbitrators in the country. They've been working on this file. The excellent staff at the Ministry of Labour are active on this file; they're monitoring it.

Bargaining by its nature is tough. We know the best agreements are those that are reached by the parties at the negotiating table.

SENIORS

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the Minister of Seniors Affairs. Minister, last week you were at the Sackville Hill Seniors Recreation Centre in

Hamilton to announce our government's new action plan for seniors. There are over two million seniors in Ontario—a number that will more than double in the next 25 years—and many who also live in my riding of Davenport. With this bold new plan, our government will help seniors live independent, healthy and active, safe and socially connected lives. It involves collaboration across our government, with 10 ministries offering new programs and services that support seniors. I know that for many seniors this new plan focuses on what they care about most, including supports to live independently, increased opportunities to contribute to their communities, and remaining socially connected with their peers. There's also a significant investment in long-term care.

Will the Minister of Seniors Affairs inform the House about this new action plan for seniors?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'm delighted to answer this question. I want to begin by thanking the member from Davenport for the question. The member has been a tireless supporter for seniors in her riding, and I want to thank her for her exemplary advocacy on behalf of seniors.

Mr. Speaker, last week I was pleased to stand with our Premier and the Minister of Health to launch our Aging with Confidence action plan for seniors. The plan invests in services that Ontario seniors have told us they want—investments like the \$15 million in naturally occurring retirement communities, investments like the \$7 million in age-friendly communities, and investments like the once-in-a-generation announcement of 30,000 new long-term-care beds.

Ontario seniors have told us they want to live their best lives, no matter what their age, and that is what this—

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

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I want to thank the minister for her work. I'm pleased to hear that we are making investments that will provide seniors with the supports they need to age independently and with confidence.

This past Friday, I was at the First Portuguese Canadian Cultural Centre in my riding of Davenport, where I had the opportunity to share our Aging with Confidence plan with the very active and very engaged seniors there. They were pleased to see, as I am proud to see, that our government has listened to seniors directly to ensure our action plan reflects their needs.

Minister, I'm also aware that with last week's announcement, our government launched a new one-stop website for seniors so they can learn about the new programs and services that are available to them.

Could the Minister of Seniors Affairs explain to this House about this new one-stop website for seniors in Ontario?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I want to thank the member for taking the time to make sure that her constituents know about our plan. The member is absolutely right: As part of our action plan, we are launching a new one-stop website, ontario.ca/agingwell.

Mr. Speaker, our research shows that 70% of Ontario seniors go online every single day, and this website rec-

ognizes that fact and will be a one-stop shop for every single seniors program across our government—programs like the new engagement through the arts program, programs like our new Active for Life program, programs like the new consumer protection program for seniors that we are launching. Aging with Confidence is our plan to ensure that Ontario seniors live their best lives, and this one-stop website is part of that.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Halton regional council is expressing serious concerns about the report of the Minister's Expert Panel on Public Health, which is entitled Public Health Within an Integrated Health System. What's more, they're speaking up about the fact that this government continues to shortchange the region of Halton for public health to the tune of almost \$10 million a year. The regional council, by way of resolution, has authorized regional chair Gary Carr to seek a meeting with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. His original request was sent July 11, almost four months ago. When will the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care meet with the Halton regional chair?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. Our 36 public health units across the province play such an essential role in ensuring that Ontarians stay safe and live and thrive in a safe environment. Their work is absolutely essential, which is part of the reason why, since coming into office, we've doubled our funding to public health. In fact, a couple of years ago we changed the funding formula, based on multi-year consultation with the sector—with the front-line public health workers and others—so that the funding formula was not a simple per capita formula as before but it actually reflected the socio-demographic economic conditions and the need expressed on public health for each of the various localities.

I know that there is a request in from the regional chair of Halton, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to have a look at that, and I'm happy to address any further issues in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: The minister said he'd be happy to look at the request, but he didn't say that he would meet with the regional chair. I can't believe that the Minister of Health would refuse to meet with the regional chair of Halton, which has been one of the fastest-growing areas in the province.

Our elected municipal colleagues are amongst our most important partners. We need to work together. It's in the public interest that we co-operate with our municipal partners, and I hope the minister will do that. The recommendations of the expert panel on public health include re-drawing geographic boundaries of public health agencies to conform with LHIN boundaries. However, in some cases, this means that regional municipalities will be separated into more than one public health agency.

At the same time, municipalities will lose their voice on public health boards but will still be expected to substantially fund the public health programs through local property tax dollars. The region of Halton believes that accountability will go out the window. How will the minister ensure that the accountability of public health boards to municipalities is not compromised?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Several years ago, as we spent and invested that time and consultation on the funding formula coming out of the Patients First Act, we committed to having a similar process and consultation to look at the structure and governance of public health in this province, something which hasn't been looked at for many, many years—I think probably since the download that the PCs did for public health. Obviously, we have uploaded a considerable amount of the download to municipalities that the PCs were responsible for.

The expert panel was asked to look at structure and governance. They consulted to do that. They made the report available over the summer. The day after I received the report, I think, I immediately met with AMO, the MOU table with the municipalities. We are now in a consultation process across the board, including with Halton and public health units and municipalities, to get their input on the report.

AIR QUALITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Last week, after years of delay, the provincial government finally released its draft proposal to regulate cumulative air pollution in hot spots like Sarnia, Sudbury and Hamilton. As groups like Environment Hamilton have noted, this proposal will do absolutely nothing to reduce existing air pollution in Hamilton. Ecojustice said, "This proposal is disappointing—it essentially amounts to business as usual." Meanwhile, for years, Hamilton families have been exposed to a toxic cocktail of different chemicals, and we have no idea how our health has been affected.

Will the Premier commit to a study to measure the impact of cumulative air pollution on the health of Hamilton families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me say to the second part of the question that, absolutely, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change will work with the community. We will absolutely work to make sure that everything is being done that can be done to deal with air pollution.

Having shut down all of the coal-fired plants in this province, we are committed, absolutely, to doing everything that we can to reduce air pollution.

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On the Sarnia issue, we're building on previous regulations to lower air pollution. We did recently post updated sulphur dioxide standards for consultation. Those proposed changes would push industrial facilities to continue to reduce pollution. Last week, we also proposed a new approach to considering the cumulative

effects of pollution in heavily industrialized areas. That could be in Sarnia, that could be in Hamilton or anywhere in the province, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I thank the Premier for just repeating what I said. But levels of benzene and benzo[a]pyrene, highly carcinogenic chemicals, are already well above provincial guidelines in Hamilton and have been for years, and the government's draft proposal is not going to do a single thing to reduce existing levels of air pollution. Any regulation of air pollution in Hamilton must start with a complete understanding of the current impacts of cumulative air pollution on the health of Hamilton families. Will the Premier conduct the health study that families in Hamilton deserve?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, I have already said that we will work and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change will work with the community and will work with environmental groups to make sure that, whether it's Sarnia or whether it's Hamilton, we do everything we can.

I talked about the regulations that have been posted. I talked about the changes that we are making. We will continue to work to find ways to reduce pollution in the air.

We believe that it is possible to clean up the air. We believe that it is possible to make the air cleaner in Ontario so that children don't deal with asthma in the same numbers and so that people who have respiratory illnesses are able to go out and enjoy the air. So yes, Mr. Speaker, we will work with the communities across this province to do everything that we can to reduce air pollution.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for small business. Minister, just yesterday, the finance minister delivered his fall economic statement and, along with it, significant measures to help Ontario businesses succeed and grow. One of the measures announced was the reduction of the small business tax from 4.5% to 3.5%. This tax cut will enable small businesses to compete, grow and reinvest in their businesses, and it's just the tip of the iceberg of the types of opportunities we are supporting through a number of new initiatives.

Can the minister please tell us what other measures our government has put forward to build a better business climate that allows our small businesses to be more successful?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Quinte West this morning, of course, as the owner of Brighton Speedway, one of the most successful small businesses in the community of Brighton.

With more than 400,000 small businesses and communities across the province, we know that when they succeed, we all succeed. That is why, through the fall economic statement, we are investing an additional \$500 million to help small businesses lower costs, take advan-

tage of new opportunities and save time when dealing with government.

What we've heard from small businesses is that the challenges they face are broader than just their bottom line. Some of the most consistent issues are the barriers they're facing in hiring and retaining youth. For many young people, their first job is at the local small business, where they gain valuable experience and skills. That's why we're investing \$124 million for employers to hire and retain youth ages 15 to 29. This is just one of the ways that we're working to ensure that small businesses have the best opportunities to thrive in Ontario, because when small businesses succeed, our communities prosper.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. It is reassuring that this government is listening and taking action to help address some of the main concerns that businesses face. As someone who was a business owner, I understand what it takes to succeed in small business.

With the rapidly changing global market, some small businesses feel the pressure as they try to stay competitive. This is a challenge for small businesses in urban areas like Toronto but even more challenging for rural businesses like the ones in Port Hope, Campbellford and Colborne.

Minister, can you please tell us what you're doing to support the small mom-and-pop shops along our downtown and Main Street areas?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member for his supplementary question. While our economy is strong and unemployment is at an all-time low, we know not everyone is feeling the benefit of this. That's why we're focusing our efforts on bringing everyone forward.

Whether it's in Hintonburg or Parkdale, downtown Quinte West or the great downtown of Peterborough, small businesses are at the heart of Ontario's thriving communities. That's why we're investing \$40 million in Main Streets across Ontario, expanding on efforts that have helped to revitalize more than 70 rural communities across Ontario. This fund will not only build on Main Street revitalization, planning and promotional activities; it will help small businesses enhance their digital capabilities and support energy audits to save them money.

Our Main Street fund will also enhance the planning of promotional activities for downtown and Main Street areas in our communities. These small businesses are the backbone of communities everywhere, providing good jobs for families, which is why our government is committed to both their success and growth.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Last week, the minister made another announcement yet again about long-term-care beds, despite nothing being in the budget for two previous budgets before that. So it's a little bit con-

cerning that eight months before an election, they're now going to miraculously build all these beds.

Back in 2007, they committed to redevelop 35,000 beds, and only a third of those have actually been completed today. Now they're trying to spin it that they are going to come out with another 35,000 beds. It's a sad day when we have to reannounce and reannounce but there are 32,000 people still on a wait-list. They've known it. The tsunami has been coming at us of the demographic baby boomers.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has not produced those 35,000 beds in the first iteration. How can the people of Ontario trust him to develop all those by 2025 now? Isn't it ironic that just before an election, they actually put money in their budget?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It's always great to get support from the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound on our further investments in long-term care. It is true, and I'm happy to share the details with him, that we have added 10,000 new beds to the complement of long-term care since coming into office, and we've redeveloped 13,500.

But what's critically important, and what I'm very proud and excited about, is the Premier's announcement last week, as part of our seniors strategy, to add 5,000 additional beds just over the next four years and a commitment to add 30,000 more over the next decade. That is an enormous addition to the complement of about 78,000 beds that exist in the province.

I know that this is a critically important issue to the member. I know that, and I know it is to his riding as well. So I hope we have the opportunity to work together to see what we can do specifically to benefit his residents.

VISITORS

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

Hon. Bill Mauro: Speaker, thank you. I'd like to just take a moment to introduce and welcome to Queen's Park Jodi Afonso from the College Student Alliance from Confederation College in Thunder Bay. Welcome.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Speaker, point of order: I just wanted to introduce the guests that I did earlier who hadn't made it into the House yet: Gino Cucchi and Alicia Vianga from After Breast Cancer. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I shall take advantage of the introductions by making sure my brownie points are added up. My Speaker's gallery is filled with my daughter, Rachel, and my wife, Rosemarie. And we can't even have lunch today.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've got a job. I've got a job.

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(b), the chief whip of the third party, the member from Timiskaming-

Cochrane, has notified the Clerk of his intention to file notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 177, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

The order for second reading of Bill 177 may therefore not be called today.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 38 relating to allocation of time on Bill 166, An Act to amend and repeal various Acts and to enact three new Acts with respect to construction of new homes and ticket sales for events.

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

The division bells rang from 1150 to 1155.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 14, 2017, Mr. Chan moved government notice of motion number 38 relating to allocation of time on 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 tickets sales for events.

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

Ayes

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

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

Nays

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Armstrong, Teresa J. | French, Jennifer K. | Munro, Julia |
| Arnott, Ted | Gates, Wayne | Oosterhoff, Sam |
| Bailey, Robert | Gélinas, France | Romano, Ross |
| Barrett, Toby | Hardeman, Ernie | Sattler, Peggy |
| Bisson, Gilles | Harris, Michael | Smith, Todd |
| Campbell, Sarah | Jones, Sylvia | Tabuns, Peter |
| Cho, Raymond Sung Joon | MacLeod, Lisa | Taylor, Monique |
| Clark, Steve | Mantha, Michael | Thompson, Lisa M. |
| Coe, Lorne | Martow, Gila | Vanthof, John |
| Fedeli, Victor | McNaughton, Monte | Walker, Bill |
| Fife, Catherine | Miller, Norm | Wilson, Jim |
| Forster, Cindy | Miller, Paul | Yakubski, John |

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 47; the nays are 36.

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

Motion agreed to.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just before we leave, a reminder that the Shine the Light on Woman Abuse Campaign is asking all members to go to the staircase for a picture in support of the anti-abuse of women.

Also in the Speaker's gallery is another guest I forgot to mention, a recent retiree here with his family, Joe Galluzzo.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1159 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to welcome Anna Baggio, director of conservation planning for the Wildlands League. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I'm pleased to welcome Ava Flieler, along with her mother, Tammy, who are here visiting Queen's Park today from my lovely riding of Durham. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FRANK COULTER

Mr. Bill Walker: Today I stand and pay tribute to a great constituent, a terrific community entrepreneur, an exemplary citizen of this province, a philanthropist and a man who exemplifies the very best of Canadian values: Frank Coulter.

Frank was a larger-than-life business person who truly lived life to the fullest. He was a farmer from day one who never lost his connection to his rural roots, a man who rolled up his sleeves to get things done, and an innovator who used his terrific people skills, honesty and sense of humour to build a small empire that included a farm chemical and supply business, better known today as Sprucedale Agromart, with offices in Tara, Hanover and Manitoulin Island.

In addition to his many interests, Frank was also one of the original six investors who bought the Owen Sound Platers, now the Owen Sound Attack, and was the driving force in helping keep the Attack in Owen Sound. To his last day, Frank was a visionary behind the Attack being such a significant part of our Grey-Bruce-Owen Sound community.

Besides being a naturally gifted salesman, Frank also liked to give back to the community, donating countless hours of personal time to bettering the lives of all around him and serving on a variety of foundations and boards,

including Trillium Mutual Insurance and the Owen Sound Regional Hospital Foundation that supported the MRI campaign and the cancer suite at Grey Bruce Health Services.

A quiet and humble man, Frank's actions spoke volumes. As such, he was a true role model for his sons Chris, Jeff and Ted in so many ways. I attend numerous fundraising events throughout our community, and I can attest that there is probably not a charity in our area that has not been blessed with the generosity of Frank and his wife, Sharon. They are the epitome of community builders who have made a difference.

So it is with a heavy heart that I announce that Frank passed away suddenly on November 2, leaving behind a legacy of salesmanship, community pride, strong family values and a community that is better because of him. Frank's death is a devastating loss for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, the Ontario Hockey League and the many great causes he worked on. However, through his community contributions and fondly remembered reputation, his legacy will undoubtedly live on and have a positive impact on the lives of many for many, many years.

Thank you, Frank, for all that you achieved and contributed throughout your very successful life. Farewell, my friend. May you rest in peace.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It is always a pleasure to rise in the Legislature as the MPP for London-Fanshawe on behalf of my constituents. Today, I am bringing attention to a very serious issue that is happening in London with regard to children and youth mental health community services.

Over the summer, I met with Vanier, WAYS, Craigwood, Merrymount, Anago and the London Family Court Clinic. These agencies provide community treatment that helps our vulnerable children with their mental health therapy. They told me that in the span of two years, there has been an increase of 23% in crisis intake for children's mental health services, with almost one quarter of clients having developed a suicide plan or attempt.

Thousands of children are on the wait-list. What happens when youth cannot access the mental health services they need? They end up in crisis. They find themselves in emergency rooms or entangled with law enforcement. Something has to be done about the chaos that has been created in London's children and youth mental health services.

At your request, Minister Matthews, 11 core agencies for children's mental health in our area composed a document outlining what a reasonable funding increase would entail if it were to happen. The agencies are still waiting to hear back from this Liberal government if additional funding has been approved.

Due to years of underfunding, agencies are speaking up and struggling to stay afloat. Now it's your turn to act. I am calling on the minister to take action. Will the

minister commit to increasing funding in the Liberal budget? It's time to improve the funding for agencies in Ontario that provide direct support for our children and youth with mental health needs.

SALVATORE "SAMMY" D'AMICO

Mr. Mike Colle: Today I'd like to speak about a wonderful local champion who passed away on Sunday: Salvatore D'Amico. "Sammy," as he was known, lived till he was 38 years of age. He had his loving brother, Frank, and his sisters, Maria and Lena—Laura, I should say. His mom and dad, Antonio and Caterina, loved him so much.

He was a very special person in that he received a great deal of love, yet he gave back so much to his family and everybody around him. He was always a positive force in the community. He participated continually, always with a smile on his face and always sharing his love with others.

I think that Sammy and his family are a shining example of how, when we have someone who is a member of our family who sometimes needs a little bit of extra help—when we help them, we are the ones who receive the love and the favour back. Sammy was that kind of special person.

He has now gone upstairs. We hope that he can still follow his Maple Leafs upstairs and that he can still cheer for his favourite wrestlers up in heaven. We all say goodbye, Sammy. We're all going to miss you.

SHINE THE LIGHT ON WOMAN ABUSE CAMPAIGN

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I rise today to raise awareness about a very important campaign which originated in London, Ontario. The London Abused Women's Centre has launched its eighth annual Shine the Light campaign. The campaign runs every November for the entire month, coinciding with Ontario's Woman Abuse Prevention Month.

The campaign's purpose is to raise awareness of violence against women by turning communities across the country purple for the month of November. I'm proud that all members are wearing a purple ribbon today to show their support for this local campaign, and I hope that next year we are able to light the outside of the Legislative Building in purple to further show our support.

The London Abused Women's Centre website states that purple is a symbol of courage, survival and honour, and has come to symbolize the fight to end woman abuse. During the month of November they are inviting businesses, schools, places of worship, homes and everywhere else to go purple.

The campaign started to expand in its second year across Ontario and then into Canada. This year, the campaign has grown internationally and has been adopted in Sweden and Australia.

November 15 every year has been designated Wear Purple Day. It is my hope that one day soon this campaign will no longer be needed, as we as a province, nation and world end the violence against women.

I want to give a special thanks to Megan Walker, executive director of the London Abused Women's Centre, and her team for the outstanding work they do day in and day out to keep women in our communities safe and for the awareness they continue to raise to stop violence against women.

WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Like all members here, we live very busy work lives. We're trying to be in five places at once. Today, while I was on committee, I unfortunately missed a meeting that would have been interesting, which was an update on winter road maintenance to happen this winter. I just want to say to my friends on the government side: I may have not made that briefing because of committee engagements, but I've got to say, let's hope that we get it right.

There used to be a time not that long ago that when you took the road in northern Ontario—or southern Ontario, for that fact—and you wanted to go from point A to point B, with reasonable weather you knew that there were reasonable roads and that they were in pretty good shape. We had this wonderful system—a hybrid—where we had public operators under MTO that operated snowplows, salt trucks, sand trucks and others, and we would augment that with private contractors. The MTO themselves were responsible for monitoring and making sure that equipment was dispatched.

Unfortunately, the Liberals went forward with privatization and privatized the entire system. We now have a system that's entirely run by the private sector, which has led to a lot of problems when it comes to the condition of our highways.

Let's hope that the government has learned as a result of some of these contracts. I know that they've made some changes. There has been some improvement, but we still have a long way to go. I just want to put the government on notice that all northerners, and I think all Ontarians, will be keeping a close eye on the condition of our roads. You can rest assured that we'll be back to talk to the government should we see a repeat of previous years.

HINDU HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'm pleased to stand in the House today to officially mark November as Hindu Heritage Month. On December 8, 2016, my private member's bill, Bill 56, received royal assent. We all proclaimed November to be Hindu Heritage Month in Ontario.

1510

Here, we are a home to a large and vibrant Hindu community, who have made significant contributions across fields including science, education, medicine, law, politics, business, culture and sport. Hindus have helped

to build Ontario into the multicultural success story that it is and have helped to build this province into the best place to live, work and raise families.

I had the distinct pleasure to attend a special Hindu Heritage Month celebration in my riding, in Ajax, on Sunday, November 5. The event was organized by Sankat Mochan Hanuman Mandir and Cultural Centre in Ajax, in partnership with the town of Ajax. During that celebration, Cecil Ramnauth, Ajax resident, community leader and member of the Sankat, honoured me with a very special personal tribute that included a signed, framed staircase photo by Premier Kathleen Wynne—signature in place—that commemorated Bill 56.

I witnessed first-hand what Hinduism stands for, through the very special deeds of Hindu people, that evening. My wife, Donna, and I were welcomed with open arms. We both felt the Hindu love of humanity that evening and fully understood how important Bill 56 is to Hindus.

I'm honoured to stand here today to commemorate Hindus this month and every day. The contributions that Hindu Canadians have made in Ontario are special, and as Mahatma Gandhi said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

FLOYD CRAWFORD

Mr. Todd Smith: Today my friends in Belleville said a final farewell to a local hockey legend. Floyd Crawford died in the early morning of November 11 with family at his side. He was 88.

Floyd was best known as captain of the fabled Belleville McFarlands, who won the national senior A hockey title the Allan Cup back in 1958, then represented Canada and won the world championship in the spring of 1959 in Prague.

Floyd and his wife, Pauline, loved Belleville. They decided to raise their family there, and we're so blessed in Belleville that they did. Floyd and Pauline raised nine children, who went on to be tremendous athletes in their own right. Three of their sons played in the NHL. Marc won a Stanley Cup as head coach of the Colorado Avalanche in 1996. All of the Crawford kids accomplished amazing feats too numerous to mention.

Floyd didn't just raise his kids to be fierce competitors and community leaders. He's credited with helping raise hundreds of young hockey players as a coach. Floyd was tough. He demanded commitment and effort from all of his kids and players.

I remember riding on the Belleville Bulls team bus with Floyd during the 1990s. He was the chief scout and architect of the Bulls drafts leading up to their only OHL championship in 1999. His son Lou was the head coach.

Floyd had a keen eye for potential talent. I remember he was being criticized for using a second-round draft pick to take this kid from Moose Factory who critics said was too slow. He said, "When Louis gets a hold of this kid on the ice, he's going to make him pick up his feet. He's got a shot that is unbelievable." He went on to score five goals in game 7 of the OHL championship in 1999,

and then 56 goals one season with the San Jose Sharks. His name was Jonathan Cheechoo.

To everybody in Belleville, we've lost a hockey legend, but his legacy will live on. Rest in peace, Floyd Stone "Pete" Crawford.

AVA FLIELER

Mr. Granville Anderson: It's a great pleasure for me to rise in the House today to discuss the inspiring thoughtfulness and advocacy of a constituent of mine, Ava Flieler. She's sitting right here in the members' gallery.

In late August, as you know, there was a fire at the Port Perry hospital, located in my riding of Durham. Thanks to the wonderful emergency crews and the on-site personnel, all patients and visitors were safe during that fire. It was a traumatic experience for the community, but as I alluded to, all were removed safely from the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, it is so nice to see community members come together in support of our beloved hospital. Nine-year-old Ava, who is with us today, held a fundraising drive at her parents' Ultramar gas station in Port Perry, in which she has raised, so far, over \$165. The donation will be going towards new equipment for the New Life Centre.

The outpouring of support from the community has overwhelmed our hospital executives and staff, as well as the community in general. Mr. Speaker, great things happen when everyone comes together.

Thank you again, Ava, for your fundraising efforts and for creating awareness in our community. Keep up the great work, and I am sure you will raise a lot more.

WOOD FRAME BUILDINGS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Last month, I introduced my private member's bill, Bill 169, the Ontario Forestry Revitalization Act, which would permit wood frame construction up to 14 storeys in height. This is to accommodate two innovative projects here in Toronto being planned by George Brown College and the University of Toronto.

The council of Papineau-Cameron township, in my riding, has passed a resolution in support of Bill 169. They note that "by increasing the use of harvested wood in construction, it will help northern Ontario by providing jobs, and will help southern Ontario meet targets to reduce urban sprawl and reduce construction costs."

As stated repeatedly over the years since introducing my private member's bill on this issue, it's a win-win proposition for Ontario.

Papineau-Cameron township council resolved that "Council supports Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli's 14-storey wood bill."

It's worth noting that the federal government is currently accepting expressions of interest through its Green Construction through Wood Program for high-rise demonstration projects in Canada, so there is momentum here, Speaker.

I was very pleased when the government adopted my six-storey proposal in 2015 and look forward to further discussion on Bill 169.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 139, An Act to enact the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal Act, 2017 and the Local Planning Appeal Support Centre Act, 2017 and to amend the Planning Act, the Conservation Authorities Act and various other Acts / Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur le Tribunal d'appel de l'aménagement local et la Loi de 2017 sur le Centre d'assistance pour les appels en matière d'aménagement local et modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire, la Loi sur les offices de protection de la nature et diverses autres lois.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

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

Bill Pr70, An Act to revive Dr. Marchand Optometry Professional Corporation.

Bill Pr72, An Act respecting the Beechwood Cemetery Company.

Bill Pr73, An Act to revive 1701423 Ontario Inc.

Bill Pr74, An Act to revive 1729293 Ontario Inc.

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

Report adopted.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Minister?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I move that the order of the House dated November 14, 2017, concerning the order of precedence for private members' public business be amended as follows: that "Mr. Berardinetti assumes ballot item number 64" be deleted and replaced with "Mr. Berardinetti assumes ballot item number 46."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Jaczek moves that the order of the House dated November 14, 2017, concerning the order of precedence for private members' public business be amended as follows: that "Mr. Berardinetti assumes ballot item number 64" be deleted and replaced with "Mr. Berardinetti assumes ballot item number 46."

Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

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PETITIONS

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I have a very important petition, signed by hundreds of people in my riding, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas on July 7, 2017, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) deemed the renewable energy approval (REA) application of Otter Creek Wind Farm LP complete; and

"Whereas Otter Creek's REA stands at the technical review stage; and

"Whereas we believe that environmental studies to date have been insufficient with regard to species at risk; and

"Whereas we believe that studies to date have been insufficient regarding the adverse effects of wind turbines at Otter Creek to migratory birds and waterfowl; and

"Whereas the construction methods required for the Otter Creek site are similar to those being employed in the construction of North Kent Wind 1, where 14 water wells have now been contaminated due to vibration; and

"Whereas Ontario has already postponed the proposed LRP II (large renewable energy projects) because further production of electricity is not required;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take immediate action to stop any construction or construction planning for the Otter Creek Wind Farm until the above-mentioned environmental concerns, and particularly the issue of water quality safety, are re-examined by expert consultants mutually agreeable to MOECC, the municipal council of Chatham-Kent, and the residents affected by the proposed wind farm development."

I wholeheartedly support this, and I sign my name to this petition.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are over 200 species at risk in Ontario that need meaningful protections to prevent their extinction;

"Whereas protecting special concern, threatened and endangered species is critical to maintaining Ontario's biodiversity and meeting its commitments under the international convention on biodiversity;

"Whereas making sure species at risk are protected is central to achieving sustainability objectives in the province;

"Whereas there was multi-partisan support for the Endangered Species Act in 2007;

"Whereas support for the act has been wavering as of late with proposals to water down the Endangered Species Act either through private members' bills or an omnibus budget bill;

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

"To reaffirm your support for stopping threats to and promoting the recovery of species at risk in Ontario through the implementation of the Endangered Species Act in keeping with the spirit and intent and purposes of the act."

I agree with this petition. I affix my signature, and I give it to page Adam to bring forward.

ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed 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 the petition. I give my petition to page Erion.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

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

“Whereas in 2009 the Ministry of Transportation received environmental clearance for six lanes of the 401 between Tilbury to Elgin county;

“Whereas the 401 between Tilbury and London was already known as ‘carnage alley’ due to the high rate of collisions and fatalities there;

“Whereas current work being done on the 401 between Tilbury and Ridgetown will reduce the road to a single lane for up to three years thus making this stretch a serious safety concern;

“Whereas there have already been four deaths, nine serious injuries requiring hospitalization and over eight collisions this summer within the one-lane construction area;

“Whereas the government of the day pledged to invest \$13.5 billion in highway improvements and has sharply increased the fees for driver permits and licence renewal fees which are used for highway maintenance and improvements;

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

“To commit to upgrading the 401 from four to six lanes and install a median barrier from Tilbury to Elgin county.”

I wholeheartedly approve of this petition, will sign it and give it to page Katrina.

PHARMACARE

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition that reads:

“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 fully agree with this petition. I will affix my name to it and give it to page Isabelle to bring to the Clerk.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Todd Smith: Good afternoon. I’m pleased to be able to present this petition on behalf of residents in Hastings and Prince Edward counties. It’s titled “Make Moratorium on School Closures Retroactive to 2016-17.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Minister of Education, Mitzie Hunter, declared on June 28, 2017, a province-wide moratorium on future school closures based on the results of the

spring engagement process, stating that the pupil accommodation review process was flawed and should be overhauled; and

“Whereas during the 2016-2017 school year this flawed pupil accommodation review process was used to close schools; and

“Whereas some of these schools are not scheduled to close until the end of June 2018, so that staffing for these schools remains in place for 2017-2018; and

“Whereas it would be consistent with the spirit of the moratorium and the reason for the overhaul of the PAR process, to stop those closures announced after September 2016; and

“Whereas the 2015 Auditor General’s report section 4.3.2 (p 299) recommends greater funds be put towards maintenance of current schools; and

“Further, whereas the current funding formula does not properly address the needs of schools within rural and northern communities;

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

“1. Reverse the closure decisions for all schools where those decisions were made after September 1, 2016;

“2. Provide fair and equitable pupil accommodation review processes that school boards must follow, recognizing the unique needs of rural and northern communities; and

“3. Review the current funding formula with a goal of developing fair and equitable funding formulae for all rural, northern and urban schools.”

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

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: J’aimerais remercier M^{me} Annette Bernard de Hanmer dans mon comté, who signed this petition. It goes as follows:

“Whereas frail elderly patients needing long-term-care placement in homes within the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN) have been pressured to move out of the hospital to await placement, or stay and pay hospital rates of approximately \$1,000 per day; and

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

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

“—Ensure patients aren’t pressured with hospital rates and fulfill promises made to hundreds of nursing home

residents who agreed to move temporarily with the promise that they would be relocated as soon as a bed in a home of their choosing became available.”

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

1530

POLICING COSTS

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition from the township of Muskoka Lakes, Georgian Bay township and Lake of Bays. It reads:

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

“Whereas the district municipality of Muskoka is the only upper-tier municipality in Ontario that does not use the province’s fair cost-sharing model for allocating policing costs to its lower tier (or an alternative that has unanimous support); and

“Whereas the current cost-sharing model for policing the district municipality of Muskoka is an abuse of power by the upper-tier municipality, with the towns using their majority on district council to shift their policing costs onto the townships; and

“Whereas numerous attempts to resolve this issue by the townships, including an offer to continue subsidizing the towns at a lower rate, have all been rejected;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to act immediately to ensure that all upper-tier municipalities use the province’s fair funding model (or one that has the unanimous approval of all lower-tier municipalities) when allocating policing costs.”

I give this to Alisha.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Catherine Fife: “Conduct a full inquiry into seniors care in the province of Ontario.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas upwards of 30,000 Ontarians are on the wait-list for long-term care (LTC); and

“Whereas wait times for people who urgently need long-term care and are waiting in hospital have increased by 270% since the Liberal government came into office; and

“Whereas the number of homicides in long-term care being investigated by the coroner are increasing each year; and

“Whereas, over a period of 12 years, the government has consistently ignored recommendations regarding long-term care from provincial oversight bodies such as the Ontario Ombudsman and the Auditor General; and

“Whereas Ontario legislation does not require a minimum staff-to-resident ratio in long-term-care homes, resulting in insufficient staffing and inability for LTC homes to comply with ministry regulations;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to act in the best interest of Ontarians and conduct a full public inquiry into seniors care with

particular attention to the safety of residents and staff; quality of care; funding levels; staffing levels and practices; capacity, availability and accessibility in all regions; the impact of for-profit privatization on care; regulations, enforcement and inspections; and government action and inaction on previous recommendations to improve the long-term-care system.”

I fully concur with this petition, will sign it and give it to page Zunairah.

GUIDE AND SERVICE ANIMALS

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

“Whereas the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 doesn’t currently include legislation that defines proper training and accreditation for service animals; and

“Whereas until there are standardized behaviour requirements for service animals, there’s no way to tell that individuals with various needs are receiving the assistance they need from their service animal;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure certification and training of service animals is regulated to confirm that the correct type and proper amount of training is given to the service animals and therefore provide assurance that an individual’s needs are being adequately met.”

I agree with this, sign my name and give it to page Aditya.

CANCER TREATMENT

M^{me} France Gélinas: I want to present this petition on behalf of people all over Ontario. It comes from Rethink Breast Cancer.

“Whereas metastatic breast cancer is when the cancer has spread from the breast and has been found in other parts of the body;

“Whereas women with metastatic breast cancer all face uncertainty and all want more time. Each one has her own reason—to reach a milestone, or to have more time with her family. But the value that these women put on time is unmistakable;

“Whereas women with metastatic breast cancer need treatments that help keep their disease controlled. Until there is a cure, it is treatments that give time and help them live a better life longer;

“Whereas research continues to show progress in treating metastatic breast cancer, but the price of these new treatments developed by pharmaceutical manufacturers continues to rise;

“Whereas the price of new cancer treatments is resulting in an unsustainable health system. This leaves metastatic breast cancer patients waiting longer for new treatments to be approved and listed in Ontario compared to other jurisdictions;

“Whereas the government is changing who decides whether patients can access cancer drugs and cancer

patients are losing their voice in the process, feeling left in the dark. There are too many uncertainties for women with metastatic breast cancer and this should not be one of them;

“Whereas delays in treatment becoming available in Ontario can lead to more uncertainties including the availability of future innovative cancer treatments and the clinical trial sites in the province;

“Whereas there is an urgent need to ensure patients are represented when decisions about their health and their care are being made, and for that process to be transparent. As Ontario strives to put patients first and invest in patient engagement, this must also include women with metastatic breast cancer;”

They “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.”

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The time for petitions is over.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 148, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and to make related amendments to other Acts, the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs of the

committee shall be 1 p.m. on Thursday, November 16, 2017; and

On Thursday, November 16, 2017 at 4 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, November 20, 2017. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, 30 minutes of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

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

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Ms. Jaczek has moved government notice of motion number 39. Ms. Jaczek?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I believe the parliamentary assistant will be making our remarks later in the debate.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Boy, was I shocked yesterday to receive notice that they moved time allocation—or intended to; they tabled a time allocation motion—on Bill 148. It seems to me that we’re in guillotine season here at the Ontario Legislature, where the government of the day, at their own whim, stifles debate and cuts it off because they don’t want to hear from the people of Ontario through their representatives here on the other side.

1540

But what’s shocking is not just that they tabled the motion itself, but the terms of it. Here we have—which they have crowed themselves—the largest reworking and changes to the Labour Relations Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act in a quarter of a century, and they’re shutting debate off to the tune of 10 minutes per party in third reading debate. Ten minutes per party: That’s seconds per member.

It is absolutely unconscionable that this is the depth to which they have sunk to stifle debate in this House. This is a significant piece of legislation. They will tell you and they will brag that we toured the province this summer—10 days of hearings, with further hearings here at Queen's Park. That was an opportunity for organizations and members of the public to offer their views on the legislation. But for God's sake, you don't stifle the very members who have been elected to debate legislation in this House. You don't stifle them without giving them an opportunity to discuss the legislation and offer their views, which they have received from their constituents as well.

As I said yesterday when we had another time allocation motion, that was, I believe, the 37th time that they have used the guillotine to stifle debate since the last election, but this is the most egregious example because of the type of legislation, how far-reaching it is, the number of changes it makes and how many lives it affects. We are being told that we've got 10 minutes per party to speak to this—most certainly next week, because we're coming back to the House on the 20th, Monday. I suspect it will be called for third reading debate next Tuesday. They want to wrap this up in 30 minutes.

When my friend from St. Catharines was on the opposition side of this House, he screamed bloody murder whenever the government invoked time allocation: that it was the worst thing and the greatest affront to democracy that you could have ever conceived of. Today, it seems to be automatic for this government to invoke closure motions and time allocation as a matter of course.

When we should be debating legislation, we're debating time allocation motions. Speaker, I ask: Did the people send us here to debate time allocation motions? When we were out campaigning, did you go around telling people, I say to my friends on the other side, that you were really going to make sure that you were well prepared to debate time allocation motions? No. But I guarantee that you told the people, as you went to their doors and you met them at the malls and you met them on the streets, that you were going to represent them when you had an opportunity to debate the issues that matter. You could have kept your word on that if you actually allowed this House to debate the issues. But no, Speaker: They would rather decide that their calendar comes before the people of Ontario.

In fact, it is the welfare of the Liberal Party that matters most to this government. I know that they hang their heads in shame because I know that the members on the opposite side do not support what is coming out of the corner office on the second floor, but they are whipped into shape. They are browbeaten. They simply follow orders. Many of them don't agree with what's in this piece of legislation. I guarantee you, a lot of them don't agree with Bill 175 and the way this government is treating our police forces, our members of Ontario's finest, our police officers on the front lines. But you don't even hear a whimper out of the members on the opposite side because they have bought into the position

that the Premier's office and the deep thinkers, the Gerald Butts of this world, who have come up with the election strategy—because all they're thinking about now is 2018. They say, "Don't worry about it, folks. We've got it all figured out. We're going to fool the people again. I know my numbers in the polls are terrible. People don't like me. But we've got all kinds of policies that they're going to fall for once again. I don't care if they don't like me. We're going to do all of these kinds of things, and then when the election is over we'll forget whatever we said."

You have to understand that when you become a member of the Liberal Party, there is only one thing that matters, and that is continuing to get elected. "Whatever we have to say, whatever we have to do, we're going to do that." It doesn't matter if it's in the best interests of the people of Ontario. It doesn't matter if it's good for the economy, if it's good for the social fabric of our province. That's not what's important. What's important is that the Liberal Party gets re-elected. That's the only thing.

All you have to do is look at every piece of legislation that has come through this House in the last 12 months. It is all focused on one day. No, we're not talking about Christmas. We're talking about June 7, 2018. Everything they have done is focused on that one day. They are pulling together all the resources of all the best strategists your tax dollars can pay for, coming up with advertising schemes and programs. Have you seen the new ads? You're going to see a whole lot more of them before the writ is dropped next May. You're going to see scads of those ads. They're not going to be trying to win the election with money raised by the Liberal Party. They're going to be trying to win the election with your tax dollars and the people's tax dollars out there. They're going to try to win that election by spending it on government advertising.

But I'll tell you what they're not going to do. They're not going to debate the issues in the chamber. They don't want to debate the issues in the chamber. They loathe debate in the chamber. They can't stand question period, although it does give them the opportunity to never answer a question and always put out the Liberal political spin doctors and the same message over and over again. It's just like one of those recorders—you just grind it out one more time, same answer, almost none of it true, and none of it in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

As I stand here in my place today, Speaker, I'm going to tell you that I find this time allocation motion more offensive than any I've experienced in my 14 years here—and I have experienced plenty. We are talking about, as they brag themselves, the most significant changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Labour Relations Act in a quarter of a century, and we're getting, roughly, about one minute and 12 seconds per year to debate it—30 minutes for the whole debate, only 10 minutes per party. That is unconscionable.

I'll tell you, if there was some decency on the other side, you would stand up to the Premier's office yourselves and tell her, "Enough is enough."

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak today, on behalf of the people of Hamilton Mountain, on this time allocation motion on Bill 148, a motion that sees the Liberal government once again ramming through legislation without giving it full consideration.

This motion, if we allow it to pass, allows no amendments to be presented after 1 p.m. tomorrow. It limits the time for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill to just four hours tomorrow, with no debate allowed for amendments after the first two hours. It can be called for third reading as early as Monday and, as you heard, each party will only have 10 minutes to debate it. It is definitely the most interesting time allocation motion that I have seen since I have been here.

1550

This bill has generated a lot of interest from the public, and I don't think I'm any different from the rest of the members in this House in that I've heard from a lot of people about this bill. They call, they email, they come to my office, and they stop and talk to me on the street about it. They have thoughts about what's wrong with the bill and what can be done to make the bill better. They have come to present to committee, and they've provided many written submissions. And what do they get for that? They get the door slammed shut in their face with minimal time to give full consideration to their thoughts and their suggestions.

These people got engaged in the political process, and I thought that was what we all wanted—for the people of Ontario to pay attention to what we're actually doing in this place, to offer their input, their experience, their wisdom—but apparently not. We invited them to make submissions to committee, but when the time actually comes to act on what they've had to say, to make amendments to improve the bill, the whole thing gets shut down. That is a slap in the face to democracy. If we pass this motion today, we are doing a huge disservice to all of those people who have given serious consideration and thought to Bill 148 and, indeed, truly, all of Ontario.

Speaker, I suspect that by 1 p.m. tomorrow, the committee will have received quite a lot of amendments. I know the New Democrats will be putting forward a number of them with a view to making this bill better for workers. These amendments are necessary, because far too many people are being left behind when it comes to sharing in the prosperity in this province. Study after study has shown that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. That's not the direction that we should be moving in, and it's a disgrace that we're allowing it to happen.

Some folks are already unable to work or can't find work, and we have a lot of work to do to alleviate that poverty. Inadequate social assistance, the lack of affordable housing, access to health and mental health services, supports for people living with a disability—the list goes on and on and on. But those are debates for another day,

providing that they don't get cut short as well, which probably—typical of this Liberal government—they'll time-allocate too.

The reality is that many people are living in poverty and they're struggling to pay the bills, to go to work every day, or most days. The work across so many of our employment sectors is precarious. They put in a shift of back-breaking work; they care for our elderly and our infirm; they serve us in restaurants and retail stores; they give us a double-double to get us started in the morning. They put in an honest day's work, and at the end of it, they go home and wonder how they're going to feed their kids. How will they pay the hydro bill? Where will they find the money for next month's rent? That's not right. For all of the money in Ontario, it is simply unconscionable that so many people are getting left behind.

Over the last number of years, we've witnessed a dramatic rise in precarious work—people hired through temp agencies or on short-term contracts with no benefits. Many people are juggling several part-time jobs just to get enough hours to get close to full-time employment. They have to try to manage those schedules and meet the demands of different employers. Their day is made even longer by having to travel from one place to another, and perhaps another after that. Those are the people that Bill 148 is about, and we could do so much more for them.

I'm glad that the Liberal government heard us in the NDP when we called for the \$15 minimum wage back in April of last year, and I hope that they hear us again. I hope that they hear us when we say that minimum wage should be a minimum for everyone.

My colleague the member from Welland—who, by the way, has done a tremendous amount of work on Bill 148—I want to give her credit for her commitment to her role as our critic for labour and for the work that she does on behalf of Ontario's working people.

The member for Welland introduced a private member's bill, the Fairness in Minimum Wage Act. That bill would have done away with the sub-tiers that allow liquor servers and those under 18 to be paid less than the minimum wage that applies to everyone else.

When that bill was debated at second reading a couple of weeks ago, both the Liberals and the Conservatives voted it down. I hope they'll reconsider their position when they get an opportunity to vote on the amendments that will come to committee that would do the exact same thing.

Due to this time allocation motion, you won't get much time, if any, to discuss it, so I'll just say this: People should not have to rely on tips to feed their kids. I hear what people say about this Liberal government when I'm out on the street, and believe me, if they had to rely on tips for their pay, they'd be broke.

I really want to thank, for their incredible work, so many who have worked hard to bring this bill forward, like the Fairness campaign—people who know that people need to earn a decent wage. But ramming this through on a time allocation is doing the bill absolutely no justice.

One of the major problems of this bill is deeming, which allows injured workers' insurance benefits to be clawed back based on what they could earn in some fictitious job, not on what they actually earn. They need to do away with deeming now. It's that simple.

I hope you hear us when we say that we should level the playing field and that we should make it easier for workers to join together and speak with one voice—a stronger voice—so that they can achieve better pay, better working conditions and safer workplaces. It's no accident that the gap between the rich and the poor was less when more workers were unionized.

There's a reason we have safer workplaces than we did years ago. It's because workers organized and fought for health and safety measures to protect workers. It started in those unionized work sites and moved beyond them to all work sites.

There's a reason we have weekends, and we can thank our brothers and sisters in the union movement who came before us for that.

But, Speaker, we're going backwards now. In this world of ever-increasing precarious work, more and more workers are losing their weekends and other days off in the week. But we can stop that now by making it easier for workers to once again join a union and protecting their rights once they do so.

Bring back universal card-check certification, which says that if enough people in a workforce want to join a union, then they have the right to do so.

We can have first-contract arbitration that helps employers and unions reach that fair contract.

We can do away with replacement workers in the event of a strike. Workers at MANA Steel in my hometown of Hamilton have been locked out since 2013. That has been allowed to happen because of replacement workers. Using replacement workers undermines our collective bargaining process, and that's a process that has been well used over decades. Overall, it brings out the best in people to try to reach a fair deal.

The Conservative government did away with card-check certification and the banning of replacement workers in 1995, and the Liberals have allowed it to continue. Workers are poorer because of that.

I hope that the government hears us when we say that victims of domestic and intimate partner violence should be entitled to 10 days of paid leave to get medical treatment, to find a safe place to live and to deal with legal proceedings.

My colleague the member from London West worked hard on this and deserves a lot of credit. She introduced Bill 26, the Domestic and Sexual Violence Workplace Leave, Accommodation and Training Act. It passed second reading way back in October of last year, but it hasn't made it to committee yet. We can fix that now and include it in Bill 148. We've already voted in favour of it in this chamber, so just make it happen during 148—the stroke of a pen.

There's a lot to say. It's unfortunate that we're finding ourselves under this awful time allocation that's before

us. I know other members and my colleagues want to speak to this bill, so I'll just thank you for the opportunity for having the time.

1600

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to lend my voice to this time allocation motion. It's déjà vu all over again. I did this this morning, as many of us did, when the Liberal government time-allocated yet another bill.

Again, time allocation is just another way of saying that they don't want to hear from any members of the opposition. I direct them to the wood carving that is here in our chamber—it has been here for more than 100 years—"Audi alteram partem." "Hear the other side." That's something that this group of Liberals has no intention of honouring: that time-old tradition. Speaker, they don't want to hear the other side. They only are interested in what they themselves have to impose on the people of Ontario.

What they're doing with this Bill 148—with the minimum wage bill, as we'll call it—is stopping the debate. They don't want to hear from anybody. We're in the middle of learning more and more information. The Financial Accountability Officer tells us that this bill of theirs is going to cost 50,000 people in Ontario their jobs. The TD Bank says that number is 90,000. The chamber of commerce, using a different set of timing over the duration of it, says that, ultimately, the way they're putting this in, it will be 185,000 people who lose their jobs.

Speaker, they don't want to hear about that. They don't want to hear these independent officers and professional organizations throughout Ontario. They don't want to hear from any of these people. They just don't want to hear anybody anymore. They just want to do what they want to do.

You get to thinking about, why don't they want us to debate? What don't they want to hear? Again, I got to thinking that, quite frankly, you just can't believe anything one of these Liberals tells us.

There was an example just this morning. I was quite surprised at it. The minister responsible for small business stood up. He was just pontificating, as he tends to do, and he said, "Unemployment is the lowest of all time in Ontario." Well, that's not true. It's just patently not true. There are other times in Ontario's history when we've had lower unemployment than today. But he espoused—and we're supposed to just take their word—that unemployment is at its lowest in all time. Well, no.

I remember him standing up a little while ago. He said, "Ah, we've got the lowest small business tax rate in all of North America." I was thinking, "Well, hang on a second." I remember going to the state of Nevada in the past, visiting Las Vegas, and their tax rate is zero. I'm not really sure that our tax rate is lower than zero. It turns out there are several states in the United States with zero, and quite a few of them under our tax rate, which was still today at 4.5%.

When you start hearing nonsense like that—“We have the lowest tax rate in North America”—well, at the time he mentioned that, we were tied for the highest in Canada. And there were still half a dozen states lower than us, besides the eight other provinces and a couple of territories that were lower than us.

Speaker, when you get this kind of talk—the Premier talked about her auto insurance being a stretch goal. Well, we know what that means. When we were little kids and your mother asked you a question—“Are you telling the truth?”—maybe it was a stretch. We know from the Premier that we have a stretch goal. We hear from this minister just arbitrary numbers.

When you get that, you wonder, why do they allow themselves to do that? Well, it starts at the top. You hear the Premier and the finance minister talking about how they’ve allegedly balanced the budget. Between 10 and 20 times, in the media studio yesterday, the finance minister said, “We’ve balanced the budget, which allows us to do”—and he went on to talk about all the other things they plan on doing. When they say things like that that are just patently untrue, what on earth does that do? It says to me that they think they can say anything and get away with saying anything—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sorry. Point of order, the member for Welland.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I don’t think we have a quorum.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Clerks’ table?

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim): A quorum is not present.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim): A quorum is present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nipissing can continue.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: When you hear the finance minister say between 10 and 20 times yesterday in the media studio that we’ve balanced the budget, but you have all of the independent legislative officers, including the Financial Accountability Officer and the Auditor General, saying that we have not balanced the budget, that tells you that they’re just continuing to make this up, and that I find to be insulting.

When we look at what they’re referring to specifically, Speaker, I want to talk about, from my Focus on Finance series, “Making Up Its Own Accounting Rules,” because that’s what the Liberal government did, according to the Auditor General. She was talking about the so-called fair hydro plan. She said that she does not question the government’s policy decision—she would never do that—but her concerns are “that the planned accounting for the government’s budgets and consolidated financial statements is incorrect, and that it was known that the planned financing structure could result in significant unnecessary costs for Ontarians.”

Basically, this is what they don’t want us to be talking about. They don’t want us in here debating these bills

because we’ll be talking about things like the alleged fair hydro plan and how the Auditor General has told us that—the issue is pretty straightforward. The government reduced the hydro bills by making them lower than the actual cost, but the power generators still need to be paid, so the government is going to borrow that cash to cover the shortfall. That additional money needs to be accounted for as part of an annual deficit and in a net debt, but the government doesn’t want to do that, so they go across the street to Ontario Power Generation and make them put that on their bill. The Auditor General said, “The government did not properly account for this debt...” This is what they don’t want us talking about. The Auditor General said, “In essence, the government is making up its own accounting rules.” That’s where we are.

So when you’ve got the Premier telling you something about a balanced budget, and you’ve got the finance minister telling you about a balanced budget, and you’ve got the minister responsible for small business talking about us having the lowest small business tax rate when we don’t, and when you’ve got the minister talking about unemployment being the lowest in all time in Ontario when it’s not, you can’t believe one word that these people are telling us. You cannot believe one word that this government is saying. You can’t believe that—none of it. If they’re stooping to tell you stories about something as simple as some statistics, you can imagine the level that they will stoop to to win this next election.

That’s what we’re seeing. We’re seeing money—hard-earned tax dollars—being used for advertising. The Auditor General told us there, as well, that that is partisan advertising and it is taxpayer dollars being used to promote the Liberal—

Mr. Grant Crack: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): I recognize the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell on a point of order.

Mr. Grant Crack: I believe we’re talking about time allocation for Bill 148. I don’t know what hydro audits and the Auditor General has to do with this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Thank you, MPP for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

I return to the member from Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I am talking—as you well know—I am absolutely talking about the Auditor General, because she has called you to the carpet. You have disparaged the Auditor General far too many times. That’s why, Speaker, they don’t want us here talking about Bill 148 or any other bill. That’s why they’re imposing time allocation: because they don’t want us reminding the people of Ontario that they have insulted and disparaged the Auditor General, the Financial Accountability Officer, and anybody else who ever goes against these Liberals.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): I now invite further debate from the MPP for Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I’m happy to—no, I’m not happy to join the debate today. This isn’t really debate.

This is an exercise in dictatorship. This is the government, under its majority rule, flexing its muscles and truncating debate to the point where it's an affront to the democratic process. That is what we're under right now.

We've seen this before. We've seen it done very rarely for the right reasons. I would submit and argue that the reason you would need to expedite a bill and to time-allocate its passage through this—one of the ways that you would get me on board is if there was a state of national emergency, or a state of emergency that required this Legislature, this body, to take action to provide some service that wasn't already on the books. Something of that order, of that magnitude, I think, would compel us to stymie the democratic process. That's where you would get me on board. If people were in imminent danger and imminent harm, I would say: Let's get it done.

But for all intents and purposes, we should be maintaining the normal proceedings of this House. This is what we're charged to do. This is the responsibility that we have and the mandate that we've been given: to fully work out the nuances and the implications of the bills that are before us; not to fast-track them through for political expediency, but to actually put our minds together and to come up with some good ideas.

Specifically, in relation to this bill, I think that every good idea that we've ever had has been presented. New Democrats have proposed how to make our workplace a fairer, more just and equitable place, not only in the context of this bill but in years previous. Myself, one of my first bills, I believe the first bill that I presented as an elected member, called on the government to extend card-based certification. It called on the government to infuse first-contract arbitration for workers. These are things that make our workplace and our economy a more stable place, because we know that you're going to address systemic inequalities through levels of fairness that are built into labour rights.

We see that the government, the Liberals right now, are in a hurry for some reason. You know what we call Liberals in a hurry, right? We call them Tories. Everyone knows that. But they don't seem to be in a hurry to take care of some of the other pressing issues that we see on the doorstep of this place. We don't see them in a hurry to address the critical overcrowding in our hospitals, at a chronic level. We don't see them in a hurry to do that. We don't see them in a hurry to clean up Grassy Narrows and the mercury deposits that have been poisoning the residents and our native people there. We don't see them in a hurry to do that. We don't see them—

Mr. Randy Hillier: I think that's the government's responsibility.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, that's what I'm telling them to do.

We don't see them addressing the opioid crisis in any tangible way with the expediency that they're showing today. Our leader, Andrea Horwath, has called on this government and the Minister of Health to declare a state of emergency on the opioid crisis that is affecting and ripping through each one of our communities. You're

hearing it. You know it's happening. I know you're talking with your law enforcement professionals, and they're telling you that this stuff is ripping apart communities. But I don't see a sense of urgency on that side. There are no time allocation motions coming forward on that issue.

They're not too much in a hurry to fix the 30,000-bed shortfall, when it comes to long-term care. I do not see that as being a pressing matter that the government is concerning itself with. We've seen that list grow longer and longer each and every day, and seniors in our communities who are looking for long-term care are struggling and suffering and left without any options.

I don't see them in a hurry to fix the broken WSIB system, and as my colleague from Hamilton Mountain so eloquently explained to members of the government, you've got a process called "deeming" that makes up some fictional job out of nowhere that they think you could possibly do at some point in your life. They deem that that should be your career even though you've been broken through years of your previous working life. That doesn't make any sense. That's not a compensation system, that isn't an insurance system; it's a corporate mandate. It certainly doesn't help heal people.

Speaker, you haven't seen this government fix the \$15-billion shortfall in capital repairs and upgrades that are needed to our schools in our communities. They're not racing around the track to get that done—\$15 billion today, right now, as a shortfall. This isn't projected into the future; this is what you need to spend today, and there's no hurry on your part to do that. Yet we'll truncate this debate. You'll fast-track it. You'll time-allocate it.

What comes next? We'll see. But it is an affront to our jobs here, an affront to the system that we all are governed under and that we have the honour to represent and to the history of this place that this government thinks it can eliminate the voice of a large percentage of the people and do what it seems it feels it can do arbitrarily. I tell you, you're not going to get it right without the voices of opposition members that are presenting good ideas. You've had a track record of getting it wrong for 14 years and we certainly can't trust that it will change any time soon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I now turn for further debate to the MPP for Parry Sound—Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: It's a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak—well, I shouldn't say a pleasure, as I'm speaking to a time allocation motion.

As I start my comments, I did want to speak about what the member from Nipissing was just talking about: the fact that he was saying the reason the government is bringing in time allocation is because they don't want to talk about other things like the interesting accounting rules they're bringing in for their fair hydro plan—and I'll quote the Auditor General, with regard to the fair hydro plan: "The accounting rules being applied are actually not in accordance with Canadian PSAS." She goes

on to say that she felt it was her “responsibility to speak out when the financial information of the government is not, or will not be, presented fairly and transparently to both the Legislature and Ontarians.” I find this shocking.

The government presented a financial mid-term report yesterday. You can't believe them when they say that they have no deficit when they actually do have a deficit. It's so to the core of what a government should be doing—being honest with people—that it's absolutely shocking that they make up their own accounting rules. How can you trust any government that does that?

But back to this time allocation motion: It certainly is draconian. Amendments are due on Bill 148 by 1 p.m. tomorrow afternoon, and then you get all of three hours and they're cut off at 4 p.m. tomorrow afternoon. It goes to third reading, and as some other members have previously stated, third reading is going to be all of 10 minutes per party—30 minutes for third reading. As the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke stated, it's a guillotine motion, for sure.

1620

It's really too bad, because some of the groups who presented to committee had very good points. I want to address some of the points that were made. You had to be on the ball to even know that the committee hearings were going on. I have a constituent, Doug Nelson, who represents the Ontario Recovery Group, a heavy-duty towing association that's based in Bracebridge, Muskoka. Doug came down to present to the committee.

The towing industry's main issue is with the proposed plan for pay for being on call, and how this will affect both the consumer and the towing services industry. Of course, in the towing business, it's the nature of the business that you're on call all the time. When you go to a call, you're well paid for that call. The system works as it is. These proposed changes could really jeopardize the ability of people, especially in rural and northern Ontario, to be able to get a tow truck when you need one.

I'll quote from Mr. Nelson. These are his words. He stated:

“As I am sure everyone here understands, the towing industry is a 24/7 responder that, in fact, is classed as an emergency responder that aids motorists in distress and through a variety of unfortunate circumstances including vehicle disablements.

“The towing industry is not an industry that enjoys a scheduled workload. It is estimated that 75% to 80% of our work is the result of vehicle disablements, which can happen any time.

“Over the last several years, the towing industry has experienced unprecedented increases in the cost of doing business: fuel, labour, licence plates, insurance and a whopping 35% increase in the cost of the trucks. Coupled with regulatory changes made over the last few years under Bill 15, the cost of operations has reached new heights.

“All of this has increased the strain on many tow operators, and many are reconsidering their future in this industry. Many have already hung up their keys. We have

witnessed a 20% to 25% reduction in the number of registered tow companies in Ontario since 2014....

“What we are seeing now, at greater cost to the consumer, is tow trucks travelling further than ever before to service the consumer, which in itself increases the end cost to the consumer due to mileage charges. Being from rural Ontario, I truly worry about the elderly and/or young people with young children, broken down on the side of the road during inclement weather.

“Moving on, the towing industry currently pays an employee at least time-and-a-half and even higher premium pay for after-hour call-outs. Seldom is the consumer ever charged a premium price for this service....

“The changes to on-call pay, as proposed within Bill 148, will drastically change the way in which the towing industry must do business and likely many other industries as well. Many of our rural members operate garages and clearly provide towing services on a 24/7 basis as a convenience to their customers. This business model will surely disappear with the burden of on-call expenses.

“One light-duty on-call driver will cost over \$26,000 per year. One heavy-duty driver on call will cost an additional \$45,000 per year. It is not unusual for 10, 12 or more people to be on call for heavy-duty towing companies due to the manpower requirements of transport collisions. Keeping these people on call for the occasional occurrence will be financially impossible without major rate changes.

“In the end, the majority of tow companies will have only a few options: (1) unbearable price increases for after-hours services; (2) major price increases for all services; (3) withdrawing after-hour services; or (4) withdrawing from the industry altogether.

“This will likely be the case for many other 24/7 service providers.

“We sincerely request that this committee reconsider the impact this will have on consumers, including the availability and pricing of emergency services, and exempt the towing industry and other emergency service providers from additional on-call expenses.”

That's the end of the comments from Mr. Nelson. I want to say that the member from Trinity–Spadina at committee showed real interest in Mr. Nelson's presentation. He said that he learned a lot about the towing industry and would take his concerns back to the minister to see what could be done to address them. I hope the member did speak to the minister and the minister listened, and I guess we'll find out when we see the government's amendments.

The changes that this legislation, as it stands, would bring to the towing industry will have a disproportionate impact on rural and northern Ontario where tow operators get fewer overnight calls.

In response to one of my questions, Mr. Nelson told the committee, “In rural Ontario, I really worry about people who break down. Right now, in Thunder Bay, the average tow call is 200 kilometres.” That's the reality of northern Ontario. You have huge distances, and it's just very, very different than southern Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, how would you feel if your son or daughter had to wait hours for a tow on a cold, snowy winter night because there are no tow operators offering overnight services in your area? What does this government think will happen if we drive tow operators out of business? Do they think there will be no more accidents? Obviously, that won't be the case. There will be accidents and the people involved will have to wait longer for a tow truck, and everyone else trying to use the road will have to wait.

For people who live in urban centres, a road closure because of an accident can be a huge inconvenience, but there are other roads they can use to get where they're going. It might take longer, but they will get where they are going. But in northern Ontario, where there's sometimes only one road going where you need to go, one accident can strand people and stop all traffic. As an example, if there's an accident on the Trans-Canada Highway between Kenora and the Manitoba border, no traffic will get through. This wouldn't be as big a problem if the government had kept their promise and twinned Highway 17, but it hasn't. The latest estimate for when that will be done is 2021.

While this wasn't a motor vehicle accident, we saw just how badly a road closure can paralyze northern Ontario when the Nipigon bridge was closed in January 2016. An accident could have the same impact if there aren't local tow trucks offering 24/7 services.

In the second reading debate, I spoke about the impact on employers and jobs in Parry Sound–Muskoka. In my last 40 seconds—I've got more that I'd like to say but limited time—I would like to talk about the effect on people that won't see the increase from increased wages but will see the increased costs. A senior on a fixed income is going to have to pay more for pretty much everything. Parry Sound is home to many seniors and other people living on fixed incomes. I've heard from some who are worried about how they're going to keep paying their bills. They're already paying so much more to heat their homes and keep the lights on, and now they're going to have to pay more for bread, milk, gas and for their cars.

I can see I'm out of time, Mr. Speaker, so I will end now.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'm happy to get up and throw in a few minutes to the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, Bill 148. I'm going to have a lot of time tomorrow to talk about it in clause-by-clause.

Some of the members here today have talked about the little bit of time we're going to have to debate the bill at the end of the day: 30 minutes divided between three parties. I was trying to do the math on that, Speaker, and it's like 0.4 of a second of the 1,500 presentations that have come forward on Bill 148, either verbally or in written form. So it is not really very much time to talk about all of the people and all of the issues that came forward over the last 18 months of this Changing Workplaces Review.

I want to spend my time talking about the fact that the government has done nothing at this point to deal with the issue of deeming. There are workers in this province who are getting partial compensation benefits from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. Maybe they're getting \$200 a month, \$300 a month, based on a minimum wage of \$11.40 an hour, or perhaps less if they happened to be a student or a liquor server when they were injured. Those folks, when the minimum wage goes to \$14 an hour and then \$15 an hour, if the government does nothing to change the policy at the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, those workers are going to see zero benefits from compensation. That is very problematic for the hundreds and thousands of injured workers who are out there.

1630

We asked the government to deal with that at second reading. They refused to deal with it. We had multiple presentations from injured workers' groups talking about what the impact of that is going to be. It is a simple policy change that compensation could deal with for this specific area. They could really get rid of deeming altogether, because for the most part, those injured workers do not have a job. They are phantom, pretend jobs for the purpose of reducing the amount of benefits that the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board has to pay.

Flowing into that, I wanted to talk about the GE Peterborough workers. We talked about them a couple of times in the House in the last month or two. This week I got a letter from a fellow by the name of Aaron Lazarus, vice-president of communications and intergovernmental affairs at WSIB—I guess a spin doctor of sorts for WSIB; a vice-president, probably making lots of money—commenting on my comments on the GE workers in the Legislature, correcting some of the stats, perhaps, that I got wrong and specifically setting out that they're doing their best to support these workers.

I can tell you that the workers don't feel supported, Speaker. In fact, there are hundreds of files. There is a four-decade history of 3,000 toxins that were in this GE factory. There are hundreds and hundreds of workers. Not only the workers but their families have been exposed to these toxins by washing their spouse's clothing, and their children may have been impacted by being around whoever the parent was that was working in the factory. In some cases, both parents were working in the factory.

At this point in time, OHCOW has reviewed hundreds of files—800 files, to be exact—without any new funding from the government or from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board since 2003. This review has been in the works for as long as the Liberal government has been in power. They promised money; the Ministry of Labour promised money. They promised OHCOW money so that they could go and do some more in-depth review of some of the files that were denied. To date, they haven't received that money.

Right now, we know that there are 250 cases in the hopper that we are all aware of—no new funding for

that—and 74 new cases that came out of the woodwork in the spring, when the Minister of Labour hosted some town hall meetings in Peterborough. There are 74 new cases. Then there are another 30 new cases that are not even in the system.

The government and WSIB have been ignoring this group of workers for years. Many of these workers have died; many of them have had multiple forms of cancer.

The burden has been placed on the workers, not on the employer, not on GE, who has been in the news as well in this last week about their financial problems. It has been on the workers to provide more and more medical information, even though all of that medical information has been readily available.

Speaker, it boils down to an actuary, one of those insurance guys who figures out the money—“How many of these cases can we pay out at the end of the day without going broke?”—regardless of whether somebody has lost their life or lost their health, deciding the fate of these GE workers in Peterborough who have industrial disease, cancers, or their wives or partners or family members who have contracted those industrial cancers as well.

There is an abundance of proof already, scientific proof, on the cancer clusters. It is available, and I don't know why they're making these workers—these other 300 or so workers that we know of—jump through those hoops.

Just recently, they reviewed 16 cases. They denied six and they approved 10. If all of these workers—this Mr. Lazarus was in the newspaper, and he said that 80% of the cases over the years have been approved. Well, if 80% have been approved, then, you know what? They should just move to the fact that this is presumptive. For anybody who worked in this factory in Peterborough who gets cancer or gets some other industrial disease, it should be presumptive. They should get benefits. That should be the end of it there.

As I say, Mr. Lazarus says in his letter that there are doctors and there are certified industrial hygienists reviewing the exposure. Well, there are lots of those people around. They are on the employment rolls of WSIB. They're certified industrial hygienists. They're all available to get this right for the workers.

There has been no proper compensation to these 350 or 400 GE workers, their families and kids. There has been a monstrous bar set up by WSIB and ignored by the Liberal government for more than 14 years.

There was an article in the newspaper in October, and here's the Minister of Labour saying, “‘If you look at the history of this, you've got a population of people that worked at GE that were exposed to chemicals in a way they simply should not have been,’ ... Flynn told the Star....

“‘They were let down by the health and safety associations that were supposed to help them, by the clinics that were supposed to help them, by their own trade union, by their employer and perhaps by the WSIB at the time.’”

What about the government? This government has been in power since 2003, Speaker. This review has been

going on since 2003. I think the Liberal government let down these workers.

Speaker, you've been involved in the steel industry. You've been involved in lots of occupational health and safety issues in your years. This is about legacy funding, at the end of the day. These factories, for the most part—with the exception of perhaps in Hamilton, US Steel and ArcelorMittal Dofasco—these factories do not exist anymore. In Ontario, we have some chemical factories down in the Sarnia area that we've been talking about recently.

This is a legacy funding issue. Manufacturing, for the most part, is gone in Ontario—heavy metal manufacturing. We, as politicians making decisions—we will not see the magnitude of these issues, where we have hundreds and thousands of people exposed to toxic chemicals and experiencing all kinds of cancers in their lifetime.

I think this was a complete ignorance of the government in both legislating, monitoring and ordering concrete changes to workplaces to prevent industrial diseases. The myriad of cancers that people have experienced have devastated thousands of families at GE Peterborough but really across this province—not just at GE. To date, there is no money for this process.

Back in the spring, the Minister of Labour, when he was speaking at these town hall meetings in Peterborough—I think he was there, and I think the Minister of Agriculture or minister of—anyway, Mr. Leal was there as well. They were there, and at that point they asked OHCOW to put forward a proposal: “How much money do you need to go back and review and assist these 250 people?”, plus the 75 new cases that were identified during those town hall meetings. OHCOW told them that they needed \$2 million. Then the Ministry of Labour said to them, “Well, we're only going to give you \$1 million.”

That was months and months and months ago. We now are here in November, almost at the end of the year, almost at the end of 14 years of Liberal reign, and OHCOW still does not have the money to hire three staff people and a physician to go and look at those cases before those people who have those cases are no longer with us.

I think the government needs to do the right thing. They need to make sure that these workers have their cases reviewed. They need to make sure that every worker at that GE plant in Peterborough who has cancer is presumed to have gotten cancer there, because there have been hundreds of cases already approved. At the end of the day, they need to put the industrial incidences at GE Peterborough to bed, and actually support the families and workers who gave so much to GE and to their community over the years.

I thank you for the opportunity.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Time allocation? I question why. What is the government trying to hide? I have some

serious concerns about that. The only thing I can rationalize is simply this: It's a tired government that just can't wait for change. Well, I've got good news, Speaker: Change is coming. It's in the form of an election on June 7.

In Bill 148, the government proposes to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2019, and this worries me. Why? Because my office has been inundated with calls from worried business owners and worried employees. Don't get me wrong; life has, in fact, become much less affordable under the present government, so I'm all for higher wages. Wages should never be allowed to stagnate. There is a need for the minimum wage to increase, but a 32% increase in only 18 months is much, much too soon—too fast, too soon—and here's why: If the minimum wage goes up by 32% in 18 months, that will be a massive burden on businesses. Many will not be able to afford it, especially small businesses. They'll have to stop hiring, and they may reduce work hours and lay off employees. Anyone thinking of starting a business may think twice about the rapidly escalating costs over the next two years.

I heard this over the summer while I attended a committee hearing in Windsor on Bill 148. I heard that small and medium-sized businesses employ 87% of the Ontario workforce—that's just under four million people. Those employees and bosses are the backbone of our economy. I also heard that many businesses will have to raise their prices to offset increased costs. Higher prices also have other unintended consequences: Ontarians with low or fixed incomes may suddenly find their grocery bills becoming less affordable.

For example, a very concerned entrepreneur by the name of Catherine Wood got in touch with me. She has been running a spa for about 30 years. She told me that a 32% increase in the minimum wage over 18 months will be more than double what she makes in profit. In other words, she can't afford it and it will probably put her out of business. Catherine recommended slowing down the increase over three or four years and topping it off at \$14. This way, employers can raise their prices moderately, maintain their market share and change their business models gradually, without drastic layoffs.

Other small business owners also reported that the more they pay in wages, the more they pay in taxes. Higher wages mean higher payments to the Canada Pension Plan, the Employer Health Tax and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, and higher payroll taxes all around. These added costs mean more money off a business's bottom line—less in your pocket and more for the government.

One of the government's main tasks should be making it easier to work and making it easier for businesses to employ people. We need regulations and payroll taxes to be reasonable and manageable. We need to let common sense inform good policy. On this side of the House, we understand that a heavy regulatory burden makes it harder to do business and harder to employ people. When changes are sudden and dictated by an out-of-touch government, the problem is even harder to deal with.

What was also concerning in that hearing that I attended in Windsor was that it became obvious that the government's limited consultation process of a mere two weeks was not enough to hear from all relevant stakeholders. In addition, the government has ignored our requests for a cost-benefit analysis of their proposal to raise the minimum wage. Why is this? What is the government afraid of? Could it be that they know that the experts would condemn their plan?

By contrast, a group who recently completed a study, the Keep Ontario Working Coalition, reported that up to 185,000 Ontario jobs will be put at risk in the first two years because of new upcoming Wynne Liberal labour reforms. The study also found that Ontario's most vulnerable workers will in fact be most affected. Similar studies were done by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Toronto-Dominion Bank, and they both reached the same conclusions.

The government wants you to believe that businesses are coming into Ontario but, Speaker, all I see are tail lights. The number of jobs we've lost or shipped overseas is astonishing. A recent study showed that the Green Energy Act destroyed 75,000 industrial jobs in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also relate to you some information. I had a meeting with the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario. They came to me because I am in fact the PC critic for tourism, culture and sport. Here are some interesting statistics that they related to me. They said that Ontario's tourism industry is comprised of 180,000 businesses, which employ some 372,000 valuable workers. Now get this: Of these, approximately 1,709 tourism businesses and almost 8,700 jobs are located within my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex. A substantial number of these businesses are small and medium-sized, with less than 20 employees.

As business owners, tourism industry operators are proud of their contributions to the provincial economy. They help to generate \$30 billion in tourism receipts each year, which in turn provides more than \$12 billion in tax revenue for Ontario.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Members are a little loud while your member is speaking. If you guys would like to have a chat, you can take it outside.

Continue.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It's interesting: These contributions will be significantly impacted if businesses are not given sufficient time to implement changes proposed by Bill 148, and Ontario's tourism industry will become less competitive as a result. Bill 148 contains drastic changes that will have a negative financial and administrative impact on tourism businesses. They carry the unintended consequences of hurting the very people the proposed changes are purporting to help.

I mentioned this earlier but it's worth mentioning again: The Keep Ontario Working Coalition, of which the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario is a part, has

commissioned the only economic impact analysis outlining potential consequences for business caused by Bill 148. Conducted by the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis, CANCEA, the report asserts that the bill will:

- (1) cost Ontario businesses \$23 billion over the next two years;
- (2) put 185,000 jobs at risk;
- (3) affect small businesses five times more than larger businesses; and
- (4) raise consumer prices, on average, 0.7%.

TIAO, the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, expects that the government should have a balanced approach to policy that considers the impact on all stakeholders, employees and, in fact, business owners. Businesses need time to adjust internal operations and policies for legislative changes.

I would also like to read something else as well. When we talk about the impact it is going to have, OMA's legal services and health policy and promotion have reviewed the legislation and the following provisions have been identified as affecting Ontario doctors, both as physicians as well as employers.

They talk about how the minimum wage will in fact be increased to \$14 on January 1—that's in about a month and a half—and then up to \$15 an hour by January 1, 2019. Of course, this is going to affect part-time, casual and temporary employees. They'll be paid the same as full-time employees when performing the job, with exceptions due to seniority.

Speaker, I remember back when I was in Windsor. There was a presentation given by a member of a bargaining unit. I asked him very specifically, "Currently, when you negotiated your contract with your company"—and there were three companies that they were involved with—"what would be the starting wage? Would it be fair to say \$17 an hour?"

He said, "Yes, that would be fair."

I said, "So probably, when you negotiated that, it was somewhere between \$10 and currently maybe \$11.45 an hour. Let's round it to 11 bucks an hour. So the difference is \$6 between the minimum wage at the time and your starting wage negotiated." He said, "That's fair."

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"But now if the wage suddenly jumps from \$11 to \$15 an hour"—that's a \$4 jump from what it was had he first started negotiating to what the government is proposing—"what's your starting rate going to be when you go back in to negotiate? Is that going to jump up another \$4 so you can keep the spread from \$11 to \$17?"

You may smile at that, Speaker. I understand that, because you're a solid union guy. I respect that. I'm not saying that I'm not. My point is, what impact will that have on businesses when all of a sudden starting wages go from \$17 up to \$21? I talked earlier about tail lights. That's exactly what we're going to see. There will be job layoffs, or that company will in fact shut down and move south.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering if the government would be able to get up and speak to the justification for time allocation, so I was playing a game of chicken here in the House.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: You win.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Well, the people don't win; that's for sure.

It's interesting: I just had a group of students from Pathways to Education K-W, and they sat in on a meeting with me with the Police Association of Ontario. I was explaining this place to them. Even as I tried to explain it, obviously much of it didn't make any sense.

How does any government of any stripe, Mr. Speaker, justify hearing from 1,500 people about Bill 148 and then giving the respective opposition parties 10 minutes to debate that and the amendments included? How is that justifiable in a democracy, having just celebrated Remembrance Day and remembered the sacrifices that people have made to ensure that we have this right, as legislators, to be in this House and to speak freely on behalf of the citizens whom we represent, come to this place and bring their voices to this place and bring their concerns and, sometimes, even their support?

But to give us 10 minutes and then time-allocate a piece of legislation like Bill 148 when there are so many issues contained within this bill that have not been resolved? I have to tell you, it doesn't make any sense.

The Pathways students were in this lobbying meeting with the PAO. It went really well. They asked amazing questions. It was a hopeful moment for me, as an MPP. They didn't understand the rent-a-cop perspective of the government with Bill 175. They didn't understand why police officers wouldn't have basic charter rights as employees in the province of Ontario. They asked really good questions about that.

Then they asked about minimum wage. Obviously, as future students moving out into the workforce, they're very interested in this concept. I couldn't explain the PCs' position of slowing it down when we've waited so long for a just move towards increasing the minimum wage. I couldn't explain the PCs; sometimes, they can't explain their own position on this piece.

But I did mention, though, that our member from Welland brought in the Fairness in Minimum Wage Act, and the government voted against it and the PC Party voted against it. They said, "Well, what does this mean?" I said, "It means that if you're a student waitress and you're working in a restaurant"—say, the Red Lobster; a good restaurant, as you know, Mr. Speaker—"and then there's another waitress who happens to not be a student working right alongside you, she's going to get \$15 an hour—or he—and you're going to make much less. You're going to make \$12."

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's \$11.40 right now.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's \$11.40.

They said, "Well, that's not right." I said, "You're right to say that that's not right." It was not right for this government to not support equal pay for equal work for students in the province of Ontario. That was not right.

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's a \$1.85-an-hour difference.

Ms. Catherine Fife: That's a big difference for students.

Of course, the PC Party said, "Well, these minimum wage jobs are not supposed to be real jobs." Well, welcome to Ontario, my friends. Minimum wage jobs are the reality for one third of the people in this province. They need to be making a liveable wage, so when they work full-time they don't have to go to the food bank at the end of the month.

Now, the issue about Bill 148 that has really still not been resolved, a really missed opportunity for this Liberal government—not the first missed opportunity—is the issue of temporary workers still being left behind in Bill 148. While time allocation is an affront to our democracy, and it undermines the very work that we are all supposed to be doing in this place, I do want—with the attention of the Speaker—to raise the issue of this article that was done by the *Toronto Star*: "Undercover in Temp Nation," by Sara Mojtehdzadeh. She covered the issue of temporary workers in the province of Ontario. She raised this issue because this young woman named Amina Diaby died last year in an accident inside one of the GTA's largest industrial bakeries, where the company says worker safety is its highest concern.

This 23-year-old was one of the thousands of Ontarians who have had to turn to temporary employment agencies to find jobs that often come with low pay and little training for sometimes dangerous work.

I want to be respectful of this story. This was a young woman who went into this factory, Fiera Foods. I want to tell you that Fiera Foods received money from this government to create jobs, but does Fiera Foods employ full-time employees, direct employees? No, they go through the back door and they use the temp agencies, where the temp agencies—they don't even actually go to a temp agency. It's a hire-for-cash.

This young woman received so little training, as did the temp worker who came—

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm talking about a woman who died in the factory, if you don't mind.

She got five minutes of training, Mr. Speaker—five minutes. Her hijab got caught in the factory machinery and she strangled to death. She was 23 years old, and she was planning on being a nurse. She had been on the job for two weeks, and she was hired through a temp agency.

Did this government improve the state of temp workers in the province of Ontario? They did not. Did they use this legislation to ensure that our most marginalized and most vulnerable workers in this province are protected with legislation? They did not. When we brought forward an amendment which said that the temp workers in any workplace would not be above 20%, did this government support that amendment? No, they did not. Did they say that a temp worker could be a temp worker for longer than three months? They did—three months, Mr. Speaker. If you're a temp worker for more than three months, you should be a full-time worker with rights in

the province of Ontario. And the employer should have responsibility. If a worker gets injured in the workplace, they should be responsible. They should be held responsible.

To the 1,500 people who came to the committee and raised concerns—and one of these workers I won't forget, because when I sat on committee, this fellow came before us. He had three part-time jobs. He was challenged by the PC Party in the committee, because they said, "Well, if we change the minimum wage, aren't you afraid that you're going to lose one of those part-time jobs?" You know what that worker said to all of us? He said to the entire committee, "You know what? I deserve to live with dignity and work with dignity and have integrity as a worker in the province of Ontario."

You have an opportunity to do that. The Liberal government, under the leadership of Kathleen Wynne, had the opportunity to do that with this legislation, and you did not. And then to time-allocate it and to limit our powers as legislators to make this legislation stronger truly is a betrayal of the people that we are elected to work for. We are not here for ourselves. We are here for the people who elected us, Mr. Speaker.

The new reality for workers in the province of Ontario is this part-time, precarious contract work, where they have no rights.

Just this morning, we asked a question of the Tibetan workers who are down at the food terminal, who have received millions of dollars from this government. They are trying to get a first contract. These are Tibetans; these are new refugees. They are new immigrants. They are doing unsafe work; they are doing work which is dangerous. They are trying to have some basic human rights as workers in a factory right down the street. And what does this government do? It does not give them even a fighting chance to be a safe, well-respected worker in the province of Ontario. Did you have that opportunity to do so with Bill 148? Yes, you did. Did you take that opportunity? You did not.

1700

Mr. Speaker, for them to time-allocate is truly a slap in the face to everybody who came to the committee, and this includes businesses from across the province, because they're still trying to figure out where this government is going with the economy in Ontario.

We have so much evidence. The Ministry of Labour knows, because you heard first-hand—it's in your own report—that temporary workers are vulnerable workers in the province of Ontario. For you not to even speak to this time allocation, for you not to accept the amendments that came in good faith from the NDP and to turn your backs not only on us as your colleagues in this House but on behalf of the people we all represent is truly the most partisan politics I've seen in this place. It denies the people of this province their voice—

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

Further debate?

Mr. Mike Colle: Just to give a bit of background here: As you know, Mr. Speaker, in 2014, the govern-

ment undertook a comprehensive consultation process with business groups, labour groups and unions in the Changing Workplaces Review. That took two years of face-to-face consultation. There were hundreds and hundreds of very good suggestions in that consultation over two years. Then, eventually, out of those consultations, the government decided to go forward with this legislation, which is critically important because, in some cases, the Labour Relations Act and the Employment Standards Act haven't been updated in 20 years, so there's an urgency to do something. Some people like to talk about it, but we want to make sure that these changes, which are long overdue, proceed. That's why we're moving expeditiously on this legislation.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, you were involved in some of the hearings where we went to Hamilton; we went to Niagara Falls; we went to North Bay and Thunder Bay to listen to people. We heard a lot of good suggestions from people who are for it or against it, and we've come up with this legislation, with amendments.

But ultimately, the thing is, there are critically important changes that are long overdue, because the workplace has changed. We have more temporary workers, more contract workers—

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Colle: —so we need to recognize the changing—

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Colle: I know the NDP don't believe that, but there is a change in the workplace. So we can't—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. Okay, folks. There seems to be a lot of cross-action across the floor, and that will not be tolerated. At least give the member a chance to say his piece. Thank you.

Mr. Mike Colle: I appreciate the opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the legislation not only deals with the minimum wage, which, we've argued, is long overdue, to give people—as you know, people who want to work. These are people who want to work. Many of them work two, three jobs and can't make ends meet. We want to help people who want to work. They're saying, "Give us a living wage." That is what this legislation is all about. So not only is a living wage part of this—which some people at committee said should be even higher. We're coming with a living wage of \$15, eventually.

On top of that, there are many critical changes in workplace protections that are sometimes overlooked. For instance, there's now more required notice for scheduling changes, which there wasn't before. There are now two paid sick days, which didn't exist. Three weeks' vacation after five years—that's not too much to ask, three weeks after five years; that's a change here. And equal pay for equal work: We heard about that—people working the same job; the one who's full-time gets paid 25 bucks and the part-time person gets paid 13 bucks. That has got to stop, and this legislation addresses that.

Also, there is increased child death leave. There is pregnancy leave for women who lose their pregnancy or their child. There is a separate domestic violence leave. There is also the hiring of 175 employment standards officers because you need people in the field to enforce these laws. There are increased fines for employers who break the rules, greater access to information for those who want to form a union, and they are ensuring that there is card-based certification. For the first time in many years, temporary health workers will be able to organize—card-based certification for temporary health workers. There is also card-based certification for home care and community workers, which is a good thing, and for building service employees—the cleaners, basically, and other maintenance people. That's what this bill does.

Not only does it try to increase the minimum wage dealing with income inequality which is growing in Canada, North America and Ontario; it tries to ensure that workers who do work in this new reality get protection. That's what this bill is all about. There is an urgency to do something. We've been at this since 2014. So what the government is saying and what people who believe in change to help our working poor are saying is, "Get on with it; we're waiting." They've been waiting for two or three years for these changes to come about. Not like the Conservatives who want to delay this another six years—let's help these people who want to work now.

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

Seeing none, Ms. Jacek has moved government of notice motion 39 relating to the allocation of time on Bill 148, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and to make related amendments to other Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a "no."

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

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I believe we have a deferral. This will be voted on tomorrow morning at the end of question period.

Vote deferred.

CANNABIS, SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO
AND ROAD SAFETY STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE CANNABIS,
L'ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE
ET LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 2, 2017, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 174, An Act to enact the Cannabis Act, 2017, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act, 2017 and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, to repeal two Acts and to

make amendments to the Highway Traffic Act respecting alcohol, drugs and other matters / *Projet de loi 174, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur le cannabis, la Loi de 2017 sur la Société ontarienne de vente du cannabis et la Loi de 2017 favorisant un Ontario sans fumée, abrogeant deux lois et modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne l'alcool, les drogues et d'autres questions.*

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's telling that we're debating Bill 174 today just after a time allocation motion was debated. I think there are things that are in common between those two. Time allocation is an abuse of the parliamentary process. What the Liberal government is doing with Bill 174 is more than just an abuse of the parliamentary process; it is offensive to the parliamentary process.

Speaker, we heard the Clerk read out the title to this bill, but let me read it out again: An Act to enact the Cannabis Act, 2017—that, on its own, is enough for one bill; the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act, 2017—that's enough for a second bill; the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017—enough for another bill; and to repeal two Acts and to make amendments to the Highway Traffic Act respecting alcohol, drugs and other matters. What are the other matters? A whole load: everything from school buses and automated cameras to distracted driving—a whole host of other matters.

1710

If this government was sincere, if they were genuine, they would never have tabled this bill in this fashion; they would have introduced at least three and probably four different bills.

Speaker, just before I make my argument about how this Liberal government is being offensive to the institution of this Legislative Assembly and, indeed, to our representative democracy, on Tuesday of this week, I introduced a motion on behalf the PC Party. It was our first available time to introduce a motion respecting Bill 174 due to the break week for Remembrance Day. This is the motion we tabled: "That, in the opinion of this House, the government should separate Bill 174, Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017 and reintroduce the legislation as three distinct pieces of legislation as follows: i) the Cannabis Act, 2017 (schedule 1) and the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act, 2017 (schedule 2), ii) Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017 (schedule 3)" and amendments to all those other matters that are included in Bill 174.

Speaker, I want speak about the process and procedures a little bit. I also want to give proof points of the unrelated matters that this government is trying to encapsulate into a singular bill and why that is wrong, why it is offensive and why it frustrates the very purpose of this assembly.

I also want to speak briefly about the numerous contradictions within this bill—there is no shortage of contradictions—and, of course, also speak to the solution I just talked about in the motion by the PC Party.

Let's just start here with a little context. We have a federal government that is in the process of legalizing the consumption of cannabis and the sale and distribution of cannabis. The Ontario government needs to bring in some legislation with regard to that transformation undertaken by the federal government, but they have a duty to the people of Ontario. They should have a duty to their own conscience to do it honestly and with sincerity and respect our conventions and our procedures. They are not doing that.

Let me give by way of example what the province of New Brunswick is doing. This week, they tabled three separate cannabis bills in the New Brunswick Legislature: one for the retail corporation, one for making it lawful—the cannabis use and the framework around that—as well as a bill for the education and awareness of cannabis in New Brunswick. Now, that's an important—I want to emphasize that: They have a separate bill for education and awareness. Bill 174, even though it's an omnibus bill and covers school bus cameras, does not have any elements for education or awareness in it—zero. There is a complete absence of duty by this government with respect to taking responsibility to assist, facilitate and help to improve education and awareness.

New Brunswick also introduced two other bills for their amendments to the highway traffic act. The legislators in New Brunswick, properly so, debate each singular aspect, the way it is meant to be.

Speaker, we've seen the same thing with Alberta. We understand that Alberta has introduced their highway traffic act amendments and will be rolling out subsequent bills for the retail distribution model that Alberta is going with.

Just last week, there was a Speaker's ruling in the federal House of Commons. The Liberal government in Ottawa had attempted to drive another omnibus bill through, but the standing orders in the House of Commons permit the Speaker to divide the bill for votes, and that's what the Speaker has done in Ottawa. They're going to have five separate votes on that omnibus bill. That's a needed change here, I believe.

But instead of just changing the standing orders or empowering the Speaker to do it, more importantly, the government has a duty to do things in a sincere way and not in a sneaky, underhanded way—which is what is happening with Bill 174. It's sneaky and underhanded.

Let me just talk briefly about the contradictions in this bill. The federal government, again, has created the legal framework for the recreational use of cannabis. I'm in favour of that. I think most people in the province—maybe most people in this assembly—are in favour. Maybe there are others who are not. However, the federal government has made it legal. This government, with Bill 174, is at the same time putting undue restrictions and prohibitions on the less harmful means to ingest that legal cannabis. Under schedule 3 of this bill, this government is imposing significant restrictions that prevent legal, recreational or medical use of cannabis from being ingested in a less harmful way. It flies in the face of everything that we know that a fair and just society ought

to do. We ought to be assisting and helping in harm reduction, not making it unlawful, but that's what this government is doing. The feds in Ottawa are making it legal; the Liberal government here in Toronto, Ontario, is making it so that you must take it in the most harmful way that you can. Speaker, I find that bordering on criminal—that sort of action where they're saying, "You must take this in the most harmful fashion." People's health, their security of the person, their lives, are important, and this government ought to be facilitating, not restricting. I said it is offensive. It is bordering on the criminal to put people's health, safety and security in jeopardy.

Mr. Han Dong: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order, the member from Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you, Speaker. I've been listening to the opposition member's debate, and I think his choice of words is really questionable and bordering against the rules of this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. What I'm going to do is take a five-minute break and discuss it with the Clerks' table because I've never had that one come up. We'll take a five-minute break.

The House recessed from 1720 to 1727.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. In my opinion, the member has been using inflammatory language which should not be necessary, as a good debater, to get his point across. Temperance of language is the hallmark of good debate. I ask the member to withdraw and continue his remarks with this in mind.

Continue.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker. I absolutely concur with—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You have to withdraw.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Pardon me. I withdraw. I should have withdrawn before I commented on my agreement. But I do fully understand that those are hallmarks of a good debate, Speaker.

I do find Bill 174 pushing everybody's envelope because it's pushing procedures so far here, pushing procedures to an extent that I have not seen before, and I would suggest to everyone in the House that nobody has seen such a blatant disregard for procedure in this House. Even the 10 minutes of debate that are going to be allotted for the transformational Bill 148 on third reading—that is still not as blatant as this is: school bus safety, children's safety on a school bus, included with a bill to create a cannabis retail corporation.

I ask you, Speaker, and I ask every member of the House: What does school bus safety and cameras on school buses—what relationship does that have with creating a cannabis retail corporation? I would like somebody on the other side of the House to answer that question for me, for everybody else and for every individual in this province. I know an answer is warranted. It is justified, Speaker, that the government be sincere and tell us their motivation and their justification for that. I'll go on to that more in detail.

I was speaking about the contradictions in this bill. Again, I think the contradictions are maybe a function of this government trying to do things they ought not to do with the inclusion of so many unrelated elements in the bill. Let me read a couple of clauses out of the bill, and I'll again ask the members opposite if they could respond.

It's under schedule 4 of the bill. Schedule 4 is amendments to the Highway Traffic Act respecting alcohol, drugs and other matters. Under subsection 48.0.3(7), "Where a police officer is satisfied"—oh, and the heading—pardon me; wrong page. This is subsection 48.0.4(6): "Licence surrendered—commercial vehicle drivers." The heading for the subsection is "Exception": "Where a police officer is satisfied that a person driving or having the care, charge or control of a commercial motor vehicle is legally authorized to use ... drugs for medical purposes, and has that drug or drugs in his or her body, as indicated by approved drug screening equipment," the officer shall not request that the driver surrender his or her driver's licence. That statement says that if you are a medical user of cannabis and the police have found that you have a drug or drugs in your body, your licence will not be suspended. That's under commercial vehicles.

Just for everybody's edification, a commercial vehicle is a pickup truck or anything larger, anything that has a black and white plate on it. So it wouldn't apply to a passenger vehicle but it would apply to my pickup truck or John's pickup truck, a highway tractor or anything in between.

That's what it states under subsection 48.0.4(6).

Subsection 48.2.2(4) says, "Where a driver of a commercial motor vehicle fails or refuses to provide a sample of breath or provides a sample of breath under section 48 which on analysis registers 'warn,' 'alert' or 'presence of alcohol' or otherwise indicates that the driver has alcohol in his or her body, the police officer may request that the driver surrender" their driver's licence.

I see that as a bit of a contradiction, Speaker, and I would like this government to explain to the people of Ontario why someone driving a pickup truck who has a detectable presence of alcohol may have their driver's licence suspended, but if you have drugs in your body, you don't.

I think it's important that our roads are safe. I think we all agree that our roads ought to be safe and that impaired drivers, whether they're impaired from drugs or whether they're impaired from alcohol, should not be on our roads. I hope we all agree on that principle, that statement, but this bill says no. The police may suspend the licence of someone who has a detectable presence of alcohol, but cannot suspend a driver's licence if you have a drug or drugs in your body and you are a medical user of cannabis. That needs to be explained. I think it's important.

There are other contradictions as we go through this bill, Speaker; I'm just putting out some of the glaring ones.

I should also speak a little bit back to the process, when I said this government brought in all these disparate subjects under a single bill. I had two technical briefings

with the cannabis secretariat of the Ministry of the Attorney General—two—one substantially before the bill was introduced and one shortly thereafter. At no time did the policy staff of the cannabis secretariat ever indicate to me that this bill was going to have anything other than cannabis in it. They did not bring policy staff from the Ministry of Health. They did not bring policy staff from the Ministry of Transportation. It was just from the Attorney General's secretariat.

I find that strange, Speaker, that a technical briefing—again, that is to provide opposition members a more detailed understanding of the legislation. It's not meant to be some sort of partisan activity; it's meant to respect the conventions of this institution. But they wilfully, purposely did not bring technical staff from the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Transportation.

When I did finally meet with the Ministry of Transportation's policy staff, they were wholly unprepared, and their knowledge of the bill less than what I expected. Clearly they're not sure what all is in this bill. They're not clear on all of the contradictions in the bill. They didn't even know how to define what a commercial vehicle was, which they're legislating. It's astonishing that this level of—what's the right parliamentary word that I can use? I may have to withdraw. The deviousness, the underhandedness of doing that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You'll have to withdraw the second one, thank you.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw, Speaker.

Again, Speaker, it is difficult to remain within the confines of parliamentary language when we see such an abuse of parliamentary process with Bill 174. Dearly, we need a mechanism that not just unparliamentary language be withdrawn, but bills disrespectful of parliamentary process ought to be withdrawn. They need to withdraw such an offensive piece of legislation.

Again, I'm going to be listening for comment from the government on some of these contradictions. I'm looking for justification, if they can provide it, as to why school bus safety is involved with the creation of a new cannabis retail corporation. That's beyond any objective process with Parliament.

1740

I also want to just lay out a few things, a few of the comments that I've received, Speaker, from people who use vapes for harm reduction to either lessen the harm from tobacco or lessen the harm by ingesting cannabis through the use of an electronic vaporizer—because those people are impacted powerfully by Bill 174. This government is turning those people who want to improve their lives, improve their health and quit smoking—they are turning these people into pariahs. If you want to lessen the harm of your addiction, stay inside the closet in your house and don't allow anybody to see what you're doing to reduce your addiction, because you can't do it out in public—nowhere. Nowhere in public will you be permitted to use a harm reduction device.

So let me just read a couple, just to give the members opposite some opportunity to understand just what they're doing. Oh, and I should mention that we had a

press conference earlier today, Speaker, and we had an advocate for vapes at the press conference. She was talking earlier in the day to the member from Beaches–East York, who is her representative, I believe, and when she told them that schedule 3 and the prohibition on the use of harm reduction was included in the bill, he said, “What? We were told that this is a cannabis bill.” This is the member for Beaches–East York telling a constituent that even he was confused by what was in the bill, and that he thought that it was only a cannabis bill. So it's not surprising that if the members opposite are even confused as to what's in the bill, surely that should give us cause and justification to split the bill up and separate it into its logical component parts and not confuse the members opposite in what they may be voting for at either second or third reading.

Here's a note I received from Christine Lapalme; she's 40 years old. “I started smoking when I was 14. I smoked one to two packs a day until three years ago. I tried to quit so many times over 24 years. I tried therapy, the patch, group counselling, gums, medications, inhalers, sprays, but nothing seemed to work for more than one or two weeks. I was waking up coughing to the point of throwing up, every single morning. My doctor told me I really needed to quit smoking.” On October 10, 2014, Christine smoked her last cigarette—

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Excuse me. Point of order, the member from—

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I just want to remind the Speaker in the House here today that the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, on November 2, was offered briefings on all four schedules to this legislation, so—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sorry, that's not a point of order.

Continue.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker. It's not a point of order, and not true either.

But on October 10, 2014, Christine said that she had smoked her last cigarette. “I was only using” the vaporizer “as I had found flavours ... that totally satisfied my ... cravings and allow me to not even think about picking up a cigarette. Within one month of only being on the” vaporizer, “I was no longer coughing upon waking up. I was able to walk up stairs and hills without feeling completely out of breath or feeling like my heart was going to explode out of my chest.”

Christine's letter goes on. I would certainly be happy to share this letter with all the members opposite and the members on this side. This is somebody who has improved their health, has improved their life, and this government—in the bill, in schedule 3, they have empowered themselves to prohibit flavours.

As Christine said, she found a flavour that she liked, and she quit smoking within a month. Certainly, we should be commending and applauding Christine, not demanding that she go into the closet to use her vape. Again, you can't use it in public places, you can't use it

in workplaces and you can't use it anywhere other than in your home. That applies whether the juice you're using is not a narcotic, or if it is a narcotic, like cannabis.

Let me just read another little bit from Richard Cousineau. Richard writes, "The bottom line is this: Electronic cigarettes, or vaping, has been life-saving for me. I was a pack-a-day smoker for eight years and desperately wanting to quit, but nothing worked. I tried the nicotine gum, a medication called Zyban, the patch and ... psychotherapy. Nothing worked.

"I was extremely desperate because I was a new father at the time and my entire perspective on life had changed overnight. All of a sudden, it wasn't just me I had to worry about. I had a child who needs me to be there for her and do things with her. How could I do that if I'm too out of shape from smoking? Or worse, dying from lung cancer."

Richard goes on to write, "I went to a local shop and the staff were amazing. They helped me choose the right set-up that would best suit my personal needs, and they explained everything I needed to know about vaping.... Two months later, I was completely tobacco-free. It's been three years since my last cigarette."

Isn't that a wonderful story to hear? A young father, somebody addicted to tobacco, goes into a store, gets the assistance and the help that he's looking for, and finds a product, a device, a means to kick the addiction.

But under Bill 174, staff will not be allowed to demonstrate a vaporizer to prospective customers. They will not be permitted to allow people to sample flavours. Everything must be behind a case. You cannot handle or demonstrate or use.

Richard goes on with one more paragraph that I'd like to share with the members: "My wife was also saved by vaping. She was a smoker for almost 20 years and there was no possible way I could see her quitting. Six months after I started vaping, she gave it a try. She's been smoke-free for two and a half years now. Vaping really saved our lives. It provides a harm-reduction alternative to tobacco cigarettes and it actually works."

Speaker, isn't that a story that is important for every member in this House to hear? Because your votes will determine if people like Richard Cousineau and his wife get the opportunity to have a more wholesome, a more healthy and a longer life with their children.

Speaker, here's one from Christina Brink. She lives in Stoney Creek, down in your part of the countryside.

"Three years ago I watched as my father lay in a hospital bed gasping for breath. He never was a smoker, he actually hated that I smoked. I would sneak out every once in a while to have a smoke, oh the guilt....

"I stopped into one of the ... vape shops ... in Niagara Falls.... Three years later I am smoke-free. I still vape. As a matter of fact, I have now opened a vape shop with my husband ... in Stoney Creek."

1750

Many vape shops that you go to will have similar stories: people who found a way to quit their addiction to

reduce the harm that they were doing to their lives, their health and to their families. They are passionate about this and they want to share that healthy experience with others. This government wants to diminish and restrain access to those life-saving harm reduction methods, Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you can see I have a few letters, and maybe I may talk a little bit more about them throughout this debate. I just want that to sink in a little bit to the members opposite. Do you really want to keep people addicted to a deadly, deadly addiction, or do you want to see if you can help out? If you want to help out, you have to split section 3 out of this bill. You have to split it out. I would say you also have to vote against section 3. Significant amendments are required.

Again, Speaker, this applies to whatever product is in the vape. There is also another element to that. There is a vaporizer that is medically prescribed in this country called the Volcano. It is prescribed to reduce the harm for medical marijuana users. Under Bill 174, schedule 3, the Volcano can only be used in one's personal home. It can't be used elsewhere. If that individual wants to go somewhere, wants to travel somewhere, wants to do anything like any other normal person wants to do—normal people don't stay cloistered and huddled or hidden in their house. They are social beings. They need social interactions. But we're saying, "If you want to lessen the harm to your health by using that Volcano, you can't have any social life outside." I think that's offensive. I'm not allowed to use the term that I really think it is, because putting somebody's health in jeopardy for political purposes I find truly offensive. But that's what is happening.

This government is saying the health and safety and well-being of our residents is of no importance. It takes a backseat to the political gains that this government is trying to attain, that their quest for re-election is more important to the lives and the health of the residents who we are elected to serve. Isn't that an indictment of this government? That is atrocious.

We don't have a very full House to hear this debate today, Speaker. These are things that I think many people on the Liberal side are uncomfortable hearing.

I would be more than uncomfortable hearing how the actions of my government were bringing harm and jeopardizing the lives of the people who I was elected to serve.

There are so many; there are so many. Let me read this one here from Jason King in Welland. These people have sent me these letters, knowing and asking me to share them with members of this Legislature. Jason is 37 years old:

"I started smoking at the ripe young age of 13 with friends in school, thinking we were cool. Fast-forward 23 years till May of 2016," and I was "at over a pack a day.... A good friend of mine opened up a vape shop" and I had previously tried many ways to quit, but now "vaping has helped me quit smoking, and in a year and a half, I've gone from 12 mg/ml of nicotine to 1.5 mg/ml. I

feel less out of breath throughout the day and don't cough up a lung when I get up in the mornings anymore.... Without vaping I would still be smoking. Slowly killing myself. One thing I forgot to mention ... I have two little reasons for quitting smoking. Their names are Paisley and Tessa. I'm not the only smoking parent with children who deserves the right to make the choice. Who deserves the right to choose vaping as a harm reduction technique. Who deserves the choice of what flavour he/she vapes."

Jason goes on that without the store clerk being there and able to answer his questions, he would still be smoking. He would still be addicted.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Congratulations to him.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Yes.

I think these are all good stories. I think that we ought to not only commend them, but I think we should encourage—if we can encourage others, if others find it to be an effective mechanism to kick their habit, why should any member in this House get in the way and impede or obstruct somebody from doing things that will be better for their health, better for their kids, better for everyone?

I've noticed, and I've indicated, that other jurisdictions in this country—New Brunswick, Alberta, the House of Commons—are all doing it right, but this one government is doing it singularly wrong. Wrong is how they are approaching Bill 174. They have not given any consideration to the people of this province; they have not given any consideration to this House; they have treated this House in a disrespectful and cavalier manner, and they need to be held to account.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Look in the mirror.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I know the member from Northumberland thinks this is funny, but I know many people have contacted his office and are looking for an answer from that member: Why he is supporting the attack on their health? So member for Northumberland, maybe you should spend less time finding it humorous to have a debate in here and maybe spend a little bit more time listening and getting letters from your constituents and reading them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It's 6 o'clock. The time has expired.

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

HOUSING POLICY

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member for Windsor West has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Premier. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and

the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I had asked the Premier to return to the House this evening after her response to my question two weeks ago regarding unlicensed group homes, which was, frankly, a completely inadequate response.

1800

On Monday, October 30, a fire broke out at an unlicensed group home here in Toronto—a residence that has been known to fail numerous fire inspections and was recently part of an OPP investigation last year. It was a seven-month-long investigation into many unlicensed group homes. That OPP investigation last year found that these homes were overcrowded, unsafe, unsanitary and in deplorable condition. The government knew about this investigation and yet the owner was allowed to continue to operate the home because, if it were shut down, the residents would have nowhere else to go.

This is what we're finding across the province. Many people who end up in these group homes are seniors, people with mental health issues or they're people with developmental disabilities, and yet, because of wait-lists and lack of supportive housing—a failure on the part of this government and the Conservative government before them—these people have nowhere else to go. The very people who are supposed to go in and make sure that these buildings are safe, that they're meeting provincial health codes, that they're meeting provincial fire codes—they feel like they have no option but to leave people in these unsafe conditions because if they close these homes, these very vulnerable people would be out on the street.

The Liberals have heard many other horror stories over the past year, stories similar to and some of them worse than what we heard about here in Toronto.

They knew that this past February an unlicensed group home owner in London was sentenced to serve jail time over 12 fire code violations at his property, where he was housing elderly people and people with severe mental illness. In November 2014, one of these London homes caught fire, and a 72-year-old man died as a result.

We know that the government is well aware of these instances because they were all raised by my colleague from Welland when she introduced her private member's bill in May of this year. Her private member's bill, Bill 135, the Protecting Vulnerable Persons in Supportive Living Accommodation Act, was introduced in May 2017. The bill requires persons who operate a supportive living accommodation in specified circumstances to hold a licence issued by the minister. The bill provides for a framework governing applications for and the issuance of licences, the obligations of persons who operate a supportive living accommodation under the authority of a licence, inspections, and complaints. The bill forbids people from operating a residential premises where four or more people not related to the operator reside and receive assistance with activities of daily living unless they have a licence authorized by the minister.

Speaker, there are some exemptions to this particular bill, like retirement homes, hospitals and child care

centres, so it's really just targeting homes that are not already specified under provincial legislation.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government, which has a majority, has stalled this bill at committee. This bill would have actually helped the people here in Toronto who were in an unlicensed group home. Thankfully, all of those people made it out alive, but in London we had an elderly fellow who didn't make it out.

I want to point out that my colleague's bill talks about "the minister." It's interesting, because when I asked my question of the Premier a couple of weeks back, the Premier didn't seem to know who should answer the question. In fact, during my supplemental, my second question, she looked around at all of her cabinet ministers to see who was responsible for these unlicensed group homes. Not one of them said it was their responsibility. Nobody seemed to know who was responsible for these unlicensed group homes. In fact, the Premier then said that I was mixing up the issue, that I was mixing in a bunch of ministries, trying to say that it's my fault that her government doesn't know who is responsible for making sure that some of our most vulnerable citizens are being taken care of. That's shameful, because, frankly, it's several ministries that are responsible, and they should be working together.

Again, this particular group home—they knew there was an issue months ago, and the government did nothing to address the issues. They did nothing to back up the fire marshal. They did nothing to back up public health, who went in there and said, "These are unsafe conditions, but we can't close it because we don't know where else to put these people." The government sat idly by and did nothing, and then nobody on the Liberal side wanted to take responsibility. Nobody wants to be the minister in charge, and I can understand that, but they do need to work together and fix the issues that we're facing in supporting our most vulnerable people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The parliamentary assistant has five minutes.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: Pardon my voice. I'm struggling a bit here, but I appreciate the member raising the question, and it's my pleasure to respond.

Our government has been clear that we wholeheartedly believe that everyone deserves the security of knowing that they will have a safe place to lay their head at night. As the Premier stated earlier, we are never comfortable when we hear stories like the one the member raised, and we are never comfortable when we hear that vulnerable people are at risk.

In fact, I would argue that that's exactly the reason we believe that government exists: to address these inequities and to help everyone in Ontario reach their full potential. In that regard, we've introduced a \$15 min-

imum wage, a basic income pilot and free drug coverage for youth aged 24 and under, all important steps towards making life fairer for Ontarians.

But we know our work isn't done. We also know that there are cases where people are living under circumstances in which the regulation of their living situation is not always as clear as it should be, and we know that more needs to be done to address this, as well.

Earlier this year, the MPP from Welland introduced Bill 135, which seeks to address some of the issues the member opposite raised in her question. It seeks to create a regulatory framework that ensures that people are well protected in their supportive-living accommodations. You might recall that we spoke to that bill in May, and that we also supported it. This is because, as I said earlier, no one on this side of the House wants to see a situation where anyone is put at risk—I want to suggest that nobody on any side of the House wants to see that, Mr. Speaker; I think that's true—and we are looking forward to hearing further debate on this bill in the standing committee.

It is for that precise reason that we have made a number of investments towards good-quality supportive housing. I know that because as the former Minister of Housing, I introduced the long-term housing plan, inclusive zoning, granny-suite legislation and some of the partnership things that we're doing around low-income housing. These are investments that have helped to fund over 4,200 supportive housing units for a wide range of people. We are also investing more than \$45 million over three years to provide up to 1,150 additional supportive housing units for those with serious mental illnesses or addictions who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. These housing units provide residents with support services and secure, affordable, stable places to live.

I know that we continue to work together through the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care, Community and Social Services, and Children and Youth Services to improve access to supportive housing programs and to increase awareness about housing and homelessness programs and services.

As I said earlier, our work is nowhere near complete. This is an extremely important discussion that needs to be had, and one that we are committed to being at the table for. I want to thank the member again for raising her question.

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 1809.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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| Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP) | London–Fanshawe | |
| Arnott, Ted (PC) | Wellington–Halton Hills | First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée |
| Bailey, Robert (PC) | Sarnia–Lambton | |
| Baker, Yvan (LIB) | Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre | |
| Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB) | Newmarket–Aurora | Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique |
| Barrett, Toby (PC) | Haldimand–Norfolk | |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB) | Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest | |
| Bisson, Gilles (NDP) | Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James | |
| Bradley, James J. (LIB) | St. Catharines | Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement |
| Brown, Patrick (PC) | Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord | Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario |
| Campbell, Sarah (NDP) | Kenora–Rainy River | |
| Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB) | Markham–Unionville | Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International |
| Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB) | Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean | Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure |
| Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC) | Scarborough–Rouge River | |
| Clark, Steve (PC) | Leeds–Grenville | Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle |
| Coe, Lorne (PC) | Whitby–Oshawa | |
| Colle, Mike (LIB) | Eglinton–Lawrence | |
| Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB) | Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est | Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme |
| Crack, Grant (LIB) | Glengarry–Prescott–Russell | |
| Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB) | Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville | Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées |
| Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB) | Vaughan | Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports |
| Delaney, Bob (LIB) | Mississauga–Streetsville | |
| Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB) | Ottawa–Vanier | |
| Dhillon, Vic (LIB) | Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest | |
| Dickson, Joe (LIB) | Ajax–Pickering | |
| DiNovo, Cheri (NDP) | Parkdale–High Park | |
| Dong, Han (LIB) | Trinity–Spadina | |
| Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB) | Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre | Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance |
| Fedeli, Victor (PC) | Nipissing | |
| Fife, Catherine (NDP) | Kitchener–Waterloo | |
| Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB) | Oakville | Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail |
| Forster, Cindy (NDP) | Welland | |
| Fraser, John (LIB) | Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud | |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|--|---|---|
| French, Jennifer K. (NDP) | Oshawa | |
| Gates, Wayne (NDP) | Niagara Falls | |
| Gélinas, France (NDP) | Nickel Belt | |
| Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB) | Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord | Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines |
| Gretzky, Lisa (NDP) | Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest | |
| Hardeman, Ernie (PC) | Oxford | |
| Harris, Michael (PC) | Kitchener–Conestoga | |
| Hatfield, Percy (NDP) | Windsor–Tecumseh | |
| Hillier, Randy (PC) | Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington | |
| Hoggarth, Ann (LIB) | Barrie | |
| Horwath, Andrea (NDP) | Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre | Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario |
| Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB) | St. Paul's | Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée |
| Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB) | Scarborough–Guildwood | Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation |
| Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB) | Oak Ridges–Markham | Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| Jones, Sylvia (PC) | Dufferin–Caledon | Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle |
| Kiwala, Sophie (LIB) | Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles | |
| Kwinter, Monte (LIB) | York Centre / York-Centre | |
| Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB) | Ottawa–Orléans | Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones |
| Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB) | Peterborough | Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises |
| Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB) | Brant | Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative |
| MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB) | Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est | Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité |
| MacLaren, Jack (IND) | Carleton–Mississippi Mills | |
| MacLeod, Lisa (PC) | Nepean–Carleton | |
| Malhi, Harinder (LIB) | Brampton–Springdale | |
| Mangat, Amrit (LIB) | Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud | |
| Mantha, Michael (NDP) | Algoma–Manitoulin | |
| Martins, Cristina (LIB) | Davenport | |
| Martow, Gila (PC) | Thornhill | |
| Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB) | London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord | Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique |
| Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB) | Thunder Bay–Atikokan | Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales |
| McDonell, Jim (PC) | Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry | |
| McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB) | Cambridge | Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts |
| McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB) | Burlington | Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport |
| McMeekin, Ted (LIB) | Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale | |
| McNaughton, Monte (PC) | Lambton–Kent–Middlesex | |
| Milczyn, Hon. / L'hon. Peter Z. (LIB) | Etobicoke–Lakeshore | Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|---|--|--|
| Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP) | Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek | Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB) | Richmond Hill | Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences |
| Munro, Julia (PC) Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB) | York–Simcoe Halton | Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite enfance et de la Garde d'enfants |
| Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB) | Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre | Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement |
| Natyshak, Taras (NDP) Nicholls, Rick (PC) | Essex Chatham–Kent–Essex | Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Oosterhoff, Sam (PC) | Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook | |
| Pettapiece, Randy (PC) | Perth–Wellington | |
| Potts, Arthur (LIB) | Beaches–East York | |
| Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) | Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord | |
| Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) | Northumberland–Quinte West | |
| Romano, Ross (PC) | Sault Ste. Marie | |
| Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB) | Guelph | President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor |
| Sattler, Peggy (NDP) | London West / London-Ouest | |
| Scott, Laurie (PC) | Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock | |
| Sergio, Mario (LIB) | York West / York-Ouest | |
| Smith, Todd (PC) | Prince Edward–Hastings | |
| Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) | Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud | Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances |
| Tabuns, Peter (NDP) | Toronto–Danforth | |
| Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB) | Mississauga–Erindale | |
| Taylor, Monique (NDP) | Hamilton Mountain | |
| Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB) | Sudbury | Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie |
| Thompson, Lisa M. (PC) | Huron–Bruce | |
| Vanthof, John (NDP) | Timiskaming–Cochrane | |
| Vernile, Daiene (LIB) | Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre | |
| Walker, Bill (PC) | Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound | |
| Wilson, Jim (PC) | Simcoe–Grey | Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle |
| Wong, Soo (LIB) | Scarborough–Agincourt | Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente |
| Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB) | Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest | Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario |
| Yakabuski, John (PC) | Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke | |
| Yurek, Jeff (PC) | Elgin–Middlesex–London | |
| Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) | Willowdale | Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation |
| Vacant | Bramalea–Gore–Malton | |
| Vacant | Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre | |

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Michael Mantha
Mike Colle, Nathalie Des Rosiers
Cheri DiNovo, Michael Harris
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Michael Mantha, Arthur Potts
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Ann Hoggarth
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Han Dong
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Mike Colle, Han Dong
Victor Fedeli, Ann Hoggarth
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Granville Anderson
Granville Anderson, Yvan Baker
Grant Crack, John Fraser
Lisa Gretzky, Julia Munro
Lou Rinaldi, Lisa M. Thompson
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Cristina Martins
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
Granville Anderson, Lorenzo Berardinetti
James J. Bradley, Wayne Gates
Cristina Martins, Sam Oosterhoff
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Nathalie Des Rosiers
Amrit Mangat, Jim McDonell
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Ross Romano, Monique Taylor
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
Joe Dickson, Sophie Kiwala
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Grant Crack, Jennifer K. French
Jack MacLaren, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Mario Sergio
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Lorne Coe, Bob Delaney
Vic Dhillon, Joe Dickson
Harinder Malhi, Gila Martow
Ted McMeekin, Peter Tabuns
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley