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Jeudi
1^{er} mars 2018

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Président : L'honorable Dave Levac
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Thursday 1 March 2018

Jeudi 1^{er} mars 2018

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Chris Ballard: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 194, An Act respecting fairness in procurement, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

At such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; 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

That, notwithstanding standing order 81(c), the bill may be called more than once in the same sessional day; and

The vote on second and 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 Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister moves notice of motion number 62.

Minister?

Hon. Chris Ballard: Speaker, I have no debate.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I rise today on behalf of the amazing people in my riding of Huron–Bruce, the PC Party of Ontario, and all Ontarians who, from one corner of the province to another, expect democracy to be carried out in this House.

I have to ask: Why is the government of the day, under the leadership of Kathleen Wynne, afraid of debate, afraid of consultation, afraid of deputations? This is totally unfair. They are running around this province under the cloak of pretending to be fair. Well, let me tell

the people watching this debate this morning: Everything this government is doing is unfair. Again, they are shutting down debate, they are shutting down consultation, and they even want to skip committee, for goodness' sake. They are cutting down opportunities for people to come in and have deputations, to share exactly how Bill 194, under their watch, is completely unfair. Actually, this government is shameful, and I'm going to tell you why, Speaker, in the next few minutes.

So, again, I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the riding of Huron–Bruce, the PC Party of Ontario, and as a member of Her Majesty's loyal opposition. But I'm not pleased, though, to have to speak to a motion from this Liberal government that is intended to completely shut down debate on a bill that is far from complete. Something that I could stand before you today and say is that I will not be supporting it in its current form. And I have complete support from the PC caucus in this regard.

Speaker, we have seen this government play some terrible tricks in its time in office, but with this last one they may have saved their best trick for last. From time to time, we see time allocation motions, which the government uses to speed up the process, in their eyes. But from the perspective of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, we see what they're doing: the use of time allocation as a tool to shut down debate and ultimately shut down democracy. Is this the Ontario we have to be stuck with? I think not, Speaker.

Furthermore, this government of the day—this old, out-of-touch, out-of-ideas, tired government—has taken it a step further. Instead of limiting the amount of debate that this bill will have in the House and at committee, the government, in its infinite wisdom, has decided that the legislative process doesn't matter. But we're used to that. Ontarians are tired of it, and this government is going to learn its lesson on June 7.

With regard to Bill 194, I will quote the Premier from her minister's statement just this past week. She said, "I am encouraging all members of this House to put games aside, come together and support the people of Ontario by passing the Fairness in Procurement Act." Well, you know, time flies. Only a week has gone by, and yet again the Premier's words ring hollow. It's like: "Don't listen to what I'm saying. Don't watch what I'm doing. Come on; everything we're doing is fair." Speaker, that is so not true.

In light of the Premier's statement from last week, her government's actions this morning can only be described by words that unfortunately you would probably remove me from the House for using. But because this is the most egregious time allocation motion that I have seen in

my time at Queen's Park—this motion frankly cuts out whole portions of the legislative process—I'm going to talk about it. People in Ontario need to know how “done” this government is. For instance, this motion cuts out the whole committee stage of the democratic process in the passing of legislation. Why would a government choose—and again, I repeat, the government is choosing not to hear from stakeholders. Speaker, that's not the type of Ontario you or I can be proud of. That's not the type of government that you and I were elected to uphold here in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

So I have to ask: What is the Liberal government under the leadership of Kathleen Wynne afraid to hear at committee? What is it that a stakeholder might say that has this government so scared? To quote the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, “We know now why they like these closure motions. Because they don't want the public to know what they're doing.” Yes, that's true. He spoke these words, though, in 2002, and they ring true today as we debate this time allocation motion.

Today we can expect a tired, out-of-touch government to make a lot of excuses. Speaker, I expect them to reiterate the Premier's accusation that our reasoned amendment last week was a stall tactic, but honestly, we had not been briefed and we had not been given time to ask our questions. There is a very good reason why that reasoned amendment came to the House. I have to tell the people watching today that this tired, old government will try to spin what's happening right now into some sort of justification of their complete disregard for a legislative process. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Allow me to lay the facts out on the table, because I feel this story is worth repeating. This bill went to cabinet in early April. That's almost 11 months ago. The government did not reach out to my office once to discuss their bill. They did not indicate that they wanted to work with the opposition at all. Not once in the 11 months since they took this bill to cabinet last spring in 2017 did they come forward to want to work with opposition.

Next, the government indicated, on February 6, that they would be tabling the bill two weeks later. I immediately told my office to reach out for a briefing or for an embargoed draft copy of the bill that, in some cases, happens. We did not receive either in a timely manner. We received our draft copy of the bill on February 20, moments before the bill was tabled. Our briefing was received the morning of the scheduled leadoffs.

0910

Again, this is a government that is acting absolutely unfairly. They had no regard for process. Ultimately, that can be translated into the fact that they have no regard for Ontarians. Again, the Premier, in the government press release on February 6, said—and she clearly stated—that she wanted to work with all parties to pass this legislation. I said during my leadoff that the very fact that they would not allow us to do our due diligence on this bill indicates their unwillingness to include us in the discus-

sion at all. Guess what? The government has now decided to limit debate and just eliminate all committee hearings on this bill.

Again, I ask this tired, old government: What are they afraid of? When exactly was the government intending to work with us, Ontarian stakeholders and ultimately put the thoughts and the priority on Ontarians, like they should? As I said on Monday, through their actions, we have seen no willingness on the government's part to co-operate with anyone. We, unfortunately, have seen their true colours. They don't want to work with opposition, the third party or stakeholders. They don't care about the dismal fiscal realities they have driven this province into. This “my way or the highway” approach is exactly what gets government into trouble.

Now, originally, I thought that this bill was something that we essentially just see from embattled politicians seeking an outside enemy. But now that they have shut down debate and all consultation entirely, their behaviour is more akin to what we see from autocrats. This government pays lip service to co-operation and consultation, but when it becomes inconvenient, again, they choose to ignore it.

I would like to remind this Premier, her entire cabinet and all of her elected colleagues that her government is off the rails. I would like to remind this Premier and her government that they are not all-knowing. In fact, if they were willing to listen, I'm sure that they would realize that there are things that they could fix within this bill, but they don't want to work with opposition. Again, it's their way or the highway. Unfortunately, who gets hurt by this unfair practice? Ontarians: our future generations, our taxpayers. The fact that we have heard very valid questions about this bill is reason enough to continue debate, actually come forward and be brave enough to bring Bill 194 into committee. There are so many valid questions that have yet to be answered.

Going back to our reasoned amendment, we asked: Why? Why is this legislation needed? What prevents the government in their authority, their self-assumed and self-absorbed authority to procure goods and services, from directing government entities and broader public sector entities to select bidders that reflect preferences on trade? We're still awaiting a satisfactory answer on that. If this motion goes through, we will not have a chance to hear that answer because the government will not allow this bill to proceed to committee.

Again, I would like to remind all of them of the fact that the Auditor General's report from 2017 revealed that Infrastructure Ontario was not even tracking how many vendors bid on capital projects and which vendors were actually winning the bids. Can you believe it? In fact, Infrastructure Ontario “allowed its external project managers to select vendors from its vendor-of-record list” but “manually add them to the list of bidders,” and 321 projects worth \$49 million were selected this way. Its managers can hand-pick vendors, so why can't the government just tell these very same managers to exclude New York-based vendors when they do their hand-

picking next time? Again, Speaker, they can hand-pick vendors, so why can't the government tell these managers to exclude New-York-based vendors when they continue to do their hand-picking next time?

It's actually very shameful, the manner in which this government is acting. We still do not know why this requires legislation.

Beyond the fact that we already know that this government is allowed to hand-pick bidders, let's take a look at what is happening today.

Ongoing NAFTA negotiations could soon render this whole debate moot. Chapter 10 of NAFTA directly references subnational procurement. Why this government felt it even had to table Bill 194 leaves a lot of people questioning their tactics. Although the subnational provisions in NAFTA were never finalized or agreed to, the potential remains, especially as many chapters in the agreement are currently on the table. Even more recently than NAFTA, the Obama administration and the Harper government also reached an agreement on subnational procurement, on a smaller scale. This is why we are party to the World Trade Organization Agreement on Government Procurement.

I ask, Speaker: Why debate this whole issue when those negotiations are ongoing? Have we not seen the rhetoric coming from the United States? Quite simply, we are being provocative and risking further retaliation for the sake of this Premier's and this government's desire to score political points.

This debate could have waited until after the NAFTA talks, but the problem was that the timeline wouldn't be convenient because it would take the government past the upcoming election on June 7. Again, international objectives are being overridden by Ontario electioneering by Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal Party.

I ask: Why would we ever risk escalation when much of the bigger conversation is happening under our federal counterparts?

Not only is this legislation not what we need; it is legislation that is, in fact, opening Ontario up to unnecessary risks. We know what happened when this government of the day tried to encourage manufacturing of industrial wind turbine parts in Ontario. Where did we end up on that side of the legal case? On the wrong side.

I might also add that a compounding risk that could happen right now is the haphazard way the government chose to write this bill. For example, what is, for goodness' sake, "proportional response" from the government? Do they even know? How is this defined? Is "proportional" defined as not exceeding the damage of an offending jurisdiction in terms of what it does to Ontario? Perhaps it means that the measure with which we retaliate must do at least enough damage to the offending jurisdiction.

They haven't defined their own definitions; they don't have a clue what they want to do within this legislation. Instead, they want to put up this blatant electioneering and decide how to clean up their mess behind closed doors, via regulations. That's not the type of Ontario that taxpayers and our future generations deserve.

Going back to the "proportional" aspect, this lack of a definition means that we could be opening up the province to massive escalations with American jurisdictions like those we've seen as a result of the Green Energy Act, escalations that will cost our economy jobs. For instance, that one company in Tillsonburg: There was a lot of hoopla when they were creating jobs in Tillsonburg building parts and pieces for industrial wind turbines, but when that closed down, so did 300-plus jobs in the Tillsonburg area.

Let's carry on here with regard to Bill 194. The President of the Treasury Board, responding to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, told us the following:

"While members opposite have referenced issues like escalation—the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, who talked about how we need to apply caution." Guess what was said, Speaker. "We agree." But she went on to say, "This is not about escalation, for that very reason. This is about a proportional response, Speaker. It's important that we keep these things in mind."

0920

I have to ask, Speaker: Really? When that member was speaking, did they know the true definition of a proportional response? I'm doubting it.

To carry on: Has the President of the Treasury Board even read her own bill? It's only a couple of pages.

Do you know what's sad? It wasn't even properly translated into French. It's a shame. This government is out of touch. Their knee-jerk reactions to try to garner favour with the Ontario voter, when they're doing so dismally in the polls, are causing them to rush legislation, and as a result, they're getting it wrong on so many different levels. As I said, they couldn't even get the French translation right for Bill 194.

Going back to the President of the Treasury Board: If the minister agreed with regard to a proportional response, then there should have been a reference to proportionality in the bill. We should see a threshold.

How can we know that this bill would not lead to escalation when there are no checks and balances in the bill? Speaker, there are none.

This government has flailed around for 15 years. Time and again they have absolutely thrown Ontario taxpayers, and all of us, quite frankly, under the bus. And here we go again.

Speaker, I was planning on bringing forward an amendment to alleviate this concern in committee, but unfortunately I will be unable to do this very action because of this government's cynical behaviour that is hitting home here right now, this morning. It's too bad, because if the President of the Treasury Board agreed with the concerns of the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, perhaps her colleagues could have entertained such an amendment. Unfortunately, if they get this motion through, they are taking away that opportunity in committee.

Again, for those of you watching today, this tired, out-of-touch government, under the leadership of Kathleen Wynne, is trying to shut down Bill 194 with regard to

debate, deputations in committee, and consultation with stakeholders.

This government's time has come and gone. June 7 can't come soon enough for Ontarians across this province.

Again, Speaker, the problem is that the government did not, at the end of the day, table a viable piece of legislation. Like we've been saying all along, this is just a last-ditch attempt to get votes. If they truly cared about Ontario jobs, we would have seen this government take action long ago. They would have seen proper legislation come through their tables and through their doors, and we would have actually seen a government caring about Ontarians. But all they care about is themselves.

As a result, Ontario has bled manufacturing to other jurisdictions. As I mentioned in my leadoff just last week, a manufacturer from my amazing riding of Huron—Bruce—specifically, in the Walkerton area—forwarded an email to me whereby the state of Vermont was telling them that when they want to grow, when they want to expand, the best place to do that is not Ontario; it's Vermont. That's what our manufacturers are facing day in and day out.

Continuing on with regard to Bill 194 and with the lack of proportionality in this bill, Speaker, there's something that I would like to remind everyone of: Trading with other jurisdictions actually saves our government money. Every time the government responds in kind to an American jurisdiction, it represents a contract that Ontario is overpaying for.

And coming from the government that brought us eHealth, Ornge and the gas plant scandal—Ontarians would prefer it if, once and for all, the government did not overpay on a contract. Ontarians have been paying more and getting less in this province for far too long over the last 15 years, Speaker. Every single measure that this government brings into force makes us pay more for less time and time again.

This bill mandates no third-party oversight to report on the additional costs of protectionist procurement regulations enacted under this law. That's a worry. Do we still have to continue to pay more and more under this tired, old government? Financial transparency could have allowed Ontarians and stakeholders to weigh the benefits and costs of the action that the government would be taking under the authority of this bill. Without a reporting requirement like this, Ontarians could be in for a financial surprise. With this government, we know what these surprises could entail.

Moving on, there's a deplorable irony to Bill 194. The very purpose of a committee is to consult. Had Bill 194 actually made it to committee, we would have seen deputations from stakeholders and we would have seen their submissions. They all want to speak on this bill. We have the mechanisms for the public to have their say, but this government is taking it away from them. How fair is that? This government is anything but fair.

Then, we've lost our opportunity to bring forward amendments in committee. This is a very important

lesson for the Liberals. The amendments that we would have brought forward would have allowed us a chance to improve their bill, which has been hastily rushed and tabled and, as we saw today, pushed through our Legislature just so that they can electioneer on, yet again, another bad idea. But, Speaker, I have to tell you, if this bill does not go to committee, it will not be amended. As we know, they didn't even get the French translation right. This is a story you can't make up.

Honestly, like I said on Monday, the lack of consultation has been an absolute trademark of the Wynne Liberal government, and the lack of transparency is very concerning.

Again, if we look at this bill, consultation is only an option. They actually wrote into Bill 194 that consultation is an option. Ontarians: Be very nervous about this, because they're taking every voice that we have in this province away. They're shutting down consultation and they're shutting down committee.

I want to go back to the bill and tell you exactly what it reads: "Before a regulation is made under this act, the minister may consult, in the manner that the minister considers appropriate, with any persons ... the minister considers appropriate given the content of the proposed regulation." What the heck is that? It's a blatant punch in the gut to Ontarians.

This government is tired. It's out of touch. Nothing proves it more than the fact that they're shutting down consultation and Ontarians' voices through consultation. No Ontarian should stand for that. I hope they send them a message loud and clear on June 7.

Considering that the government is not even willing to consult with stakeholders at committee or to consult even with the opposition members of this Legislature, this action is completely indicative of how this government thinks. Their thought process is that they don't need to consult on a bill that doesn't require them to consult before they make regulations. They believe the public should trust them. Again, trusting them: What did that get us? It got us Ornge; it got us eHealth; it got us the dismal Green Energy Act; it got us the gas plants. We just don't trust them anymore. That's why we think that it's a travesty that they're shutting down debate and they're shutting down consultation. Essentially, they're shutting Ontarians out of their government.

They believe that the public should just trust them, and we're not going to do it. After 15 years, we've had enough. The public does not trust this government on hydro. The public does not trust this government on jobs. The public does not trust this government on education. The public does not trust this government on health care. And the public does not trust this government on ethics.

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: How can the government possibly expect the public to trust them on delicate diplomatic issues like trade? The fact is, the public can't trust them to get trade right, because their track record has proven that they've gotten pretty much nothing right over the last 15 years.

I have another issue with the bill that I would like to highlight, and I highlighted this in my leadoff. I was hoping to—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Okay. I was more than reasonable with your outburst, but you've kept it up. It's over.

Mr. Wayne Gates: It was funny.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It may be funny to you; it's not funny to me.

Continue.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I have another issue with the bill that I would like to highlight, and I highlighted this in my leadoff as well. I was hoping to address it in committee, but unfortunately, that opportunity is being ripped away, not only from me but from stakeholders as well.

0930

I will read you the portion in question from the bill. It reads: "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations designating an American jurisdiction as an offending American jurisdiction if, in the minister's opinion, the government of the American jurisdiction has enacted legislation or ... measures that may inhibit or prevent Ontario suppliers from participating or succeeding in procurement processes...." The definition that reads "may inhibit or prevent Ontario suppliers from participating" is very vague.

Instead of heckling and just doing what a tired, old government does, I encourage the members to actually read this bill because, in fact, I've read a comprehensive list of those measures in the House during my leadoff. I talked and shared over 50 examples from over 50 states in the United States of America that talked to procurement. I invite them to go back and check the lead-off, because I doubt that many have. Statutes, both big and small, that could allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council to designate an American jurisdiction as offending and enabling the government of Ontario to respond in kind, but, of course, with no legislated limits on what proportionality looks like—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'll remind the member from Durham that when he crosses the floor, he's supposed to nod—now, a little late.

Continue.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Okay. I'll repeat that: Statutes, both big and small, that could allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council to designate an American jurisdiction as offending and enabling the government of Ontario to respond in kind is what is read in the legislation—but of course, with no legislated limits on what proportionality actually looks like.

They don't know what that means. They did not take time to define proportionality. This is a huge concern, and another reason why old, tired, knee-jerk Liberal legislation needs to have scrutiny. We should have the right to debate it in the House. We should have the right to take it to committee, and for goodness' sake, Ontarian stakeholders and Ontarians who are concerned about trade should have every right to exercise their voices via deputations in committee.

What they are actually proposing in Bill 194 could put our trading relationships at risk, our trading relationships with Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, North Dakota, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming. How can we possibly give the government the unilateral authority to penalize all of these jurisdictions without any defined checks and balances?

Did you hear that across the House? In this legislation—because I doubt if you've read it—Bill 194 does not define any checks and balances, so you should be going back to your caucus and saying, "What the heck are we doing shutting down debate on Bill 194, and for goodness' sake, why are we not having an opportunity to correct our own mistakes in committee?" like we've seen you do so many times before with regard to other bills. It is just stunning, Speaker, what's happening in this province under the Liberal watch.

Bill 194 gives the government the authority to respond in kind to measures big or small—measures as big as steel contracts and as small as flag holders; as big as meat products and as small as baseball fields. The way this legislation has been written is absolutely absurd. This government knows this unsettling fact. They know it, and that is why they are afraid to continue debate. That is why they are afraid to take it to committee. That is why this government is afraid to hear from stakeholders. They don't want to hear the flaws of the bill and they don't want anyone to see that they are tired, they are out of touch, they are out of ideas, and they can't even write proper legislation. They don't want any of those facts out there in the open.

What's even more troubling is that the government's response to this fact has been complete dismissal, as we're seeing here today. The member from Guelph told this House that the Minister of Agriculture does not find Alaska's measures against Ontario in the agri-food sector as requiring a response. She views it as a merit to this bill that the government can pick and choose. But, Speaker, I'm telling you, that is a major flaw in the bill. Why would the government not write thresholds into the bill so that we would know what actually warrants a response?

There has been a trend in this short debate over Bill 194 with this government, and it goes something like this. To illustrate my point, Speaker, I'd like to speak to an exchange between member from Kitchener–Conestoga—the really effective, respected member from Kitchener–Conestoga. The exchange was between him, the member from Welland and the member from Trinity–Spadina.

The PC and NDP members brought very legitimate concerns regarding escalation from American jurisdictions and how that could do further harm to Ontario businesses.

The member from Trinity–Spadina responded: “It doesn’t mean that we will do it, if this legislation passes; I’m just saying that this is giving us the legal tool to do so, if necessary.”

To me, that makes sense. This bill enables the government, unfortunately, though, to sit on the fence and do nothing until they decide it’s time to arbitrarily pick a battle. And why do tired, old governments pick a battle? They do it so there’s a distraction; they do it so they can find a villain that the white knight can go up and fight against.

But guess what, Speaker? Ontario is seeing through this act. They want a government that is acting in good judgment. They want a government acting on behalf of Ontarians, as opposed to one trying to find a way to posture as we lead into the election on June 7.

This is cynical public policy at its worst; that’s what Bill 194 is. Right before an election, we see this government suddenly claim that it cares about Ontario businesses and workers. We don’t agree with that; we have not seen proof of that for years.

Another trend we saw in the debate is when we saw the PC members stand, time and time again, to show that this government stood idly by while 300,000 manufacturing jobs left the province or were just shut down.

When the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex joined the debate, he shared the fact that an automotive supplier in Strathroy had to shut down its plant. The fact is, 300 people from his community lost their jobs. That has a ripple effect across southwestern Ontario. This government is blind to the fact that, when it comes to the automotive industry, parts of a car pass through the border eight times before the finished product actually takes to the road. They completely don’t get that, and they are jeopardizing so much.

Another trend that we saw is that our members spoke of rising hydro rates. If this government truly cared about manufacturing and truly cared about procurement of products, they, for goodness’ sake, would take a look at what they themselves have done. Take a look in the mirror. I encourage the Premier and the rest of her tired Liberal government to look in the mirror and actually accept the fact that it’s because of their bad policy decisions that we have lost so many jobs in Ontario. In fact, this procurement piece of legislation is anything but fair. The title, quite frankly, is a joke. If they really cared about jobs in Ontario, they would be addressing the cheaper hydro rates that are luring businesses across the border into New York.

The member from Leeds–Grenville made an excellent point, and I’m going to quote him directly. He said, “Given what this government has done to hydro rates, you can imagine what their sales pitch is. One business gave me this comparison, so listen up over there: In Massena, New York, the all-in price for electricity is 2.5 cents per kilowatt hour.” Guess what it is in Ontario? “In Ontario, the cost is 17 cents plus HST. That’s the imbalance, Speaker, that’s costing us jobs, and this bill is not going to answer it. You know what’s going to answer it? The fix to this problem is going to come on June 7.”

Perhaps Ontario businesses do not need this legislation; perhaps they need a government that actually, once and for all, listens to their concerns before pushing ahead with their own priorities.

In my leadoff, I referenced energy prices and their effect on our economy. Does this bill help that at all? Not at all. In fact, we have seen the Auditor General’s value-for-money audits of this government grow thicker and thicker every year.

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Have the Liberals included in the bill a provision that mentions the public interest at all? No. Sadly, the answer is no, Speaker. This glaring omission means that whatever action this government decides to take, we will not know the cost of these measures on government entities or broader public sector entities. This means that Bill 194 could make health care more expensive. It could make post-secondary education more expensive. It could make children’s aid more expensive. And of course, it could make electricity more expensive in this province as well.

This bill puts everything on the table. It allows the government to respond in a way that only they see fit, and in a way that is self-serving to them and them alone.

Ironically, with this time allocation motion, they have shown again that when given an inch, they’re going to take a mile. They’re that desperate.

I would like to read a quote from the member from St. Catharines: “Time and again, the government puts the boots to the opposition in this Legislature, as it has this afternoon with this time allocation motion—more ominous, more sinister every time.”

I wonder if he’s recognizing that in his own government right now. I too have never seen a time allocation motion as ominous as the one before us this morning, one that goes as far as to bypass the whole committee process.

In conclusion, Speaker, I think we should all recognize here today that the motion before us is very troubling, and it cannot be supported. Time allocation motions can serve a purpose at times. However, tabling a bill, answering none of our questions, ending debate, removing our ability to bring forward amendments at committee, turning a deaf ear to stakeholders and all of Ontarians, and then actually cutting third reading debate to a mere 30 minutes is a sign that this government is done. They’re done, and they need to check out on June 7.

Every single member of this House should be concerned, if not disgusted. This bill is two to five pages long. It wasn’t even properly translated into French. How long could clause-by-clause have realistically taken?

I will specifically say that the member from Nickel Belt astutely noticed—and I mentioned it earlier—that the French title of this bill is incorrect, and it needed to be changed. But is she going to have a chance to bring that good amendment forward? No. This government just doesn’t want to listen to anyone because they are embarrassed by this dismal legislation that they’re bringing through.

I can recall, during Bill 172 in the last Parliament, that the government brought forward amendment after

amendment after amendment because there were so many issues with the bill. They used the committee process to actually fix their mistakes. I was embarrassed for that side of the House.

The French title is one, and my colleagues and I have identified so many others. But none of these potential amendments will ever see the light of day if this government has their way yet again—all because this government refuses to allow the legislative process to proceed. This government refuses to listen to Ontarians.

Speaker, this week, we have seen member after member from both the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democratic Party stand up and argue against the tone and timing of this bill. It cannot be supported.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I am not going to say that I'm pleased to be participating in this debate. Quite frankly, I find this a little bit sad for this institution that we all serve.

Some of us were around here before we had time allocation. I know the member from St. Catharines and a few others were here when the standing orders were such that a government actually had to call a bill and have it debated. Yes, at times it took a while to get a bill through. But what would normally happen was, there was sort of an agreement between the parties about which bills they wanted to have more time on and which bills they got along on and agreed on. So some bills would go faster. You might have a couple of hours' debate at second reading. We would refer it off to committee, and it would do what it had to do and would come back.

Since we've had time allocation brought in—and I'm going to say this in the debate, because somebody's going to say, "Oh, yeah, the NDP." Listen, every government had their hand in changing the standing orders. In my view, it has been a mistake. I think this motion is the pinnacle of how bad a time allocation motion can be.

We have a bill that New Democrats support. We support the general intent of what the government is trying to do here. We think there needs to be some changes. The government has a bill that we generally agree with, and I'll get into that in a second as to why, but there's some difficulty with the bill.

There are probably changes that have to be made at committee on reflection and reading of the bill, and normally that's done; it's automatic. We refer all our bills to committee. In this case, the reason I say this is probably one of the worst time allocations I've seen since I've been here: The bill says we get a very short time at debate this afternoon, like as with this morning, as we're doing now. By the looks of it, there are going to be 40 minutes from the official opposition and 40 minutes from the NDP. The government is not taking their time. There will be a vote and then, the next time the government decides to call the bill, there will be a total of 30 minutes. But the real kicker is that there is no time in committee. We're going straight from second reading directly to third. I think that's a mistake, and it's a problem for this institution.

Committees are where we go back and not only fix bills as far as noticing there may be some drafting errors or some policy parts that we need to fix in the bill, but it gives a chance for the public to come before us and say, "Hey, here's what I like about this bill. Here's what I don't like about the bill. Here are the ideas I have about how you can make it better." The government has decided not to do that in this case. They've decided to have a time allocation motion that excludes the public, that completely cuts out the committee process and refers the bill directly to third reading once the vote happens in this House. I think that is dangerous when it comes to how we draft legislation.

I heard some of the government members on the other side a while ago say, "Oh, yes, but we have to do that because the Conservatives rang some bells yesterday." Those are the standing orders. The standing orders of the Legislature allow the opposition some tools—not very many, I will argue—to try to keep the government to account. At times, they will ring bells. It was the first time I had seen bells rung in this place in probably a couple of years, but I think that only means that the Conservative Party had reasons why they wanted to do that. Now, I may agree or disagree with them ringing bells. In fact, we voted against the ringing of the bells when it came to the vote, but it's their right. It's the ability of any opposition party to be able to hold the government to account by the rules that are set out in the standing orders.

Here's the difficulty. When I listen to government members across the way say, "Oh, we had to do it because you guys are ringing bells," it just shows the arrogance of the government and, I think, the lack of understanding on the part of some members—I would not say all, but some members—as to how this place should work. If you think you're really helping Ontario by short-shrifting the committee process and moving a bill from second to third reading, I've got a rude awakening for you: You're not. At the end of the day, committees serve a useful purpose in the drafting of legislation.

When a Parliament or a Legislature decides that it's in its best interest—in this case, the government, because they are the majority—to do those kinds of things and keep public out, it is a form of tyranny. I know that's a strong word to be used in this Legislature. I know there may be some on the other side who are maybe a little bit upset that I would use such a term, but it is a form of tyranny in the sense that the government is utilizing its majority to not just cut out the opposition but, more importantly, cut out the public. The way this Legislature is designed, and the beauty of the legislative process, is that the public always gets its opportunity to have its say.

These days, under the Liberal government and, before that, under the Tories, we didn't get as much time in committee on bills that I would like. I remember, as the member from St. Catharines does, that we used to have bills that would go into committee in the spring and they'd be back in the fall because the committee work needed to be done in order to make the bill better. It's

just the process. We used to take a lot longer to draft bills and pass them through the process. It used to take a lot longer in the past, and for a good reason. It allowed the public to come and talk to us and tell us what's good, what's bad and how to change it. There was a real exchange between the opposition and the government. I was on the government side at one point of that process, and I was on the opposition side for the other part, and the point is, there was a real exchange. The government said, "Well, you know what? They've got a good point here. How do we change this? This is embarrassing for us." We used all of the political considerations, but at the end of the day, there was a free exchange of, "Okay; how are we going to make this happen?"

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I've used the example—and I'm not going to go into it in any detail—but I use the sustainable forestry development act that we did or the skidoo trails legislation that the Conservatives did. When those bills went into committee, we made those bills much, much better as a result of involving the public. The opposition members, in the case of both those bills, really were a part of making those bills better. They still stand today and have not been amended. They have stood the test of time because they had the proper time to be able to do the work that had to be done, get the public involved so that we can hear all sides, and to draft regulation—not draft regulation; that's a whole other issue—but to draft amendments to the bill that made it a lot stronger.

I just say to the government across the way: You think that you're being very clever and wise. You think that this will just fix one of your little political problems because you want to be able to wave something going into the next election. Heck, if you're going to run over the public to get there and if you're prepared to use your majority in order to squeeze out the public and the participation of this place, I don't think that's a good thing. I quite think that that's actually pretty bad in all things.

As far as the bill itself—I know I've got caucus members who want to speak, so I'm not going to do much longer, because I know there are a few people that want to speak, right?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes, but you could go much longer.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I could go much longer. I could go much longer; I've been known to do that. But I just want to say this to the bill: Do we have a problem with trade with the United States at this point? Absolutely. We have the most unstable trade situation right now, given the current administration and given the mood in the United States as to what has happened over the last number of years in their economy. Legislators and the administration have been doing things in order to protect their side of the border when it comes to economic activity, and some of it very unfairly.

The one that jumps out is the Bombardier deal. Boeing, which is heavily subsidized by the American military—because you'll know that in the United States,

when you build an airplane, a 777 or whatever it might be, as a passenger jet, the money that allows Boeing to operate doesn't strictly come from commercial sales. A large part of it comes from government sales, which is, in their case, the military, when it comes to building for their four armed forces, if you include the Marines. It's sizable amounts of money.

My point is, Boeing and other aircraft manufacturers—and there's only really Boeing these days in the States as the big one—get subsidized quite heavily by the Americans when it comes to operating their company. If I have a branch of my company and it makes a lot of money as a result of government contracts, I can afford to build the commercial airplane for maybe a little bit less. So to make the argument that they're not subsidizing, I think, is a bit ridiculous.

In the case of Bombardier, Bombardier was slapped with—what was it? a 300% tariff? I think it was 300%. There was a 300% tariff put on the sale of Bombardier equipment from Canada into the United States. We did what we had to do. We went off to the various tribunals and mechanisms by which we defend ourselves in these trade situations, and guess what? There was no case by the United States to slap on a 300% tariff, and they had to take it out.

The point is: We need to have a trade system and we need to have mechanisms in our trade system that allow those types of situations to not run away on us so that the government of a state or the government of a country, such as the United States, can't all of a sudden decide on a whim, because they're being lobbied by some organization, to slap a tariff, and goes on and slaps it. You need to have mechanisms to deal with it. The government, in this particular case, is saying by way of this legislation, "If there are going to be unfair practices in the United States and they unfairly treat Ontario manufacturers and service providers, then we will mirror what they're doing on this side of the border."

We're not going to lead. We're not going to do it ourselves and say, "Well, we're doing this and we don't care what you're doing." We are saying, as I understand in this legislation, that should a state decide to do something that affects trade between our province and their state, we would mirror simply what they are doing. It's not what you would like to do. I don't think anybody in this House likes the idea that we have to get to this point. But I can understand why the government is doing it. They want to be able to run around going into the next election and say, "Look at what we've done," and they don't want anybody saying anything negative on this legislation, because anybody that says anything negative could take away from the shiny bauble that they will have running into the next election with this particular piece of legislation. They made a political decision in order to not have this bill going to committee, so that people are not able to come before the committee and to say what they think is wrong with the bill or what has to be changed with the bill. That's a really disturbing part.

The other point I just want to raise, because it gives me an opportunity to get into it, is the softwood lumber

dispute. Canada and the United States entered into, first, the free trade agreement and NAFTA some years ago. Mr. Speaker, you were probably on the picket lines with me marching against those trade agreements when they were being negotiated, because we felt at that time that the deal and the way that it was negotiated was problematic for Canada. There would be job losses. And, in fact, it turned out to be that way. Unfortunately, we lost a lot of manufacturing in Ontario as a result of free trade and other pressures that made costs go up on our side of the border and moved the production into the United States, or into Mexico once we got into NAFTA. That was facilitated by the NAFTA agreements. But the one good thing about NAFTA, and this was something that the federal government had negotiated into the provisions of chapter 19, is that we have a dispute resolution mechanism. That dispute resolution mechanism simply says this: If there's a trade dispute, either Canada, the United States or Mexico has the right to be able to raise the trade dispute at this panel.

The interesting thing about the panel—the panel is made up of experts chosen by each of the three countries. I can't remember how many. I think there are 10 or 20 each that we put up and nominate. But they are trade experts. They are people that understand the intricacy of the trade issues between Canada, Mexico and the United States when it comes to the various sectors of our economy: forestry, manufacturing, resources, oil and gas, etc. So we have these experts on the panel that are not necessarily political appointees. In fact, they're not political appointees. When they look at the trade dispute and they are asked to make a decision, they are doing it based on law and based on what the actual facts are. We have been quite fortunate that that particular chapter 19 provision has served us well in the forest industry, in that, every time the United States has slapped a duty, as they have this time, and put a tariff on wood going from Canada to the United States, each and every time, we've won. The only one we had a problem with was the last one. We were winning it and the federal government decided to negotiate away a billion dollars' worth of the money that was held by the United States and gave it back to them. I think that was wrong. We should never have allowed that to happen. But that was the choice of the federal government.

The point is, Mr. Trump is making noises—and I don't know if he's going to go there, but he is certainly making noises in that direction. His administration, along with other lawmakers in the United States, are talking about weakening the provisions of chapter 19 so that the panel would be made up of political appointees. So I'm Mr. Trump and I get to appoint who is on that panel. And do you think that those appointees are going to be in any way influenced by the person that appointed them? Well, absolutely. You are there as Mr. Trump's person on the panel and you will have instructions as to what the decision should be once the panel hears the case.

Canada, and rightfully so, is pushing back on that and saying we should not allow the panel and the provisions

of chapter 19 to be weakened, because as bad as NAFTA has been for our economy—and I have a lot of colleagues here who have lost plenty of jobs as a result of NAFTA and free trade, in Sudbury, St. Catharines, Timmins and different places. As bad as it has been, the one thing that has helped us has been chapter 19 when it comes to at least trying to maintain the stuff that's left. There is already a lot of manufacturing that is gone, but at least we're able to protect some of the stuff that we have here against unfair trade practices by the United States.

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With that, Mr. Speaker—I know that other members of my caucus want to speak—I just want to say one more time to the government: This is the grandfather of all time allocation motions that you have brought forward. The fact that you bring back a time allocation motion on a bill that limits debate at second reading, I can live with. You've been doing that for a while. I don't like it, but I get it. But the fact that you've excluded the public by saying that this bill will not go to committee and it will go straight to third reading for a 30-minute debate to me says that this government is tired, it is done, and the quicker we get rid of it, the better we're going to be.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: Before I start, it's March 1 today, and my wife and I have been married 22 years today. I want to wish her a happy anniversary. We're looking forward to going out tonight for dinner. To Rita, happy anniversary.

I will say—and my colleague touched on it a lot better than I probably can on the time allocation—obviously stakeholders should have the opportunity to come and present on Bill 194. I think it's a big mistake. They shouldn't be cutting off debate.

I'd like to thank you for allowing me to speak today. I think most of the members in this House know what the situation behind this bill is. Obviously, in the United States, we're facing an issue where the President and certain states have forged themselves an America First policy. We're looking at our largest trading partner talking about cutting off ties with us because they believe somehow that will create jobs. Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the evidence points in the opposite direction.

I'm an auto worker. I spent my entire life representing auto workers, and I believe our auto sector is a perfect example of why this American policy is flawed. When you're making a car, the parts in that car will cross the border on average six to seven times before that car is completed—back and forth. If you look at the auto sector, you can see this clearly. If you look at an assembly plant, they're based around major routes that allow parts to move quickly up and down the highway.

That's why we're so strong in supporting the GO train and public transit in the NDP. When the highway is clogged, it slows the transit of parts like these. When those parts get slowed down, manufacturing slows down, and when that slows down, people start getting laid off

and losing their jobs. Keeping our highways congestion-free is not only good for the environment; it's necessary to maintain good-paying jobs. I know that the Speaker worked in the steel industry and he knows exactly what I'm talking about.

But what happens when the border closes? We've seen just a small, small part of this happening. Delays at the border cost our province and our nation millions of dollars. We've all seen it. You pull up to the border on a busy weekend, and there are 10 booths but only two are open. It's not the workers' fault. They're trying to keep up the best they can, but it's a staffing issue.

I know this is a federal issue, Mr. Speaker, but it's a good example of what can happen here when manufactured goods have trouble crossing our borders. The federal government can and should resolve this issue, particularly around staffing.

We have people all over Niagara—and I know the Liberals are listening to this, I think; maybe not. We have people all over Niagara looking for jobs, who would love to work at the border, but unfortunately that's not how it works. So we end up with borders being understaffed and workers being overworked while we have people willing to work within that town.

But it causes other problems too, and automotive parts, in my eyes, is the best example. Steel and plastic are all good examples. Mr. Speaker, it's the best example because it's the most important export that we have in Ontario. These are industries that provide good-paying jobs with benefits and pensions. When your parts slow down, we start producing less, and it starts to be a risk to have an automotive plant here in Canada.

I want to be clear because I listened to the—it tells you how exciting my life is; I actually watched the debate last night around 10 o'clock on TV on CPAC just to get an idea of what parties were saying about this Bill 194. It is rich, with the Conservatives—I want them to listen to it—when they stand up and talk about protecting good manufacturing jobs in the province of Ontario. Do you know what they said about the auto sector? I was there. Nobody can deny this. I was at the bargaining table. I remember the stress that I was under because it looked like the auto sector was in big trouble and we could lose the entire auto sector. We needed the support of all the parties right here in this House—Liberals, NDP, Conservatives—and you know what the Conservatives said about the auto sector? You want to hear it? They said, "Let the auto sector die. We don't pick winners and losers."

Mr. Speaker, you are from steel. If that auto sector had died, it would have affected the steel plants. It would have affected plastics, small manufacturers, advanced manufacturers. But they said, "Let it die."

I was at the bargaining table at that time, and the stress that we were under was incredible. We were going 72 hours around the clock trying to get a solution. What we didn't need was a party saying, "Let it die."

What they didn't know when they said that was that immediately, if the auto sector had died, the people who I

represented, who I took great pride in representing—it was one of the highlights of my life, being a president of my local union. Immediately, if they were getting a \$1,000 pension—and this is just an example, because they get more than that in pensions—their pension would have gone to \$300; 30%, they would have got on their pensions.

But what was even worse—and we were faced with this at that table—was that the pensioners, and their spouses—our seniors—would have lost their benefits immediately. If the auto sector had died, the very next day they would have been cut off their medication, their heart pills, their diabetes pills; anything they were getting was cut off immediately. So it's a little rich when the PCs stand up like they did yesterday talking about manufacturing.

We should talk, by the way, about how we got into the mess around losing 300,000 manufacturing jobs. Yes, they could have done a better job on the Liberal side, make no mistake about it. You could have. You could have done a lot more. But the reason we lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs was twofold. One was a NAFTA agreement that wasn't—there's nothing wrong with trade. We're a trading nation; we should continue to trade. But it wasn't fair trade. It wasn't reciprocal.

What happened in the auto sector, and why we lost 300,000 jobs—I worked out of a plant in St. Catharines. Before NAFTA came in, you know how many people worked in that plant, Mr. Speaker? Your steel mills were the same way; I know they were. We had 10,000 people working in Niagara, in St. Catharines. Those 10,000 jobs supported a parts sector outside of that, based around the plants. Hayes-Dana was there. There was all kinds of manufacturing. Steel plants were there. All that stuff was there.

When NAFTA came in, because it wasn't reciprocal, those jobs were gone. You go down Ontario Street in St. Catharines today—and I know the member from St. Catharines is here—all there is is a chimney left. That's all that's left there, where there used to be 4,000 jobs.

That's one of the reasons we lost. And who brought in NAFTA? Anybody know?

Mr. James J. Bradley: The Tories.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you. I just wanted to see if anybody knew, if anybody remembered that that's who brought it in. But having said that—

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Mulroney.

Mr. Wayne Gates: You're right. I know who it was.

Having said that, there was another issue that hurt us even further as we went down over a period of time, as we were fighting like crazy, as our plants—steel is the same way. The only reason I say "steel" is because I know my colleague has raised pensions in Hamilton and how hard it has been on your members for a long time and how they've been under attack. I'm saying "steel" because I know a little bit about his situation as well.

What happened is, we decided, under Harper, to have a high Canadian dollar, a petro dollar. That's all it was. It went on for years. Our dollar went from being where it is

today, which is around 79 cents, I think, when I looked yesterday; maybe 78 cents. We should have a Canadian dollar around 80 cents. That's about where our dollar should be: 80 to 82 cents. But because they decided to have a petro dollar, what happened was, our dollar went up. It was driven by the west, we know that, at the expense of our province of Ontario and good-paying manufacturing jobs in a number of sectors. Our dollar went up to a buck 10, a dollar 10, as manufacturers and businesses said, "I can't compete. I can't do this."

You've seen what's happened. Manufacturing has come back. I always said, when I was president of the local and I was on radio station after radio station, "Do not give up on advanced manufacturing. When our dollar goes down, we might get some of those jobs back." And that has happened. But we're never getting the plants that we lost, because of NAFTA and because of the high Canadian dollar.

So if we're going to stand up and talk about trade, we've got to take a look at the big picture. And the big picture is—there are a number of reasons, but there was a blatant attack on the manufacturing sector in the province of Ontario by the PC Party through NAFTA and through a high Canadian dollar. That's how I see it.

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When I talk about letting the auto sector die, like I said, I was watching TV last night and there was steam coming out of my ears when I was listening to this. So I thought I'd raise that this morning, and I'm going to continue to raise it until they at least acknowledge the fact that that's what they said. They've never, ever acknowledged that, and I was at the table, and I'll be honest with you: It just about killed me. Nobody can deny what happened there. I'll be honest with you, it would never have gotten done without some of the parties coming together, but it was really the Obama administration that put its foot down at that round of bargaining and said, "We've got to get it done. We can't allow the auto sector to die in the United States and Canada." We had to get it done, and a resolve was finally come to.

But when you're at a bargaining table and you have a party that says, "Let those jobs go. We don't care about pensioners. We don't care about seniors. We don't care about their spouses," that's a mistake. They should at least acknowledge that it was a mistake.

So we're talking about—I'm sorry; I got off a little bit on that. Obviously I have passion around it. We're talking about tens of thousands of jobs involved with each of these plants. But here's the thing: It's not just about us. The thing about trade is that it has to go both ways. If you close the border on certain products, it's going to hurt Canada. Make no mistake about it. But it is also going to hurt New York; it's going to hurt Ohio; it's going to hurt Michigan and states all along the border. Simply put, it's a terrible idea that's going to hurt workers on both sides of the border.

I'm going to support the bill. But I want to say again: You should not be cutting off the debate. You should be

allowing the stakeholders to come and make presentations. You should be allowing the public to come and make presentations on a bill as important as this. To cut off debate is a mistake. You shouldn't be doing it. I'm going to tell you straight out, Liberals, you should not be doing it on this particular issue. You should be ashamed of yourselves on this one.

I have one major problem with the bill, one question I'd like to ask the Liberal government. If you're worried about trade being unfair or about trade issues hurting our workers, how can you sit there and put your name on the new TPP? You're going to sit there and pretend you care about auto workers with one hand while with the other hand you're signing trade deals that will put the automotive sector at risk again.

Let me be clear: I'm not against trade. But trade has to focus on being fair, reciprocal, benefiting both parties. That's what it's supposed to be about. For decades, we had fair trade with the United States along our border. When one side was producing more of the assembled vehicles, the other side would produce more parts. That's how it's supposed to work, where both benefit.

Yet you have a government that doesn't care about that. You have a government that, alongside their federal counterparts, supports a trade deal that is going to cost workers. Don't take it from me; take it from a Liberal press release. After talking about supporting the deal, the press release said:

"The Premier reiterated her support for new opportunities for free trade, but made clear that the benefits of enhanced trade should not come at the expense of Ontario's auto workers, farmers and food producers. Premier Wynne called on the federal government to fulfill their commitment to provide transitional assistance to help Ontario's automotive and agri-food sectors adjust to the new realities created by the CP-TPP before ratifying the deal. The province is requesting at least \$1.26 billion over 10 years in assistance for the auto sector and at least \$1.4 billion over 10 years for the agri-food sector in Ontario."

So here's the question, Mr. Speaker: If the Premier believes this is good for Ontario, then why are you asking for money to give to workers to cover their losses? That statement makes it clear. She expects the auto sector and she expects agri-food to lose jobs. We don't want to lose jobs in the province of Ontario. We want to create jobs. We want opportunities for our kids and our grandkids. She expects them to take a hit when the government signs this deal. I'm saying to the Liberal government: Say no to an agreement that's going to attack workers in the province of Ontario.

What the government of Ontario is trying to do is soften the blow of a trade deal. But what happens when the money runs out in 10 years? What happens to those workers in the plant who started only a few years ago, our young people, our grandkids? Do their lives and their pensions not matter? Or is this just a problem for another government—push it down the road?

Mr. Speaker, I know I've only got a couple of seconds left. What we see in this bill is an attempt by this govern-

ment to look like they're standing up for workers. Well, if they really cared, why not truly stand up for workers? Why not stand up to the federal government and fight for a fair trade deal, one that actually benefits our workers, like the old auto deals we used to have with the United States?

Here's the problem: Ontario is going it alone. We can't compete head-on against—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'm sorry; the time is allotted.

Debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to introduce one of my constituents to the Legislature: Justin Mawoko, who is here at Queen's Park today with the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers. Welcome to Queen's Park, Justin.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It also gives me pleasure to introduce two of my constituents: Ms. Nadia Aftab, professional engineer, and Ms. Emily Pascual, professional engineer, here with the engineers today.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: On behalf of my colleague the MPP for Ajax–Pickering, Mr. Joe Dickson, it's my pleasure to introduce Mr. Manraj Pannu from Pickering. He is also with the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers.

Welcome to you and all of your colleagues here from the society today.

Mr. Bill Walker: On behalf of my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga, Michael Harris, I'd like to introduce Shelly Deitner, board director of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers and a constituent in Kitchener–Conestoga; Thomas Riedel, a proud member of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers and a constituent in Kitchener–Conestoga; and Arjan Arenja—a little shout-out to the government liaison program chair of the Georgian Bay chapter of the Professional Engineers Ontario.

Miss Monique Taylor: It gives me great pleasure to welcome some guests who have joined me here for the reading of my motion this afternoon. I would like to introduce, from Children's Mental Health Ontario, Alicia Raimundo, Leah Sullivan, Caralyn Quan and Karen Leiva.

Also, from Good Shepherd in Hamilton, we have Alex Chavez, Norma Joaquim, Loretta Hill-Finamore, Salina Brien, Ashlea Clegg, David Da Silva, Tyler Henderson, Tyler L., and Hoden and Sierra Smith.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Laura Albanese: I want to introduce Mr. William Lytwyn. He's a professional engineer with the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, here today at Queen's Park. I would like to welcome him.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to introduce Ingersoll mayor Ted Comiskey and councillor

Marcus Ryan, who are here today for the introduction of my private member's bill, and to share the message that municipalities deserve the right to approve the location of landfills. I want to thank them both for joining us here at Queen's Park.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'd like to welcome representatives from the Canadian Red Cross here today at Queen's Park: Tanya Elliott, the vice-president of the Canadian Red Cross, Ontario; and Tyler Hague, a disaster management officer. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have a number of guests I'd like to introduce today.

Today marks the first annual Professional Engineers Day in Ontario. I want to welcome a few of them to Queen's Park: Jonathan Hack, president and chair of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers; Sandro Peruzzi, chief executive officer of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers; and Miro Forest, a professional engineer and a constituent in Don Valley West, as it happens. I'd like to welcome them all to Queen's Park.

I'd also like to welcome a constituent of mine, Mr. Speaker. It's his first time in the Ontario Legislature. He's a student at the University of Toronto. I want to welcome James Hooks to Queen's Park.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, if you would indulge me, I'd like to introduce the members of my family who are here today. My partner, Jane Rounthwaite, is here. My daughter Jessica Cowperthwaite is here. Her partner, Stanley Wesley, is here, and the three people through whose eyes I see policy every day: Olivia Wesley, Claire Wesley and Hugh Wesley, my grandchildren.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We'll continue with introductions, and I beg the members to be brief and short. We'll get through all of the introductions. Never fear; we will.

Mr. Ross Romano: I want to introduce Jonathan Hack, president and chair of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, and I want to recognize this organization's continued support for the Ring of Fire.

My second introduction: It's very important to me today to introduce my wife—my much, much better half—Heather Mendes. She's in the back gallery here.

You're allowed to wave, dear.

She didn't want to stand and wave.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to welcome, from my riding of Hamilton–Mountain, Mr. Nabeel Nassar, a proud member of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, who is here today to celebrate Professional Engineers Day. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm delighted to acknowledge and welcome Mr. Paul Acchione, a past president and chair of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, who is here with us in the gallery.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I would like to introduce, up in the members' gallery, the executive director of PANDAS/PANS Ontario, Kerry Henrikson, and her son, Jonah; and Erin Kwarciak, Janet Trider, Ellen Nicol, Erica Mills, Mike Boland, Doreen Crombie and Don Crombie, to support me in my private member's bill today on PANDAS/PANS.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to introduce Mr. Brian Smith, a constituent of Waterloo and a proud member of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I would like to extend a warm welcome to the professional engineers who are here today, including Ms. Anita Sparre, who is a member of the Ontario society and a constituent of the town of Milton, and also, my good friend Marisa Sterling, who is here today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

If I may, I also extend a warm welcome to Tanya Elliott of the Red Cross, who is also a good friend.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Today is the professional engineers' of Ontario's special day. To commemorate it, they're having a reception.

I have Mr. Tim Kirkby here; Roger Jones, from the executive; and Yousef Kimiagar. They're all proud members of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'd like to welcome an engineer who is no stranger to here: Jeannette Chau, from Mississauga, a very special guest. Welcome.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Today I would like to welcome three students who are visiting us from the Orillia campus of Lakehead University. Sami Pritchard, Aaron Hiltz and Jessica Kearney are at Queen's Park today with the Canadian Federation of Students. Welcome.

Also, on behalf of the member from Trinity-Spadina, the page captain today is Reed Benzie. I would like to introduce his mother, Rhonda McMichael, and his sister, Ella Benzie. They are in the public gallery this morning. Welcome.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'd like to introduce the following guest from Mississauga: Ms. Jeannette Chau, professional engineer and manager of the government liaison programs at Professional Engineers Ontario, a proud member of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers and, of course, a proud resident of the great city of Mississauga. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's a great pleasure to welcome Gisoo Akhavan, who is an international student from Iran. She's studying at Glendon college, York University.

As a former engineer, with a small "e," I also want to welcome all engineers to the Ontario Legislature as we celebrate March 1, engineering day in Ontario. Welcome.

Hon. Harinder Malhi: I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Lawrence St-Onge, who is a proud member of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers and a constituent of my riding of Brampton-Springdale.

Hon. Michael Chan: I'm delighted to rise in the House today to introduce Mr. Kam Leong and Mr. Paymon Sani-Bakhtiari. They are proud members of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, and they live in Markham.

I would also like to welcome Maxford Thomson to Queen's Park today. He's not living in Markham; he's from Australia.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Kingston-based members of the Ontario

Society of Professional Engineers, including Sadiq Bdour.

As well, my very best wishes and welcome to Kingston-based OSPE member and past director Steve Rose. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: On Professional Engineers Day, I want to welcome all the professional engineers to Queen's Park, and especially my constituent Mr. Peter Chackeris, professional engineer. Welcome.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It's my pleasure to welcome all of the engineers visiting here today on the first Professional Engineers Day here in Ontario.

A special shout-out goes to Sandro Perruzza, who is CEO of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers and a friend; another good friend, Marisa Sterling, who was just recently elected as the vice-president of Professional Engineers Ontario; and a huge shout-out to two engineers from my riding of Davenport, Mr. Alberto Quiroz and Mr. Benjamin Hendry. Welcome.

1040

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, please join me in welcoming, from the beautiful riding of Dufferin-Caledon, in the Speaker's gallery, Lauren McDonald.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: We're all celebrating Professional Engineers Day in Ontario and welcoming them to Queen's Park today. I'd like to extend a special welcome to Jonathan Hack, who is the president and chair of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers and a proud constituent of mine from Burlington. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to welcome Mehemed Delibasic and Ian McDougall, who are constituents of mine. They are here today at Queen's Park to celebrate Professional Engineers Day.

Hon. David Zimmer: Reed Benzie is the page captain today. He has been introduced, his mother has been introduced, and his sister has been introduced, but his proud father, Robert Benzie, who is sitting up here with his camera, should be introduced also.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I also would like to introduce two engineer constituents of mine: Arthur Sinclair and Marisa Sterling, who of course has been introduced a few times.

I've also got Erica Mills here. She's here to support the member from Sarnia-Lambton's private member's motion on PANDAS/PANS.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'd like to introduce three guests who are here: Ms. Emily Thorn Corthay, who is the board director of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers and a constituent of Etobicoke Centre; Ms. Marilyn Spink, who is the vice-president of Professional Engineers Ontario, a political action network member of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers and a constituent of Etobicoke Centre; and Mr. George Comrie, who is a past president of Professional Engineers Ontario, a member of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers and a constituent of Etobicoke Centre. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: You're obviously saving the best till last, Speaker. I'd like to introduce three

constituents of Oakville who are here for our province's very first Professional Engineers Day: Dr. Tom Murad, who is the head of Siemens engineering and a proud member of OSPE; Mukul Asthana, member of the research and innovation task force; Oakville constituent Sandro Perruzza, the chief executive officer; and Jeffrey Lee, who works for the town of Oakville. Please finally welcome them to Queen's Park, Speaker.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Just on the off chance that there's an engineer here today who hasn't been welcomed yet: Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Chris Ballard: There are a couple of great engineers from my riding of Newmarket–Aurora. Robert Baynit and Oscar Bazante are both professional engineers and both from Newmarket.

Hon. David Zimmer: Two of Ontario's finest engineers are here from Willowdale: Nanda Lwin and Sell Selvarajan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Anyone else? The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to welcome all the children here in the Legislature today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As you can see, we do have some guests in the Speaker's gallery today. I would like to introduce one of our commissioners and the staff who are here. We have with us today Lauren McDonald, Aroona Shahid, Jessica Pellerin, Cara Des Granges, Jennifer Pain-Andrejin, Nina Jhooti, Yasmine Jeofry, Shikha Vyas, Deborah Danis, Lalitha Flach, and the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario, Greg Essensa. Welcome. Thank you for joining us today.

We do thank them for all the work that they do during election time. We appreciate the hard work that all of your staff do to have an election run that is comparable to anything in the world. We appreciate your work.

We also have with us today in the gallery a student delegation. These are our future political leaders in the United States of America, and I know we would want to welcome them. This is the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies from Richmond, Virginia. Welcome.

There being no further—I suspect there is one more introduction to do. The member from Durham.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Not an introduction.

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would call upon the member from Durham on a point of order.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe you will find we have unanimous consent that members be permitted to wear pins today to recognize Professional Engineers Day. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Durham is seeking unanimous consent to wear the pins. Do we agree? Agreed.

PROVINCIAL VOTER REGISTRATION MONTH

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I think we have another point of order.

Point of order: the member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Speaker. I believe you will find we have unanimous consent that members be permitted to wear pins to commemorate Provincial Voter Registration Month, and, in recognition of the month, have a representative from each caucus speak for up to two minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member is seeking unanimous consent to wear the pins and for up to two minutes to have each party recognized. Do we agree? Agreed.

The member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Speaker. I'm delighted to take this two-minute opportunity to welcome Mr. Essensa to the House, and his staff.

Voting is the cornerstone of our democratic privileges here in the province and across all democratic institutions in the world. Registration is that first step that we need to do in order to exercise our democratic privilege. This being Provincial Voter Registration Month, I'm delighted to announce that Elections Ontario has found a very important new way for people to register. They're helping remove barriers for Ontario voters in order to get them registered, to facilitate their ability to vote on election day, or in the days leading up during advance polls.

Voting was a privilege that my father imprinted on me at a very young age. My dad ran in 1963 for the Ontario Liberals. At the age of six, I had the opportunity to campaign with him and go into the voting booth when he signed his first ballot. It's a tradition that I carried on with my children, to ensure they were fully familiar with the voting process, and I'm pleased to say that my daughters, Robin and Dara, are active participants in the electoral system. They make sure they're registered in every location where they live, so they have a chance to exercise their democratic right.

Elections Ontario has launched its new tool that will modernize the voter registration process and help meet the needs of Ontarians who are used to accessing information online. We have a new online service, so that there will be no excuse. I would encourage all those who are watching today to disseminate the information that they can go to eregistration.elections.on.ca and register, to be sure their names are there.

Speaker, as you know, when you file your taxes, you can check off a box on your tax return to make sure you're registered to vote in the federal system and the provincial system, so that your name is attached to your residence where you're filing your taxes. I, of course, encourage everybody in this taxation season to be sure to do just that, so our lists are as up to date as possible.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: It's an honour to speak on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and our leader, Vic Fedeli, to

speak in support of Provincial Voter Registration Month in Ontario.

Ontarians should take great pride in our strong and enduring democracy, especially when we look to troubled places around the world where the basic right of citizens to decide who represents them doesn't exist. The right to cast a ballot without fear or intimidation is something generations of brave Canadian soldiers put their lives on the line to defend. We must never take it for granted, nor can we become complacent by assuming our system is perfect.

Many members of this Legislature join me in expressing grave concerns about the state of our voters list following the 2014 provincial election. Casting a ballot for a candidate of your choice is a fundamental act in any democracy, but it's only part of the process. If people aren't registered and don't have the information about where or when they vote, they'll never get to mark a ballot. They are disenfranchised, Speaker. That's what was happening in too many cases in my riding and across the province. So I'm so very pleased that Elections Ontario has recognized this problem and has launched this initiative to ensure that every Ontarian who is eligible to vote is registered. Ontario PCs are proud to stand with all the parties today to proclaim the month of March as Provincial Voter Registration Month.

1050

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I rise on behalf of Andrea Horwath, leader of the NDP, and our caucus in order to congratulate our friends at Elections Ontario for this initiative. I think it has been said how important it is that people can find themselves on election lists when they go to the ballot box to exercise their right to vote.

Unfortunately, it's becoming more and more of a problem. Although this is a step in the right direction—nobody's going to say this is a bad idea; in fact it's quite a good idea—I hearken back to a day when you had people who went out and actually did enumeration, so that when you got to the door, the enumerator would show up, and they would find out who's living in that house, that apartment, and how many voters were eligible to vote. It would be on the list, the corrections would be made, and you would have a list that reflected who's in the community and who's able to vote.

How many times have we all seen in our own individual ridings, in our elections, on all sides of the House, somebody show up at poll 23, but they're registered somewhere else? They've got to be able to get in their car, if they have one, and get from point A to point B in order to be able to vote again, or they've got to go through a pretty elaborate process at the poll. In fact, I remember that happening in your by-election when I was helping my brother, hoping that he would be here instead of you. But congratulations nonetheless.

It is an issue that we need to deal with. What's happening is, our electronic lists for voting are not as accurate as they need to be. Our leader raised that yesterday in the debate that took place at Ryerson, and she was

right. We really need to have a system so that every voter who is able to vote, who is a citizen of the right age, is able to find themselves on the list, listed at the proper poll, so that they can execute their democratic franchise.

Is this a good initiative, what Elections Ontario is doing? Yes, but it shouldn't be the only one. We should go back to door-to-door enumeration so everybody gets on the list and we have less confusion on election day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their comments and again, one more time, re-inforce our gratitude and thanks to the commissioner and his staff for the work that they do during our elections. I appreciate it very much.

NOBLE VILLENEUVE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I therefore call upon the member from Simcoe–Grey on another point of order.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to commemorate the passing of Noble Villeneuve. Noble served in this House from 1983 to 1999 for the riding of Stormont–Dundas–Glengarry and East Grenville. He's a former minister responsible for francophone affairs and a former Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe–Grey is seeking unanimous consent for a moment of silence. Do we agree? Agreed.

I would ask all members in the entire House to please rise to show respect for Noble Villeneuve.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): God rest his soul.

It is therefore time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier.

The Liberals today debated one of the most appalling time allocation motions this Legislature may have ever seen. As the government tries to stop debate on their flawed Buy American bill—

Interjections.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: The truth hurts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not helpful.

Indicators are that we need to go to warnings, and I will. The next outburst, we'll go to warnings.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: As the government tries to stop debate on their flawed Buy American bill, they are flying in the face of democracy. It is an affront to this House and to all members. They are not allowing any committee hearings in Ontario and only 30 minutes of debate—30 minutes to discuss legislation attacking our biggest trading partners.

There is no longer any doubt, Speaker, that this bill is simply a crass political ploy. How can the Premier stand in this House and support such an affront to democracy?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am standing in this House and standing up for the workers in this province and standing up for the businesses in this province. I find it quite remarkable that the Leader of the Opposition would not understand how important it is that we support and stand up for the businesses and the workers in this province—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Both sides have had their turn at it. We're now in warnings.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Our government values the deep and long-term relationship that we have had with the United States. I just came back from Washington. I met with 38 governors, with congresspeople and with senators. The impression that we are leaving in the States and the work that we're doing to bring people together to push back against the protectionist wave that is going across that country—that is something that is very important to the well-being of the economy of this province. I would have thought that he would have understood that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: They are stopping debate when they don't have any idea of the impact of this legislation.

Inside Trade magazine asked the Premier, "Was there any analysis done to determine if your bill would be WTO-compliant?" The answer: "There's always a legal analysis and I actually don't know the degree of risk."

They asked, "Are you worried that this might be illegal at the WTO, that this might result in a challenge in Geneva?" The Premier: "We're pretty sure that we're okay...."

"Pretty sure" isn't good enough. They were pretty sure that Windstream was NAFTA-compliant, but now we're still on the hook for millions. Is the Premier pretty sure she's okay with stopping debate on a bill that could end up in the courts?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I am absolutely certain of is that it is extremely important for us to have a proportional response to protectionism on the part of the United States. It is absolutely critical that, in this time of uncertainty, we establish that we are going to protect and we are going to support the workers and the businesses of this province. We don't want to get into a trade war with the United States—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All right. We're there. The member from Huron-Bruce is warned.

Finish please, Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The last thing we want is a trade war with the United States, but we must respond. We are working extremely hard to make sure that everyone who has a decision-making role in the NAFTA discussions understands how integrated our economies

are. But if there are Buy American policies that are going to threaten our businesses and workers, we're going to make a proportional response, and the opposition should be supportive of that.

Interjections.

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

I've got two on my radar now—because of my standing.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: "The Ontario Chamber of Commerce believes that the best approach for Ontario is the formation of positive bilateral co-operation with our American neighbours," not retaliatory legislation.

The editor of the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. The President of the Treasury Board is warned.

Finish, please.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: The editor of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives magazine is quoted as saying, "Reality is US states have a WTO carve-out permitting Buy American while Ontario restrictions on US bids will be illegal."

But it's clear this crass political ploy will only lead to more trouble down the road, whether it's directly with a state or with the World Trade Organization.

Is the Premier still pretty sure the bill won't hurt Ontario's businesses? Because I think the answer is pretty clear.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, let's just finish the quote that the member opposite started. This is the quote that he began, from Rocco Rossi, who is the president and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

1100

He said: "The Ontario Chamber of Commerce believes that the best approach for Ontario is the formation of positive bilateral co-operation with our American neighbours. This is the approach the Premier and her government have taken to date and they must continue to do so...."

"We acknowledge the province has already been active on this through their state engagement strategy."

Mr. Speaker, we are on this. We've been on this long before the opposition even was aware that there was an issue. We recognize that meeting with folks in the States—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's pretty difficult to ask any one individual to stop when both sides are yelling back and forth at each other, but I can find you.

You have a wrap-up.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We recognize that working hand in hand with our federal government to deepen relationships in the United States is important, and we've been doing that. But we're also going to stand up for Ontario businesses and workers.

Mr. John Yakabuski: So you're saying this is just a political question.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

New question.

HOME CARE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, when questioned about the SEIU-backed home care agency, the Premier said, “We are working with personal support workers. We are working with the people who are on the front line ... We’re going to do that, we’re going to support them.”

Speaker, that can’t quite be correct, because the Ontario Personal Support Workers Association doesn’t support this agency and 95% of the providers are suing the government. Will the Liberals actually work with PSWs and scrap this home care agency?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said yesterday, we are talking about the people who are doing the important work of caring for the most vulnerable people in our society, whether it’s the aged or whether it is people with disabilities, providing care for folks in our communities who otherwise would not be able to have dignity.

The work of PSWs is incredibly important, which is exactly why we have been working with them. It’s exactly why we delivered on our commitment to raise the new base wage for publicly funded PSWs to \$16.50 an hour. We made it clear that they had not seen increases and they needed to be supported. We created the \$10-million PSW training fund, which has supported training and education for PSWs working in home and community care.

We believe that the people who are doing this work need to be supported, and they need and deserve to have a professional organization. That’s why we’ve been working with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Again, when questioned about the SEIU-backed home care agency, the Liberals cited other countries and states that use this model.

Washington state: Great; that’s one rife with controversy, alleged malfeasance and several lawsuits. They mentioned Australia, which actually does not use a central government agency. In fact, none of the countries the Liberals referenced have created a central government agency outside of that one in the US.

The Ontario model does not make sense—not for patients, not for providers, not for PSWs. It is clear this is only for the SEIU. I again ask: Will the Liberals scrap this agency?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To what the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care said yesterday, let’s just make sure we understand that what we’re trying to do is make sure that people who need the services of PSWs have choice, that they have the opportunity to get—

Mr. Steve Clark: Oh, we understand: donations first. That’s how your government operates.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —are able to get the care when they need it and where they need it.

So, to that end, we’ve committed further investments to PSWs in our 2017 budget, including a continued investment of \$250 million in 2017-18 for community and personal support services, and up to \$10 million annually for eligible organizations for education and training in the home and community care sector through that PSW training fund. These investments will help meet the increased demand.

We recognize that there’s increased demand. We recognize that there is pressure on PSWs, which is why we are working with them to make sure that they have the tools to deliver, as I’ve said, the care that people need, and that patients have access to the choice that they are looking for.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Eleven agencies that represent 95% of the providers are suing the Liberal government. Their judicial application reads, “Home care patients, including those who would be served by the agency under the ministry’s plan, are amongst the most vulnerable individuals in Ontario, and the government’s unilateral decision to create the agency will cause distress, confusion and anxiety.”

The agency will cause distress, confusion and anxiety. It’s shameful that the government is proceeding.

Mr. Speaker, is a home care system full of distress, confusion and anxiety really the best system for Ontario?

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

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Let’s be very clear about what we are talking about when we’re talking about our model for self-directed care. We estimate that only 1% of all home care clients in Ontario would be eligible for the services of this PSW-employing organization. The program will only be implemented in a small number of regions in the province at the outset. Some four LHINs will be involved. These self-directed care initiatives will be subject to the most rigorous third-party evaluation based on looking at cost effectiveness, and I think the most important piece is client satisfaction.

Our goal is to look after clients in their homes with a particular model where there is continuity of care, where the PSW involved is totally involved in—

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

New question.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Premier. Donna Simmonds is an 87-year-old constituent of mine. On Tuesday, Donna’s daughter stopped in to visit her at her home, and her mom wasn’t looking very good. She rushed Donna to the hospital in Welland right away. They were told Donna had had a heart attack.

What happened in the ER should never happen to any family in the province of Ontario. For nine hours, Donna, a senior, 87 years old, was put in a wheelchair in a crowded emergency room hallway to wait for a bed to become available. The hospital was so overcrowded that there wasn't even a stretcher available to lay an 87-year-old senior who had had a heart attack on.

How can the Premier hear these stories day after day in this House and continue to say that there isn't anything going wrong in our hospitals in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First of all, let me say to the family that I'm sorry they are going through that difficult time. It would be stressful for anyone. I'm very sorry that that mother and daughter had to go through that experience.

Mr. Speaker, we know there is more to be done. We know that there is more that needs to be done in terms of alleviating the stress on hospitals. That's why \$500 million was in our last budget. That's why we've invested in 1,200 new beds, and those are being extended.

We recognize that there has been, as the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has said, a particularly difficult period because of the flu surge right now. We recognize that we need to continue to support our hospitals, as well as—to the previous question—care in the community, because there is an increasing need because of the aging demographic. We understand that and we are working with our hospitals to ensure that we continue to put the resources in that they need.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Donna was in severe pain for nine hours. She's 87 years old. She's a senior. She has severe arthritis in her back. She was forced to wait nine hours in a wheelchair in a hallway. She should have been in a bed, on a heart monitor. Donna is still in the emergency room waiting to be moved to a floor, one of two floors in the Welland hospital.

How does the Premier hear stories like this, stories like Donna's, day in and day out, and continue to make Conservative-style cuts to our hospitals and health care system?

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

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Hon. Helena Jaczek: I also, of course, am very touched and concerned about what we've just heard today from the member from Welland.

As the Premier said, of course, we have been taking steps to alleviate these sorts of situations. As I think everyone knows, in the 2017 budget, we invested over \$500 million in funding—that's over half a billion dollars—in Ontario hospitals, giving a really significant increase to the hospital sector. So we are working on the hospital side of things.

But in this particular case, we're talking about a senior. We are working very hard on the community side, hopefully to prevent such situations as we've just heard. In addition to adding these 1,200 hospital beds through the funding increase, we're also providing some 207

affordable housing units for seniors who need additional community supports when they're discharged from hospital. We're also creating a number of transitional care spaces outside of hospital for a further very large number of patients.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: Hospital overcrowding and hallway medicine are not new. They really are a reality in this province, and the situation didn't get like this overnight. The last Conservative government fired 6,000 nurses and closed 28 hospitals. The Liberals have short-changed hospitals for the last 15 years—\$300 million last year alone—forcing cuts to hospital staff and to people like Donna, who I talked about today, in the emergency department.

Why is the Premier carrying on the Conservative tradition of cutting health care services for Ontario families and people like Donna?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Of course the hospital beds are most important in the acute care system, but some of these other community supports are exceptionally important as well.

I just want to make sure that the member opposite knows about the 150 new transitional care beds at the Reactivation Care Centre—this is particularly to serve the northern Toronto area and York region; it's very important in my community—and also 75 beds at University Health Network's former Hillcrest site to provide care for those transitioning out of hospital.

I do agree, certainly, with the comments in relation to the previous Harris government, but I'd like to remind the member that when the NDP were in power, they closed 24% of acute hospital beds in the province. They closed 13% of mental health beds, and closed a grand total, in their last budget, of 9,645 hospital beds.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre.

The Hospital for Sick Children is a world-class hospital. Its amazing doctors and health care professionals perform little miracles every day.

Yesterday I toured SickKids hospital and spoke with children and parents. It was very clear that the Premier's answers yesterday were a huge disappointment in light of the crisis that they are coping with. SickKids is running out of room. It has been overcrowded every single month for the past year. In January, staff treated more than 8,000 children in their emergency department, setting a record for more patients than at any point in the hospital's 143-year history.

The overcrowding at SickKids hasn't been solved; it's getting worse. Why won't this Premier do what's right for children and stop the overcrowding in our hospitals?

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

Hon. Helena Jaczek: We certainly do recognize the stress placed this past year on our hospitals, and particu-

larly on SickKids. Having interned there, and having had my daughter have surgery there, I think we all know what excellent care that hospital provides.

We know that our health care providers are stressed. They are working overtime. They're doing their very best, with their unwavering commitment to patient care.

But to go back to what we did this last fall, we invested \$100 million to create 1,200 new hospital beds across the province. That's equivalent to six new medium-sized hospitals. We've begun to see how valuable this additional support has been to our hospitals, and we've already made the commitment that we're going to renew this investment, increasing the new funding to our hospitals for the coming year to \$187 million.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Back to the Premier: The incredible health care professionals at SickKids are doing the very best they can in very cramped spaces, but it is this government that is not doing enough to help. The neonatal ICU is running at 115% occupancy. Nurses are tripping over equipment. Every hallway, every nook and cranny, is jam-packed. Children who receive bone marrow transplants have to stay in a tiny room without a bathroom or a shower for six long weeks.

SickKids needs immediate relief now, and capital investments to rebuild and expand its facility, so why is the Premier refusing to stop overcrowding and to help SickKids?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Specifically to SickKids, through the 2017 budget, our government increased annual funding to SickKids by some \$9 million to continue to support them in their delivery of world-class health care to the children most in need. Since September, Ontario has provided SickKids with funding for 20 new beds.

We commit to this ongoing work with our hospitals to analyze exactly what they need and to provide it over time.

This year, as has been said, has been particularly difficult. Influenza B, one of the strains that was circulating, particularly affected children in this last year. The need for the surge capacity obviously has been proven this year. We will continue to analyze the needs and accommodate as necessary.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: For too long, people across this province have been asked to settle for overcrowded hospitals or for cuts to our health care system. It should not be that way. It absolutely does not have to be that way. SickKids should not be forced to operate at 115% occupancy in its neonatal intensive care unit. It shouldn't be losing world-class surgeons, and it should not be forced to provide 21st-century medicine to the sickest of children in spaces that have not been updated since 1949.

What will it take for this Premier to stop denying the problem, stop making excuses and start providing the capital investments that SickKids needs right now?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Certainly, we are looking very closely at the capital needs of our hospitals. There has

been some allocation of funding for planning and for new construction. I just want to make sure that the member opposite does understand, because since 2003, we've increased our investments in health care each and every year. There have not been any cuts. We have been increasing funding to treat more patients, so we have been able to improve care each and every year and to reduce wait times to some of the very shortest in the country.

We have more to do. We acknowledge that, but we're listening to our hospitals and we're working towards, obviously, maintaining this world-class system that we have here in Ontario.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. A little Jeopardy for the minister: This hospital's emergency department had the busiest month in its 143-year history in January 2018. For the past year, this hospital has been over capacity, and since December, the occupancy rate has been over 108%.

Mr. Speaker, this story is nothing new. The dire straits that Ontario hospitals are facing today are not rare or even occasional occurrences in the province anymore. It's happening across my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, and in Sudbury, Hamilton and Ottawa. In fact, I would have an easier time telling the minister where the hospitals that aren't chronically overcrowded are.

Speaker, based on the challenges I've described to you and the questions that I've posed, could the minister tell me which overcrowded Ontario hospital I'm speaking about?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I do want to say to the member opposite that we have a very comprehensive system of health care in this province. It includes some 144 hospitals, I believe; 143, perhaps. There have been some amalgamations. But of course that's not all. We have so many ancillary community support services, and we are committed to looking regionally at the needs. We know that the demographics in this province do vary considerably.

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This is why our government established local health integration networks, so that we have that local input to ensure that we have individuals—obviously, everyone knows LHINs are governed by boards. They have divisions looking at and analyzing constantly the needs of their communities.

So we respond as a ministry to what we hear from the ground, and we do our very best to accommodate those needs in a thoughtful, analytic way. We will continue to make this progress that we have made very substantially over the course of our government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the minister: What we've seen over the past 15 years is this government invest in large-bureaucracy administration. We've seen them form

the CCACs, where 39 cents of every dollar go into administration. We've seen the Ministry of Health expand from five assistant deputy ministers to over 20, with a full complement of staff.

What we've seen, though, is a cut in front-line services and overcrowding in our hospitals. The situation I described previously is at SickKids, just down the street: a world-renowned children's hospital conducting cutting-edge research and providing innovative, life-saving care. But it's bursting at the seams. Children in critical care are having to squeeze into a room with five other patients and their families, sometimes in the most stressful and scary times of their lives.

Speaker, this government should have seen this coming. It's not because it's a one-off year. It's years of underfunding despite warnings from SickKids and other hospitals in the province. So will the minister finally listen and commit to fully funding our hospitals in this upcoming budget?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Mr. Speaker, any suggestion that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is a bloated bureaucracy is a complete myth. In the past 13 years, the health ministry budget has almost doubled, increasing from about \$30 billion to \$52 billion, while administrative staff have decreased by 50%.

We are committed to ensuring that Ontarians have the health care that they need where and when they need it. I'd like to ask the member opposite: Where exactly does the opposition party stand on this? As far as we know, the PCs have absolutely zero dollars for hospitals in their platform.

PHARMACARE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, my constituency offices, like probably every constituency office in this House, have been having parents come to our office completely stressed out that their children, who used to get medication by the private coverers—the coverage that they got from their work benefits—once they show up at the pharmacy, if the drug is not covered by pharmacare, they end up being rejected and having to go back through an entire bureaucratic process of trying to get the medication covered. For young kids, this is a very serious issue, as you well know, because a number of them can't be off the medication for a period of time, because of their medical condition.

Why did the government put in place a program if you hadn't figured out how to make sure that people would not have interruptions when it comes to getting the drugs that they need?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: The reason we have instituted OHIP+, of course, is to ensure that every child in this province has access to the drugs when and where they need them. We have four million children and youth who can now access 4,400 drugs. These are essential, of course: antibiotics to treat infections, asthma inhalers, insulin, seizure medications, antidepressants, etc.—everything that a child needs.

Obviously, we have instituted this to level the playing field, to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive and to have good health. We instituted this program, and so many people have already taken advantage of it. I'll give some more information in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, as New Democrats, we don't need to be preached to on the benefits of pharmacare; we're the ones who came out with it. The fact that you followed, that's a good thing.

But the point is this: I can tell you that if we were to put together a pharmacare program to—

Interjections.

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

Finish, please.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You have a responsibility when putting together such a program to make sure that kids don't fall off the system. I have at our constituency offices—I'm sure that we have it at all our constituency offices, as you do—people coming to our doors and saying, "I want to renew the prescription for my child, and I was not able to because of the bureaucratic bungling of the creation of this new plan."

My question to you is: What are you going to do to fix it, so kids don't have to go without the medication that should be covered by the plan in the first place?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: This Premier and our government have taken a historic step in a program of this magnitude, a program that is positively benefiting four million children and youth here in Ontario.

Leading up to January 1, we worked closely with a number of prescribers, specialty clinician groups and insurance providers to ensure a smooth transition to coverage through OHIP+. So in fact, over 800,000 young people aged 24 and under have already had their prescriptions filled at no cost under OHIP+. More than 1.7 million prescriptions have been filled to date under OHIP+, so the numbers continue to grow.

Of course, we know that while this program does cover some 4,400 drugs, there's also the opportunity, if a drug is not covered in this way, to access a drug through the Exceptional Access Program. I, as a physician, remember very well taking advantage of that excellent program.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Han Dong: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. When I'm out in my community talking to residents about their thoughts and concerns, I always hear, "Transit." Transit can make or break a person's day. That is why it's so important that we not only have enough transit, but we also have to have good-quality transit that people want to use.

I know that the people of Trinity-Spadina live very busy lives. When they are on the move, they are often responding to their work emails, arranging plans for

dinner or taking care of one of many other tasks they have to do on a daily basis.

Would the minister please tell the members of this House what our government is doing to improve the transit experience for riders by making it easier to get online while riding on our GO network?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I really want to thank the member for Trinity–Spadina for his question, but also for his staunch advocacy on behalf of transit riders in his community.

Speaker, last week I was really pleased to be in the member's community at the UP Express station at Union Station to make a very exciting announcement: Our government is bringing WiFi to the GO network.

In June 2017 we released an expression of interest for WiFi providers. Now, coming this spring, we'll be testing the service on two trains and four GO buses. This approach will allow us to receive important feedback from commuters so that when we roll out WiFi across the entire network, we get it right.

WiFi on GO trains and buses is the number one customer service improvement requested by GO Transit riders, and that's exactly what we're delivering. This is a major step forward, and I look forward to seeing the results of this trial as we plan to bring WiFi service across our entire GO network.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Han Dong: I want to thank the minister for her great work and the answer.

I know that WiFi will encourage even more commuters to take transit. Making transit more enjoyable and more convenient helps commuters to make the choice to leave their cars at home and hop on transit at their local GO station or streetcar, bus or subway stop.

Speaker, I know that we need to continue to make these types of improvements. At the same time, we can't afford to press pause on building new transit and increased services. This is something I hear regularly from transit riders in my community who want to see progress.

Would the minister please provide the members of this House with more information on what our government is doing to make taking transit an even better option, while also continuing to increase the service we provide?

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Hon. Kathryn McGarry: Again, I want to thank the member for Trinity–Spadina for all his work on this subject.

WiFi is readily available at the majority of GO Transit stations. We know that commuters appreciate that service, so making WiFi available on GO Transit vehicles is the clear next step.

Speaker, to make your commute even easier, we're also updating the GO website. This new website will improve your commute through tools like a fare calculator that helps you to determine your GO fare with cash or Presto; service update information for trains, buses and stations all in one location; and an easy-to-use trip planner.

While working to make your trip more convenient and more enjoyable, we also continue to add new service whenever possible. We're on our way to deliver 6,000 weekly trips, up from 1,500, and improving the experience for our commuters is a very important step along the way. I can't wait to see how this rolls out. We're very pleased to offer this new service.

MOTHERISK

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a question for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Earlier this week, the Motherisk Commission released a damning report regarding the flaws in this government's hair strand drug and alcohol testing, a flawed and discredited toxicological methodology. The report highlighted the use of false evidence to facilitate the removal of children from their homes, breaking up families and damaging communities.

In 2014, Toronto mother Tamara Broomfield won a court appeal after being convicted in 2009 of feeding her toddler cocaine, a faulty conclusion reached by the Motherisk method. The government knew there were concerns, yet did nothing for two years. The public's confidence is shattered.

Will the Minister of Children and Youth Services share his plans to rectify this gross injustice done to Ontario's most vulnerable?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to thank the member for the question. The Motherisk report did come out this week, and I'd like to thank the commissioner for her hard work. It was thoughtful work. The recommendations that she made were accepted by my ministry. I know the Attorney General was there as well. Again, I'd like to thank the commissioner for her work.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of the recommendations that were in that commission speak about the reform and the modernization of the child welfare system here in the province of Ontario. We went through an exercise this year, and we brought forward some legislation, Bill 89, and it spoke to those pieces. There were a lot of similarities between the report and what our bill did. For example, in our bill, we talked about cultural competency. But it was the Progressive Conservative Party that voted against that bill. We still don't know why the Progressive Conservative Party voted against Bill 89.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Again to the minister: Children were ripped away from their families under false evidence. Starting in 2014, there were reports in the media that the alcohol in hairspray can affect test results. The media was aware, the public was aware and the Attorney General was aware, so obviously the Ministry of Children and Youth Services had to have been informed.

This government was warned and knew the concerns. Yet, it was only in May 2017 that this Liberal government found it appropriate to consider the issue of accreditation standards for Ontario labs.

Affected families are seeking justice. On their behalf, I would like to ask the minister why it took his government

years to finally start a review of the Motherisk test program.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I again thank the member for the question. My heart goes out to the families that were affected by the Motherisk testing.

We announced, when the report came forward, that we would continue to provide counselling services to all the families affected. In fact, we immediately announced that we would put together a task force of people from across the province, folks from the indigenous community, from the black community and other communities that were affected by the Motherisk testing.

It is important for us as a government to ensure that children are at the centre of decision-making. Again, that's why we brought forward Bill 89. It's ironic that the member can stand up in this Legislature and talk about positioning children for success, but we brought forward a bill, Bill 89, the most comprehensive piece of legislation to protect children here in the province of Ontario, and you voted against it.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Premier. At the age of 13, Alicia Raimundo was in a place of darkness. She couldn't imagine living another day. At 14, she tried to take her own life. Luckily, she woke up in hospital, but then she had to wait seven years to get the mental health treatment that she needed.

This is just one of thousands of tragic stories of children and youth who are being put into danger by the failure of this government to provide the mental health services they need.

Will the Premier commit to eliminating the wait-lists for community-based children and youth mental health services?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Thank you to the member opposite. I know the member is a passionate advocate for young people in her riding, and of course, young people here in Ontario.

When it comes to mental health services for young people in this province, we don't want young people to have to wait to get the services they need. That's why we have moved forward with the Moving on Mental Health strategy here in the province of Ontario. When we launched that strategy, we invested an additional \$100 million in it around 2012, and started the process to look across the province to better coordinate services.

The member opposite has looked at bringing forward some solutions. They believe that it's just about money. It's not just about money. It's about organizing our agencies on the ground to ensure they're working together to deliver the best possible services to young people, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: Back to the Premier: In 2012, the government committed that within three years, we would have a system that must deliver early and appropriate help for each child and youth who needs it. Speaker, three years after the government's own deadline, we are still waiting. Twelve thousand are waiting, some for as long as 18 months, to get the treatment they need.

Tyler Henderson struggled with mental health but never got the help he needed. He was in and out of hospital. He self-medicated and ended up living on the street. Now, fortunately, he uses that experience to help others in a similar place, but the outcome could have been so different.

Speaker, the time for talking is over. Children's mental health is in crisis and demands urgent action. I will ask again: Will the Premier commit to eliminating these wait-lists?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Michael Coteau: We have been making many improvements in the system over the last few years. For example, we continue to invest, every single year, additional money into mental health in the province of Ontario. With the former Minister of Health and the new Minister of Health, we've made a commitment that we are going to add more money into mental health.

But it was about building a strategy that organized our agencies on the ground, and they're moving on mental health. There was a commitment to reorganize our lead agencies and we've done that. Thirty-one of 33 regions now are reorganized. We're working with those lead agencies to better deliver services.

Mr. Speaker, we added mental health leaders in 72 school boards. This provided 770 additional community mental health workers across the province.

We've set up youth mental health hubs in the province of Ontario that have an alternative delivery model. Some are 24/7, where young people can just drop in and get the services that they need.

So we have been making improvements, and we will continue to move down a pathway to provide better services for young people when they need it, right across this province.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Yvan Baker: My question is for the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Once a month I hold a seniors' advisory group meeting where I meet with seniors and I hear from them about the issues that are important to them. When I started having those meetings, I started to hear about the issues you would expect to hear about. I heard about health care, transportation and housing.

But then I started to hear about an issue I didn't expect to hear about, and that was door-to-door sales. I started to

hear story after story from constituents who had been the victim, or who knew someone who had been the victim, of a door-to-door sales scam, where salespeople use aggressive, coercive, misleading sales tactics to dupe people into contracts, into products that are bad for them, to dupe them out of their own money right at their own doorstep. That is why, in 2016, I introduced a private member's bill to ban door-to-door sales of certain products where these practices were widespread, like furnaces and water heaters and air conditioners.

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My question to the minister: Could you tell this House and share with Ontarians what we are doing to protect Ontarians from these misleading and aggressive door-to-door sales practices?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the member from Etobicoke Centre for this very important question.

Of course, protecting consumers in Ontario is of paramount importance to our government. I'm very happy to share with the House that as of today, March 1, the unsolicited sale of certain prescribed goods at the door will no longer be allowed in Ontario. We developed this list of banned products after extensive input from consumers, and we'll monitor the list to ensure that it remains relevant and effective. It includes air and water treatment devices—water heaters, furnaces.

I want to thank the member from Etobicoke Centre for his work, his advocacy and—

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

Mr. Yvan Baker: This is really fantastic news. I know that consumers in my community will be thrilled to hear about this, as will consumers across Ontario.

I also know that this is part of a number of things that you, Minister, are working on to protect consumers in a number of areas, with the support of a number of caucus members who surround me here today.

As I said, I heard from far too many constituents, from concerned consumers who had been taken advantage of by these coercive and misleading door-to-door sales practices. As a result, consumers have been sold products they don't need, products that don't work, products that were priced far above what they should have been. They were duped into fees, and they couldn't cancel their contracts, couldn't get out of these terrible contracts.

While this is an issue that cuts across all ages and backgrounds, I noticed that these door-to-door sales practices tend to disproportionately affect the most vulnerable people in our society. It is beyond reprehensible that there are people who have a business model based on taking advantage of vulnerable consumers.

I'm proud to have worked with you on this, Minister. I'm proud that you adopted my private member's bill. I'm proud that we'll be protecting consumers from aggressive and coercive sales practices in Etobicoke and across Ontario.

Minister, my follow-up question to you is, what penalties and fines are in place to make sure that people adhere to these new laws?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Again, thanks to the member for the question.

Just to be clear, this legislation is to go after those bad actors, not good businesses that are conducting themselves properly in Ontario.

We're determined that the penalties in the act will be real deterrents. Violations of our new rules will make contracts void. One of the best parts of this legislation is that consumers will be able to keep the goods and services with no obligation if that contract is deemed void. That's fantastic news.

In addition, businesses soliciting for these goods and services will be required to keep records. They'll be required to provide more information to consumers. Of course, there's always a 10-day cooling-off period for—

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

New question.

PANDAS/PANS

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Minister, this afternoon, members of this Legislature will be debating my motion number 64. The motion calls on the government to immediately strike an advisory council on pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorder associated with streptococcal infections and pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome, also known as PANDAS/PANS. The council would advise the Minister of Health on research, diagnosis, treatment and education related to this disorder.

PANDAS/PANS may affect as many as one in 200 school-aged children, and in almost all cases it has been misdiagnosed.

Minister, can I count on your support for my motion and making the PANDAS/PANS advisory council a reality?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you very much to the member for Sarnia-Lambton for his question.

I was certainly very intrigued when I read his motion, because pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorder associated with streptococcal infections and pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome was not something I learned about in medical school. Actually, my experience is probably the experience of many physicians. The member opposite has made reference to the fact that some of these rare conditions are often misdiagnosed. They may have symptoms that mimic other disorders, and so on.

This is a very real situation. Our government has recognized that there are a number of rare diseases in this sort of category, and we recognize how frustrating it can be for families, and obviously for the individuals affected as well, when confronted either with no diagnosis or a misdiagnosis. So I certainly look forward to the debate this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Minister. My understanding—I spoke with your predecessor, and he also had

lots of time for this. Children affected by PANDAS/PANS often experience an abrupt onset of tics, obsessive-compulsive behaviour and severe depression or anxiety after a common strep infection. In the members' gallery today we have members of the organization PANDAS/PANS Ontario, including its executive director, Kerry Henrikson, and her son, Jonah. Each and every one of our guests has a personal story of how their lives have been impacted by the fight to have either themselves or their loved ones properly diagnosed and treated for PANDAS/PANS.

Minister, will you commit to setting aside some of your time—and I know your busy schedule—to meet with Ms. Henrikson and the families of PANDAS/PANS Ontario to learn more about what our great province can do to help them?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'm certainly very much prepared to meet with the parents and the individuals here today.

Because of this important issue around rare diseases—and the member did reference some of the symptoms that are involved—I just want to reference back to OHIP+. Now we know that through OHIP+, many of the drugs required for these children in fact are going to be provided completely free.

Also, I want to remind everyone that our government has formed a Rare Disease Working Group. It's made up of experts who can explore how services for people with rare diseases in Ontario can be improved. The group is led by two experts in this field: Dr. Ronald Cohn, the pediatrician-in-chief at the Hospital for Sick Children, and Scott McIntaggart, senior vice-president of the University Health Network. So we already have a group that can look at the situation regarding these two particular disorders as well.

MERCURY POISONING

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Premier.

Four years ago, the former chief of Grassy Narrows First Nation, Elder Steve Fobister, took the extreme and desperate step of going on a hunger strike to draw attention to the historic and ongoing poisoning from mercury of his community in nearby Wabaseemoong First Nation. At that time, the now Minister of Indigenous Relations committed to Chief Fobister that action to change the badly broken system of compensation for the victims of mercury would follow.

The federal government took thousands of samples of hair and blood from hundreds of members of these communities between 1970 and 2000, and only now, after a fight, are these community members gaining access to their own samples.

My question is this: What has the minister done to honour his commitment to Chief Fobister to fix the broken compensation system and create a mercury-treatment home?

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

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you to the member opposite for that very important question.

We're really concerned by the many challenges facing Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong First Nation. Our government is committed to working with First Nations to clean up the English-Wabigoon River system and to achieve real progress that will create a prosperous, healthy and strong community.

Back in December, we passed legislation that will provide \$85 million in dedicated funding for the remediation of the English and Wabigoon Rivers, and we're doing that with the active participation of a number of indigenous communities in an open and transparent way. We are sharing the data, we are inviting people to be on-site, and we are listening to the needs and the concerns of those communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?
1150

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again to the Premier: The community has had to fight. The community has had to scrap—and has even had their youth thrown out of this very building—and threatened to starve themselves to get recognition, and are still waiting for action from this Liberal government.

My question, again, to the Premier: What will your government do to ensure that every member of these communities receives compensation for the intergenerational harm done to their health and livelihood from the exposure to mercury?

Hon. Chris Ballard: To the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

Hon. David Zimmer: Speaker, there have been a number of actions taken to address this problem. I take you back to February 2017. That's when we committed to Grassy Narrows First Nation and Wabaseemoong, or Whitedog, and the federal government to explore options to reform the Mercury Disability Board.

Subsequent to that in February, the four parties—federal government, the two First Nations and Ontario—met in April. As a result of that meeting, there was a further meeting in October where my ministry received a letter from Whitedog indicating their concerns about the Mercury Disability Board reform process. As a result of that letter, I met with Minister Philpott and the leadership of Grassy Narrows and Whitedog to discuss this issue further. As a result of that, we met in December—again, the four parties. Various written submissions were provided.

In January 2018, we met with the representatives again. We are making progress on that. All of the parties are making their best efforts to resolve this.

INVASIVE SPECIES

ESPÈCES ENVAHISSANTES

M. Shafiq Qadri: Ma question est pour la ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts, l'honorable Nathalie Des Rosiers.

I would also like to recognize His Worship Mayor Jim Watson of the city of Ottawa. Clearly, by his demeanour, he misses question period.

This is Invasive Species Awareness Week. As stewards of our environment, clean air, clean water and maintaining the diversity and integrity of our flora and fauna, there are a number of important initiatives coming forward. For example, these species can be very devastating to rivers, plants, animals and, of course, to our economy and our way of life.

I would like to know from the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, what actions are we taking during Invasive Species Awareness Week in this domain?

L'hon. Nathalie Des Rosiers: Merci au député d'Etobicoke-Nord pour sa question et pour son intérêt dans les espèces envahissantes.

I'm really pleased to stand here for the first time as Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. My first words will be to thank my predecessor for the great work that she has done on this file. She's now the Minister of Transportation, but I want to commend her for leading us on this file for so many years.

I also want to thank the ministry and all the teams across Ontario that are actually, day in and day out, protecting Ontario's biodiversity, because that's what we're talking about when we're talking about invasive species. We want to protect Ontario's natural habitat and the biodiversity. It's our duty, not only for this generation but for generations to come. We are the only province in Canada that has an Ontario Invasive Species Act. It's unique, and it allows us to take action on prevention and eradication of these species.

I look forward to explaining more on what we're doing with the legislation in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

M. Shafiq Qadri: Merci beaucoup, madame la Ministre.

I appreciate, of course, the many programs and initiatives that we're taking to deal with invasive species. As you well know, especially, Ontario is now celebrating 25 years of the invasive species awareness program and many, many partnerships between the provincial government—for example, with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

Over the past 25 years, we've had a number of successes, whether we're developing, for example, cutting-edge new biological control agents for perennial grasses or whether we're dealing with the launch of eradication programs targeting species like water soldier and water chestnut. I know that you, as with so many other domains, will not allow Ontario to get trumped.

S'il vous plaît, est-il possible pour vous, madame la Ministre, d'élaborer sur ces programmes et les initiatives pour combattre les espèces envahissantes?

L'hon. Nathalie Des Rosiers: Le député a bien raison. On ne peut pas faire ça tout seul. Ça nous prend des partenariats avec plusieurs acteurs de la société civile.

Obviously, it has been really interesting to see the number of actors that are involved in this fight, wanting to protect Ontario's biodiversity. In a way, I think I want to thank the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, which is contributing to this fight.

We also have, in Sault Ste. Marie, an Invasive Species Centre where we've invested over \$11 million to help us understand what is good science to go ahead and deal with invasive species. It's important that we recognize how threatening they are. They can choke our local native species. That's why we want to ensure that we have good science and a good participation of civil society.

On this side, we take our responsibility toward the environment very seriously. We have been leaders on this file, and we'll continue to be leaders in protecting Ontario's environment for the future.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Following the long tradition of the Speaker introducing former members, even though some try to do it in a different way, we have with us in the members' gallery the member from Ottawa West-Nepean in the 38th and 39th Parliaments, Mr. Jim Watson.

I believe there was a point of order on this side. The member from—no? Okay. The minister—

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'd also like to introduce the former mayor of Ottawa, and the current mayor of Ottawa, His Worship Mayor Jim Watson, who no doubt is here to patrol the corridors looking for any minister who has a chequebook.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Durham.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I just wanted to remind the members of this House to meet the engineers on the staircase for a photo op. The voter registration group will be there as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I believe the President of the Treasury Board may have a point of order.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: No, thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): She's passing.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1157 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LANDFILL

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Shortly I will be introducing a bill which will give municipalities the right to approve the location of landfills within their borders. This is about respect for municipalities and their residents. Today, municipal governments can decide where Tim Hortons should go, but they can't decide where something as significant as a landfill is located. That doesn't make sense.

Currently, only the Ministry of the Environment approves a new landfill. Municipalities don't have a real say, despite the significant impact on their communities. If passed, this bill will ensure landfills only go ahead when waste companies can earn community approval.

There is support for this across Ontario. Last fall, the mayor of Ingersoll came to Queen's Park to request this authority, and I want to thank him for that. He's in the gallery today. Now, nearly 30 municipalities have passed resolutions of support. A further 150 municipal leaders have signed petitions demanding the right and are in the process of passing similar motions in their own councils.

A recent poll found that almost 80% of Ontarians believe that cities and towns should have the right or authority to approve new landfill sites. Any community outside the 905 to the provincial border is a potential site for future mega-dumps, and under current legislation, they have no say. We want to change that.

Ontarians are tired of governments forcing everything from wind farms to landfill sites down their throats. It's time to recognize the authority and accountability of municipal governments in meeting the needs of their residents. I thank you very much for the opportunity to make this statement, Mr. Speaker.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today to recognize family physician Dr. Sharad Rai, president of the London and District Academy of Medicine and a London West constituent.

Dr. Rai is on the front lines of the health care crisis in my community. At his office at the Hyde Park Medical and Walk-In Clinic, Dr. Rai sees daily the effect of lack of access to primary care, as more and more Londoners seek walk-in treatment because they can't find a family doctor or nurse practitioner.

He hears regularly about the impact of chronic underfunding on our health care system and he is doing something about it. Last April, on behalf of the London and District Academy of Medicine, he organized a patient health care forum to provide an opportunity for patients and their loved ones to share their health care experiences. The painful stories that were told about people's inability to access care, their frustration navigating the health care system and their medical conditions that got worse instead of better highlighted the failure of our health care system to respond to Londoners' health care needs. The stories also revealed the serious consequences of this failure in increased patient suffering and in much higher health care costs down the road.

I am grateful that physicians like Dr. Rai are taking action. Another forum is being organized by the London and District Academy of Medicine on Thursday, April 12. I hope that many Londoners will attend.

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

Mr. Granville Anderson: Last week, my motion passed to officially declare March 1 Professional Engin-

ers Day in Ontario. Thank you to all the members of this House and to the professional engineers across this province who showed up in support. I am very pleased to say that Ontario is the very first jurisdiction in Canada to formally recognize a day for engineers.

To become a professional engineer in Ontario, you must be a licensed professional engineer and be registered with the PEO. This designation represents the highest standards for engineering knowledge, experience and professionalism in the country.

How we as Ontarians live, travel, learn and experience the world is made possible by the expertise of professional engineers. In my riding of Durham, engineers are the driving force behind many employers, including Ontario Power Generation, Darlington Nuclear and General Motors. There is also the very impressive Automotive Centre of Excellence—ACE—at UOIT.

ACE was developed in partnership with UOIT, General Motors of Canada, the government of Ontario, the government of Canada and the Partners for the Advancement of Collaborative Engineering Education. On Professional Engineers Day, I would like to sincerely thank all of the engineers in my riding of Durham, as well as across this great province, for their hard work and countless contributions to their communities.

MUSEUMS

Mr. John Yakabuski: Recently, I have been contacted by several local museums in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who reminded me that provincial funding for community museums has not increased in 10 years. Although our municipal partners have stepped up to the plate on many occasions, this decade-long freeze has severely restricted the ability of museums to deal with increased demand and higher operating costs.

As with so many other groups in the non-profit sector, local museums have been doing more with less in recent years. This is not sustainable. We know that local museums play a vital role in keeping our history alive. Without our museums, who will preserve it? Learning about our history is one of the most culturally important things we can do. All this is put at risk if the provincial government continues to freeze their funding.

Community museums are asking for an additional \$5 million for the Community Museum Operating Grant. I think that everyone in this chamber can agree that that would be money well spent. I stand with local museum staff, our municipal leaders and every citizen who understands the importance of preserving history, and call on the Minister of Finance to include this modest request in his upcoming budget.

Local museums are a cornerstone of our rural communities. If they were to disappear, it would be devastating to our small towns and villages in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and all across the province. I say to the Minister of Finance: Don't let this happen.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I rise to call for a restoration of provincial funding for transit. About 20 years ago, the Progressive Conservatives cut the annual net operating grant for transit. It had a huge impact here in Toronto. That funding was never restored by the Liberal government.

As I go door to door talking to my constituents, I hear constant tales of unreliable transportation, of crowding, and of subways, streetcars and buses that just simply make life very difficult for people because they can never, ever sit down. As I talk to people, there are many who used to take transit but now drive because it is too uncomfortable, too unreliable and too problematic.

That funding has to be restored. We need a system with good operations. We need it to be reliable. We need it to be comfortable so we don't drive residents away. We need as many people taking transit as possible. In the next budget, the treasurer—the Minister of Finance—should be putting in the funds to restore transit funding in Toronto and across Ontario.

TEAGAN HARRISON

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: It's my pleasure to rise in the House today to congratulate Teagan Harrison, a 10-year-old Irish dancer from my riding of Barrie. On March 24, Teagan will be heading to Glasgow, Scotland, to compete in the World Irish Dancing Championships.

Teagan started learning Irish dance only five years ago, proving herself to be a talented and dedicated student. She was inspired to take up Irish dance by her mother, who herself had danced as a child. Teagan trains every evening in preparation for the big competition. In the opinion of her coach, Maureen Miller, it was clear that "from the minute she walked in the door she had a talent; she picked it up really quickly and put the work in." Teagan is the youngest student ever from the Miller School of Irish Dance to qualify for the world championships.

For those who are unfamiliar with Irish dance, it is a discipline that requires considerable athletic strength and technical skill. Dancers must have excellent posture, stand tall on their toes, be flexible and have strong core muscles. You must also be able to calm your nerves when you go to a world championship.

As my mother's maiden name was Shanahan, I wish Teagan all the luck, and I hope she brings home the world championship to Barrie.

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RICHARD REID

Mr. Lorne Coe: I rise this afternoon to honour Richard Reid, the 2018 recipient of the Ontario Library Association's Larry Moore Distinguished Service Award.

From a young age, Richard saw the impact that a library can have in a local community, as his mother was

a public librarian. Today Richard is the Durham District School Board's innovative education facilitator for libraries, and provides support to 130 teacher-librarians working in Durham region schools.

Additionally, Richard has spent several years volunteering with the Ontario Library Association, including assisting with the annual Forest of Reading festival held in Toronto. As of this spring, he will also be the new vice-president of the Ontario Library Association.

Speaker, librarians and librarians play an important role in educating Ontario students, and it's a privilege today to offer my sincere congratulations to Richard Reid, a passionate and strong voice for increased library resources and for teacher-librarians in Durham region schools.

Congratulations on this accomplishment.

ANNETTE PHILLIPS

Mr. Arthur Potts: Today I would like to acknowledge the death and passing of Annette Phillips, a beloved member of our Queen's Park family. Fifty-seven years ago, on a bright and cloudless morning in Copper Cliff, Ontario, near Sudbury, Annette Phillips was born and Ontario was just a little bit more special.

In addition to her full and rich family life as the mother of Shawna and Torri Phillips and a very proud grandmother to Hailey and Caiden, Annette was a dedicated Queen's Park staffer. She joined the Queen's Park team in about 2006 as a senior communications adviser working for the Honourable Monte Kwinter. From there, she went on to become director of communications in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. She also worked as chief of staff to the Honourable Michael Coteau in the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and as chief of staff to the Honourable Glen Murray in the Ministry of Infrastructure.

Annette was also a constituent, and when she left Queen's Park, she took on a volunteer role as the president of the Beaches–East York riding association before moving to Kingston to take up a position with St. Lawrence College. I appreciated immensely her talent in helping our association excel.

Annette envisioned a fairer Ontario, and I'm proud to say that as a government we are committed to staying on the same path, for which she would be very, very proud.

Speaker, I extend my deepest condolences to her family and friends and to all of her colleagues who had the pleasure of working with her in her decade-long career here at Queen's Park. May she be at peace.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Ross Romano: I want to speak further about trade relations with the US, and Bill 194 in particular. Yesterday we had a pretty fiery debate. I want to speak as passionately as I can right now, in a calm and simple manner, about the situation.

I really do not believe that Bill 194 is the answer to resolve the strained relationships we're having with the

US. In fact, I feel that this antagonistic approach is only going to make matters worse. If we anger our friends to the south, we risk compromising trade relations so much further. Major economic drivers will fold throughout our province, city by city. In a community like mine of Sault Ste. Marie, with the industry being steel, Algoma Steel will fold.

The answer is simple. If we look within each of our individual communities and we think about what our major businesses are that supply and drive economies south of the border, we can demonstrate to the leaders there with one phone call—if each one of us makes just one phone call to a leader south of the border that relies on our economies to keep their economies afloat, we can show the US that they need us as much as we need them. That’s how we can resolve this issue.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

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

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 193, An Act to enact Rowan’s Law (Concussion Safety), 2018 and to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 193, Loi édictant la Loi Rowan de 2018 sur la sécurité en matière de commotions cérébrales et modifiant la Loi sur l’éducation.

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.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RESPECTING MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY OVER LANDFILLING SITES ACT, 2018 LOI DE 2018 SUR LE RESPECT DES POUVOIRS DES MUNICIPALITÉS À L’ÉGARD DES LIEUX D’ENFOUISSEMENT

Mr. Hardeman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 201, An Act to amend the Environmental Assessment Act and the Environmental Protection Act to require support from municipal councils and band councils before establishing landfilling sites / Projet de loi 201, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les évaluations environnementales et la Loi sur la protection de l’environnement afin d’exiger l’appui des conseils

municipaux et des conseils de bande avant la création de lieux d’enfouissement.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: The bill enacts the Respecting Municipal Authority Over Landfilling Sites Act, 2018.

The act amends the Environmental Assessment Act to provide that the minister shall not give approval to proceed with an undertaking in respect of a landfilling site within a municipality or on a reserve unless the municipal council or the council of the band, as the case may be, passes a resolution supporting the establishment of the landfilling site.

The act makes a similar amendment to the Environmental Protection Act with respect to the director issuing an environmental compliance approval in respect of the establishment of a landfilling site.

These amendments would show respect for municipalities by ensuring a landfill cannot be located in their community unless they are a willing host.

PETITIONS

CHILD AND YOUTH CARE

Mr. Robert Bailey: I have almost 2,000 petitions here.

“Whereas there are approximately 10,000 child and youth practitioner positions in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas child and youth care practitioners are commonly known as child and youth workers, child care workers or child and youth counsellors; and

“Whereas child and youth care practitioners are entrusted to provide support and care to some of the most at-risk and disadvantaged children and youth in the province; and

“Whereas the profession of child and youth care is unregulated and not legislated in Ontario, allowing individuals without qualification or training to work with these at-risk young people; and

“Whereas legislation would require the provision of consistent, high-quality care to children and youth, with accountability for these concerns regarding unpredictability identified in the Youth Leaving Care Hearings report, My Real Life Book; and

“Whereas individuals who work in the profession of social work, early childhood education and teaching are legislated to protect the young people of Ontario; and

“Whereas failure to regulate the profession allows vulnerable children to be at risk, and unqualified staff to continue to practise as child and youth care practitioners without adequate qualifications; and

"We, the undersigned, are actively engaged as qualified child and youth care practitioners or CYC students who are currently providing support to the children and youth of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass and enact a bill to regulate the profession of child and youth care in Ontario."

I agree with this petition. I'll affix my signature to it and send it down with Maggie.

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas:

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

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

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

"—More than 59,000 will eventually die from tobacco-related cancers, strokes, heart disease and emphysema, incurring at least \$1.1 billion in health care costs; and whereas an adult rating (18A) for movies that promote on-screen tobacco in Ontario would save at least 30,000 lives and half a billion health care dollars;

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

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"—79% of Ontarians support not allowing smoking in movies rated G, PG, 14A (increased from 73% in 2011);

"—The Minister of Government and Consumer Services has the authority to amend the regulations of the Film Classification Act via cabinet;

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

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

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

I support this petition and give it to page Michael S. to deliver.

CHILD PROTECTION

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

"Whereas habitual absenteeism often results in students leaving school early and subsequently having significant gaps in both the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve future success;

"Whereas habitual absenteeism may be an early indicator that a child is experiencing difficulty in the home, including substance abuse and addiction, neglect, and/or abuse;

"Whereas there is a need to improve communication between education and child protection workers;

"Whereas it would be beneficial for child protection agencies to be empowered to investigate such habitual absenteeism when it cannot be resolved by the school system;

"Whereas when a child is subject of or receiving services through the child welfare, justice and/or education systems, intervention at the earliest opportunity puts the child at the centre and could identify dysfunction, provide help to the child and family, and promote better outcomes for children;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make chronic absenteeism and lateness from school, when it cannot be resolved by the school system, a child protection issue."

I agree with it, I'll sign my name to it, and I'll give it to page Elizabeth.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

Mr. Jeff Yurek: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Family Responsibility Office (FRO) is outdated, ineffective and the provincial government needs to conduct a review of the entire system;

"Whereas many families are either paying too much in child support or receiving too little, due to the ineffectiveness of the system;

"Whereas families are forced to become their own caseworkers to investigate information that is required by the Family Responsibility Office before they can enforce action;

"Whereas many of the federal and provincial databases do not link up, causing misinformation which affects the money paid or owed in child support for many families;

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

"We call on the provincial government to strike an all-party supported select committee to conduct a review of the practices of the Family Responsibility Office to improve and streamline the collection of child support in the province of Ontario."

I agree with this petition and affix my signature to it.

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

Ms. Deborah Matthews: This is a petition from the extraordinary Middlesex-London Health Unit youth leaders and part of their One Life One You campaign.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas:

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

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

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

“—More than 59,000 will eventually die from tobacco-related cancers, strokes, heart disease and emphysema, incurring at least \$1.1 billion in health care costs; and whereas an adult rating (18A) for movies that promote on-screen tobacco in Ontario would save at least 30,000 lives and half a billion health care dollars;

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

“—79% of Ontarians support not allowing smoking in movies rated G, PG, 14A (increased from 73% in 2011);

“—The Minister of Government and Consumer Services has the authority to amend the regulations of the Film Classification Act via cabinet;

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

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

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

I agree with this petition. I have signed my name to it and I am passing it to page Noor to deliver to the table.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Jeff Yurek: “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 London;

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

“Whereas the government 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;

“Whereas there has been another tragic, fatal accident in Elgin county on the 401;

“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 London.”

I agree with the petition and I affix my signature to it.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: This is a petition entitled, “Ontarians Need Access to Medical Specialists.” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario is behind international standards for specialist wait times, particularly in the specialties of neurosurgery, gastroenterology and rheumatology; and

“Whereas London consistently has the longest orthopaedic surgical wait times in the province, particularly for knee and hip replacement surgery; and

“Whereas many Ontarians are forced to wait several months, or even years, before getting treatment from a medical specialist in Ontario; and

“Whereas medical specialists report a lack of funding often resulting in surgical rooms sitting empty;

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

“Address gaps in funding to ensure an end to long waits for the medically necessary procedures of patients.”

I fully support this petition. I’ll affix my name to it and will give it to page Klara to take to the table.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. James J. Bradley: “To the Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas podiatrists treat foot pain and injuries in women at twice the rate they treat men;

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

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

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

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

I’ve affixed my signature.

GRAVEL PIT

Mr. Jeff Yurek: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the proposed gravel pit on Heritage Road in Thorndale, Ontario, is not supported by the community members at large; and

“Whereas if the project is approved prime agricultural land will be taken out of production and the rehabilitation of the land back to agricultural use is not plausible; and

“Whereas 600 acres of agricultural land is taken out of production every day in Ontario; and

“Whereas the operation of the proposed gravel pit will have negative effects on the environment, groundwater and surface water resources; and

“Whereas the proposed gravel pit does not reflect land use planning policies and is contrary to the official plan of the municipality;

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

“Object to the application for the licensing for a category 1, class A license gravel pit at 20232 and 20304 Heritage Road in Thames Centre and request the application be denied.”

I agree with the petition and affix my signature to it.

PHARMACARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: This is a petition entitled “Universal Pharmacare for All Ontarians.” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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“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” as follows:

“Support a universal provincial pharmacare plan for all Ontarians.”

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

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

Ms. Deborah Matthews: I have another petition from the great Middlesex-London Health Unit youth leaders and their One Life One You campaign. It’s a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas:

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

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

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

“—More than 59,000 will eventually die from tobacco-related cancers, strokes, heart disease and emphysema, incurring at least \$1.1 billion in health care costs; and whereas an adult rating (18A) for movies that

promote on-screen tobacco in Ontario would save at least 30,000 lives and half a billion health care dollars;

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

“—79% of Ontarians support not allowing smoking in movies rated G, PG, 14A...;

“—The Minister of Government and Consumer Services has the authority to amend the regulations of the Film Classification Act via cabinet;

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

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

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

I agree with this petition. I have attached my name to it, and I’m handing it to page Jamie to take to the table.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

PANDAS/PANS

Mr. Robert Bailey: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government should immediately strike an advisory council on pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorder associated with streptococcal infections and pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome to advise the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on research, diagnosis, treatment and education relating to the disorder and syndrome.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Mr. Bailey has moved private member’s notice of motion number 64. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Robert Bailey: It’s an honour to stand here today and discuss this important issue. I am reminded of what my former colleague the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook said in his farewell speech to the Legislature: We are a privileged 107 in this place. We have the special opportunity to walk into this chamber, take our place at our desks and talk about the issues that are most important to the people in our communities. We have the real ability to create positive change for the people of Ontario. So I am optimistic that the members will seize that opportunity and support this motion that we are discussing here today.

What I’m asking for in this motion is that the members of this House support my call for the government to immediately strike an advisory council that will make recommendations to the Ministry of Health about how best to support children and families dealing with PANDAS/PANS.

You may recall that just about 15 months ago, this Legislature wisely voted to pass Bill 43 into law, creating PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day in Ontario. Every October 9 now is officially recognized in Ontario as PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day.

I was very proud that the members of this Legislature chose to join the growing movement across North America to recognize the need to educate and raise awareness of pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorder associated with streptococcal infection, otherwise referred to in this bill as PANDAS, and pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome, otherwise referred to as PANS. I'll refer to that in the rest of the bill. I was really taking a chance to get it out that many times.

The work to help children and families who are confronted with these diseases does not stop with one day of awareness a year. For those families, the impact of PANDAS/PANS is felt every day of the year. I want to take this opportunity to recognize some of those families who are here with us today in the west members' gallery. I would like to introduce them once again. I introduced them this morning. Kerry Henrikson is here, the mother of Jonah Henrikson; Erin Kwarciak; Janet Trider; Ellen Nichol; Erica Mills; Doreen Crombie—there they are—and Don Crombie. These are some of the leaders in this struggle across Ontario, and I want to salute them at this time and thank them for being here.

These are just a few of the people across Ontario who make up the PANDAS/PANS Ontario network. I know that there are many more who are probably watching today who would have liked to have been in attendance. They have all faced the challenge of dealing with the symptoms of PANDAS/PANS either personally or in caring for a loved one.

Please join me in welcoming them to Queen's Park today.

PANDAS—I'm not going to go through that long name; I'll stumble over it—describes a subset of children or adolescents who have either an abrupt onset of obsessive-compulsive disorder or tic disorder symptoms or an acute worsening of symptoms following a streptococcus infection. PANS, which stands for pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome, describes the sudden acute onset of any neuropsychiatric condition—for example, OCD, anxiety, depression, irritability or other regression—that cannot be explained by any other neurological or medical disorder.

This is a lot to take in, so let me simplify it just a bit. Children and adolescents are all infected at some time or other with the strep virus, which we all know is very common. I'm sure every member of this House who has children or grandchildren has at some time had to deal with the threat of the strep virus. After the strep infection has run its course, parents are noticing that their children are acting differently. They are showing behaviours and traits that they didn't have before the strep infection was present: things like obsessive-compulsive behaviour, generalized anxiety, joint pain, restrictive eating, tics, separation anxiety, hyperactivity, sleep difficulties and

regression in both language and behaviour. This is obviously very troubling for any parent or grandparent. So parents and grandparents are going to their doctors and pediatricians and asking for help. But because the awareness and understanding of PANDAS/PANS has not permeated the mainstream thinking of the medical community, which our own Minister of Health acknowledged today and the former minister acknowledged to me over a year ago when we passed a bill for the day of recognition, the symptoms that these children are displaying are often being confused with other conditions, Madam Speaker. As a result, these children are potentially being misdiagnosed and they end up taking medication to deal with their symptoms, but the root of the problem is never being addressed.

A perfect example of a lack of understanding in how to properly address PANDAS/PANS can be found in the response that I received from the former Minister of Health to a question I tabled on April 16, 2015, in this House. At that time, I asked the minister to detail what the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care was doing to support patients and children dealing with a PANDAS/PANS diagnosis. The minister responded, "PANDAS/PANS are not fully understood." The minister continued, "Ontario's health care system provides support through treatment of symptoms such as OCD and tic disorders."

That is very important, Madam Speaker. Because of a lack of understanding, our medical community ends up prescribing treatments for the symptoms but not the root cause of the disease. For many parents, this is an incredibly frustrating and scary situation to deal with. I think we all agree that parents know their children best. But what do you do when a medical professional suggests that your child, who has changed almost overnight, should begin being medicated by psychiatric drugs like Zoloft, Prozac and Cymbalta? To be clear, these are drugs that are used to deal with things like depression and anxiety. I'll yield to my colleague from Elgin-Middlesex-London; I know he'll go into maybe greater detail on what those drugs can do, being a pharmacist.

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Madam Speaker, every community in our province is facing the challenge of how we deal with youth mental health issues. I can't help but wonder if it's possible that young people with these treatable medical issues like PANDAS/PANS are being misdiagnosed—not on purpose, but because of a lack of experience and education on symptoms like depression and anxiety—as having mental health issues.

Of course, no parent wants to see their child medicated needlessly. There's a very powerful documentary by the filmmaker Tim Sorel called *My Kid Is Not Crazy*. The film follows the story of six children and their families as they fight to have their children properly diagnosed.

It is an experience that I think each and every one of the guests here today from the PANDAS/PANS Ontario network has experienced first-hand. That is why it is so important that this government of Ontario join this fight

to raise awareness of PANDAS/PANS as a possible diagnosis in these situations.

The advisory council I am seeking your support for would ideally include a multitude of perspectives, but, first and foremost, it would include parent representatives. The parents and the children who have lived these experiences must be part of the process to educate, inform and advance our understanding of PANDAS/PANS.

These stories are very powerful. I would strongly encourage each member of this Legislature to set up meetings with representatives of PANDAS/PANS Ontario in your communities. Believe me, ladies and gentlemen, they exist in every community in Ontario. So I would urge you to reach out. I have contacts here that will make sure they make their members aware of your connections and addresses.

I know that a number of members have already held meetings. I want to thank those members for that. I know the member from Beaches–East York is going to speak later today; he has met with someone in his riding.

In addition to parent and child representation on the advisory council, my hope is that the government can turn to the example that is currently being provided in the state of Illinois, which struck its own advisory council in 2015. That panel has a wide and diverse selection of experts in medicine, research, wellness and child development to inform its recommendations. I know any parent is going to say they want to know that everything is being considered when it comes to the health of their child.

Once diagnosed, treatment of PANDAS/PANS may be as simple as antibiotics or an anti-inflammatory medication. The impact on the child can be seen almost overnight. This is important information and potentially life-changing for those affected.

Before my time is up, I want to mention that the major driver behind the bill to create the PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day on October 9 and to form this advisory council is an organization that was started in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton by Kerry Henrikson, who I introduced earlier today. Kerry is one of the parents, with her fellow members, who saw these dramatic changes in their children and knew something wasn't right. So she started asking questions, making phone calls and organizing people around the province. Now, with the help of the families that are here today and many more that can't be here, they are doing a lot of great work in getting the word out about PANDAS/PANS. I hope that members from each party will take a few moments to say hello to Kerry and the other visitors from PANDAS/PANS Ontario to learn more about their personal stories.

As I wrap up, I'm going to circle back to the thought I started my remarks with. As members of this Legislature, we have a great privilege to sit here and to be able to impact people's lives in positive ways. I can think of no better way for members of this Legislature to execute that privilege to effect positive change, especially those members sitting on the government benches, than voting to support this motion this afternoon, but then, once that

is done, directly appealing to their colleagues, the Premier and the Minister of Health, to act without delay in striking that advisory council on PANDAS/PANS.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I look forward to the remainder of the debate. Thank you very much to my colleagues for listening to me.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's always a pleasure to stand in the Legislature, especially on Thursday afternoons when each member of the Legislature who represents their constituents—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): I am just going to ask that those people who are having conversations make them a little quieter so that people who have come to hear about this bill are able to hear.

I'm sorry for interrupting. Thank you.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker. It is very important—as I said, this is probably one of the most exciting parts of our job, when we're here as legislators representing our constituents and understanding what issues are brought forward in our ridings so that we can voice them here.

I want to say congratulations to the member for Sarnia–Lambton. Obviously, there are concerns in his riding. He's been talking to people. People have come to consult with him and meet with him and let him know that this is a problem, that they need answers—of course, they're here today, and we welcome all the guests who are here today—and to educate legislators. And that's what the member from Sarnia–Lambton is doing.

Until I became familiar with the fact that we have, on October 9, a day that recognizes PANDAS/PANS in Ontario, no one really knew about this subject, perhaps, unless you happened to come across a constituent or some stakeholder or someone in a sector of health care who actually got your attention—or, more importantly, people who are experiencing difficulty with health issues who come to us and talk to us.

The member from Sarnia–Lambton has asked this government and all of us here to support immediately striking an advisory council on pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorder associated with streptococcal infections and pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome to advise the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on research, diagnosis, treatment and education relating to this disorder and syndrome.

What this tells me is that there's not a lot of information out there. I tried to Google it on the Internet; that's the first source we have. Back in the day, before the Internet happened—I am a little bit mature in my age here—we used to go to the library and the card catalogue. We used to search out books and articles and information. Microfiche: That was our Internet back then. Everything electronically—that's where you found things on the Internet, on microfiche. Now it's so easy—well, it isn't easy for the north. We know that they don't have broadband.

Mr. John Vanthof: They have it in libraries.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: They have it in libraries, but at home it's not so accessible.

But we are privileged here, so I went to the Internet, and I tried to look up some information on this. It's very scant. There is not a lot, if any, information on the Internet about this.

When the member is talking about having an advisory council to look at this issue, he's asking for information to be gathered. He's asking for acknowledgment that this is happening and that people can bring their experiences to educate us. This will be a form of research, obviously.

The people here today, the families here today, are looking for answers. They are looking for answers to a diagnosis that they are experiencing, whether it's themselves or their children. That's what parents do. If something happens, an illness, to a child, they expect to go to their health care system. They go to their doctor. They go to the emergency room, when it's not overcrowded, and they get help. They get some medication, or maybe it's surgery, but there's generally some diagnosis. There's generally something that can help the ailment that they've come to find treatment for.

But in this case, with PANDAS/PANS, it's not so readily available. There's not much around diagnosis. We know that we've heard from parents, and from looking at the information I've sought out, that it often starts with the streptococcus, and then somehow, there are other side effects or ailments or health concerns that arise.

Parents are concerned, and they want help with this. They want to know what kind of treatment—if you can identify some of these health risks when it comes to PANDAS/PANS, what are some of the preventive things that can happen so that it doesn't escalate into these other symptoms that have been highlighted before?

If there are ways to do that, I think the advisory council is a good first step. We need to have, especially—I agree with the member from Sarnia-Lambton—experienced people to represent the advisory council and guide them, because this is such an unknown right now. We need to learn from people who are experiencing these health concerns. That's the right thing to do. We need to involve them, and we need to ask them what it is that they are seeking.

When we have that advisory council, of course you're going to have to have some terms of reference and a mandate, and maybe that is also guided by what they have experienced. Surrounding those terms of reference, when we're consulting, when we're hearing and collaborating with people, families, parents, grandparents, patients and people who are experiencing these health concerns, PANDAS and PANS, finding out what that is so that the advisory council can be effective—making it up within these walls and not consulting with the people who are actually living it, living what's going on, I think, doesn't help research and the advisory council to develop what their mandate would be. We need to know what their experiences are.

1350

I thank the member for his passion, and for the fact that he is good at what he's doing here today. He's good

at listening to his constituents. We had the first step, which was the bill for recognition on October 9 of PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day. Oftentimes that's where things start. It's a progression: We don't have knowledge of an issue, we start researching it and then we start educating people, as well. Education sometimes comes first, before research, as in this case, so education is a good thing. So that was the first step. We had that recognition of awareness.

Then the member talked further, and probably at the pressure of the people who are experiencing this health concern, so good on them for continuing to lobby the member from Sarnia-Lambton, and him coming up with some kind of solution or mechanism to address their concerns.

Today, again, one of the great things that we have the pleasure and the privilege of doing is debating issues that we're not aware of, listening to our members who bring concerns forward in their riding and opening up the vast tools that we have as legislators in our own ridings to deal with problems as they come forward. That is the next step that he has progressed to.

And then, who knows? After the advisory council, should it come to light—I mean, we certainly support this initiative. We'll see what happens after it gets sent to a committee, or where it goes from that stage. If it passes through this chamber and ends up actually being legislation where this advisory council is created, then from that stage forward, that information—like they said, it's a report. They'll want it to be reported back to the Legislature. We'll have to examine those results. Then, from there, that's where the health minister can maybe have some training and education in medical schools, because this is all brand new.

I just want to congratulate the member again and welcome everyone here who has come here to support the member in this initiative. I look forward to continuing the debate and hearing other perspectives and experiences that people have in speaking to the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure to see you in the chair this afternoon for private members' business here.

This is, I think, one of those great days in our week where we get to do some very important work, where the whole House can come together on issues that are of particular importance to one member who has had his ear to the ground to hear what his constituents are saying and what others in the community are saying, and taken action on it. I'm delighted to be able to stand and to take an opportunity to support the member from Sarnia-Lambton on this initiative.

I came to understand PANDAS as a rare disease among children about two and a half weeks ago, when a constituent of mine came to see me. She happens to be the daughter-in-law of a very close personal friend. I had heard that they had some issues with their child back a year ago, and I didn't know what it was; I didn't have

any idea what it's about. But she reached out to me, now that their child had stabilized, to say that she wanted to tell me about her experience with her son Knox.

Erica Mills was here earlier. I wonder if some of the families had a chance to meet her when she was here earlier during question period. But Erica came to see me and said, "You're not going to believe what happened." One of her two children, a very healthy, very active son, suddenly started to display very odd symptoms: his head tics, anxiousness, and he started to verbalize things they'd never heard out of his mouth before. It was very distressing as a parent, as you know it would be, and I'm sure your families have gone through exactly this distressing, unpredictable, un-understandable behavioural changes in your child that happen really quite suddenly.

So they went to hospital, they went to emergency, as any good parent would. There was no diagnosis of PANDAS at the time. They weren't quite sure what was going on. They gave him some relaxants and sent him home again. But the situation and the complications got worse and worse. They were watching their loving child change dramatically, and they were just horrified: "What do we do?"

Now, Erica happens to be a professional researcher, so she went online; she went to journals; she went to the University of Toronto medical libraries. She started doing research to try to better understand. Her mother happens to be a physician, as well. She eventually came across a PANDAS diagnosis, and she said to her mother, "Look, this seems to be exactly what my Knox is going through."

It's not a complicated treatment. Drugs are readily available once you get the diagnosis. So she brought that to her mother and her mother agreed. They went back to the family physician and had the family physician do some investigation. It's a simple blood or saliva test, I believe, in order to determine that in fact there are antibodies running around that are supposed to be attacking a strep virus and which are now actually attacking the brain of the child. Knox wasn't exhibiting symptoms of strep throat, fever or any of those things, but just a simple blood or saliva test could indicate that he had these antibodies in his system that had to be addressed.

They put him on a treatment protocol. I think it was three to four months of antibiotics. Now they live with that fear that it may come back, so they're watching him very, very closely. At some point, I understand, the immune system may become more robust and it won't be an ongoing danger to an early teen or into adulthood, but for now they maintain that vigil to ensure, if he starts to exhibit signs, which are now more recognizable, they will go and get him back on a treatment system.

So she came to me, and I immediately said, "We need awareness." I've only been here since 2014, but I've seen the incredible work we've done on awareness for a whole series of issues by holding a special day of recognition, for instance. So in my mind, what about a PANDAS/PANS Day? I looked online, and in the US, October 9 is widely recognized as a day of recognition of

this disease. So I thought, well, we should do a private member's bill.

It didn't take me long in my research to determine that another member of this House, the member from Sarnia-Lambton, had already done a private member's bill to recognize October 9 as PANDAS day, and it had received the approval of the House and it went forward. I congratulate him on that very, very important bill. But it doesn't mean that the work was done, because what we really need to do is get more information to pediatric doctors. This woman's own mother is a doctor, and she wasn't aware of the symptoms that would have led her to a diagnosis. So we need to do more.

I thought, as part of my work, I would go and spend some time with the Minister of Health, which I did. I said, "What we need here is some kind of professional circular to go to every single pediatric doctor in the province of Ontario: 'Are you aware of these symptoms and that the cause could be...' and that this is the simple test to confirm and these are the treatment options?" It seemed like a simple thing to me. You would do this in any professional organization. You'd send out an advisory to all of the people who are dealing with diagnosis, particularly pediatric diagnosis, to say, "Be aware."

It's not unlike—and the member from Sarnia-Lambton will also be very familiar with this—the issues around Lyme disease, because with climate change and the temperatures warming in Ontario, we're starting to see more deer ticks carrying Lyme disease up into Ontario, and it's not an illness that's well understood by doctors in the province. So we're seeing people with Lyme disease not getting the treatment as early as they need, and it results in catastrophic difficulties for them later in life if they don't get early treatment.

The same, I think, could be said about PANDAS/PANS. The earlier you treat it, the better the chance for full recovery, and a lack of treatment can lead to serious consequences for the children and their families in not being able to indulge in a full and productive life.

So I had this conversation with the minister: "Can't we be doing something along the lines of those kinds of professional directions to all doctors?" And he said, "Well, that would be difficult. For the Ministry of Health to tell doctors how to do their job is kind of overstepping authority. We need some other mechanism."

1400

I had reached out to the member from Sarnia-Lambton to say, "What else has been happening?" And it just happened, that day, he said, "I'm going to table my private member's motion," which he has in front of us today. From my perspective, the timing was very fortuitous. I welcomed the opportunity that I could support him. I know that all members of the House will support that the ministry does determine, through—I think you're asking for an advisory council that can put good, professional minds on the case to figure out how best to disseminate the information to those who need it most.

The minister told me—very supportive—he was aware of the disease, but wasn't aware of whether we were

doing anything special within the ministry. And now we have a ministry change, of course. I haven't had the chance to speak to the new Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, but I'm absolutely certain that her staff will be absolutely on topic, trying to do the work.

Particularly because this is not like a rare disease wherein the treatment is costing hundreds of thousands of dollars and putting taxpayers—money spent well to keep people healthy is obviously very important. But we face that issue often, where people come and say, "We want you to fund this drug, even if we're not sure it's going to be effective, and it's going to cost hundreds of thousands of dollars." But that's not the situation here. The situation here is that if you get the information right and if you get the diagnosis right, you can treat it.

I'm delighted that part of our treatment options now, under OHIP+, is that every child under the age of 25 is now entitled to free medicine, so the drugs associated with treating PANDA/PANS would be free under the OHIP+ program. I think that's an important step, but it doesn't deal with the more important diagnosis piece, which is what I hope this advisory council can focus on—to bring those talents, those best minds, together.

It may be that an advisory council that's constructed out of the ministry could, in fact, put a kind of information circuit together, and maybe start publishing into medical journals that doctors read, and maybe make it part of continuing education for physicians in the province of Ontario, that will alert them to the symptoms.

Erica Mills told me—and I've seen it in some of the other government material that has come to me—that they classify this as a rare issue. But she has seen evidence in the US that suggests that almost one in 200 kids could be affected. I look around at the kids I know in the community who are suffering from dyslexia or autism or OCD issues, and you have to stop and ask yourself, "Wait a second; did something happen earlier in their life that changed their behaviour and that never was caught and it had an effect?" I think the incidence is not nearly as well understood as it should be. We should be putting the research dollars into ensuring we know more about it and what we're doing to identify it.

Speaker, I don't know if any of my other members want an opportunity to say a few words on this. I will absolutely work with the member from Sarnia-Lambton to ensure that we get the work done so that we can support the families from his own community, in my community and across the province of Ontario to ensure that they get the diagnosis and the treatment that they so richly deserve.

Thank you to the member for bringing the motion. I look forward to further conversations with him about it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm proud to stand up and speak to the motion from the member from Sarnia-Lambton on pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorder associated with streptococcal infections and pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome.

First of all, I've got to say welcome to those advocates that are here today. It's quite important that you do take the time and opportunity to voice your concerns to not only your local MPPs but to the Legislature as a whole.

I do have to commend the member from Sarnia-Lambton. He's a champion in this House at private members' business. I think he has passed five or six motions or bills in this Legislature, which has to be close to a record in such a short amount of time. He does so because not only does he bring issues to the Legislature which are important to Ontarians, but he is also able to reach across the—

Interjection: The aisle.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: The aisle; thank you—in order to find consensus on issues. This is another one of those issues that he has brought forward. I am quite proud to be here to speak in support of it, and I know that the PC caucus is 100% behind the member from Sarnia-Lambton.

It's interesting that we have another one of these pieces of legislation coming forward to deal with a rare disease. It was more than a year ago when the member from Kitchener-Conestoga, Mike Harris, brought forth a similar type of bill, which called on a special advisory committee on rare diseases as a whole. It was important that that bill came forward to put a spotlight on the fact that Ontario is not dealing with the issue of rare diseases very well. It hard to blame anyone, however. It has been occurring for so long; we do have to throw it out in the spotlight.

Medical technology this day has become so advanced and our diagnostic protocols have been so specific that more and more types of diseases and conditions are being diagnosed. The treatments that result from those diagnoses and responses have become so specific that we are creating more and more rare diseases because we are becoming a brighter and more technically advanced society. I mention that when speaking of any GI—gastro-intestinal—type of problem, we've become so specific. It used to be that maybe we would just treat Crohn's disease or colitis, but now we can break it down even further. And the medication and treatments coming out, and the understanding coming out, for these diseases are so advanced that, many times, a misdiagnosis occurs.

It's not a misdiagnosis because our health care professionals are failing us—I think that Ontario has the brightest and highest-trained health care professionals not only in North America but in the world; it's because our advances are so quick in coming forward. That's the role the government needs to play: How do we create an integrated system so that with these advancements in society—that the government is well informed about what's happening in the medical system—they can find a way to ensure that that information and ideas are spread through the health care professionals and our hospital system so that we can diagnose these conditions quicker and ensure that treatment begins soon?

It's unimaginable, as a parent—and most of us who are parents are blessed to be parents here—the fact that if

your son or daughter were to take ill and you would go to your doctor, and they weren't getting better—something was missed. And I know in the system, it's really hard to see specialists to start with. The fact that we have the potential to continuously misdiagnose these issues is only heartbreaking to the family. You can talk about the cost associated with it, but I'm just going to talk about the anxiety and the worry that parents must feel.

It's motions like the ones from the member from Sarnia–Lambton that make this really important to bring forward so that the Minister of Health is kept well informed, because with the bureaucrats in the Ministry of Health and the minister themselves, there are so many issues to worry about that they can't possibly keep on track of all the issues going on.

I know that the ministry created a rare disease advisory committee at just the same time that Michael Harris was pushing the issue, but that committee is not enough for this issue. Perhaps this motion wouldn't have had to come forward if the government had had a proper consultation process in listening to health care professionals as they reach out for help.

My other point I just want to bring forward here—because hopefully this will pass—is the implementation of this committee. The member opposite mentioned Lyme disease. I think it has been about two years now since we passed a similar motion to create a strategic plan for Lyme disease in this province, and we've had little to no movement. The bills from the member from Haldimand–Norfolk and a member from the third party pushed this forward.

Step 1 is get this motion passed. Step 2: We need your help going forward, once we pass this motion, to push the government into action. There is more than enough time to get this started before the election, so don't let that be an excuse. Know if this motion passes, and we're fortunate enough to form the government, that we will continue to ensure that it's enacted. But we need to get this pushed as quickly as possible.

I will make this small comment on OHIP+. It's great to expand coverage for OHIP+, since we're talking about a pediatric condition. OHIP+ fails because the formulary does not cover enough dosage forms for children. I'm getting calls from psychiatrists and I'm getting calls from family doctors saying that the dosage their child is on, especially for anti-depressant medications—the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary does not cover children's doses.

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I'm hoping they're making those changes to that formulary to ensure that those children are going to get the treatment they need. We can do better with OHIP+. It was rushed, implemented—our side of the House, we're going to fix that. I hope the government is making note of the necessary changes in case they want to expand it—that they need to do better homework in creating these programs.

Thanks again to the member for Sarnia–Lambton. We're proud of you. We're going to pass this piece of legislation today and then we're going to get to work to implement it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in this House and speak on behalf of our constituents, which the member from Sarnia–Lambton does very well.

Today it's an honour for me to be able to sit in this House and learn, as a parent, about what other families have to go through, and learn that—I did a bit of research. We just assume, because it's not well identified, that it's going to be very hard to treat. From what I've learned today, that's actually not the case. It's recognizing, identifying—and I think it's a very good thing to create this council. On behalf of the NDP caucus, we fully support this initiative.

Although we disagree philosophically with the Conservatives and with the Liberal government on a lot of issues, on issues like this we work together. And I don't think you could find a better champion on an individual issue than the member from Sarnia–Lambton. I would really like to recognize that.

This motion will pass today. Many of us have had motions passed. Once we pass it, it's incumbent on us all to force—and sometimes we don't have to force, but “force” is probably the word you need to use—the government of the day, regardless of if it's the current government, or if we form the government, or the Conservatives form the government—to keep the pressure on to actually make this motion become not just the will of the Legislature, not just the will of the people, but the will of the government—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Once again, I would ask that if you're having a separate conversation, either have it somewhere else or please make it so that we can hear the speaker. These people have come a long way to hear what's being said, and I'd appreciate you listening. Thank you.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, Speaker.

If I can leave one message, yes, the NDP caucus fully supports this initiative. We have to unite and make sure that whoever forms a government—right now, we have this government—we'll push them.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: I think it will be us, but you can dream.

Whoever sits on that side of the aisle come June 8 or June 9, we have to make sure that we continue to work together to ensure that this motion becomes a reality. This isn't something that is unattainable. This is attainable, and this can make a huge difference in those children's lives, in those families' lives.

Thank you very much for advocating for the people you love.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you to my caucus colleague from Sarnia, Bob Bailey, for taking this important step in continuing our party's efforts to ensure that Ontarians with rare conditions have the support they need.

Special acknowledgment goes to Kerry Henrikson and her son, Jonah Henrikson, and all of the people in the gallery who have come here today to support this. It's a very important cause and one that I'm proud to support.

Following up on the work done some years ago when we declared October 9 as PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day in Ontario, we're now taking this advocacy work to the next level, which is to establish an advisory council on PANDAS/PANS—on research, diagnosis and treatment relating to the disorder and syndrome.

As you heard earlier, PANS stands for pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome, and PANDAS stands for pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorder associated with streptococcal infections. It is not one we often hear about, but because of that first step this Legislature took some time ago, we were able to raise awareness and, as a result, we now know that we need to do more to help improve our understanding of the two disorders which have slightly different diagnosing criteria.

So far, we have learned that PANDAS is believed to develop from a case of strep throat and results in a multitude of behavioural issues similar to obsessive-compulsive disorder or autism and, in the words of the parents with kids suffering from PANDAS, a lot of mental anguish that, and I quote, "just explodes overnight."

Parents describe the symptoms as anger and raging, followed by life-changing symptoms such as severe restrictive eating, intense anxiety, tics, personality changes, a decline in math and handwriting abilities and sensory sensitivities.

This autoimmune illness affects one in every 200 children. It's a similar statistic to childhood cancer, yet there's no single test, no single lab test available to confirm the diagnosis.

This is why raising awareness levels is critical, as PANDAS/PANS is often misdiagnosed and undertreated due to the lack of awareness both by the public and even the medical community. The truth is, the disorders aren't widely recognized in most medical circles and treatment is difficult to come by and isn't covered by health insurance, albeit the province provides support through treatment of symptoms of tic disorders. This is why we need to set up an advisory council and coordinate a plan to help children suffering from this autoimmune illness.

The members opposite will know that our party has always supported individuals and families who are affected by rare diseases. It was just two years ago that another caucus colleague and MPP for Kitchener-Conestoga, Michael Harris, stood here on behalf of rare disease sufferers who were seeking access to treatments. He championed a motion for an all-party select committee into rare disease treatment after the government refused to help these families, many of them who had been forced to scrape up the needed funds themselves or suffer in silence. In some cases, these treatments can run between \$3,000 a month or \$25,000 a year.

Similarly, another colleague from our party, the MPP from Nepean-Carleton, Lisa MacLeod, did the same.

Our PC caucus will continue to support and take next steps towards access to support and treatments for Ontarians suffering from rare diseases.

At home in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, my constituents support the same. I've received emails and phone calls from concerned citizens in my riding who are not happy with this government's treatment of patients, the government's lack of support for people who are struggling to access treatment in Ontario and whom the government is forcing to max out resources to pay for life-saving treatment.

This is why it's important for us to change that by supporting this motion and putting parents and families dealing with symptoms of PANDAS/PANS on notice that we are listening, we do care and we are taking action to help.

I'm proud to stand here today with my colleagues from Sarnia, Kitchener-Conestoga and Nepean-Carleton who continue our fight and call for better support and access to health care and treatment for Ontarians—all Ontarians.

I truly support my colleague Mr. Bailey from Sarnia. I think this is number six of his PMBs. He always brings those issues that are truly impacting people across the province.

He was just sharing that it's kind of unfortunate sometimes that it's on Thursday afternoons when the House isn't here. People go home to their ridings, and that's just the reality of the situation. Please know that the people who aren't here in the House today—it's not a reflection that they're not caring and concerned, because there's tons of support across, I hope, all three parties. At the end of the day, this motion will get passed and we will be able to take critical action as quickly as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Further debate?

The member from Sarnia-Lambton has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a privilege to be able to respond to all my colleagues. I'd like to thank, at this time, the member from London-Fanshawe for her kind remarks; the member for Beaches-East York for his support, of course; the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London, who was a pharmacist by trade before elected and always gives us great advice on medical issues; the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane; and of course my colleague here next to me, the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, for all their support today.

But most importantly I want to thank again the people from Sarnia-Lambton and across Ontario who are here today in the persons of Kerry Henrikson, her son, Jonah, Erin Kwarciak, Janet Trider, Ellen Nicol, Erica Mills, Mike Boland, Doreen Crombie and Don Crombie. It's most important that you made the journey here today from across Ontario and Sarnia-Lambton to be here, to advocate on behalf of your children, your family and friends.

I did make a couple of other notes here. I understood from Kerry that there are only two doctors across

Ontario, one from Chatham and one from somewhere else in Ontario, who may be presently treating this disease. I could be corrected on that. It's not a widely treated disease because there's just no one with enough expertise in it or who takes the time to be made aware of this. We need to work with this.

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I appreciate the support of all three parties in the House to do this. As the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane said, whatever government forms after June 7, if I am given the privilege and honour of being returned to this House, I intend to work with whatever stripe of government is in place. I intend to stay on this. I appreciate the words of all the members—if they are all returned; hopefully they will be too—that we'll make a point of following up on this for the children and the parents and the future children that could be affected by this.

Private members' business: I have sat here on many Thursdays. I think that if everybody in the province could have the privilege to be here on Thursdays to hear the many issues that are brought up from ridings across the province—you learn so much on Thursdays. I'm not so sure of the rest of the week, but Thursdays, definitely, for private members' business, because that's when the members from every party in the House bring issues that are important to them and to their constituents here to this House, which is such a privilege to serve in.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): We will deal with this ballot item at the end of private members' public business.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Miss Monique Taylor: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should reverse years of chronic underfunding and provide adequate resources for community-based mental health services for children and youth to immediately eliminate the wait-list of an estimated 12,000 children and youth awaiting care; help reduce the stress and financial insecurity faced by families seeking assistance; and alleviate the burden on hospitals that have often been the only option for families in crisis.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Ms. Taylor has moved private member's notice of motion number 81. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Miss Monique Taylor: First, I want to welcome all of those who attended Queen's Park today to listen to this debate. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the work that you do, for your courage, for your determination to make life better for all of those children and youth, now and in the future, who struggle with mental health.

It is an honour to rise today to speak to my private member's motion to eliminate wait-lists for children and youth seeking community-based mental health services. I wish this motion wasn't necessary, but it is because,

despite the words I hear from the government that they know that more needs to be done, I am not sure they appreciate the urgency of the situation that we are facing. That is the message that I hear from those who work and live in the field: that we have a crisis on our hands.

In 2012, the government announced Moving on Mental Health, a plan that promised to transform the system. It promised a system “that is easy to navigate, that enables fast answers and clear pathways to care. Most important of all—the system must deliver early and appropriate help for each child and youth who needs it.” The service providers were hopeful that this had signalled a significant change, and they worked hard to make sure that they could do the best that they could. I can assure you, Speaker, they have a history of working miracles with very limited budgets, because they have had to—because the fact is that they have received only two increases to their base funding in the past 25 years: 3% in 2003 and 5% in 2006. Once you take into account inflation and an increase in demand, service providers are operating at about half the capacity of what they were before.

They had been hopeful for change, but they soon recognized that instead, they were falling further and further behind. In Moving on Mental Health, the government gave themselves three years to transform the system so that “parents will know where to go for help and know how to get service quickly. Funding will reflect each community's current and future needs. All Ontarians will know how well the system is working.”

Speaker, that was in 2012. We are now in 2018, three years after the deadline the government had set for themselves, and we are no further ahead. In fact, service providers are saying that their capacity to meet the needs of those they serve continues to erode.

The numbers speak for themselves: 12,000 kids in Ontario are waiting for mental health treatment, some for as long as 18 months; it estimated there are 6,500 that are waiting more than a year. This has a devastating impact on lives, an impact that can carry on into adulthood and stay with them for the rest of their life. In fact, 70% of mental health problems have their onset during childhood or adolescence. In other words, early treatment is crucial to avoiding bigger problems down the road. Tragically, some take their own life; others come much too close.

This morning, I was joined at a news conference by Alicia Raimundo, who shared her experience with the children's mental health system. Alicia spoke of her life as a 13-year-old: She was in a place of darkness. She couldn't imagine living another day. At 14, she tried to take her own life. Luckily, she woke up in hospital, but then she had to wait seven years to get the mental health treatment that she needed. Her survival is a true testament to her strength in the face of adversity. To speak out now, on behalf of children and youth all across Ontario, demonstrates remarkable courage, and we so appreciate it.

Sadly, there are far too many who do not make it through. Suicide is the second leading cause of death

among young people in Canada, where we have the third-highest rate of youth suicide in the industrialized world. Our First Nations youth are in crisis, having a suicide rate five to six times higher than that of non-aboriginal youth.

Loretta Hill-Finamore, who is the director of youth services with the Good Shepherd in Hamilton and who is here with us today, told me of a young artist and musician who first showed up at their door before the age of 16. This youth was in and out of hospital, in and out of youth mental health facilities and a homeless shelter. They fell into the world of substance abuse, and the system was never able to meet their needs. At one point, they were ordered by the psychiatrist and the court to go to Syl Apps Youth Centre, the most restrictive youth facility. It's a tragic story that ended in suicide for that youth.

As Loretta said, if we had a system that was accessible to indigenous families living in poverty, this young artist might still be with us today. As stark evidence of our need for increased awareness of gender identity and expression, LGBTQ2+ youth have a risk of suicide and substance abuse 14 times higher than that of their peers.

Beyond those particular tragic outcomes, the lack of services causes untold damage that severely impacts lives. A survey conducted by Ipsos in October of last year found 46% of 18- to 34-year-olds had missed school due to issues related to anxiety and 40% had sought mental health help; of those, 42% are still waiting or did not get the help that they need. The result, of course, is that kids with mental health issues have substantially lower achievement at school. Their career opportunities become severely limited and could lead to a life of poverty as they get older.

Outcomes like this mean that the effects of what we are doing now are not impacting just today's kids, but potentially their families for generations to come. Parents have to take time away from work to care for their children. It affects their income, or perhaps takes them out of the workforce completely. As we might imagine, this adds significant stress to situations that are already extremely challenging. Lacking proper treatment, the problems inevitably get worse.

Some end up in group homes where the staff just don't have the resources to deal with them. Don't get me wrong: The staff at those homes do a very difficult job that they often feel is thankless, and they do it for very little pay. Often, the staff have no training at all, let alone any to deal with complex mental health issues. This is a problem that was highlighted in the report submitted two years ago by the government-appointed Residential Services Review Panel.

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Sometimes these placements have terrible consequences. In February of last year, a tragic fire in a foster home near Lindsay took the life of 14-year-old resident Kassy Finbow and staff member Andrea Reid. Mary Ballantyne of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies wrote a column in the *Toronto Star* about this tragedy, and in the column she said, "The residential

services working group convened by children's aid societies is looking at initial data from agencies that suggest in some areas upwards of 40% of their youth in the care of group homes should actually be in the care of a children's mental health service."

The fact is that in the absence of adequate community-based mental health services, many of those who need help end up in the wrong place—hospitals, for example. In the past 10 years, there has been an increase of 63% in emergency department visits, and a 67% increase in hospitalizations for children and youth seeking treatment for mental health disorders in Ontario. Not only are children and youth being denied the services and the treatment that they need; we are also needlessly encumbering other parts of our health care system, at an estimated cost of \$190 million a year.

Children and youth who can't access community-based mental health services have no other option but to go to the hospital when they are in desperate need of help—hospitals that, as we know, are already strained to their limits by an overcrowding that none of us have ever seen. It makes no sense and it's bad policy.

Speaker, the stigma of mental health has always been a problem. It has been a barrier to us talking about it and dealing with it. However, I think that we have made significant headway in recent years. The young survivors who came here today and spoke so eloquently in sharing their own experiences are evidence of that. More and more, it is being treated as a health issue, but we still have a long, long way to go.

Just last week, the former Minister of Health said in this House, "I think all of us understand that mental health and physical health are two sides of the same coin. We need to demonstrate that same vigour, intent and determination on mental health as we do in providing health services for those with physical ailments."

I have to say to the government that you'd better believe that you need to demonstrate it, because it certainly isn't being seen by those who are dealing with mental health each and every day, and it certainly isn't evident when we compare spending on mental and physical health. Data from just a couple of years ago tells us that Ontario spent \$1,361 per capita on health care versus \$16.45 for mental health.

The government will tell us what they have done, but the fact is that they have fallen unacceptably behind on their Moving on Mental Health plan. We are still waiting for a new funding formula. In 2012, they said it would be done in three years. They said that by 2015, "the system must deliver early and appropriate help for each child and youth who needs it." The actions they have taken, such as their commitment to wellness hubs, do not include an increase to treatment services. It's a good service delivery mechanism, but it does nothing to reduce wait-lists, and they are limited to only nine communities in the entire province.

Meanwhile, children and youth in the thousands wait and wait and wait. They struggle, they suffer and some die. We are at a critical stage when it comes to our

children's mental health. I ask all members to support this motion today.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Ms. Deborah Matthews: I want to begin by thanking the member from Hamilton Mountain for bringing forward this motion. I will support this motion and I know that many of my caucus members will too. We all agree in this House that doing a better job addressing the mental health challenges of all people, particularly children and youth, is a very high priority for all of us.

We've said time and time again in this House that there is no health without mental health. I think there is no family that is not affected with mental health challenges. Every single one of us will have a story of a family member or a close friend who has experienced mental health challenges.

I would say that there have been tremendous gains in awareness and anti-stigma work over the time that I have been here, over the past 15 years. People are prepared to talk about mental health. The issue has come out of the darkness and into the light, and that is a very, very good thing.

I want to take this opportunity to applaud the people, people like Clara Hughes, many people across this country who have made it a top priority to talk about mental illness. There is no question that that has had an impact on our mental health system.

We have continued to invest more and more. We've continued to streamline the process of delivering mental health services. This is a job that is not done. This job is not done. That is why I will proudly support this motion. We need to continue to make not just progress but real, strong progress on better serving people with mental health challenges, Speaker.

I think it's important to acknowledge that we have put our money where our mouth is: more than \$10 billion more into the mental health system since 2008. As I say, it's not just about money, but money is important. We have committed to an additional \$1.9 billion over the next decade in better mental health services.

Speaker, I can tell you that in my community—and I think this is not unusual—the challenge with mental health services for young people is that there has been a very uncoordinated labyrinth of services to try to navigate. I know there has been really good work done in my community and in other communities bringing together organizations that provide mental health services.

We've established lead agencies. In the 33 service areas across the province, 31 of them have identified a lead agency that is responsible for mental health services in that area. These are agencies that are really beginning the work of integrating care for people. There's nothing worse for a parent who is worried about one of their kids than to go an agency, wait for an assessment, get the assessment and then be told they are in the wrong place, that there's a better agency somewhere else. Then they have to start it all over again. Meanwhile, the clock is ticking on this child. The child is not thriving. The

families are suffering; the kids are suffering. We need to better coordinate.

The other area where there is really good progress being made is through our school system. Very often it's the teacher who first identifies a mental health challenge. In fact, often it's the teacher before the parents. Parents can maybe not realize that their child is experiencing mental health challenges, but the teachers do. We need to bring that mental health service into the school system as well.

This is not a partisan issue. All of us agree that we want the very best services for our children and youth. But I think we need to bring not just agencies within the mental health sector working together but we need to bring schools and we need to bring our hospitals and other health care providers. Collectively, I know we can continue to improve services and better outcomes for people.

Some real example of change is taking place. We've now got 24/7 walk-in counselling services so children and youth can get the help they need when they need it the most.

When I was Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development, the number one issue that I heard when I went to colleges and to universities—whether from the faculty or the administration, and certainly from the students—the number one issue that was identified to me was mental health services.

The advice that I got time and time again was that we need to provide a system that offers the right care at the right time in the right place from the right provider, so that students who can work with peer groups like Jack.org—Jack.org provides terrific peer support. For some students, that's the right care. Others need more intensive care. We need to continue to develop a system that delivers the right care at the right time in the right place from the right provider.

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I am encouraged by the progress that has been made. I would be the last person to say that we're at the end of this journey. There is so much more to do. We will continue to do the work.

Again, I applaud the member from Hamilton Mountain and so many others in this Legislature who have stood up and said that there is no health without mental health. We can't continue to fail people when it comes to mental health services.

I look forward to supporting this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: We're proud to support this motion by the member from Hamilton Mountain. Thank you very much for bringing this issue forward.

On this side of the House, we have been speaking continually about the failure of this government to provide adequate services for children and youth with mental health conditions.

Even in our own area of London—last November, I received a letter from the agencies that are providing care

and services for children and youth with mental health conditions. They're all on the verge of going bankrupt, because this government has failed to increase their base funding since 2006.

The member from London North Centre said that they're in the middle of this journey of ensuring that services are there for mental health. I don't think they've begun the journey yet. That's the failure of the system—when, in fact, those agencies are borderline.

In my own county of Elgin, we have one agency that's able to provide services for children and youth. I even had a pediatrician come to my office saying that it's too long a wait there, so they get sent to London, only to be turned back because it's not their area. And then they call the LHIN, and they say there are no catchment areas, but there are. That needs to stop. When a pediatrician is at her wits' end because she doesn't have the supports needed in place to treat these children and youth, it's quite concerning.

I'm going to go strictly to the point.

Children's Mental Health Ontario released these stats—CIHI data. It's evidence that this government has failed our children and youth for 15 years. It has been 12 years since 2006—but 15 years in total.

Emergency department visits: From 2006 to 2016, emergency department visits for mental health disorders rose 63% in our province. You could say it's because of Bell Let's Talk, which has increased awareness and reduced the stigma, which is great. People are seeking the help they need. But that wouldn't be the cause of all the emergency department visits. The increase is because community services have been starved for support from this government, and there's nowhere to turn but to the emergency departments in our hospitals.

The next stat: Hospitalizations for mental health disorders in children and youth rose 67%. It's lucky enough if they have a bed. Right now, as we're seeing in hallways throughout the province, people are coming in for help in our emergency departments and there are no beds. Unfortunately, some people needing specific mental health beds are being placed in units where they shouldn't be because there are no beds and there's no place to put these people.

Let's contrast the stats. Hospitalizations for all other conditions for children and youth fell 18%. So at a time when hospitalizations for other issues with children and youth are falling 18%, they're increasing by 67%.

I don't understand; we have these stats available, we have front-line health care professionals calling out for help, we have the organizations saying they're about to go bankrupt, and it's silence on the government side—silence of action. I implore this government to do something. We can't wait any longer.

I'm proud of our party committing \$1.9 billion in new funding to mental health, matching the federal government's \$1.9 billion—\$3.8 billion in new spending purely for mental health. A good portion of that will be going to build up our community sector so we can release the burden on our emergency departments. And most of all,

our children and youth can seek the treatment and help that they need and deserve.

This government is a failure on this issue. They should be ashamed of themselves.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to say congratulations to the member from Hamilton Mountain. I am pleased to rise today to support the motion. Of course, my colleague has done a lot of work on the children and youth file, and this is part of her ongoing work.

The motion is regarding the provision of resources for the estimated 12,000 children and youth who are currently on wait-lists awaiting mental health services. Truly, it is a disgrace that Ontario has underfunded community-based mental health resources to this extent. I know that there has been some good work done, and I'll talk about that, but it needs to be work so that we don't have this number of 12,000 young children sitting on a wait-list.

We know that 70% of mental health problems have their onset during childhood and adolescence, and that's a key piece of information. We need to prevent mental health from escalating into adulthood. If we acknowledge that 70% of mental health issues happen in childhood and adolescence—this is why we are talking about this wait-list. We're not acknowledging that that needs to happen—the onset of help when people are seeking it.

This government brought forward a Moving on Mental Health strategy in 2012. The Liberals gave themselves three years to transform the children and youth mental health system. Like I said, has there been some movement? Yes. But it isn't effective, as we can see.

They stated, most importantly of all, that the system must deliver early and appropriate help for each child and youth who needs it, and we still have 12,000 on the wait-list. Six years have now passed, and we haven't come close to that. That hasn't stopped the Liberal government from hiding their real record on this issue behind a very thin veil of platitudes. There are a lot of platitudes when it comes to mental health, but it actually needs to happen so we can get rid of this wait-list of 12,000 and so people have access to treatment as efficiently and quickly as possible when they need it.

They've announced that they have invested an extra \$10 billion since 2008 and are establishing a network of youth wellness hubs. That \$10 billion doesn't have a portion targeted towards children and youth, and the wait-list just keeps growing. That \$10 billion is for the whole mental health system, which is a good thing, but there is not a targeted amount to tackle that children and youth mental health piece.

The commitment to the youth hubs doesn't include an increase to treatment services. I met with the Canadian Federation of Students yesterday. I'll just read from their booklet here. They say, "On May 3, 2017, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development ... announced an additional investment of \$6 million per year for three years to fund initiatives such as mental health hubs, peer support programs and counselling." This is a

quote from this book: “Though this funding is a step in the right direction, given the prevalence of mental health concerns among students, the amount of funding does not go far enough. In 2016, the survey conducted by OUCHA also revealed that 65% of students reported experiencing overwhelming anxiety in the previous year.”

That’s the piece I think I am bringing out: that something is done, but these students—these university students, these college students—know it’s not enough.

In London, what we’re experiencing is something very similar to communities throughout this province. In the summer of 2017, I met, along with my colleague Peggy Sattler of London West, with different agency chairs—about seven, I believe it was. They expressed that, for the last 25 years, very minimal funding has been dedicated to child and youth services for mental health. The services are bursting at the seams. The wait-list is so large, they can’t help all the children they need to. That is a growing need among agencies.

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What they told us—this wasn’t an ultimatum or a fear tactic—they said, “If we don’t get some funding help to address the wait-lists in our community of London, some of these agencies are going to have to close down and shut their doors.” That’s what they told us. This is how dire it is.

Speaker, also, when it comes to London–Fanshawe, my riding, I can tell you that we hear from families who are beyond frustrated with the current wait times for mental health for their children. I have a family whose son has been in emergency at Victoria Hospital at least seven times over the last year, but he’s always discharged without an appropriate treatment plan. The family reached out to patient relations at the hospital, but they received very little help navigating an underfunded mental health system. They suggested that the patient’s family doctor refer him to a psychiatrist. Here’s the clincher: He doesn’t have a family doctor, which is another crisis in my riding. Not a lot of people get access to a psychiatrist because you need that referral from a family doctor and they don’t have one. The young man’s parents say that the various mental health outreach organizations refuse to deal with their son anymore because he is beyond the scope of their care.

This young man has been experiencing episodes of violence, causing problems in public and coming home and breaking things. It got so bad at a certain point, he is now in conflict with the law. He was incarcerated briefly and his family was actually relieved because they thought that at least he’s going to get an assessment with a psychiatrist and perhaps begin some sort of meaningful treatment plan. That’s what they thought, and that is pretty desperate, when that’s where you’re going to get the help for your child in mental health. Their hopes were dashed when they realized that there was no discharge plan for him in the community to continue his mental health care, and no referral to a psychiatrist.

We have to ask ourselves: What has our province come to when parents of children with mental health

challenges are faced with the sure knowledge that the safest place for them could be the possibility of incarceration? That’s not right.

We’ve heard the horrible statistics around the escalation and the increase of mental health—and then the awful results where people die by suicide. That’s unacceptable.

The member from Hamilton Mountain, rightfully so, has brought a very important issue to this House, but we need to take action and we need to do better. I’m going to, of course, support this. We need to make sure we can clear this wait-list up so that people can get the health care that they need.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate? The Minister of Seniors Affairs.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Speaker. May I say that it’s very nice to see you in the Speaker’s chair.

I also want to stand up, add my voice and speak to this motion. I want to begin by saying that I support this motion and I congratulate the member from Hamilton Mountain for introducing it. I know it’s been said before, but I think it’s worth saying again. I don’t think anybody said it better than the previous Minister of Health, Minister Hoskins, when he would say, so many times, that there can be no health without mental health. I think that very elegantly captures the need and the importance of mental health and making sure that all of the supports are required.

We’ve done, as a society—not as governments, but as a society—a really great job of taking the stigma out of mental health. Having taken the stigma out of mental health, there has certainly been an increase in the number of people willing to come forward and say that they are living with mental health issues and they need help. We have done one side really well, which is to make it easier for people to acknowledge and want to seek help without stigma.

We need to do a better job now addressing the demand side, if you will. We have to do a better job of ensuring that the supports are there, in place, because we have empowered people to come forward and say that they have mental health challenges—that it’s okay to say that, that it’s okay to want treatment. And, with treatment, people can and do get better. So I am really pleased that not only have we invested over \$10 billion more in mental health, we have also committed to putting forward an additional \$1.9 billion over the next 10 years.

We also recognize that it’s not just enough to invest more money. We need to make sure that the system works for people. One of the issues, I can say as a local MPP, is that sometimes, even when the supports are available, it’s hard for people to figure out where to go, which door to go to. So as a government, we are coming forward with policies. We are moving on mental health and we have identified lead agencies in 31 of 33 service areas across Ontario.

I think there is a philosophy underlying everything which recognizes that there is no wrong door. That is quite a bit of what Ontario needs to do and will be doing,

moving from that idea, because people find it so hard, so confusing sometimes, to navigate the system. We recognize that, and that's why we will be moving on a mental health strategy.

Finally, I just want to take exception to the member from—what is Jeff Yurek's—

Mr. Bill Walker: Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: —Elgin–Middlesex–London, when he says that as a government we should be ashamed. I take exception to that, because I believe that we have done a fantastic job on mental health, as well as on health care in general. We have made record investments. That does not mean that we say the system is perfect, but I will say this: We as a government have spent a lot of time and a lot of money improving our system.

I can tell you, as the local member for Mississauga East–Cooksville, that I am absolutely delighted that we are adding 350 new beds to the local hospital. That's investing in health care. There are so many examples of our investments in health care across Ontario, so I am quite proud of what we have done in the health care sector and what we will continue to do in health care.

I want to end by leaving you with some examples of concrete change; for instance, 24/7 walk-in counselling services, so children and youth can get the help they need when they need it the most. Community mental health agencies are working with health and education sectors such as schools and hospitals to better coordinate services and supports. Youth wellness hubs are another new concept that we're working on, and a special focus on the child and youth mental health sector.

Personally, as an MPP, one of the things that I advocate for is that it's really, really important for us to look at treatment options, making sure that people have places to go, but also to look at what we can do to prevent—sometimes; not all mental health issues are preventable, but some are. For instance, we know that loneliness and isolation can be a predictor for some types of mental health issues. What we can do to address those root causes is also something that is important to me as an MPP.

In summary, I'm happy to support this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm pleased to support the member from Hamilton Mountain.

Just last year I rose to bring the government's attention to the serious gaps in mental health services in my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. For 14 years this government has made life harder for Ontarians. We see the proof in the rise, sadly, of mental-health-related emergency department visits. Madam Speaker, the Hanover and District Hospital in my riding was recently forced to hire police officers at a great cost to watch over some of the patients in distress, who are a danger to themselves and to others.

Tragically, we are seeing the reality in the growing number of suicides. This is a crisis that is destroying

entire families in our great province. It's interesting to hear the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville saying they've done a fantastic job. I hope she looks in the mirror and does a double-take when she knows that she supported borrowing \$25 billion for a very short-term hydro rebate, yet she is saying that they're doing a fantastic job, with all of the gaps in mental health services across our province. It's hard to understand that she would even say that.

Consider how many reviews this government has had over 14 years in power, multiple capacity reviews and the Moving on Mental Health strategy, and yet no action. Luckily, there are organizations such as WES for Youth in my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, and Bell Let's Talk, of course, across the province. I'd also like to acknowledge the many local groups that are involved in mental health services in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, particularly the staff who pour their hearts out and bring their skills and talents to this.

But there is more needed. How many more children and people have to die by suicide before this government takes real action to stop the crisis? More than 12,000 children and youth in Ontario are currently waiting to access mental health services. In some parts of the province there are shocking wait times—up to 18 months—at child and youth mental health centres, forcing many to seek treatment in hospitals. Since 2006-07, there has been a 63% increase in emergency department visits and a 67% increase in hospitalizations for Ontario children and youth with mental health issues.

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I just met with some folks from the universities, who, again, were sharing with me that on their campuses, they're very concerned about the lack of services that are actually there for people in mental health situations.

When children receive treatment in hospitals, they are stabilized, kept for a few days and then discharged, only to wait in long lines for treatment at a child and youth mental health centre. In many cases, they go home empty-handed, with nothing, really, to fall back on. Tragically, some youth will die by suicide, waiting for treatment.

Gaps in access to mental health services is one of the Liberals' big broken promises. Their announcement just last month included a mere 61 new mental health beds. What I want to know is: How does that help the 12,000-plus kids and countless adults on a wait-list?

Here's what the government did get right: They created a hashtag called #kidscantwait. That is true; kids cannot wait. But a hashtag is not going to fix the youth mental health crisis they have ignored. It's not going to fix the crisis any more or better than the 61 beds they announced last month to deal with the 12,000 kids languishing on the wait-list. Again, it's about priorities, Madam Speaker.

Here are some quotes from the pre-budget hearings on this issue:

“It has gotten to the point that, on our campus, if you want access to a psychologist or a psychiatrist, the

psychologist is a four-week wait, but for a psychiatrist, you're looking at months. For my friend who booked an appointment with a psychiatrist in November, they can't access a meeting until April." That's Roch Goulet, OUSA member.

Another: "We have called for investment each and every year with little response by government. We're losing too many kids from suicide. It's way past time to act." That's Kim Moran from Children's Mental Health Ontario.

That is why our party has called on the government to make the largest mental health investment in our province's history—\$1.9 billion in additional new funding—to make sure we close the gap in mental health services in Ontario. It's time to treat and fund mental health and addictions care like physical health care in Ontario.

Madam Speaker, I can't say it enough: We have to take action. When you are in distress and pick up the phone and you hear that there is going to be a four-month wait, that is horrendous and not acceptable for the great province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: I've listened to a lot about this issue. I'd like to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain for bringing this mental health issue forward.

I'd just like to spend a moment to talk about mental health services in my riding. The only open door in my riding is the hospital emergency room. For many, that isn't enough, because the other open door I've gone through in the last three years is the door of the funeral home: in two cases, friends of my children, and in two other cases, First Nation kids. The only thing I had to say to those parents is, "But for the grace of God, it's not me," because we faced this in our family.

In rural northern Ontario, there is no place to go. A waiting time of a year? For many, it's a death sentence. This has to change. Anything we can do to change it, we have to work together. This isn't a political issue. This is truly a life-and-death issue. We have to change it now.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to join the debate today as the official opposition critic for education and post-secondary education. As you would expect, I am meeting regularly and discussing current challenges in Ontario schools—elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities—with regard to challenges. In those discussions, the unanimous agreement amongst those stakeholders is that the most significant challenge is mental health, and it's reaching crisis proportions.

The pre-2018 budget submission from Children's Mental Health Ontario cites the findings of a 2016 audit of child and youth mental health services in Ontario. It was conducted by the Auditor General of Ontario. This audit found that wait-times are a substantive public health issue and that the Ontario government has not allocated sufficient resources to meet the needs of the growing number of children and youth seeking treatment.

It is no wonder, Speaker, that there has been a 50% rise in the hospitalization of children and youth with mental health problems.

During question period on February 20 of this year, in response to a question from the Leader of the Opposition on mental health services, the Premier had this to say: "I am the first to agree that there is more that we need to do to make sure that there's coordination of services, to make sure that there are more services in terms of counselling and professionals." The reality is that the growing mental health needs of children and youth have not been a priority for the government. They simply haven't. They've had 15 years to address this crisis, and as we've heard, they've failed miserably.

Earlier speakers have cited a \$1.9-billion investment to build a comprehensive mental health system on behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party. Among other areas, these funds would be used to make targeted investments into youth and children's mental health services across the province to reduce wait times for services, as we should. These funds would also include topping up elementary and secondary school supports for improving mental health and well-being, including funding awareness campaigns and investing in suicide prevention counselling.

Speaker, it's time for Ontario to replace fragmented mental health services with a comprehensive approach to help our most vulnerable children and youth. It's time that mental health issues get the same attention and prioritization as physical health. It's time to ensure that Ontario's children and youth no longer have their well-being put at risk due to lengthy wait times and chronic underfunding. That's why I look forward to supporting this motion at the time of voting.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am very pleased to rise in support of this motion that was brought forward by my colleague the member for Hamilton Mountain. I have to say that I don't think there is a more passionate, fiercer, more committed advocate for children and youth mental health than the member from Hamilton Mountain, so thank you.

I want to acknowledge a group of amazing girls whom I am working with in London West, who are part of the Girls Government program. These girls came together and they had to pitch what issue they wanted their government to focus on. They decided to focus on youth suicide prevention. After they chose that issue as the topic for their government, they did some research, and I can tell you, Speaker, that they were absolutely shocked to read from Children's Mental Health Ontario that there are 12,000 young people on a waiting list for children and youth mental health services. These young girls knew from hearing their colleagues and from looking at what is going on in their community that services for children's mental health are in crisis in this province.

I want to quote from a letter that the member for London-Fanshawe, the member for London North Centre

and I received last summer. This is a letter from seven agencies that provide services for children and youth mental health. They said that they wanted to express their “shock and disappointment in a provincial budget ... that provided no new funding to community children and mental health services.”

They said, “We are not heading toward a crisis, we are there now.... Neglecting mentally ill children and youth when they are in the community and could be helped, only to spend money on them once their conditions have worsened to the point of an expensive hospital visit is not an outcome of diligent financial governance. Money aside, this is an unacceptable way to treat our children and their families.”

Speaker, we know that since 1992, there have been only two base funding increases for children and youth mental health centres. There were no increases under the Conservative government, and there have been only two increases under the Liberals, and nothing for the last 12 years. These agencies are struggling just to stay afloat. When I met with the boards of directors of these agencies in my community, they said their monthly board meetings are about, “Can we keep our doors open? What services do we have to cut next that are going to affect the children, youth and families who live in our community?”

In the last two years alone, London had a 23% increase in children’s mental health crisis intake—almost one quarter of these children who are going to the doors of our agencies where services are being cut—almost one quarter of these young people were planning or had already attempted suicide. In 2016, London police dealt with almost 500 incidents related to youth mental health crises. That was more than double the number that they had dealt with in 2010.

Speaker, I look forward to supporting this motion.

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The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): The member from Hamilton Mountain has two minutes to rely.

Miss Monique Taylor: I thank the members from London North Centre, Elgin–Middlesex–London, London–Fanshawe, the Minister of Seniors Affairs, and the members from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Timiskaming–Cochrane, Whitby–Oshawa and London West for their comments on my motion brought forward today.

I have to say that I’m shocked by the words that I hear from the government. I’m glad that they support my motion. I’m glad that they see that we need to do this. But, Speaker, they hold the purse and they have underfunded this ministry and this sector for years—and the Conservatives before them—because the base funding for these facilities has been 25 years with only two very small increases. Both of those parties talked about their commitment of \$1.9 billion over 10 years. Children’s Mental Health Ontario alone says that they need \$1.3 billion over those same 10 years just to deal with our children. So when they put in their \$1.9 billion—that is

fantastic; it’s over the lifespan of a person from child to death who needs services in mental health and addictions—but it’s not near enough.

We need to get back to the root of things. We are never going to be able to correct our societies, to be able to ensure that people have healthy lives as adults, if we’re not taking care of them as children. We have underfunded them for so many years that every single part of the sector is now in a crisis.

They talk about Moving on Mental Health. It’s great that we have better administration to move systems, but if we have doors that are locked because they have no funding, then it’s not doing anything. Just in Hamilton alone, we lost 24 beds since this Moving on Mental Health has been put into order. It’s great that you’re supporting it, but put the money in to go with it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): We will deal with votes at the end of private members’ public business.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I move that, in the opinion of this House, Brampton is one of the fastest-growing communities in Canada, with a youth population expected to grow by 20% by 2035; that the jobs of the future will require skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics; and that Brampton should be home to a new university site focused on helping students acquire these skills so they can thrive in the knowledge economy.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Mr. Dhillon has moved private members’ notice of motion number 87. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Today I’m incredibly proud, as the member for Brampton West, to rise and speak about the future of my community, because it is a bright future for my community of Brampton West. The government has identified Brampton as one of the fastest-growing communities in Canada. People are moving to Brampton because of what it offers: things like a strong local economy, a stable marketplace, a growing transit system and, of course, a diverse and inclusive community spirit. I am glad that people are recognizing Brampton for what it is: a city with lots of pride and potential.

But the real growth, Madam Speaker, will be led by young people. As I said, Brampton’s youth population is expected to grow by 20% by 2035. So, as the government, we have a responsibility to these young people to support them, to protect them and help them grow in the best possible ways. The actions this government has taken have done exactly that.

Just look at OHIP+, the largest expansion of medicare in a generation. Now, children and youth under 25 can get their prescriptions for free, and so far, more than 1.7 million prescriptions have been filled. OHIP+ benefits more than four million children and youth in the province. That’s a big savings for families in my riding of Brampton West and across the province. It provides that

much-needed peace of mind for parents and young people who rely on prescription medications.

But access to health care and medication is just one way we're supporting the growing young community in Brampton. We also want them to grow up to get good, well-paying jobs that are being created every day, but as we all know, what these jobs look like is changing. More and more, they're in science, mathematics, engineering and technology, so we need to make sure that young people have access to the training and education they need to succeed in these types of roles. That means connecting them with Ontario's world-class post-secondary education system and getting that education in the community they love so much.

This government made a commitment to the people of Brampton. We made a commitment to build a university campus in the city, one that will offer Brampton residents programs and courses that provide them with the skills they'll need to find good, well-paying jobs. I'm happy to say that we're very close to announcing more on the progress of that campus.

I can tell the people of Brampton a few things about this project. First, we're focusing on creating a talent pipeline for science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Enhancing an already talented and innovative region, tens of thousands of smart companies are already doing business in Brampton. By building this campus, these businesses will have the ready support of current students or recent graduates to draw from. We're infusing arts programs in the mix as well because the challenges facing the province and the world won't be met by any one kind of thinker.

The second thing I want to share is that this new campus will help build a diverse and career-ready workforce. We're looking for ways that business and schools can work together to create hands-on learning opportunities in Brampton. That includes more co-op programs, service learning, and placements. All of this takes learners out of the traditional learning environments and into the real world so that when graduates leave school, they have the connections and the training to find good jobs immediately. And it's something we're doing all across Ontario.

Our government is investing almost \$190 million in creating these kinds of opportunities. Our goal was to create 40,000 new experiential learning programs for students, but I'm happy to say that we've already created 70,000. That's because schools and businesses recognize the value of hands-on training and they're eager partners in creating more opportunities for people to get in-demand skills and in applying what you're learning in this class to real-life situations.

We don't just want a talented workforce in Ontario; we want a diverse one. That means bringing higher education and training to communities that represent the multicultural backbone of the province and our country—communities like Brampton. Walking through Brampton, you can hear almost 100 different languages. By its very makeup, Brampton has the insights and ties to global

markets. And we can capitalize on this by building up Ontario's economy, both here and internationally.

I'm very proud and excited about the work this government has done on bringing a campus to Brampton. But that's not the only way we're supporting access to post-secondary education for the people in my community. Access means having a physical space in your community to learn and grow, and it also means financial access.

That's why this government made tuition free for hundreds of thousands of families. This year, over 225,000 students are going to college or university for free. Many are people who previously wrote off higher education. They looked at the price tag and thought it wasn't for them. Well, because of the actions of this government, we delivered a single message: university and college is for anyone with a desire and an ability to go. It doesn't matter how much your family makes. The only thing that matters is your potential, and the young people in Brampton have a lot of potential.

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What has been great to see with our free tuition program is that it really is opening up colleges and universities to a whole new group of people. We can see that applications by indigenous students have significantly gone up since we introduced free tuition. We've seen that more single parents are going to college and university, with the majority of them being single moms, and, of course, we've seen many more applicants from families living with low or middle incomes. Our free tuition program is making education a reality for everyone.

That means we're building a workforce that is more fair and more inclusive. When everyone is able to get the skills they need to be their best and find good jobs, everyone wins. Families can support themselves, businesses can find the talent they need and the province is a more fair and prosperous place to live.

I'm very proud of this government's action on creating opportunities for education and employment for diverse people across Ontario. I'm glad that the Brampton campus will play a big role.

There's only one question to be asked: What's the alternative? All of these investments will be lost if the Conservatives are elected. We know they have no plan to help young people. We know that, if elected, the opposition party will make billions in cuts. That means cuts to funding for things like upgrading our schools, hospitals, and social housing and building more transit. That means cuts to services like education and health care. It means job cuts.

Sadly, students who are getting free tuition today will be under huge financial stress to pay for post-secondary tuition under a PC government. No matter who the leader will be, this is the same old Conservative Party.

In conclusion, our government is proud to stand up for young people and make the investments that will make sure they have the tools required for the jobs of tomorrow. That's why this government is moving towards the building of a university campus in Brampton.

The people of Ontario need us to continue to make the right investments to build Ontario up. Building this university is part of that plan, and we're pleased that young people in Brampton will take advantage of this great investment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I rise this afternoon to speak to the motion related to a proposed new university site in Brampton, and I do so in my capacity as the official opposition critic for education and post-secondary education.

I've travelled the province and had the honour of meeting with the staff and students from every university. What's clear to me is that university innovation, research and entrepreneurship are the future of Ontario's economy.

Ontario's universities have made discoveries and broken new intellectual ground that has dramatically changed and enhanced the way we live. Never before has the connection between the research being done at universities and the training of young minds in innovative ways been so intrinsically linked to the economy of today—the global economy.

However, as competition in the global knowledge economy intensifies, Ontario will need to continue to innovate and adapt. We must continue to invest or risk losing ground. We must maintain and strengthen the culture of innovation on which our prosperity depends.

The importance of what universities contribute is well recognized by students and those engaged in discovery and invention. The value of an education for the individual and the contribution of our universities to the social and economic vibrancy of our province as a whole is powerful.

I look forward to advancing the contributions of Ontario's universities for the good of students, their families, the betterment of Ontario's economy and the communities we have the privilege of serving and representing.

Speaking of communities, the motion before us today would emphasize the importance of these contributions and build upon them, recognizing that the city of Brampton is one of the fastest-growing communities in Canada and also that the province's future jobs and prosperity will require students to have the skills and training in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Consequently, the measures proposed by this motion would have some impact on alleviating the skills mismatch through Brampton becoming the home of a new university site focused on helping students acquire science, technology, engineering and math skills so they can thrive in Ontario's knowledge economy.

In addition to providing Ontario students with another option for post-secondary studies in these fields, the proposed university site is projected to bring significant economic activity to the local community. In an economic impact study conducted by urbanMetrics for the city of

Brampton, it's outlined that a proposed university site in Brampton will result in over 3,100 construction jobs and an annual operational impact of over 1,900 jobs and \$308 million in economic activity.

It's also worth pointing out, Speaker, that some of the previous work that has been undertaken by Brampton's committee of council, prior to today's debate on facilitating a new university campus in the community, is underpinning this particular motion, specifically the development of both business and public sector partnerships for a science-, technology-, engineering- and math-focused university; an endorsement of an investment in principle of \$50 million over 10 years; and up to \$100 million in a joint-use community space to support a university campus space.

These commitments and investments by Brampton's council have together set the foundation for a new science-, technology-, engineering- and math-focused university campus. This is crucial, absolutely crucial, Speaker, as Ontario faces a growing skills mismatch, particularly in these sectors. In fact, a June 2017 Ontario Chamber of Commerce survey indicated that of the 62% of Ontario Chamber of Commerce members who attempted to recruit staff in the latter half of 2016, 82% experienced at least one challenge in doing so, the most common being finding someone with the proper qualifications.

Speaker, this motion is timely, particularly as students continue to be unemployed or underemployed in Ontario, largely because steps have not been taken by the Liberal government to address the skills mismatch over the past 15 years. For example, the Liberal government has yet to implement the recommendation from the Premier's Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel report released on June 23, 2016.

Over a year and a half later, the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party believes it is every young person's aspiration to become successful as an adult, and often an effective route to that success is by receiving a high-quality post-secondary education.

The motion being debated this afternoon recognizes the importance of post-secondary education in relation to the needs of Ontario's future jobs and economy. I'm inspired by how students look at the world. Our students see the world in a variety of different ways and perspectives. They are the driving force behind the work I do as the official opposition critic for education and post-secondary education every day, every week, every month, every year. I believe in the intrinsic importance and value of what universities do, and that's why I'll be supporting the motion from the member for Brampton West.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise as the NDP critic for advanced education and skills development to speak to the motion before us today, that Brampton should be the home to a new university site: focused on helping students acquire skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Speaker, we know that universities are critical to the economic prosperity and also the social well-being of our province. We also know that investments in university education have a huge return to the public. When you graduate an educated workforce that is able to go out and get jobs and pay taxes, there is a huge benefit to us collectively. In fact, the return on investment was recently estimated at \$189,200 for each post-secondary graduate who enters our workforce. So this is a smart investment for any government.

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We also know that Brampton is the only top-10 city in Canada without a university. It also has the youngest population of any of Canada's top-10 cities and sits on the innovation super-corridor between Waterloo and Toronto. So this focus on STEM and the efforts that are made to bring this university to that community are fundamental to the city's economic development plans.

Another key component of this project will be a joint youth centre for education, innovation and collaboration in downtown Brampton, as well as a new downtown library.

Speaking of my own community, the city of London, we have seen—with Fanshawe College locating a program downtown, a digital media centre downtown as well as, soon, a tourism and culinary centre—that locating these university and post-secondary facilities in the downtown core can have a very positive impact on business, when you have students who are out using local businesses, going to restaurants, purchasing clothing and what have you. This is really a proven strategy to improve the downtown core.

But we also know, from a study that was just released by the United Way of Toronto and York Region, that middle-income neighbourhoods in Brampton are virtually disappearing. We saw in that report that in 1980, 2% of the neighbourhoods in Peel, including Brampton, were considered low-income. As of 2015, 52% of Peel's neighbourhoods are considered low-income. Brampton, in particular, has been hard hit by this income polarization that has occurred.

The report notes that high- and middle-income neighbourhoods in Brampton have decreased at an alarming rate, and low-income neighbourhoods have increased dramatically. Much less than half of Brampton's neighbourhoods have families earning \$50,000 or more. So for these low-income families, access to university education where they live is very important.

I heard the member reference the fact that his government's reorganized system of student financial aid will help local students access this university education. But I also met, yesterday, with students from the Canadian Federation of Students—Ontario, who pointed out that only two thirds of post-secondary students in Ontario are able to benefit from the Liberal government's program, which they like call "free tuition." It is not providing free tuition for two thirds of young people in this province. So there will have to be a lot of work done to ensure that these growing numbers of low-income

families in Brampton are able to afford to attend this university.

I also heard the member talk about access to experiential learning opportunities. Certainly, we know from lots of research that work-integrated learning is a very important tool to enable new graduates to enter the workforce after they complete their post-secondary education. But we also know from the research that what's most important about this work-integrated learning is that it be paid. There has been study after study done by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, which is a large organization in the US. They have shown, year after year, that participating in unpaid work-integrated learning is about the same as participating in no integrated learning in terms of transition into the workforce. It is those paid work-integrated learning opportunities that really give students a leg up.

I will note that the government is expanding experiential learning, but nowhere in the government's Career Kick-Start Strategy is there a reference to enabling more young people in the province who are attending post-secondary to get paid while they are doing their work-integrated learning programs.

In fact, recently the government, in Bill 148, removed protections for young people who are doing work-integrated learning and who are studying at career colleges in this province. That means that students who are in secondary school, post-secondary school, public colleges and universities, and now private career colleges—none of these students have access to any of the protections of the Employment Standards Act, including minimum wage. When we are encouraging these young people to participate in these programs, there is a great danger that they could be exploited by employers who don't provide any compensation for their labour or by employers who don't have any regulatory obligations in terms of breaks or conditions of work.

Those are a few of my comments on the motion. Certainly we support it. We recognize the value of a university, but we want to ensure that the students who attend that institution get the best possible supports to be able to afford the tuition and to be able to benefit from the experiential learning opportunities that are provide.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I'm very pleased to rise in the House today and to speak to my colleague the MPP from Brampton West's motion that has been tabled. I happen to spend a lot of time in Brampton. When I have a bit of free time, that's where I go, because that's where my family lives. My mother lives there, along with two of my brothers, my older brother and my younger brother, and their families. So I recognize that Brampton is a thriving, growing community in the GTA. It also is one of the GTA's most diverse communities.

We know that one of the areas that Ontario continues to lead in is the skills and the talents of our great people. We have one of the most highly educated populations in the world—the highest in the G7. A big part of that is due

to our tremendous immigration here and newcomers who come with tremendous skills and talents, as well as our incredible system of education: both our K-12 system and our post-secondary education system, our great colleges and universities, as well as our apprenticeship programs.

We know that Ontario's economy is strong. It is growing, and we need to tap into that potential in our workforce, so that we can realize our fullest potential here in Ontario. There's no better place to do that than in the technology sector. We know that our economy is changing. There's innovation happening all the time, and Ontario has to be prepared for that.

Our highly skilled workforce strategy is an area that we're strongly focused on. It's designed to meet people where they are, with the employment, the training and the resources that they need to find a job match in their chosen field. When it comes to investments that we're making in post-secondary education, this is an area that we're moving forward on.

We have our Strategic Investment Fund. This is the government of Canada and the government of Ontario providing \$950 million to enhance and to modernize innovation, training and research facilities at colleges, universities and indigenous institutes across the province.

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But, Madam Speaker, we're here to talk about Brampton because the member from Brampton West has put this on the floor of the House today. I'm so pleased that we have already taken a number of steps to invest in this incredible community.

Ontario is investing up to \$180 million to build STEAM-focused, university-led post-secondary sites in Brampton and Milton. We've chosen science, technology, engineering, the arts and math because we know that represents the jobs of the future. We know that when we invest in the skills and the talents of our people, that drives innovation, which drives our economy. We want to create these sites so that they provide residents of Brampton and Milton and the surrounding area with easier access to post-secondary education within their chosen communities, helping to build the skills and the talents that we need right here at home.

I'm very pleased to see the passion and the commitment of the member from Brampton West, recognizing that Brampton has a growing population, a growing economy, and that the investment of a university there will help to accelerate that and will help to graduate those with the necessary skills for a changing economy.

With our rapidly changing economy, we know that many people need to upskill, they need to reskill and they need to keep pace with the changing technologies and practices.

When I first started my professional career, I started off in tech. I worked with Bell Canada, and one of the responsibilities I had was, in fact, to connect the company with local communities, including Brampton and the surrounding GTA communities. We recognized that with the presence of technology comes acceleration of

other companies that want to be co-located near each other. We realized that by having a highly skilled workforce, it means a workforce of lifelong learners, where people who are given the tools they need to adapt their existing strengths and the resources to bridge any gaps at all in our labour market.

This is exactly what we need at this time, as we look towards the future. Madam Speaker, we want all of our young people and, in fact, those who are changing careers to thrive in Ontario's dynamic economy. Focusing on our investments in the skills and talents of our people is the best investment that we can make.

Let me be clear: Our post-secondary education system is one of the best in the world. It is recognized worldwide. I know that the Minister of Innovation recently attended a conference where one of our digital media innovation hubs was recognized as having the number one business accelerator in the entire world. That's because of the investments that we've made in our post-secondary education institutions, in the technologies that are needed to set people up for success.

We need more graduates of a diverse background. We need more women and girls participating in STEM, indigenous people, people of diverse backgrounds participating fully in this new economy, getting degrees and certified in STEM, because by developing our world-class talent in this area, Ontario is proving to be a chosen destination for innovative employers like GE. Amazon has just put us on the list of their selection list for headquarters. Reuters has just moved their head office here. Google is expanding its presence here in Ontario. The federal government has just selected the Toronto and Waterloo corridor as an innovation super-corridor.

That's just the beginning, because our institutions have a key role to play in ensuring that our students are graduating with the skills that are needed in this 21st-century economy. I couldn't be more pleased to rise in the House and to support my good friend on his motion today to build greater supports in Brampton for post-secondary attainment in the area of STEM.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: It's a pleasure to respond on the motion introduced by the member from Brampton West on a university site in Brampton. I'm fully supportive of the intent of this motion, but I can't help but feel uneasy about it. It feels like déjà vu. Something isn't right with this motion being in front of us at this time, just three months before an election after 15 years of Liberal government.

I will talk about my uneasiness in a few minutes. Let me first talk about why I like what I read in this motion. The motion reads about Brampton being a fast-growing community, with the youth population expected to grow by 20% by 2035.

I represent an area on the other side of the GTA. The area I represented as a Toronto city councillor, ward 42, comprises more than 50% of my current riding of Scarborough-Rouge River. Ward 42 has the highest

youth population in the city of Toronto. More than 20% of ward 42's population is comprised of youth—the highest in the city of Toronto. Ward 42 is the only ward in the city of Toronto where both the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic school board are building new schools. As a city of Toronto councillor in ward 42, we focused on providing more services for youth. We built more playgrounds. We provided more recreation services and programs.

I understand the pain that the member from Brampton West is seeking to resolve. I can honestly say that in my part of the province, we are already where Brampton will be in 2035. So I'd like to see a higher-education facility in the Brampton area. I'd like to give youth in Brampton the opportunity to receive the appropriate education and training to succeed in the future job market.

I came to this great country as a relatively young adult, 51 years ago, in March 1967. Before I came to Canada, I already had a BA degree in English from Korea. However, I soon realized that I could not find a decent job. It seemed that racial discrimination in Vancouver in the 1960s was very serious.

After a long search, my first job in Vancouver was as a dishwasher. After a while of working tirelessly as a dishwasher, soon I realized that education is the key to success. In order to earn money for my future education, I worked in asbestos mines in British Columbia. In order to make enough money, I worked three jobs simultaneously: a mine labourer during the day, a waiter in the evening and a janitor in the middle of the night.

I worked very hard to get my master's degree in social work from the graduate school of social work at the University of Toronto, followed by a master's degree in education and a doctorate degree in counselling psychology, all from the University of Toronto.

In fact, higher education didn't end with me. My oldest son, Raymond Jr., is chief psychiatrist at Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital in Texas after getting medical training at U of T. Ronny, our middle son, obtained his PhD in biochemistry at the University of Cambridge in England and completed medical training at Yale University. He is currently a plastic surgeon in Houston, Texas. Our youngest son, William, got a BA degree in education from McGill and a master's in education from U of T. Currently, he's teaching in Montreal.

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I could go on, but now I only have about 50 seconds, so I could summarize the points.

Every young person's aspiration is to become successful as an adult, and often, an effective route to success is by receiving high-quality post-secondary education.

We continue to hear that universities and community colleges need the resources to be focused on preparing students for future success, in particular giving our businesses access to the talent they need for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

That is why myself, and the MPP from Whitby–Oshawa, and all the PC caucus members will support this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this motion.

What Mr. Dhillon has moved is “that, in the opinion of this House, Brampton is one of the fastest-growing communities in Canada, with a youth population expected to grow by 20% by 2035; that the jobs of the future will require skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics; and that Brampton should be home to a new university site focused on helping students acquire these skills so they can thrive in the knowledge economy.”

As my colleague, our critic for education, has said, this is a good idea. Having an investment in universities is something that helps grow the economy as a whole. Certainly in Brampton, given the large population, the very diverse population, this investment can be a really positive contribution to the GTA.

I want to say, however, that there are a number of things that are going to have to be addressed by this government in order to have this university, should it proceed, be successful in the way that we need it to proceed.

As the member who has moved this motion is well aware, increasingly in our post-secondary institutions, the faculty, the force that is teaching, is made up of people who have part-time, temporary, contingent employment, not knowing from one session to the next whether they will be employed or not.

A friend of mine is taking a course this year at George Brown in downtown Toronto, and one of her teachers was hired the week that the course started. That woman was scrambling in the first month to make sure that she had all the material for her students.

I think it's a good idea to have a university, but I also think it's a good idea to have the funding in place and the policies in place so that you have a stable workforce that knows what it's going to be teaching in the session to come and the year to come, if you actually want to have the kind of quality that we require. I think this is one issue that's going to have to be addressed.

The other issue that was addressed by my colleague was the smoke and mirrors around funding for students going into university: the language that the Liberal government uses of “free tuition” that applies to one third of the population. Speaker, we aren't interested in just ensuring that one third of the population gets covered; we want the whole population to be able to access post-secondary education.

If the member wants this university to be a success—and I have no doubt that he does—he should be pressing for those changes in human resources so that we have long-term, stably employed faculty who have a deep grounding in the issues that they're presenting and the time to prepare so that students get maximum value. We need funding for post-secondary education so that students are not excluded because they don't have the cash. Those things, I think, are going to be critical for the success of any institution.

In my remaining time, I want to note something that my colleague didn't have a chance to get at, and that is that although science, technology, engineering and mathematics are really critical in building this world, too often, if that is the only lens through which you see the world, you don't catch the whole picture. I would urge the member to look at ensuring that humanities are also part of this university. In so many ways, engineering is extraordinarily capable of focusing in on a very narrow problem, solving that problem—ones that we need solved—and moving on, but if you want to see the world as a whole, if you're operating within the broader context of human society, geographically and over time, you need a much wider perspective. That's why I think it would be useful to have humanities as part of the focus of this university.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Madam Speaker, it's a great pleasure to stand in this House and speak to the motion put forward by my colleague MPP Dhillon of Brampton West.

MPP Dhillon has been a great advocate for his constituency and the city of Brampton. I have witnessed this over the past almost 11 years that I have been in this House and had the pleasure of working with him.

Madam Speaker, we all know that investments in young people are the best investments that we can make as a government, as a country. Premier Kathleen Wynne has often referred to the fact that our people are our greatest assets. For that matter, for every nation, for every country, its greatest assets are the people. That's why this government has been investing in our young people, in particular, since we came into office in 2003. We have increased the capacity of our universities and colleges by more than 200,000 since we came into office, through very historic investments—capital investments in our universities and colleges, as well as by increasing their operating budgets over the years.

Madam Speaker, the city of Brampton is one of the major hubs for high technology in the province of Ontario, along with various other hubs we have; for example, Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo and Ottawa. In particular, I would like to mention two major industries in Brampton. One is the aerospace industry, and the other one is the medical devices industry.

These two industries are huge in terms of their potential in the world, in terms of sales and marketing and their contributions to our economy, as well as to exports of products and services from Ontario. For that reason, this government, under Premier Wynne, has decided to expand university campuses across the province of Ontario. We decided to establish three university campuses in the province of Ontario. The first one was decided to be in Markham, in collaboration with York University and Seneca College. And of course, the cities of Brampton and Milton are the choices for the next two campuses.

We are increasing the number of STEM—science, technology, mathematics and engineering—students in

our universities, from 40,000 graduates, as we have today, to 50,000 in the next five years to come. This is going to be a 25% increase in the number of engineers and scientists we are going to graduate, because the demand for engineers and scientists in our society is quite high.

But I would agree with the member from Danforth that we need to pay attention to humanities, as well—which we do. Those subjects are as important as science, technology, mathematics and engineering.

Madam Speaker, we have invested quite heavily in the innovation economy. Over a number of years, we have basically transformed our innovation economy in the province of Ontario. The innovation economy is dependent upon talent, and the talent comes from our universities and colleges. That's why we're investing in the talents of Ontarians, particularly young people—so that they will be the best engineers, the best scientists, the best health workers and the best artists and designers, so that they can produce more and contribute to our economy for years to come.

That's why this government is investing in post-secondary education—so that our young people, the future of this country, the future of this province, will be equipped with the best knowledge and skills.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): The member from Brampton West has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I want to start off by thanking the members from Whitby–Oshawa, London West, Scarborough–Guildwood, Scarborough–Rouge River, Toronto–Danforth and Richmond Hill for chiming in on this debate.

1600

Madam Speaker, my wife and I have three children, and we're involved with the schools that they have been to or are going to. In fact, my wife has been a full-time volunteer at the schools they have attended or are attending. We can attest, like most parents, that we have a world-class publicly funded education system. So I'm very happy that we're extending this success into our post-secondary institutions by taking the worry of affordability out of this equation.

When I tell parents about the free tuition program, their eyes light up because often it has been a choice that they haven't had. Parents are planning and students are planning for not necessarily taking the courses with the least duration or the cheapest cost to them, but on what they actually want to do.

I visit businesses and speak to business people in my riding. Often, the issue is the availability of trained or educated workers that they don't have access to. In fact, some businesses have been running ads for weeks and months, if not years, looking for the talent that they need.

I'm very happy that Brampton will be getting a new university. Not only is it a success story for Brampton but, in fact, it's a success story for our province.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

PANDAS/PANS

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): We will deal first with ballot item number 27, standing in the name of Mr. Bailey.

Mr. Bailey has moved private members' notice of motion number 64. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Miss Taylor has moved private members' notice of motion number 81. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Mr. Dhillon has moved private members' notice of motion number 87. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 1, 2018, on the motion for time allocation of the following bill:

Bill 194, An Act respecting fairness in procurement / Projet de loi 194, Loi concernant l'équité en matière de marchés publics.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House—today, not so much. I usually do this with, perhaps not joy, but today it's a sad day to be in this House to debate this motion.

We often talk about time allocation. For those unfamiliar with the process, the way bills normally go through this House is that you have first reading, which is kind of automatic; we almost accept every bill in this House at first reading. It goes to second reading, where we debate it, and in a majority government situation, the majority can vote after a certain amount of time. The majority government can take it upon themselves and vote and then send that bill to committee. At a committee, the way it's supposed to work is that they hold public hearings so that people who have an interest in the bill or expertise on the bill can actually make deputations to the committee. Wherever that bill is sent to, it would be hoped that some of those recommendations that are provided by both lay people and experts could be implemented into the bill at third reading. That's the way you improve legislation. And the bill would be debated—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): The member on a point of order.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I don't believe there's a quorum in the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Check for a quorum.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): Speaker, a quorum is not present.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): I am going to recognize the member for Timiskaming—Cochrane to continue debate.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. So let me continue, for the folks at home—because here everybody should understand it—normally a bill is sent to committee and deputations are made by lay people and by experts. Hopefully, those deputations are converted into amendments, and those amendments are, some of them, passed into the bill, and when the bill comes back to the House for third reading, it's a better bill. That's why the process is structured that way, so the public, both expert witnesses and lay people, can actually make better legislation.

What is happening with this time allocation motion is that not only are the elected representatives not all allowed to speak, but much more importantly, expert witnesses, people involved in industry and people who will be very impacted by a bill that could potentially impact trade are not allowed to speak. The government is basically saying, "We are putting forward a bill"—they call it a procurement bill; it's a retaliatory bill on Buy American, which might have a place. But the government is basically saying, "We know best. We don't care." They really don't care what anyone else in the province believes.

I'm sure if there were committee hearings held, you would see representatives of workers come to talk about how this bill could impact people, you would see the chamber of commerce come, you would see all kinds of people—perhaps the steel companies would come; I don't know who would come. But the fact that the government is saying, "We don't care"—they are introducing and obviously going to pass, with this time allocation motion, a bill that is basically retaliatory trade action. It could be. Yet, they're saying, "We don't want to hear any expert opinion from anybody."

Mr. Brad Duguid: We sat through your last speech.

Mr. John Vanthof: I am certainly not—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Order.

Mr. John Vanthof: Speaker, I am not claiming to be a trade expert. That's why it's so important—and I don't think there are a lot of trade experts on the other side either, considering the problems we've had with the World Trade Organization and green energy. I don't think a lot of those people can claim to be trade experts.

What the problem is, is the government is saying, “We don’t want to listen to anyone who might have a difference of opinion. We don’t care.” They don’t care. I think that’s very telling. That they’re rushing this bill through regardless of anyone else’s opinion is even more telling that this bill is actually meant for an election issue, an election ploy, as opposed to actually looking at how to best look out for the interests of Ontario’s workers. That is galling, Speaker. It’s galling because legislation that isn’t well thought through, like this piece of legislation, Bill 194, could have waves upon waves of collateral damage. But the Wynne Liberal government doesn’t care about collateral damage. They only care about election-eering. That is all that’s on their mind from here till June.

1610

This bill is proof, Speaker. The fact that they are afraid of allowing anyone with trade expertise to actually present at committee and possibly present different information than the government is willing to spin—that’s proof that the government is more worried about votes than about protecting the future of Ontarians.

The last time that this manoeuvre was done in this Legislature was 2001. That’s the last time that a time allocation motion was put through this Legislature that eliminated a committee or deputations by anyone. You know who did that? It was the Mike Harris Conservatives. One of our tag lines has always been, “Liberal, Tory, same old story.” This is proof.

Why is this government refusing to allow the public or expert witnesses to actually make deputations on a bill that could impact the lives of thousands of Ontario workers? Why? Why would a government not want to make the best legislation possible? It boggles the mind, Speaker. It boggles the mind.

When other time allocation motions are put forward, we often bring up the issue that the hearings are always in Toronto. That impacts people across the province. People across the rest of the province sometimes get the idea that the government doesn’t care about anyone outside Toronto. This is proof, Speaker. The fact that they, on a bill that could impact the entire province and workers across the entire province, including people in Toronto—Speaker, this motion is proof that the Liberal government doesn’t care about anyone. It only cares about getting Liberals elected in the next election on June 7. That’s all they care about.

If they actually cared about the jobs of other people, they would be more than happy to invite trade experts to come depute on this bill to ensure that it was going to comply with the WTO, comply with NAFTA, and that it wouldn’t impact future negotiations. They would be more than happy to do that, but the fact that they’re not proves that they are Liberals only worried about Liberals.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate? Further debate?

Seeing none, Mr. Ballard has moved government notice of motion number 62, relating to allocation of time on Bill 194, An Act respecting fairness in procurement.

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

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”
In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

“Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government notice of motion number 62 be deferred until deferred votes on Monday, March 5, 2018.”

Vote deferred.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Resuming the debate adjourned February 28, 2018, on the motion regarding climate change.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I’m pleased to rise to discuss motion 60.

I thought I’d just go over a little bit of the history of what has gone on prior to getting into the debate and going forward, the fact that this motion came forward on Wednesday, February 21, 2018. The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change led off the debate on Thursday, February 22. Our caucus critic, the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, responded that same afternoon.

I’ve got to say that the member from Wellington–Halton Hills is a stand-out member—our most senior member, next to the member from Simcoe–Grey, in the caucus. Quite often we rely on him for his advice and experience. I’m glad to be part of his team.

Why are we debating today, and why are we debating this motion? The main idea is that this government has run out of ideas. They have no legislative priorities at this time, and they’ve been in power for far, far, far too long—15 years, which is unheard of.

We look no further than the health care file to see where 15 years of this government has had \$8 billion wasted on eHealth, 39 cents of each dollar wasted in administration of our community care health centres. Hospitals are overcrowded. People aren’t able to get the surgeries they need, both elective and non-elective. In fact, just recently, in London, those needing bypass surgery were unable to get the surgeries they’ve needed. They’ve been postponed and cancelled—and those needing life-saving treatment.

Just recently, over the last couple of weeks, we’ve heard of those Ontarians who have left the country on vacation only to find that when they got sick, there were no beds or doctors for them to come back to in Ontario. We know of the gentleman in London who was in Mexico and, of course, the gentleman in the Dominican Republic who was needing blood transfusions. The Dominican Republic ran out of blood. However, they were trying to stabilize the patient and get him back home to Ontario. Unfortunately, what this government

has done is it's created a system where he couldn't get home.

We had to work with the insurance company and also with the local hospital, and we finally found him a bed. It wasn't at the London Health Sciences Centre, because the government has them pegged for only catchment areas. It's unfortunate that we had to send him to Strathroy, but at least we got him home and at least he got the treatment that he needed.

Just look at the history of this government and health care over 15 years. You can see they're tired. They're out of—

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Point of order.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I just wanted to point out that the honourable member opposite is not speaking to the bill. There's no health care in a climate change motion, so perhaps he could stick to climate change and not get into health care.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): I'm just going to ask the member to please speak to the motion as he continues debate.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I was going to get back to—I was just reviewing the fact that they've lost ideas and they're a tired government with no real legislative opinion.

In the discussion about being in the government for 15 years, I thought one of the avenues to take—we can talk about climate change, but I thought I'd talk about the health care system just quickly and briefly, with the fact that usually you link health care and climate change together. This government has said quite often that they're saving lives with their climate change policy, which may or may not be true, but I thought we should talk about the health care system with relation to their failures over 15 years—their wasted \$8 billion on eHealth, money which probably could have gone into preparing a better health care system for the province of Ontario—

Mr. Bill Walker: Thirty-three thousand seniors on a wait-list.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: That many? Thirty-three thousand seniors on a wait-list—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): I'm just going to remind the member again to please bring the debate back to climate change. Thank you.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Certainly.

Our position on climate change: We recognize that climate change is happening today, and Ontario must do its part to deal with the changing climate. Whatever we do, we need to ensure that Ontario families and businesses aren't hurt by the policies and remain competitive in this dynamic global economy. As we reduce emissions, we need to protect and ensure jobs.

Ontario does represent a small fraction of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions. I do have to note that this government continually talks about the fact they have shut down the last coal plant, and they are taking all the credit for it. But I do really have to point out that our own

Elizabeth Witmer, who was environment minister in this Legislature, was the one who first announced shutting down the coal plants in this province. It was our party, when we were in government, that actually started to shut down those coal plants. They can take all the credit they like; we were the ones to shut down the coal-fired plants.

Really, what this government is famous for is closing down those gas-fired plants to win an election, to save five seats. It cost over a billion dollars to save the seats of five members, including their finance minister, who wanted to be the leader of the House. This government tried to shut down debate at committee to find out the real cause of the climate change bills. Unfortunately, what we're seeing, Madam Speaker, is the fact that this government, again, through their initiatives to save their seats—the \$1.3 billion spent on the gas plant closures was verified in a court of law, with the chief of staff of Premier McGuinty being found guilty—

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Point of order.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Well, I'm sure, Madam Speaker, that the member opposite is enjoying his time here in the House, but we would be enormously grateful if he would stick to the debate at hand and talk about the climate change motion. He is doing everything but. I understand they don't have a cogent policy to offer on climate change, and that's perhaps why he isn't—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you. I'm going to once again remind the member to please bring the debate back to what's on the floor, which is climate change, and I'm going to ask all sides of the House to please respect the member who currently has the floor.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for her statement that she attempted to deliver.

This government is out of ideas. They're a tired, old government. Instead of debating substantial bills to improve the lives of Ontarians, they play political games with toothless motions.

Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): The member has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the debate be adjourned?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1623 to 1653.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Members, please take your seats.

Mr. Yurek has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing to be recognized by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing to be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 7; the nays are 22.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): I declare the motion lost.

Continue debate. We're going to return the floor to the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for returning the debate back to this side of the House.

As I was mentioning earlier, over 15 years, where this government has taken us with wasted spending in health care, growth of bureaucracy—

Mr. Bill Walker: Red tape. Waste. Scandal.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Red tape—keep going. This bill is about climate change. It's curious that after following the PC Party's lead in closing the coal plants to improve our environment, what this government did through their ownership of Hydro One was purchase an energy company down in the States that runs coal plants. I'm wondering why that is occurring in that strategic planning this government has undergone.

It's also interesting to discuss that as the government brought forth their cap-and-trade program, only to the point of—last campaign, during the 2014 election, they were right on record saying they would not introduce a price on carbon. One of the first actions they did was sell off Hydro One, which of course they didn't talk about privatizing Hydro One. So what did they do? They sold off Hydro One, and secondly, they also brought in a price on carbon.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: A hundred thousand jobs.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: He's mentioning over there the 100,000 jobs in our campaign platform. At least we were honest about it and put out in part of our plan what our leader had proposed.

To the opposite side of the House, we didn't talk about pricing carbon—which they did—which is costing jobs in the province. Basically, that money is going into a slush fund. We have no idea how it's being spent or the accounting, much like the special purpose account in the hunting and angling community that they have where they collect the fees from hunters and anglers in the province and put it into a special purpose fund, which the past Progressive Conservative Party created. That money is to go into hunting and fishing resources throughout the province. Unfortunately, what we found is the government of the day is spending that money outside of those provisions. So what are we seeing here? They're paying for houses, psychologists—anything, actually, but resources.

I've asked for a true accounting, and I'm unable to get accounting and transparency from the Ministry of Natural Resources on how that money for the special purpose account is being spent. It's quite unfortunate. Hunters and anglers are seeing their fees go up—they're getting an extra \$2 fee—and all that money should be going into resource management. And what is this government doing with that money? They're spending it outside what the act clearly specifies on how it should be spent. I've

tried through FOI requests; I've asked the minister—nothing. But fortunately we did get that one document, which did show hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on various projects that had nothing to do with wildlife management in this province.

It is quite unfortunate, because truly the hunters and anglers of this province contribute so much to our community. They, along with farmers, are the true stewards of the environment. They're the ones who work, day in and day out, to ensure that we have a strong environment. Farmers do it because that's their livelihood. They're in love with the land that they're taking care of. Hunters and anglers do it so the resource is strong so they can continue with their activities.

What should be done with the special purpose account, which this government is not transparent about, is to ensure that it's truly spent on fishing and wildlife resource management. This government has destroyed the moose population in northern Ontario. The fishing opportunities have become less and less. In fact, I've tried to get the walleye or pickerel season reopened on the Thames River. The government had shut it down. They were only supposed to shut it down for six months to do a study—over 10 years ago. They haven't done the study yet, and they've kept it shut down. That alone is restricting the fishing on the Thames River, but it's also affecting the local economy. There are a lot of bait and tackle stores throughout the area that would do a tremendous amount of business if they were to actually open that fishing opportunity again. Those small businesses pay taxes. Those small businesses ensure that the economy is strong. They're a local economy, and unfortunately, this government through its inaction—and we probably could have had this fixed because the fishing management zone was supposed to be created I think six, seven or eight years ago. I brought that forward and the comment from the Ministry of Natural Resources at the time was, “We don't have the ability or understanding of how to create that fishing management zone.”

1700

I brought it up numerous times that the anglers of London in southwestern Ontario wanted to open up the fishing opportunities again on the Thames River, and unfortunately, because they don't have the fishing management zone to do so, this government has stopped the progression of that opportunity.

Now, after I forget how long—I said six, seven or eight years; it could be 10 years, knowing this government—they decided to look toward making that fishing management zone. I don't know why it took so long or why this government doesn't have a care for southwestern Ontario and their needs and wants. It's unfortunate. Hopefully they can go forward.

We're asking to the walleye fishing again on the Thames River and we're looking for some transparency and openness on this special purpose account—some \$70 million a year which is unaccounted for. Add that up for 10 years, and that's \$700 million. In 15 years in power, my goodness, you're looking at over a billion dollars

unaccounted for by this government to look over resource management.

What are you seeing? Well, as I mentioned, they've devastated the moose population. Why? Because they cut back on surveillance of the moose population, because of money. Well, they have not accounted for a billion dollars. We don't know how that is spent. Some of that money could have gone toward moose surveys to ensure—

Mr. Bill Walker: Conservation officers.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: And conservation officers. It's truly unfortunate that they've headed that way.

We've talked about health care. We've talked about MNR. There's debt and deficit, and our interest payments, which could be going toward health care—\$13 billion dollars a year, holy smokes. I just don't really understand why they don't really care about debt.

Look at the federal Liberals. I think they're trying to surpass you in the shortest amount of time possible—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): I'm going to ask the member to continue the debate on what the motion is on, which I believe is climate change. He has spoken on everything but. Can you please return the conversation to that? I really appreciate it.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Certainly, Madam Speaker. I have mentioned the fact of climate change, with regard to their policy of pricing carbon when they promised not to do so.

I've mentioned that this government is out of ideas. They're tired and old, and we're still not debating substantial bills in this Legislature. Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Mr. Yurek has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1703 to 1733.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Members, please take your seats.

Mr. Yurek has moved adjournment of the House. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing to be recognized by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing to be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 7; the nays are 19.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): In my opinion, the motion is lost.

Mr. Yurek.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: It's been a pleasure to have, right now, 17 minutes of wholesome discussion on motion number 60. I believe that we've reviewed quite a bit with regard to this motion, and I think the only other item that we haven't really discussed deals with pollution from automobiles.

Madam Speaker, you can look no further than the promise this government made to reduce auto insurance rates by 15%, a stretch goal which never materialized, only to have our auto insurance rates go higher. To help with the climate, you obviously would like fewer cars on the road. I don't know if their way of getting cars off the road is to jack up auto insurance rates so people can't afford it, especially in rural and northern Ontario, where the only modes of transportation are the cars. It's unfortunate.

I know in my riding, with regard to the gas tax, out of the 10 municipalities that I have, I think there are only three, maybe four, that actually receive the gas tax. The other ones are, unfortunately, unable to do so, so their infrastructure has to be built with their local tax base.

It's quite unfortunate that this government doesn't realize that for rural municipalities and northern municipalities, their transportation systems are the roads and they do need the support. This government has cut the OMPF funding for 10 years, and it has really hurt the municipalities, causing them, obviously, to forgo necessary infrastructure projects.

Mr. Bill Walker: They cut 600 schools. That will help the environment.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Well, when you're talking about the schools—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): I'm going to remind the member once again that we are speaking about climate change, if you can please address that.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Right; sorry. So with regard to climate change, there was a report I received from the architectural society of Ontario which stated that reusing older buildings improves the climate; it reduces the burden of the carbon footprint in our communities. Unfortunately, the government is closing 600 of those schools instead of reusing them for better purposes, which is hurting our climate.

It is terrible when small municipalities with one school in them are going to have to be shutting them down. They could be used for community centres. What they're doing is breaking the backs of these communities. They are, unfortunately, causing these communities to bus their students, which is only adding to the pollution. I mean, I have students now who are on the bus for over an hour. Can you imagine the pollution?

And that goes to what this government has done to independent school bus operators. They have made changes, and independent operations in small rural communities are going out of business because this government has decided they want to support the big conglomerates and are putting them out with these long tenders. Unfortunately, at the end of the day, competition will decrease. It's only adding to the cost to the system later.

Because of this government's action, which they think is for climate change, we've got closed rural schools, we've got decreased small business owners because of the buses, and we've got auto insurance rates that are

soaring through the roof. I'm sorry, Madam Speaker; this government has been a failure with their policies for the last 15 years, including the climate policy.

I hope this government takes this motion for what it really is and maybe substitutes it with something more substantive in this Legislature. Let's help the small business out. Let's help rural Ontario. Let's give autonomy back to municipalities so they don't have to build these wind turbine projects that this government has shoved down their throats.

Thank you very much for the time. I look forward to the responses.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to speak in the House, and today on motion number 60. I would like to read the motion just to clarify what we're debating:

"That, in the opinion of the House, we recognize that climate change is a real and present threat that is already costing Ontario families, and that Ontario should do its part in supporting national and international efforts to reduce greenhouse gas pollution at the lowest possible cost to families and businesses by putting a price on pollution to combat climate change."

The NDP agrees with the principle of the motion. We have some severe reservations, however, regarding whether some of the policies that the Liberal government has in place are actually the most effective way to combat climate change.

We agree with the principle of cap-and-trade. Actually, our party voted for cap-and-trade. But we also, in the committee stage, put forward amendments that we would, once we form government, reinsert into the climate change agenda.

One of those: In the California legislation on which the Ontario legislation is based, 25% of the funds that are generated by the cap-and-trade auction system are specifically directed to communities that will not be able to compete under the new regime. That is law in California. The NDP put forward exactly the same amendment to the Ontario legislation, and the Wynne Liberals voted it down.

1740

They really don't seem to care about communities that can't compete—and there will be communities that can't compete. Take northern Ontario. We don't have transit in most places. We have no chance for public transportation. Our climate is much colder. People have to drive to and from work. People have to drive to and from medical appointments. They have to drive all the time. They are not going to be able to compete, and the government of the day, the Wynne government, ignored that. That is an example of why the cap-and-trade system needs to be drastically changed.

Another thing that should be changed in the cap-and-trade system of the Liberal government: We are unable to find an exact formula to prove that the money is directed for the maximum benefit of the climate. Now we have a program, the GreenON program. It's a rebate program

for new windows—a good program. There's a rebate program for electric cars. But do we actually know the numbers, how much greenhouse gas, how much carbon is being eliminated by those programs? Because farmers could be doing something that actually reduces greenhouse gas more than electric cars. But where is that formula?

There needs to be a formula where you can plug your numbers in that actually shows where you're going to get the biggest bang for your buck. Right now, the climate change program by the Liberal government could just as well be influenced by where you get the biggest bang for the votes, because we don't know. There is no public formula. If there is, I hope the government would give it to us. Then we could actually work with our sectors, to work with everyone for the long-term benefit of the people, the long-term benefit of the climate.

Climate change is real. It's one of the biggest challenges we face. But we need to face it with our eyes open and make sure that what we're doing is for the maximum benefit of the climate.

Two more points: If this government was really serious about climate change in the whole province, then why do they still refuse to bring back passenger rail to northern Ontario? You're forcing everyone into cars because you made a decision to kill passenger rail in 2012. You're unwilling to look at it, regardless of how many cars you're forcing on the road—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: Quite frankly, sir, you don't really care about parts of the province, and that is a huge travesty.

My last point: Although we don't believe that some of the measures in the Liberal climate change plan are actually effective, at the very least, we do believe that climate change exists and that we need to do something else about it. The Conservative Party—at the moment, their response to climate change is to ring bells. They are going to wait till we have flood sirens, till we have emergency bells, and then they're going to wonder what happened. That seems to be their response to climate change: Let the coastal regions flood over.

Climate change is real. It's happening in northern Ontario. We can grow crops that we couldn't 20 years ago. That's a great thing, but that's not a great thing for other parts of the world. We have to act. We can't just ignore this issue and wait for warning bells until it's too late to do anything.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate?

Hon. David Zimmer: I think at this point in the debate, it's helpful to share some facts that have developed as late as yesterday—and these are facts; this is not the fake news that we've been hearing about from the other side.

Fact number one: I want to note that yesterday was the result of the first joint cap-and-trade auction with Quebec and California. The results of that trade were made public

yesterday. The auction was a sellout—a sellout. It raised \$471 million in proceeds.

What this has gone on to demonstrate is that business is confident in the market, and the market is functioning as designed. That's what we have been saying all along in front of the naysayers on the opposite side of this chamber. We have seen that business, as well as the experts, agree. They agree that cap-and-trade is the very best way to put a price on carbon, and carbon is what we have to deal with.

In fact, in January, the independent—and I stress “independent”—Environmental Commissioner of Ontario said that Ontario's linked cap-and-invest program “will save almost all of us money,” and that jurisdictions around the world are choosing cap-and-trade systems like Ontario's because they have much lower costs than any other competing system to deal with carbon.

Ontario and California and Quebec, in this joint undertaking, have become models for other jurisdictions around the world. That's good for Ontario, because all of those businesses realize that Ontario has got it right. The program not only reduces pollution, but it also lowers various costs of production.

I want to stress this again: Third-party experts and businesses alike have expressed their confidence in our cap-and-trade program, which the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario said—and this is a quote from the commissioner—is “best in” its “class” in dealing with the carbon issue.

But the main focus here is not the funds. The funds are welcome, of course—\$471 million. But the ultimate goal of this strategy is to achieve greenhouse gas emission reduction results.

That said, Speaker, we are going to use these proceeds that I've referenced to invest in programs that are going to allow Ontarians to participate in really meaningful emission reduction programs and to charge their imaginations and to fund ways that we can make even more progress.

Speaker, I want to also point out—and this is important to keep in mind—that 100% of the proceeds of our cap-and-trade auctions—and it's by law, not by government choice—must be reinvested into green programs that help Ontario businesses and families reduce pollution.

So there is no uncertainty about where that money is going to go, contrary to what they have been saying on the benches opposite—that the money is going to end up here, and the money is going to end up there. By law, that money has to be reinvested in green programs.

In fact, last year, we were able to invest hundreds of millions of dollars into green projects like transit, electric vehicle incentives, and housing retrofits. These programs, these carbon reduction programs and emission reduction programs, help the people of Ontario to fight climate change and to save money at the same time. That's the dual purpose: We're making money and we're reducing emissions. What could be a better strategy?

Our plan isn't just about putting a price on carbon and reducing greenhouse gas pollution; it's about investing in Ontario. We've got the three elements here: We're making money, \$471 million; we're reducing emissions; and we're investing in Ontario's future. By investing in Ontario's future on these initiatives, we are creating a healthier society and a fairer society, where we're all going to benefit. Even the members opposite who oppose this are going to benefit because of cleaner air, reduced energy costs, and clean and sustainable, new, well-paying tech jobs.

1750

Hon. Jeff Leal: They're probably buying new windows over there.

Hon. David Zimmer: They're probably buying new windows over there.

Our plan encourages innovation. It's going to drive investments. It's going to make Ontario, as I have said, the leader in a low-carbon economy. That's going to attract business. That's going to attract people who want to copy our system. This is good for Ontario's reputation in the global business world.

Meanwhile, what have the PCs decided? They have decided, when it comes right down to it, sadly, that Ontario's environment is not worth protecting at any level—at any health level, at any business investment level. They've got nothing on offer.

I was going to share my time with the member from Mississauga–Streetsville, but he seems to have stepped away. So maybe I'm going to call on—

Hon. Jeff Leal: I've already spoken on this.

Hon. David Zimmer: You've already spoken on it?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I have. But if you want me to speak again, I'd be delighted to.

Hon. David Zimmer: I'm going to let the member for Peterborough, the Minister of Agriculture—

Hon. Jeff Leal: I can't. I've already spoken once.

Hon. David Zimmer: You can't speak anymore?

Hon. Jeff Leal: Peter can speak.

Hon. David Zimmer: All right. I'm going to call on the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, the Minister of Housing, to speak.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Delaney is back now.

Hon. David Zimmer: Well, he has missed his turn. Minister, take it away.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): I recognize the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'm very pleased to speak to this. Certainly, as Minister of Housing, one of the issues that I was tasked with tackling early on in my time at the ministry was, of course, assisting social housing providers across this province in dealing with the repair of social housing.

I remember, as a member of city council a number of years ago, when the party across the chamber was in power and had some interesting ideas about social housing. They were going to devolve it to the cities because that was going to be more efficient.

The way that the Mike Harris Conservatives and their successor, the Ontario PC Party, or the Ontario party of cuts, proceeded at that time was—their idea of efficiency for social housing was, you announce that you will transfer it to municipalities in 18 to 24 months, and then you immediately stop spending any money on it. That's efficiency. In essence, you abandon the housing stock immediately, you put no money in it, you let it degrade as quickly as you possibly can, and then dump it on the municipalities to deal with the fallout.

In 2003, when the people of Ontario finally had had enough of that version of efficiency—this government has spent \$5 billion on social housing since 2003, and we've actually accelerated it in recent years.

Madam Speaker, last year, as a result of our cap-and-trade system and the monies that are flowing into the system to help support initiatives that will reduce the effects of climate change, we announced a program whereby we are providing \$653 million for social housing repairs across the province. What that is assisting those social housing providers to do—in many cases, the municipalities that suffered so greatly under the Ontario party of cuts—it allows them to make sure that necessary repairs can be done in a way that not only fixes the deficiency but actually makes building the project more energy-efficient.

Imagine you have a roof that's leaking and needs to be repaired. You don't just slap down some tar and gravel on it, the way that somebody might have done before. You add insulation. You do certain things to make that roof more energy-efficient, to better insulate the building, to give greater longevity to the building and its structure. You would do the same with the boilers and the water tanks that you install to heat the building, to heat the water. You improve the windows. Tenants might have drafty windows. They might have leaks around the windows, and mold growing on the inside of the apartment because of the deterioration that was caused by the Ontario party of cuts. We've given them the opportunity to replace them, but not just to replace them with the cheapest possible windows—something that the Ontario party of cuts might have deemed efficient—but with energy-efficient windows. So not only do you fix the problem; you actually provide a better living environment for the residents of that unit and you reduce the ongoing energy costs of that building.

Madam Speaker, on this side of the House, we say that we acknowledge that climate change is real and that it needs real solutions. We have actually offered that. Through cap-and-trade, we've designed a system where those who pollute, or those who cannot yet quite catch up to reducing their energy consumption, buy these credits in an open auction. Then, that allows us as a government

to set priorities for how we can improve the lives of everyday Ontarians and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

This is a particularly poignant example of where a well-thought-out mechanism for dealing with climate change can have a real impact on everyday Ontarians: by making their homes safe, clean and in good repair; warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer; and reducing energy costs for all. Madam Speaker, that is good policy. So when we debate this motion today, we have to acknowledge that climate change is real and that we have to take real steps and real action to do something about it. When we do that, we have the ability to solve other problems in Ontario as well.

Madam Speaker, I can tell you that when we talk about climate change, one of the things that we know is a result of greenhouse gas emissions is that our climate has become less stable, that extreme weather is not as rare an occurrence as it used to be and that it's actually becoming more of a norm to expect extremes: extremes of hot, extremes of cold, extremes of rain, snow or drought. We're seeing this. We've had a bit of a peculiar winter here in Ontario this year so far—certainly in southern Ontario. We've had far more snow than we've seen in decades, and then we saw a sudden warming. Then we saw a lot more rain than would be normal at this time of year. Communities in southwestern Ontario have unfortunately seen the results of that, with extreme flooding and, very sadly, the loss of a young life.

We, as elected officials on all sides of this House, have to make note of that. We have to make note of this, and we have to build new infrastructure in our communities to be more resilient, because while our efforts to reduce the impact of climate change are good and strong, it's going to take a long time to really have an impact. Human activity over the last few hundred years, and certainly over the last 100 years, has had an immense impact on our planet. So as we try to take steps to counteract that, as long as it took to create some of the problems, it's going to take just as long, or longer, to begin to undo them.

As we build this more resilient infrastructure, we need to pay for it. So again, by having a mechanism to collect funds that stem from the use of energy, they can be reinvested back into reducing the use of energy and can help build the infrastructure that we need—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins):
Thank you.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins):
Seeing that it is 6 o'clock, the House is adjourned until Monday, March 5, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
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Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
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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
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle
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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, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
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 Transportation / Ministre des Transports
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
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
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite enfance et de la Garde d'enfants
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
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, Hon. / L'hon. Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
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	Parkdale–High Park	
Vacant	St. Paul's	
Vacant	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Catherine Fife
Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Bob Delaney, Catherine Fife
Michael Harris, Monte Kwinter
Michael Mantha, Mario Sergio
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Han Dong
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Mike Colle, Han Dong
Brad Duguid, Ann Hoggarth
Lisa MacLeod, Cristina Martins
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Arthur Potts
Yvan Baker, Grant Crack
Lisa Gretzky, Sophie Kiwala
Sam Oosterhoff, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi, Lisa M. Thompson
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
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Sophie Kiwala, Cristina Martins
Sam Oosterhoff, Randy Pettapiece
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Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Lisa MacLeod
Liz Sandals
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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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