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of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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Thursday
19 April 2018

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41^e législature

Jeudi
19 avril 2018

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Thursday 19 April 2018

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Jeudi 19 avril 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 31, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes, 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 referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Thursday, April 26, 2018, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the notice of public hearings; and

That the deadline for requests to appear be 4 p.m. on Wednesday, April 25, 2018; and

That witnesses be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis; and

That the Clerk of the Committee distribute a draft copy of the agenda to the committee members and their designates by Tuesday, April 24, 2018, at 5 p.m.; and

That each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members divided equally among the recognized parties; and

That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Thursday, April 26, 2018; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 2 p.m. on Friday, April 27, 2018; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Thursday, May 3, 2018, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

On May 3, at 3:30 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the

proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, May 7, 2018. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

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

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

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, three hours of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

That during this time, there shall be no motion for either adjournment of the debate or adjournment of the House permitted. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The votes 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.

I believe, Speaker, the parliamentary assistant will make our remarks later in the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack): The minister has moved government notice of motion number 7.

Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker, and good morning.

I'm pleased to join the debate this morning on Bill 31, the time allocation motion on the budget measures act. Yet again, this is an example of the government using a motion to stifle debate and push through their agenda, which has caused Ontario residents to pay more and get less. What's particularly disturbing about the motion are the comments of former and current members of the Liberal government related to time allocation motions when they were the official opposition 15 years ago.

For example, on December 19, 2000, the former Premier and member from Ottawa South said, "For a govern-

ment that promised to be open, this ... action is the height of arrogance, the height of exactly everything you campaigned against and you said you were for.”

Another example: On December 4, 2002, in Hansard, the member from Eglinton–Lawrence said, “I’m ... saddened to stand up again and speak to another motion by this government to shut down debate.... They just ram this through like they’ve rammed everything else through.

“We know now why they like these ... motions. Because they don’t want the public to know what they’re doing.”

Ontarians can no longer trust this government. The people of this province know they only care about their own political survival. The Ontario Progressive Conservatives are the only ones who respect the people, the only ones who will stand up for people.

Beyond this motion for time allocation, nothing in the bill implements or even begins to implement the Liberal government’s big-ticket election promises. The government’s lack of regard for hard-working families and small businesses could be found in schedules 32 and 33 of Bill 31. Schedule 32 implements the federal tax changes impacting small business, and schedule 33 allows the government to implement a \$2-billion tax increase and gives the Premier a loophole to raise taxes after the election through any bill introduced in the 2018 calendar year. Notwithstanding the other schedules in Bill 31, these two significant changes alone will make life harder for Ontario’s hard-working families and small businesses.

But how can members of the Legislature scrutinize this proposed bill if the government stifles debate so regularly through time allocation motions? Yesterday, I was in the House and heard that upwards of 50% of the bills have been fixed with a time allocation.

In debating time allocation motions, the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines said this:

“It’s just stunning that the way they choose to deal with it at the end of the day is to put time allocation on debate. It’s wrong, I think everybody knows it’s wrong and I think even the government members themselves know that it’s the wrong way to approach it....

“There will be no public hearings at all, and that is disgraceful. This is unbelievable. Once again we’re seeing this kind of behaviour, and I suspect we’ll see it again.”

0910

However, in continuing to address the time allocation motion being debated this morning by other speakers who will follow me, I want to focus some of my comments on the gap, a particular gap, in the budget as proposed in Bill 31, and that’s the lack of funding and measures to combat and prevent acts of elder abuse, a particularly troubling aspect that we’re experiencing here in Ontario. Elder abuse is a terrible crime, Speaker, and I know you’ll agree with that, perpetrated against our society’s most vulnerable citizens, those people who built our communities.

Speaker, 8% to 10% of seniors, or approximately 750,000 seniors, in Canada experience some form of elder abuse. But it gets worse; it gets worse. Elder abuse is one of the most under-reported crimes across Canada, with one study estimating that as few as 20% of incidents involving a form of elder abuse ever come to the attention of a person who can be of assistance.

An Ontario Human Rights Commission report titled *Time for Action: Advancing Human Rights for Older Ontarians* contained a section devoted specifically to elder abuse and neglect. The final recommendations from that report, and in particular that section, said this: “That mechanisms currently in place to address other forms of familial abuse be extended to apply to elder abuse and that provincial and municipal governments take steps”—take steps, Speaker—“to support specialized programs, including shelters, for victims of elder abuse.”

However, Speaker, here we are today debating a time allocation motion on Bill 31 as proposed instead of debating the lack of support or initiatives to combat and prevent elder abuse in Ontario, and that’s despite projections in the 2018 budget that the number of seniors is expected to grow from 2.4 million today to 4.5 million by 2040.

I’d like to quote the member from St. Catharines, the former minister responsible for seniors, who has had a very distinguished and illustrious career here in the Legislature. In his portfolio as the former minister responsible for seniors, he did a great job. During that period, I was a civil servant within the Ontario Seniors’ Secretariat, so I saw directly the effect of his work.

The member from St. Catharines said this: “The minority in this House and perhaps on many occasions the majority of the people in this province, who on occasion disagree with this government, are having their rights run over by this government because it is efficient.”

Let’s turn for a moment to Elder Abuse Ontario. It’s a provincial non-profit organization that’s focused on supporting the implementation of the province’s strategy to combat elder abuse. It was first developed in 2002, and it was developed while I was a civil servant at the Ontario Seniors’ Secretariat. Since its inception, Elder Abuse Ontario has grown to support over 50 networks throughout seven regions here in the province. These networks operate through the support of volunteers, who apply continuously for funding in order to pay for part-time staff to carry out the mandate of Ontario’s Strategy to Combat Elder Abuse.

Elder Abuse Ontario’s programs include intergenerational projects and outreach, positive aging initiatives, and supports related to arts and aging. Elder Abuse Ontario has been collaborating with other academic institutions across Ontario, in particular Trent University in my riding, to implement an elder abuse professional certificate program.

And yet, despite this growth, despite the projected increase in the population of seniors and despite the growing demand for cutting-edge services in training, awareness and education, Elder Abuse Ontario’s funding has remained static at less than \$1 million for the past

decade. So I was shocked that in Bill 31, as proposed, none of the funding allocated for the government's Aging with Confidence strategy was allocated to Elder Abuse Ontario, who is mandated by the government to combat and prevent elder abuse.

The seven staff of Elder Abuse Ontario are the sole paid coordinators for all of Ontario—seven people. There are thousands of clients who need their support to help prevent incidents of elder abuse every year. But, for the past 10 years, the government chose to not properly fund Elder Abuse Ontario and implement mechanisms to combat and prevent instances of elder abuse in Ontario. Instead, they prefer to have the Legislature debate time allocation motions rather than support Ontario seniors.

I'd like to again quote the member for St. Catharines and former minister responsible for seniors. His quote speaks, again, broadly to time allocation motions. This is taken from Hansard: "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."

If the Liberal government cared, as the title of Bill 31 purports, they would have had substantial measures in Bill 31 to deal with elder abuse, and in the process, acknowledged the builders of Ontario's communities.

In closing, I would return to the comments made by the former Premier and member from Ottawa South. He was speaking at that time specifically to time allocation motions. On December 19, 2000, he said this: "I don't care what you people have to say when it comes to this matter. I've got all the answers. I run the government. I run the show."

Speaker, elder abuse—and I know you agree with this—is never okay. Seniors deserve to live safely and without fear in their homes and in their communities. Our collective goal should be to ensure that seniors, and all of us who will one day join their ranks, are able to age with respect and dignity, and remain healthy, independent and as active as they wish. That is the Ontario they worked for. That is the Ontario they should be getting that type of respect for, not debating a time allocation motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack): Further debate? I recognize the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I wish to ask for unanimous consent to be allowed to give my inaugural address.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack): The member from Niagara West has requested unanimous consent to speak to an inaugural address. Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It is a privilege and an honour to stand up today in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as the democratically elected member of provincial Parliament for Niagara West—Glanbrook and give my inaugural address to the Speaker, all honourable members of the Legislature, any guests in the gallery today and all those watching from home.

I wish to begin by sincerely and wholeheartedly thanking all those who placed their trust in me in November of

2016 by electing me to serve them as their provincial representative. I wish also to thank all those who dedicated time and energy on my campaign, my wonderful campaign staff and my campaign manager.

The privilege and right to speak in this House of deliberation, debate and decision is one that I do not take lightly. Generations past have not always been blessed with the opportunity to openly discuss and disagree on matters fundamental to the prosperity, well-being and future of our beloved province of Ontario and great nation of Canada.

0920

As I was preparing for my address today, I was reading through the maiden speech of an exemplary parliamentarian given in the mother of Parliaments, the British House of Commons. In that speech dated February 18, 1901, a young Winston Churchill had this to say about the importance of our legislative bodies: "In my opinion, based upon the experience of the most famous men whose names have adorned the records of the House, no national emergency short, let us say, of the actual invasion of this country itself ought in any way to restrict or prevent the entire freedom of parliamentary discussion."

Although, thankfully, the spectre of invasion is not one that rises in our imagination when we envision the future of Canada and our province, it is entirely plausible that without the invasion of my family's homeland, I would not be able to rise in this august House today to represent the fine constituents of Niagara West—Glanbrook and bring their perspectives, values and concerns to bear on the debates of our provincial Legislature.

Speaker, in that tragic conflict and birthplace of much human suffering we call the Second World War, the Netherlands was invaded by a power of pure evil. In the Second World War, Hitler's Nazi hordes poured over the dikes and canals of my family's homeland and imposed their hatred, racism and blatant satanic disregard for morality and human life on a peace-loving and industrious people. Not only in the Netherlands but across the globe, democracy, the rule of law and the inalienable human rights granted by God to mankind were under attack by a brutal dictator and a hateful ideology.

My grandparents—my opa and oma and my pake and beppe—lived under the tyranny of the Nazi regime, and their families hid Jews from the Gestapo and the German SS. My great-grandfather was a member of the Dutch resistance and was almost executed by the Gestapo in 1944, only to be broken out of jail the night before his execution by members of the resistance.

My grandparents understood then, and have passed along to me today the understanding that no matter where one is from, who one is or what one believes, every human life is worth protecting, cherishing and defending. They understood that freedom and equality are worth standing up for and, yes, even dying for.

In the spring of 1945, almost 73 years ago exactly, my grandparents welcomed the Canadian soldiers into their hometown with wild cheers and open arms. "The Canadians are coming" was a phrase that echoed hope, promised

deliverance and guaranteed a better future over 70 years ago, as it does today in many nations around the world.

Speaker, it was because of the brave sacrifices made by the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces in the muddy dikes and canals of the Netherlands in 1945 that in the early 1950s, my grandparents moved to the land of hope and promise. They moved to Canada.

Today I do not wish to give the Legislature an exhaustive history of my family tree and, indeed, I am afraid that with the extensive family I've been blessed with, I would scarcely have time in this address to do so. But I wish to share this story because I desire to impress upon myself as much as on all the honourable members of the Legislature the great gift we have here in Ontario and Canada and the enormous responsibility we have all been entrusted with as we ponder decisions surrounding the governance of our province.

Speaker, both of my parents were born here in Canada. My mother, Monica Oosterhoff, was born in northern BC; my father, Carl Oosterhoff, in Chatham, Ontario. They settled in Niagara shortly after getting married in 1981 and moved onto the farm in Vineland, where I had the unbelievable good fortune to be raised. They were blessed with eight children, of whom I am the second youngest, and continue to be blessed with many grandchildren and new in-laws. I cannot thank them and all my family enough for their support, advice and, of course, prayers, without which I would have been unable to make it to this stage in my life, and for which I am deeply and eternally grateful.

Growing up in Niagara was an adventure and an opportunity that I wish more had the chance to experience. The region of Niagara is known by many for its fine wines, its friendly people, its incredible hiking trails, scenic views and, of course, the world-famous waterfalls.

The region has diverse industry, from dozens of advanced manufacturers to a wide variety of service industries. Our agriculture sector is rich and diverse, from conventional cash cropping to tender fruit growers, to wineries and a significant and growing greenhouse sector.

Growing up in the Niagara region, I had the opportunity to work for landscapers, construction companies, a demolition and excavating firm, and even in a greenhouse. Life was good for me and for many I knew, but, Speaker, things are changing here in Ontario.

My grandparents moved to Canada and my parents to Ontario because they believed in and knew the greatness of our province was because of people such as them. They knew they could come to this province and raise their family in security, safety and prosperity. They knew if they worked hard and spent wisely, they would be able to get ahead and they would be able to create a good life for themselves and their children. They knew that Canada and Ontario was a land of opportunity and a province of freedom.

My grandparents are not those who only speak of things in the good old country, because they came to Canada to pursue a better life for themselves and their children, like so many millions of others have come and

continue to come to our country and our province to do. They came to Canada with little more than the shirts on their backs in the early 1950s, and they worked hard to get a place they could call their own and to put food on the table. But Speaker, things have changed in Ontario.

As I believe the honourable members of this Legislature know, I am young—some would argue, quite young. One of the questions I hear regularly as I speak with constituents or members in this House or members of the broader public: “Why would you do this? What motivated you to run for office at this level, at this age?” The answer is multi-faceted and one that would take more than the length of this address to answer fully. But the brief answer, and the answer that most fully encapsulates my motivation and my purpose in entering this House is very simple: I believe that Ontarians deserve better. I believe that Ontario and the people of Ontario possess boundless potential and opportunity. But I believe that the Ontario my grandparents immigrated to, the Ontario that my parents chose to live in and the Ontario that I love deeply has changed, and not always and not completely for the better.

For the past 15 years, the electorate of Ontario has decided to entrust the governance of our great province to the hands of the Ontario Liberal Party. I am the first to confess an ardent and undying love for democracy, and I do not intend to disparage either the electorate or the motives of the members serving on the government side of the House. I know that all the members of this House seek to serve the best interests of their constituents and the ultimate good of our province and the country. However, over the past 14 years, we have seen an Ontario that has been transformed from an economic powerhouse of this country into a have-not province burdened by staggeringly high debt, outrageous amounts of red tape and a future mortgaged to the hilt by the horrifyingly bad decisions of this Liberal government.

I see students, my peers, coming out of university or college who feel that they deserve “free everything” and are shocked to discover that the well-paying jobs of their parents, coming out of post-secondary education, simply no longer exist.

I see young families struggling to make ends meet as hydro rates soar to unimaginable heights, as gas prices continue to climb and the cost of living continues to make life harder under this government.

I see seniors worried about their retirement savings as the rising debt makes Canada and Ontario a more and more unpredictable place to do business. They worry about being able to make it into the long-term-care facility of their choosing as the changing demographics double and then triple long-term-care-facility wait times. They worry about being able to get the medical care they deserve, as physician and nurse shortages lead to ever-increasing wait times in emergency rooms and operating rooms.

Speaker, I am a Progressive Conservative because I believe that Ontarians deserve equal opportunity. I am a Progressive Conservative because I deserve, and I be-

lieve Ontarians deserve, personal responsibility. I am a Progressive Conservative because I believe Ontarians deserve freedom. I am proud to stand on this side of the Legislature with the political party that seeks to serve the best interests of the province above all.

0930

I would be remiss today if I stood and spoke about public service in Niagara without mentioning the former member for Niagara West–Glanbrook, the highly respected and very dedicated Tim Hudak, who I grew up admiring and observing. Tim has left big shoes for me to fill and I will be working hard to ensure the constituents of Niagara West–Glanbrook see the same excellent level of care and commitment from myself as they came to expect over the 21 years of Tim's service to his community and neighbours.

Neighbours: Most, if not all, of us in this House entered politics to serve our neighbours and our communities. As a Christian, this is indeed true for me. The example of Christ, who served the poor, the widows and the orphans in the land of ancient Israel, inspires me every day. His words ring of divine truth, and his greatest commandment, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind, can only be fully understood in the context of the second half of that commandment: Love your neighbour as yourself.

The reality is that in Canada and Ontario, it has in many ways perhaps become less common and popular for those in public life to speak of their faith and the role it plays in their commitment to public service. During my campaign, I was very clear that my family, neighbours and faith inspired me to run for public office.

As a Conservative, I believe strongly in the importance of the free-enterprise marketplace that allows for the exercise of personal freedom, opportunity and responsibility. As a Christian, I believe strongly in the importance of ensuring the most vulnerable in our society are being looked after, that they are being taken care of, that the proverbial poor and orphaned are not being taken advantage of but are, rather, considered as worthy of protection and support as the richest and most successful among us today.

I believe in equality and fairness. I believe in acceptance and toleration. Every human life is of equal value, and every human must be treated with dignity and respect. Every human has the image of God, the *imago Dei*, printed on his or her very soul.

I also believe very strongly in the liberal-democratic ideals that I am convinced have allowed Canada and Ontario to prosper and become the amazing places they are today, truly gifts to the world. But these ideals cannot be taken for granted by any people, any legislator or any government. The importance of cherishing and defending freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of association and freedom of religion cannot be over-emphasized. I believe it is safe to say that without these ideals and the practical outworking of these ideas in the respectful manner that our parliamentary system and democratic society allow for, we would be much the

worse, not only in this province but across our nation. I bid this House not to take these freedoms for granted but to be vigilant that they be protected and cherished against the ever-encroaching and expanding power of the state.

Speaker, I look forward to spending whatever amount of time the constituents of Niagara West–Glanbrook are inclined to honour me with in working for them, their concerns, their priorities, their needs and their interests. I trust and pray that future generations will look back at the debates and deliberation that take place in this House in which I may have the privilege of partaking and acknowledge that in this House the pursuit of the good for Ontario and Canada was our primary focus.

Once again, I wish to acknowledge and thank the constituents of Niagara West–Glanbrook for placing their trust in me. I wish to thank all of those who have helped me in this journey, from my campaign team to those who sent me well-wishes from across the world, all the mentors and friends who have surrounded me with advice and assistance, and my family for being a bulwark of support up to this point. I wish to thank those in this House and all those in the Progressive Conservative caucus who have welcomed me into the Legislature with open arms and have given me the benefit of the doubt, their advice, wisdom and experience over the past year and a half.

Most of all, Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my loving Heavenly Father for giving me the opportunity to serve my province, my neighbours, my friends and my colleagues. I look forward to continuing that work with all members in this House. I look forward to improving our province, our nation and our society.

I cannot sit down without saying, to paraphrase again Sir Winston Churchill, how very grateful I am for the kindness and patience with which the House has heard me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a privilege for me, as always, to rise in this chamber and participate in the democratic process on behalf of the people who I represent in London West.

Today we are discussing the government's notice of motion number 7, which, of course, is a time allocation motion, which is somewhat contradictory to the democratic process because, as we know, the whole purpose of a time allocation motion is to shut down debate. It is to limit discussion and exchange of ideas. It is to undermine, in fact, democracy by closing off discussion of alternatives, other ideas, suggestions for improvements, identifying gaps etc.

We have before us a motion that is going to limit each party to 40 minutes, and then this bill, Bill 31, another omnibus bill, will be rammed through this chamber, sent to committee, with a very short period of time for people to come to committee to present on the bill, and then it will be brought back and passed in the province of Ontario.

We on this side of the House will be opposing this motion because we do not support time allocation. It is a fundamentally anti-democratic tool that undermines our roles as legislators in this chamber.

This is a time allocation motion related to Bill 31, which is the budget measures act. The purpose of Bill 31, of course, is to enact the budget itself—what the Liberals call their plan for care and opportunity.

This morning, in the limited time that I have available, I am going to address some of the most problematic provisions of Bill 31, and then I am going to turn to the budget itself, which is the purpose of Bill 31.

In particular, Bill 31 contains three schedules that are of significant concern to the NDP. Schedule 23, which goes to some extent to address the concerns that we are all familiar with, from Sears pensioners—many of us have Sears stores in our communities. We know the impact the bankruptcy of that retailer had on people who had been working at Sears for many years. Schedule 23 makes a modest increase to the Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund and makes that increase retroactive so that Sears pensioners can also access those funds. Unfortunately, however, the \$500 monthly increase that is proposed to the Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund is nowhere near what is needed to bring benefits up to the level that was intended when that fund was first introduced in this province.

The government convened in 2008 an expert commission on pensions. That body called for guaranteed benefits to be increased to \$2,500 a month. That was 10 years ago, Speaker. When you look at the impact of inflation since 2008, the Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund benefits should actually be around \$3,000 a month, which is much greater than the paltry \$500 that is proposed in schedule 23. If you had an opportunity to review the NDP platform, that's why our platform includes a commitment to increase benefits under the Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund to \$3,000 a month, which is really where it should be. That's where the 2008 expert commission on pensions recommended the level be set.

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Another problematic schedule of Bill 31 is schedule 13. This was an opportunity for the government to actually do something on auto insurance rates. Instead, what schedule 13 does is change the requirement for the Ministry of Finance to table a report on the statutory accident benefits schedule, which are the benefits that Ontarians are entitled to if they have an injury as a result of an auto accident. It removes the requirement for the Minister of Finance to table a report about those benefits in the Legislature. This is a move away from transparency and also a move away from effective oversight of what is happening in our auto insurance system in this province.

We just heard this month that auto insurance rates in Ontario have climbed 42% over the last 14 years, which happens to coincide with the time the Liberals have been in office. That includes a 2% increase in the first quarter of 2018 and a projected increase of at least 5% over the rest of 2018. This is after we have heard repeated commitments from this Liberal government to reduce auto insurance rates. In fact, we heard before the 2014 election that there was going to be a 15% rate cut to auto insurance. We heard that after the election, although we also

heard an explanation that they hadn't achieved that 15% rate cut because, in fact, that wasn't a commitment; that was actually just a stretch goal.

It was a case of the Liberal government trying to back-track on a promise that they had made to the people of this province to reduce auto insurance rates. We see that auto insurance rates are climbing rather than reducing. Instead of actually doing something about that in Bill 31, the Liberals have introduced this amendment about the tabling of FSCO reports.

Then, of course, the third problematic schedule in Bill 31 is schedule 14. What schedule 14 reflects is this Liberal government inserting itself into a jurisdictional matter between labour unions that really should be arbitrated through the labour relations board. It should not be the content of legislation before this House.

I come from a family in which my father is a proud member of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners. I have nothing against carpenters; I love carpenters. That union has enabled my father to have a great life, to put his kids through post-secondary education, to go on holidays and everything else. However, this schedule 14 gives that union jurisdiction over the members of LIUNA, many of whom live in my riding of London West. LIUNA Local 1059 represents 650 or more members of LIUNA, people who participate in the concrete-forming sector in southwestern Ontario.

This schedule, schedule 14, really undoes a 40-year period of stable labour relations that has worked in southwestern Ontario. One has to ask oneself: Why is the Liberal government taking this action to name unions in legislation, which is completely unprecedented and has the potential to really cause a lot of disruption in that sector, particularly in southwestern Ontario and for the people I represent in London?

I want to read from an email I just received yesterday from one of the LIUNA 1059 members. He says: "My father has operated a small concrete forming business here in London for over 35 years. He and his team have had the privilege of working on hundreds of projects in our community and surrounding areas. The company is a signatory to LIUNA 1059, which has served the company and its employees very well over the 35 years, with excellent benefits and fair wages. The union makes it easy for employers as only one union agreement is required. This makes it easier for smaller businesses with limited overhead.

"The current relationship with industry and unions is very healthy, and I am concerned that Bill 31 could put" all of "this in jeopardy."

I fully expect that the Liberals will hear a lot about schedule 14 when this bill goes to committee. We should have had more of an opportunity to address some of these concerns during the debate. But, unfortunately, we now have a time allocation before us, which means that other members who may have also been hearing from LIUNA, who may want to get on the record with these concerns, will not have an opportunity anymore.

I now want to turn to the budget itself, the Liberal government's optimistically named a Plan for Care and Opportunity. This is a document that could just as easily be called "magical thinking for care and opportunity." I say "magical thinking" because there is really no logical connection between what is in this budget and the government's ability to implement what is in this budget.

Poll after poll has confirmed consistently that it's time for a change in Ontario. Whatever the poll has taken, whatever the methodology, we're seeing about 80% of Ontarians have been saying for quite some time that after 15 years, it is time for new leadership at Queen's Park. It is time for a change in government.

This budget proposes a number of new programs, new investments that are supposed to address the problems that have been created over the past 15 years that this government has been in office. I mentioned before: The 15 years that this government has been in office, we saw auto insurance rates increase 42%. Over the 15 years that this government has been in office, we have seen hydro rates increase 300%. Over the 15 years that this government has been in office, we've seen the school backlog in maintenance and repair balloon to \$16 billion from the \$5 billion that was inherited, by the Conservatives when they left office in 2003. We have seen health care in total crisis in communities across this province. I have stood in this House on many, many occasions, since I was elected in 2013, to draw attention to the dire situation of health care provision in London.

Just this week, I raised the concern that the London Health Sciences Centre has now approved a hallway transfer protocol, because it has not just become something that happens every now and then that there is no bed available and a patient has to very short-term, temporarily, be placed in the hallway. Now we are seeing that the hallway is a designated location for people to receive care when they go to the hospital.

This hallway transfer protocol was created to provide oversight, to put rules in place when patients are transferred from the emergency department to the hallway, when they are transferred from the critical care unit to the hallway, or when they are transferred from the post-anesthetic care unit to the hallway.

0950

Some of the criteria that are put in place around caring for patients in the hallway are that you can't place patients in stairwells; you have to make sure they are in the hallway and, if possible, have all the patients lined up on just one side of the hallway, not both sides of the hallway.

It is unimaginable that we are in a situation in this province where hallway transfer protocols are being established in hospitals across Ontario. I don't know if London Health Sciences Centre is the only hospital that has passed a hallway transfer protocol, but it is—there are no words. People feel that this health care system that we have in Ontario is completely broken when the hallway becomes the place where people are receiving care.

I know that the member for Nickel Belt had raised an example of a constituent in Sudbury who was receiving

care in a bathroom. People are receiving care in make-shift storage areas of hospitals now because of the chronic underfunding of our health care system that we have seen under this Liberal government and that has really just escalated in the past six years.

In the past six years, not only have hospitals not received the funding that they need to maintain services, much less enhance services, but they've actually seen their funding reduced. At London Health Sciences Centre, just since Kathleen Wynne became Premier, we saw \$142 million removed from that budget and the hospital has had to try to deal with the impact of that reduction of funds. That has led to hallway transfer protocols and it has led to the lack of beds.

Stuart Cline, a constituent of mine in London West, fell ill in Mexico and was unable to be relocated back to Ontario because there was simply no capacity in any hospital to receive him back. It has led to people like Chris Punter, a Londoner who had his brain surgery cancelled four times because there was no recovery bed available for him. The fourth time he had his surgery cancelled in December he was actually in a hospital gown, he had wires on his chest, he was ready to go into the operating room and he was told that the surgery had to be cancelled because there were no recovery beds available.

This budget, this Plan for Care and Opportunity, pretends to address some of these issues that have been created as if the Liberal government just only became aware of these problems and is suddenly out there riding in on their white horse, coming to solve these problems with these investments that are included in this budget. Really, these are stopgap measures. The Liberals are putting their finger in the dike to try to present a positive face to the people of this province that they are aware of the pain and the suffering that patients have had to go through, that families have had to go through and that children have had to go through.

There was a story in Toronto just last week: Two children were burned after asphalt dripped from the roof of their school because of the \$16-billion backlog in school maintenance and repairs that have led to this dire situation where roofs are leaking, boilers are broken and children are in classrooms wearing coats and mittens. That is directly a result of the decisions that have been taken by this Liberal government.

Speaker, I'm going to conclude my remarks now but, certainly, you can be assured that the NDP caucus is not going to be supporting this time allocation motion, nor will we be supporting Bill 31 when it is brought forward for a vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I will ask for your indulgence to listen to not a very pleasant voice this morning. I feel better than I sound, though.

Here we are, talking about a time allocation motion. What that means is that we will not be allowed to talk about the budget bill anymore. What that means is that although some of the MPPs in this House that represent every corner of this province wanted a chance to talk, this

opportunity has been taken away from us. This is called tabling a time allocation motion. It's a fancy word that means that nobody is allowed to talk anymore. I don't like time allocation motions. I would much prefer that everybody had an opportunity to represent the voices of their riding. I represent the beautiful riding of Nickel Belt, but I'm really aware that things are different depending on where in this huge province we live.

I will start with health care. I've been the health critic for the NDP for the last 10 years. In the government's budget, they talk about a drug plan for children under the age of 25, and they talk about the copayment and the deductible for seniors. I have nothing against drug plans. Ontario has six of them, since we have OHIP+. We used to have five; we now have six. It's all good, but it is not pharmacare. What makes the strength of pharmacare is that everybody is covered. What makes the strength of pharmacare is that no matter who you are, no matter your circumstances, no matter your age, pharmacare applies to all of us equitably.

Around the world, there are 132 jurisdictions that have medicare. Medicare, as we know it, is a program that defines us as Ontarians and defines us as Canadians. It makes sure that if we need to go see a physician or if we need to go to the hospital, those services will be delivered to us based on our needs, not on our ability to pay. This is great; it shows that we care for one another. It shows that we have empathy for one another and that we understand that in a province and in a country as rich as Ontario and Canada, we pool our resources together so that if people fall on bad health, the system is there to help them.

Did you know, Speaker, that of those 132 other countries that have medicare, we stand out as the only one that does not have a pharmacare system attached to it? The pharmacare system that is used in most other countries and jurisdictions that have medicare is the one that the NDP is bringing forward, where you start with a limited formulary based on the highest needs of the people, in our case of Ontario, and, if it was to be Canada-wide, the highest needs of the people of Canada.

We have tested three different formularies with about 125 drugs in each, and I can tell you that 90% of the people had all of their drug costs covered. With 125 drugs, you can cover the needs of 90% of the people of Ontario. The pharmacare plan that the NDP is bringing forward is on top of the six drug plans that already exist. So OHIP+ will continue to exist and the formulary for people over 65 will continue to be there. What we're doing is making sure that everybody, no matter your age, no matter where you live, also has access. This is a game-changer for many, many people who don't have a drug plan.

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It is rarer—I think that's a word—it's less common now for people to have benefits at work. If I look at my kids and their friends, a lot of them work in what is called a "gig economy." A lot of them work one, two, sometimes three jobs patched together to make sure that they have enough money to make ends meet. But none of those one, two or three jobs comes with a drug plan, and

at some point—I am the poster child for this this morning—everybody gets sick. I can vouch for it; right now I'm not feeling too good. But I'm one of the lucky ones who does have access.

The second part I wanted to talk about is the drug plan. I will give you a few examples. I have Madame Hélène Diotte. She's one of my constituents; she lives in Hanmer. She called because she's looking for help for her sister. Her sister has been disabled for all of her life and has been on ODSP. Her sister has just—well, actually, a few years ago—turned 65 years old. She is no longer eligible for ODSP.

ODSP used to cover her dental care; it doesn't anymore. She's had to pay \$150 for every one of the visits, and she cannot afford to go to the dentist anymore, because we are looking at hundreds of dollars of dental care that she doesn't have. Now that she's aged out of ODSP, she receives OAS and she receives the supplement, but that's it; that's all.

Her sister wants to continue to live independently; however, she is on a wait-list for rent geared to income. She did the work and found out through Sudbury housing that it will be a four- to more than likely a five-year wait before her sister gets into rent-geared-to-income housing and maybe has a little bit more money. This is one example.

I also want to give the example of Barb Goldsmith. She lives in Whitefish, in my riding. Mrs. Goldsmith is 87 years old. She has a few health problems—COPD, emphysema—but she's had major problems with her teeth. She needs extractions, but she hasn't got the money to pay to go to the dentist. She continues to have infections in her mouth. They treat her for infection and they treat her for the pain because she has access to her family physician, who is able to do that. But what she really needs is to be able to see the dentist. She can't afford to do that, and she continues to suffer.

I would like to give the example of Shirley Lafortune. Shirley is 76 years old. She is disabled and aged out of ODSP when she was 65. The whole time that she was on ODSP, she had issues with her teeth. She always went to see the dentist, and the dentist was able to help her. Now, between the price of hydro and the price of gas, which is very high, she receives CPP and OAS, but she hasn't got enough money to pay for the dentist.

The northern health travel grant: She lives in Bruce Mines and has to travel to Sault Ste. Marie for her care. She hasn't seen a dentist in the last 10 years. Ten years is a long time, Speaker, for not going to see the dentist. Why? Because she can't afford it. She can't afford the travel to go to Sault Ste. Marie, and this is where she receives dental care. There are no physicians or dentists where she lives.

She has to take a Greyhound bus. Depending on when the appointment is, it often is the day before. Then she has to take a cab or the city bus and maybe has to pay for a hotel, depending on how all of this transportation—public transportation in northern Ontario is not as convenient as it is down here. There's only one bus going

west, or one bus going east. You often have to sleep over. The Northern Health Travel Grant does not cover her, because you're not covered if you're not at least 200 kilometres away from the service.

Plus, you have to be referred to a physician. Going to see the dentist is a problem. So is going to see a physician or specialist. These expenses are not covered and they are unaffordable. Her physician has recommended that she get the shingles vaccine for medical reasons, but she is 76. The vaccine is not covered for her. There is no way she can afford the price.

The list goes on and on. When we looked into the budget bill, we see that dental care is there. But dental care is there for \$50 per child or \$300 per person. For people who cannot afford to go to the dentist, to be reimbursed \$50 per kid or \$300 per person after the fact is a system that still leaves huge barriers to access.

What the NDP is putting forward is the biggest development of public dental that you have ever seen in this province. Did you know, Speaker, that right now the province pays for less than 3% of all of the dental care that is being provided in our province? Dental care in pretty much every other province is supported by the provincial government way more than it is in this province.

Right now, the Liberal budget tells us that a single person will get \$300, and a couple will get \$500. With children, you get \$50 more per child. This basic system is of no use to people who don't have the ability to pay up front and wait for the government to reimburse them.

I can tell you that there are a lot of people where I live who qualify for the Northern Health Travel Grant, but it takes so long to get reimbursed and they often face huge barriers. If you need a root canal, the average cost is close to a thousand bucks. You will have to pay up front \$1,000 and then get reimbursed part of this at a date yet to be determined. This leaves huge barriers to care, huge barriers to access.

What the NDP is putting forward is public dental that is available and accessible to everybody who can't afford it. If you have a dental plan that covers the minimum basket of services, everything stays the same for you; you continue to go to your dentist and nothing changes.

For all of the seniors who do not have a dental plan, they will have access to either the dentist of their choice or a community health centre, a public health unit, an aboriginal health access centre, a family health team or a nurse practitioner-led clinic: places that are accessible to them, where they feel welcome and are not ashamed to go and ask for help, although they haven't gone to the dentist for 10 years. Some people feel very embarrassed about their dental health needs. You have to make sure that the system we put forward is a system that is accessible to them, where they feel welcome. If you feel good and want to go to the dentist that you used to go to, by all means, you will have the opportunity to do that.

Right now, for people who receive Ontario Works, it is left to a patchwork of local municipal rules. Some municipalities provide dental care for people on Ontario

Works and some municipalities provide very little dental care to people on Ontario works.

1010

All of this will change, Speaker. The NDP will put a basket of services that will be available to all. If you are one of those workers in the gig economy, then your employer will have a choice to bring forward their own dental plan or to participate in the Ontario-run dental benefit. This benefit will be mandatory for every worker—a bit like if you look at employment insurance or if you look at CPP. It doesn't matter if you work part-time or a few hours here and there, your employer has to pay into employment insurance, your employer has to participate and pay into CPP. The Ontario benefit will work very much along the same lines.

One more part that I forgot to say about the pharmacare that we are putting forward is that not only will it be available to all, but it will also cover what we call take-home cancer drugs. More and more, cancer is not the death sentence that it used to be. More and more cancers are now either chronic diseases or diseases that you can be completely cured from for years on end and go on to live your life.

Those new treatments often include what we call take-home chemo drugs. Rather than having to go to a cancer treatment centre, where they hook you up to chemotherapy through all sorts of needles and other tubes, it's a pill. It's a pill that you can take at home. The treatment is a lot better. Most people would much rather take a pill than go and sit in a chemo chair for hours on end. But the problem is that as long as you are in the chemo chair and you are in the cancer treatment centre, your drugs are completely covered; you don't have to worry. The minute you take them at home, then you are on your own.

An NDP government has made it clear that this is not fair and has a commitment in our platform to cover the take-home chemo drugs so that people who are facing a diagnosis of cancer can concentrate on getting better rather than having fundraisers to be able to pay for those drugs that they can't afford.

Another part of the budget that is talked about by the Liberals is mental health. I am happy to say that mental health has finally become a priority for people. It has been a priority for the NDP for a long time, and now I'm happy to see the change in our society, where people are reaching out and saying that they are in need of mental care and they are in need of help.

The NDP has put forward some really drastic changes. Did you know, Speaker, that there are 12,000 children waiting for mental health care? In my riding, the wait-list for children's mental health is 18 months long. Many of the young people will age out of the children's system only to be put on a wait-list for the adult system, still not receiving the care they need.

If you look at how the mental health system is available and delivered, you will see that north of Parry Sound and certainly north of the French River, we have no long-term mental health services available. We have a bit of crisis care available to some people in some parts of the northeast, but for big parts and for many, many people,

there is nothing available. We will bring forward—we will be talking about this this afternoon—a ministry of mental health and addictions to make sure that we develop this basket of services; that we make it available equitably to all.

When we see the Liberals' budget that increases funding—increased funding is but one part. If you continue to invest in a broken system, you will continue to leave people behind. You will continue to have a patchwork of services that works for some of the people some of the time in some locations, but fails a lot of the people a lot of the time in many locations. We can do better. We have to do better.

Same thing with long-term care: The Liberals talk about four hours of hands-on care, but we put it in law—how it will be counted, how it will be financed—so that everybody, the 78,000 residents of long-term-care homes, will have access to four hours of hands-on care.

I see that my time is up. Thank you so much, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much.

Debate deemed adjourned.

VISITOR

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack): I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome a former member of the 39th, 40th and 41st Parliaments. We have with us this morning former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and many other ministries, the Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins and his wife and family. Welcome.

It being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.
The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In the members' gallery, we have a former member from St. Paul's in the 39th, 40th and 41st Parliaments, the former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Eric Hoskins.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Today in the west gallery, we have Elliott Silverstein, manager of government relations for CAA South Central Ontario, as well as Emma Kaplan, who is a student from Thornhill. She is going to my alma mater in September, the University of Waterloo, to study for a master's in public service. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Joining us today in the east members' gallery are the great-uncle and grandfather of page Rowan Watchmaker—they're visiting from Ottawa—Kashyap Majmundar and Ashok Watchmaker. You must be so proud. Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to introduce page Mia Wendling's family; they're here today in the members' gallery. Her mother, Rosanne, and her sisters Ariel, Kyara and Matteya, are here today—and Justine, as well. Welcome again to Queen's Park.

Mr. Han Dong: I'm delighted to introduce the family of page Rhys Hoskins: someone we know very, very

dearly, a proud constituent of mine, Dr. Eric Hoskins, the former health minister, alongside with the real boss, Ms. Samantha Nutt, and her mother and Rhys's grandmother, Ms. Joan Nutt. It's a pleasure to have you here. Welcome.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm really honoured to welcome Mr. Ashok Watchmaker, who is the grandfather to our page Rowan Watchmaker. I have known Mr. Watchmaker for a long, long time because I attended law school with both of his sons. I'm just so excited that he's here at Queen's Park today.

Also, please welcome Kashyap Majmundar, who is the great-uncle to our page Rowan Watchmaker. Welcome to Queen's Park.

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Écoutez, aujourd'hui, le page qui est le capitaine, Maxime Dufault, est ici d'Ottawa-Orléans. Son grand-papa Gilles Rodier est avec nous en Chambre. J'aimerais le saluer et lui dire : merci de votre présence ici, monsieur Rodier.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Merci beaucoup. The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change—no?

Hon. Chris Ballard: Yes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes? Yes.

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Speaker. You were talking about me and looking in a different direction. You got me.

For a second time in as many weeks, I'd like to welcome a co-op student in my constituency office, Matthew Acheson, who is a student at St. Maximilian Kolbe secondary school in Aurora. Welcome, Matthew, again.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I also want to welcome students who are part of the executive MBA program at the Schulich School of Business, who are here today to see our democracy in action. I want to thank Sameer Ali, who is part of the class and has arranged for the group to come to Queen's Park. I welcome them to our great institution.

APPOINTMENT OF FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a copy of the order-in-council appointing Peter Weltman as Financial Accountability Officer for the term of five years commencing May 7, 2018.

May I also take this opportunity, on behalf of all of us here in the House, to thank the Honourable David Wake, once again, for stepping in during the vacancy in this position to act as temporary Financial Accountability Officer during the last six months. We thank His Honour.

ORAL QUESTIONS

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. A backroom deal struck by the board of Hydro One raised the CEO's severance to \$10 million if there was a change

in control of the company. As the largest shareholder, Speaker, I ask the Premier: When did the Premier and the Minister of Energy know of this deal?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, we recognize that executive salaries are high compared to the vast majority of Ontario salaries. We remain committed to Hydro One's regulation and their accountability, Mr. Speaker, through our government's involvement as a majority stakeholder and shareholder. That said, Hydro One is now a publicly traded company, not a government entity. Hydro One's rates continue to be set by the Ontario Energy Board. The board is the energy sector's independent regulator with a mandate to protect the province's electricity consumers, and it continues to deliver on its mandate.

For instance, last fall the Ontario Energy Board capped the portion of executive compensation at Hydro One for electricity customers. They are required to fund 10% of base salaries, saving ratepayers \$30 million over this year and the next. Completely eliminating the CEO's salary wouldn't even take pennies off of anyone's bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: A backroom deal struck by the board of Hydro One jacked up the CEO's severance to \$10 million if there was a change in control of the company. Speaker, as the largest shareholder, did the Premier or the Minister of Energy sign off on this backroom deal?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Again, decisions made regarding executive compensation are made by the board of Hydro One. When it comes to the article that is being quoted—let's see what else that Globe and Mail article said. The article said that the government cut hydro bills by 25%, Mr. Speaker. That's something that they voted against and have no plan on how to actually reduce rates. Similar reductions were made for small businesses and farms, 500,000 of those businesses to be—a matter of fact. In rural areas, a number of fees were cancelled and bills were lowered, in many areas between 34% and 50% on average. Thanks to our plan, Ontario families and small businesses are now paying less on average here than in many similar jurisdictions. That's real relief for Ontario families and it's the relief that they can depend on, and it's part of our plan to invest in care and create more opportunity for everyone.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: The millionaires' club that's running Hydro One signed off on a secret \$10-million payout should the Hydro One CEO be fired. When did the Premier know?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, I'll reiterate for the opposition that decisions made regarding executive compensation are made by the board at Hydro One. But the one thing it is important to state is that completely eliminating the CEO's salary at Hydro One would not even take pennies off of people's bills. It's up to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Ford, to try and explain exactly how his chaotic scheme would work to benefit

ratepayers. The opposition knows very well that Hydro One's rates are set by the Ontario Energy Board—the independent Ontario Energy Board—not Hydro One's CEO.

But compare Mr. Ford's chaotic scheme to our fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, which has lowered bills by 25% on average for families. As many as half a million small businesses and farms have also seen that reduction. Low-income families have also seen a 40% to 50% reduction if they live in rural areas. We continue to move forward making our bills affordable for the people of this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There have been some signals that we need to go to warnings. I'll listen carefully to the next round, and those decisions will be made quickly.

1040

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, I am looking at a few people.

The member from Nepean—Carleton.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier. On April 12, the Minister of Energy said: "Ultimately the board is there to make the best decisions for Hydro One." Why did the board not take that commitment to heart when they signed off on a \$10-million payout?

Did the Premier sign off on her Liberal insiders' and hydro cronies' \$10 million deal? Yes or no?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: What this government and this Premier signed off on is a 25% reduction for all families right across the province. It's that party that voted against it. It's that party that has no plan on how to bring forward any further savings for the people of Ontario. We do, and we continue to work hard to make sure that we have a clean system, a reliable system and an affordable system.

Let's take a look at what they're talking about. They're going to fire the CEO of Hydro One. That will not do a thing for actually taking off anything, even pennies, off the bills for ratepayers.

We have the best interests at heart of ratepayers in this province. That's why we brought forward a system and a plan that has reduced rates by 25%. We made sure that we eliminated coal, and we've got one of the cleanest systems in North America. That is something we should be proud of.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary, the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: For the Premier: It's reported that the \$10-million severance was signed off on in November. When did the Premier know about the deal?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Again, it's our government that understands that affordability is critical for families and businesses. That's why we launched Ontario's fair hydro plan, reducing rates by 25% on average for all resi-

dential customers and as many as a half a million small businesses and farms.

Our plan is working. Monday's report by the Environmental Commissioner reconfirmed that Ontario's families and small businesses pay less on average here than in many other North American jurisdictions. Families in cities like New York, Boston and San Francisco, for example, pay more than double the average Ontario bill, and customers in Charlottetown, Regina, Halifax and Moncton are paying more than the Ontario average.

By bringing prices down for customers, we're continuing to increase fairness and create more opportunity for Ontario families.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary, the member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Back to the Premier: The Premier can't sweep another scandal under the rug. Did the Premier try to hide the \$10-million severance for the last five months?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Again, Hydro One's rates—and I know the opposition know this, but they pretend not to know a lot of things—continue to be set by the Ontario Energy Board. The board is the energy sector's independent regulator, with a mandate to protect the province's electricity consumers, and it continues to deliver on that mandate.

When we're looking at Hydro One and their so-called scheme, it actually will do nothing to reduce the rates for ratepayers right across our province.

That being said, Hydro One is now a publicly traded company, not a government entity.

So while we recognize that executive salaries are high compared to the vast majority of Ontario salaries, we remain committed to making sure that we keep our system clean, reliable and affordable.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, we are in warnings. Clear? Thank you.

New question.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. Earls Court Village long-term-care home is in my riding. Things got so bad at Earls Court last fall that they were forced to stop admitting residents.

Can the Premier tell people who are worried about their loved ones why she is blocking a find-and-fix inquiry into Ontario's long-term-care system?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to speak to the specifics of this question, but I just want to say that, this morning, the Minister of Finance and I and the minister responsible for seniors and the MPP for Trinity-Spadina were at Kensington Gardens, a beautiful long-term-care home. The Minister of Finance had waffles with strawberries and whipped cream for breakfast, served by the Premier.

We were thrilled to be able to announce that the locations for 5,000 new long-term-care beds have been finalized. This is on top of the thousands of beds that have already been redeveloped in Ontario. This is on top of the investments in home care that we've made. This is a very, very important move forward, and 1,500 of those beds are for culturally specific communities. It's a great move forward for seniors in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Workers in long-term-care homes are such dedicated and caring staff and they do the best they can, but when the ministry inspected Earls Court, things got so troubling, they ordered that the company hire an outside consultant to report on how residents were being cared for. The ministry has that report but they won't release it.

Is the Premier more worried about bad political news than she is about getting answers for residents of Earls Court and their loved ones?

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

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Our government is absolutely committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our loved ones living in long-term-care homes across the province and we take that responsibility very, very seriously.

Of course, all long-term-care homes are overseen by a rigorous inspection system and regulatory framework, which includes an annual inspection to ensure compliance. What we have done as a government is to ensure that the results from every inspection are posted online and in the homes themselves.

We're constantly working to create an even more open and transparent health care system to ensure that families have the information they need to make more informed choices about the care of their loved ones. We're enhancing oversight through the Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act to ensure all operators are addressing concerns promptly.

We will continue in this regard to ensure the safety and the dignity of our loved ones in long-term-care facilities.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: People in my community live in Earls Court. People have families and loved ones in this home. They deserve answers. People deserve the answers they need to have to make sure that they know their loved ones are being cared for and will be safe, that seniors will be treated with human dignity and respect.

Will the Premier release this report today?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Our ministry has had the home get a consultant to do a report on the recommendations to date. We take this incredibly seriously. We're going to be working towards our commitment to transparency in releasing this report in due course.

We want to ensure that everyone has the information they need to make informed choices in terms of the care of the residents and to ensure that long-term-care homes in this province live up to our expectations as a government as to the type of care that they provide.

CHILD CARE

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. With 49 days left, does the Premier regret that she failed to make child care affordable?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I'm very proud of is that we are in the process of building 100,000 new child care spaces. I'm very proud that, when I was the Minister of Education in this province, we moved and began to create full-day kindergarten. That has now been in place for a number of years. That is great for kids, but it also saves families \$6,000 a year per child in child care.

We have built a strong foundation and now, in our budget, we have committed to free preschool child care starting in 2020 for children from two and a half to four years old. That builds on the foundation that we've already constructed.

I thank the member opposite for the question, because I'm very proud of the work we have done in child care in this province.

Interjections.

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

Supplementary.

Miss Monique Taylor: Back to the Premier: The Liberals have been in power for 15 years. This Premier has sat in her role for over five years. That's nearly 1,900 days.

Last year, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives noted that child care costs in Toronto increased six times faster than inflation.

With 49 days left, does this Premier regret—

Interjections.

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

Finish, please.

Miss Monique Taylor: With 49 days left, does this Premier regret that she ignored this problem personally, as a Premier, for over five years, and for 15 years as a government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, that is just not the case. It's just not the case. I am really pleased that this time around, as we go into an election, the NDP has come onboard and is actually talking about education, is talking about child care, because those issues were absent from their platform the last time around. But it's great that now they have taken the bit and they are running with it.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has always talked about education and has always talked about child care, so that's not new, but it is new that the NDP has grabbed onto that. I'm pleased about that. We've been working on providing excellent education, high-quality child care, and rebuilding and building new spaces, and we will continue to do that.

The threat in this province as we go into an election is from a Conservative Party that has no intention not only of building child care spaces but actually no intention of

even retaining what is in place, and would cut across government. That is the threat—

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

Miss Monique Taylor: The government has ignored affordable child care for the last 15 years, but there is change coming and people need to decide what sort of change they want. On one hand, they know that Doug Ford will cut and privatize. Child care will get more expensive. Quality will get worse. We will see more corporate child care and less high-quality, public child care.

New Democrats think that affordability should be based on need. The Premier thinks it should be based on how old the child is. Why?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I want to thank the member opposite for this question because, really, it gives us a chance to talk about some of the amazing work that we have been doing. Frankly, I don't even know where to start, so—

Interjection.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Yes, let's start with the commitment to 100,000 more spaces. Let's start with the commitment of historic amounts being put into operational budgets: \$1.4 billion across the province. Let's talk about building spaces: \$1.6 billion, which is going to lead to building 45,000 spaces. And let's not forget that we are committing to making sure that there will be free preschool child care for all children across the province from the ages of two and a half to four, saving families \$17,000 per child, and building on our full-day kindergarten commitment, which also saves families \$6,500 per child.

Speaker, if you want to talk about child care and what we're doing, we have been working hard, not just now but for several years, building the foundation to ensure that we give our families a solid foundation, and our children the best start in life.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's great that the Premier has decided to answer a few questions. Perhaps she'll answer this one. This is directed to the Premier. Perhaps she'll answer this one.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Come out, come out, wherever you are, Dougie.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Etobicoke North is warned. Some members try to hide their voices by putting their hand in front of their mouth. That's not going to work.

Finish, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Just give a straightforward, honest answer to this question.

The Hydro One board recently secretly agreed to pay the Hydro One CEO over \$10 million in severance should he be fired. Now, the Premier had to know of this

deal because she has said herself that the province retains control of the board.

The question is this: When did she know and why would she sign off on this kind of secret, obscene deal?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I find it very ironic that the opposition talks about not answering questions, when their own leader refuses to answer questions to the media outside every time they're asked. This Premier answers questions in the House. This Premier answers questions to the media. But what we saw yesterday was Mr. Ford take one question and then do the duck-and-dash. He needs to put on running shoes, not dress shoes, because the man refuses to answer questions.

Mr. Speaker, it's appalling that the opposition has no plan—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This House is requesting me to set a record for the amount of time I can stand. I can go an hour.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That will cause me to go longer.

Minister?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll take no lessons from the opposite party when it comes to making sure that we take questions, answer questions, and put forward a platform and a policy that makes a difference for the people—

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker, we look forward to the opportunity to answer questions in this chamber.

Back to the Premier: We'll try again. If the CEO and the board of Hydro One have any respect for the taxpayers, for Ontario, or for the people, they would resign today.

Will the Premier march over to Hydro One, demand and subsequently accept the resignation of the board?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: How will that help ratepayers? Right now we've brought forward a plan that's reducing rates by 25%—25% on average for all residences across the province and for 500,000 small businesses and farms. The CEO's salary wouldn't take pennies off anyone's bills. That's why we brought forward the fair hydro plan. The fair hydro plan takes that 25% off and has actually helped many Hydro One customers—customers from Chapleau and from Atikokan, customers from Innisfil Hydro and from Northern Ontario Wires, just to name a few. They're seeing their rates reduced somewhere between 35% and 50% on average, Mr. Speaker. That is something that we actually put in place and is something that they voted against.

Once upon a time, Mr. Speaker, they snuck that into the People's Guarantee. Now we know where the People's Guarantee went; that went into the trash. But the fair hydro plan is a program that's working for the people of Ontario. They recognized it once; they should recognize it again.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, the CEO of privatized Hydro One now makes over \$6 million, about eight times what the previous CEO made when Hydro One was a publicly owned company. The board of Hydro One must have known how outrageous this looks to the people of Ontario because they changed the rules to actually increase the payout and protect the CEO if a cap is placed on his salary or he is fired. Instead of protecting ratepayers and the public, the board protected their executives. They also protected themselves, because to fire the CEO, the government first must fire the board.

Why did the Premier privatize Hydro One and hand-pick a board that protects its executives and itself, but not the Ontario ratepayers and the public?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, I will say that we recognize that executive salaries are high compared to the vast majority of Ontario salaries. We remain committed to Hydro One's regulation, accountability and transparency through our government's involvement as a major shareholder. That said, Hydro One is now a publicly traded company, not a government entity. Decisions made regarding executive compensation are made by the board of Hydro One.

But, Mr. Speaker, let's be clear: Completely eliminating the CEO's salary would not even take pennies off people's bills. Our fair hydro plan did take money off people's bills. It took 25% off. In other parts of the province, we saw anywhere between 35% to 50% off for those individuals who live in rural or northern parts of our province.

1100

Included in the fair hydro plan is an enhanced Ontario Electricity Support Program as well, making sure that low-income individuals can actually save more on their bills. We eliminated the First Nations delivery charge, making sure that those who live on reserves didn't have to pay that delivery charge, helping them lower their bills as well.

We brought forward a plan that actually worked for the ratepayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is back to the Premier. Minister, no CEO at Hydro should make \$6 million when people can't afford to pay for their hydro bills. You should be ashamed of that.

Privatization has not made Hydro One more efficient or reliable; it has not. It has not lowered hydro costs. Privatization has allowed the CEO to extract over \$6 million from Ontario ratepayers. It has allowed Hydro One to borrow billions to buy up a coal plant in the United States and expose Ontario ratepayers to even new debt risks. It has allowed the Liberals to collect campaign donations from Bay Street, who are in turn now collecting hundreds of millions in Hydro One profits that used to belong to the people of Ontario.

Will the Premier finally admit that her privatization of Hydro One was a mistake that—

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

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, Hydro One has become a better-run company, Mr. Speaker. They found \$114 million in savings last year. They actually moved forward and eliminated winter disconnections on their own, before we had to implement that legislation. They have increased their customer service, and they have seen calls to their customer service offices drop significantly. They have been doing a lot to become a better-run company.

I understand that the costs that are out there can be concerning to some people, but it's this government that brought forward a plan to reduce rates by 25%. Mr. Speaker, when you're looking at electricity platforms, there are pie-in-the-sky platforms, and that party has one of them when it comes to this sector. Buying back billions in shares of Hydro One will not take one cent off electricity bills for Ontario families and businesses. They should know that. They're choosing ideology over the people of Ontario and not even reducing rates one cent.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour la ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle, the Honourable Mitzie Hunter.

My question is about the major capital expansion going on in Milton, but I would like to, at the outset, thank Minister Hunter for being at West Humber Collegiate in Etobicoke North for the free tuition Pathways announcement and for, as well, presenting yourself in this chamber for questions and scrutiny and not engaging in Doug-and-cover.

Speaker, with a strong economy in Ontario, the lowest unemployment rate in two decades and a construction boom in Ontario proceeding—of course, with that growth comes population growth. A community like Milton is one of the fastest-growing communities in Canada. Of course, it is a powerhouse of economic growth now and certainly in the future.

We have a responsibility to the young people in Milton. I would invite the minister to please explain to us how we will encourage access to training and education.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: The member is absolutely right: We live in a beautiful province, and the fastest-growing community in Canada is Milton. It is an up-and-coming powerhouse. I want to say thank you to the member from Etobicoke North for this question.

This is part of our government's commitment to the people of Milton. We promised to build a university campus in that community. We asked our universities and colleges in Ontario to partner and to really shape a vision. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand in this House today to say that we have delivered on that commitment.

Yesterday, in front of a packed room, the member from Halton, Indira Naidoo-Harris, and I announced that a thorough review of proposals has allowed us to arrive at a decision. Wilfrid Laurier University and Conestoga College will partner to develop a campus in Milton with the help of our investments. That is such great news for the people of Milton and Halton region. We know this community is nested in the Niagara Escarpment and right in the greenbelt.

I want to thank the member from Halton, for the Premier, for her championship and her leadership on this important—

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

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I know, of course, this is welcome news, not only for the residents of Halton itself but for the entire region.

Local investments such as these are critical because we know that population growth over the next 10 years is expected to be concentrated in and around the city of Toronto, including York, Peel and Halton regions. Having local access to high-quality post-secondary education and training at this new site will improve access to local talent in Canada's fastest-growing community.

Speaker, my question is this: Would the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development please tell us more about the region of Halton and the important investments that we're making for its development?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to say thank you to the dynamic and hard-working member from Etobicoke North. I know he understands that when we talk about Milton being located in Ontario's Innovation Super-Corridor, it's Canada's innovation region. We want people to learn, to be trained and to stay right here in this region. And with our programs like free tuition and the new OSAP, we're making university and college more accessible for families in Milton who believe they can't afford tuition.

Our focus is to create a talent pipeline for science, technology, engineering, arts and math. Our focus is to make sure that we are enhancing the already talented and innovative region in Halton, so along with the member from Halton, our government announced an investment of \$90 million to support this opportunity for the people of Halton.

Tens of thousands of smart companies are already doing business in this region. By building this campus, we will support—

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

New question.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Minister of Energy. When the Hydro One board changed the compensation package to pay the Hydro One CEO over \$10 million in severance, did the Premier know about this secret deal, and why did she support this exorbitant severance package?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Again, I understand executive salaries are high compared to the vast majority of Ontario salaries, Mr. Speaker. I know they're quoting a Globe and Mail article today. Let's see what else was in the Globe and Mail article that they were talking about.

That article says that the government cut hydro bills by 25%. Similar reductions were made for small businesses and farms—500,000 small businesses and farms. In rural areas, a number of fees were cancelled and bills were lowered even further. We're talking somewhere between 35% and 50% reductions on average. It's thanks to our plan, Mr. Speaker, that Ontario families and small businesses are now paying less on average here than in many other similar jurisdictions.

All of that being said, I understand that what they have is no plan when it comes to reducing rates. Even talking about the CEO's salary, eliminating it wouldn't take pennies off the bill. We brought forward a plan that took off a lot more than that; it took off 25%.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Our plan completely is surrounding respect for the taxpayers, something you seem to have forgotten how to do.

The minister continues to suggest the government has majority control of Hydro One. If that's the case, then he needs to explain why he allowed changes that will give the CEO a \$10-million severance package. Did the minister ask the board to roll back this change? If not, why not?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that she says they have a plan. They have no plan. They are not even bringing forward a platform.

It was this government that actually brought forward a plan to reduce rates by 25%. We actually then enhanced that even further and brought forward changes to the RRRP, making sure we could reduce rates for individuals who live in rural or northern parts of our province anywhere between 35% and 50%.

We made sure that our plan looked at everyone in this province and brought all families and 500,000 small businesses and farms that 25% reduction. We also enhanced the Ontario Electricity Support Program, and we made sure that First Nations were part of this plan, making sure that they actually had their delivery charge removed, saving them about \$80 a month on their bill on average as well.

Our plan worked for the people of Ontario. They voted against it.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Acting Premier. Eleanor Varga lives in London West and is 73 years old. She has been waiting two years for hip surgery and has developed fractured vertebrae as a result. Her hip is now bone on bone, and because she can't take pain medication she lives with excruciating pain. She says, "I used to be a vibrant, energetic person. I am now a broken, pain-ridden senior citizen, all because the government only allows so much funding for hips."

1110

Will this Liberal government remove the arbitrary caps on surgical procedures so that Londoners like Eleanor Varga can get the surgeries they need?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Certainly when we hear stories, as we just have, about individuals such as the member's constituent, we feel very badly. We obviously would not want anything like this to happen to one of our loved ones.

First of all, I'd like to ask the member whether her constituency office has approached my ministry with some further details so that we can look into this case. Obviously, this sounds like a case that should be dealt with very expeditiously.

On a broader policy note, Mr. Speaker, we certainly have now heard from the NDP as to their platform, and it seems as though they agree with us, with our budget. Of course, in our 2018 budget, we are increasing our funding for some of the vital procedures such as hip replacements.

I look forward to hearing the specifics of this case.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Again to the Acting Premier: Beverley Garlough also lives in London West. She is 65 years old and was first referred to an orthopaedic surgeon in 2016. After waiting almost a year for an appointment, double the provincial target, she learned that she will have to wait another year and a half, at least, to get the surgery. That is three times the provincial wait-time target.

Speaker, Beverley now has to walk with a cane. She can no longer work or carry out her usual activities, like spending time with her grandchildren. She wrote to me to ask, "How did health care in Ontario become so broken?"

Will the Acting Premier admit that it is Liberal funding cuts that have broken Ontario's health care system?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: First of all, I want to make sure that everyone understands that there's absolutely no arbitrary cap on a particular type of surgery. I would like to bring that to the member opposite's attention.

Certainly across this province we have reduced wait times for hip and knee replacements by some 25%. We're investing some \$11 million more to provide over 1,300 more hip and knee replacement surgeries specifically in the coming year. This is in addition, of course, to so many other initiatives that we have in this budget. I would hope that the member opposite will be encouraging her colleagues on that side of the House, hearing what we've said about our budget this year, to in fact vote with us for this very progressive set of priorities that we've established, which they seem to agree with.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the Minister of Housing. Housing affordability touches the lives of so many Ontarians. I know that many of my constituents in Beaches–East York feel the pressures of buying a home or affording their rent.

With the introduction of the Fair Housing Plan in April 2017, we brought greater stability to the rental market. In particular, many of my constituents, I know, were glad to see that rent controls were now being applied to their homes. Rent control has helped protect 237,000 people in Ontario, who can now rest easy knowing they can't be forced out of their homes because the rent has suddenly been doubled.

Earlier this month, Speaker, the minister announced the details of another housing policy that I and many of the members on this side of the House had been advocating for, and that is inclusionary zoning. Will the minister share the details of this new affordable housing tool with the members of this House?

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: I want to thank the member for Beaches–East York for his advocacy on this issue. I was happy to announce last week that inclusionary zoning is now the law in Ontario. Municipalities across this province now have access to this tool that will help them design and formulate their own plan on how to deliver affordable housing in partnership with the private sector.

Municipalities will be able to decide how many units would be provided in certain developments, the period of affordability, the level of affordability and what kind of financial contribution they would make towards that, and they would be able to devise the housing solution for their community that fits their needs.

Municipalities across the province, housing advocates and AMO have all welcomed this new tool that we've brought forward. It's another commitment made and commitment delivered.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I certainly want to thank the minister for clarifying this policy for us and being able to make that announcement. It's a very important tool that I know will be very, very useful in Beaches–East York, as we're building new rental and condominium properties all across the neighbourhood.

I want to thank the minister particularly because of the service he had on municipal council with Doug Ford, the leader of the PCs, where we know that his housing policy consisted of handing out \$20 bills to residents in the Toronto Community Housing Corp.

We know that creating affordable housing that is accessible to a young family buying their first home or to a minimum wage worker is absolutely vital to supporting our vision of a fairer Ontario. Housing affordability is a critical part of Ontario's plan to support care, create opportunity and make life more affordable today and tomorrow.

On behalf of my constituents, I'd like to thank the minister and this government for putting in place progressive policies in housing that help us all build productive and fulfilling lives for the children, for their parents, for our communities.

Would the minister, then, please tell us more about the public's reaction to last week's announcement?

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: The reaction has been overwhelmingly supportive. We worked with our stake-

holders. We worked with municipalities. We listened, and we've created an inclusionary zoning tool that reflects what municipalities asked for, which is flexibility: the ability for them to craft their own local bylaws and policies that will help deliver thousands of new affordable units every year.

But Mr. Speaker, there's more to affordable housing than just inclusionary zoning. We're investing over \$540 million in social housing retrofits. Doug Ford wants to cut the cap-and-invest program that would fund that. Doug Ford has said he's not in support of rent control, which we've expanded to all Ontario tenants. When Doug Ford and I sat on the board of Build Toronto, the city of Toronto's real estate agency, he was not supportive of using city land for affordable housing, and he doesn't even support supportive housing for autistic kids.

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

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: There is no affordable housing—

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

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Beaches–East York is warned, and the member from Nepean–Carleton is warned.

New question.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is to the Minister of Energy. The Hydro One board secretly agreed to pay the Hydro One CEO over \$10 million in severance, should he be fired. I'll just remind everyone that this is the gentleman who's already making over \$6 million a year, and now, should he be fired, he gets an additional \$10 million. This is a slap in the face to the people of Ontario. It's insulting and shows a complete lack of respect for the taxpayer who has to pay these millions of dollars.

I'll ask the minister, since we didn't get an answer from the Premier: When did the Premier know, and did the Premier sign off on this \$10-million secret deal?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Again, I'm always pleased to rise in this House and speak, Mr. Speaker. Executive salaries, I recognize, are high compared to the vast majority of Ontario salaries. We remain committed to Hydro One's regulation, accountability and transparency through our government's involvement as a major shareholder. That being said, Hydro One is a publicly traded company, not a government entity. Decisions made regarding executive compensation are made by the board of Hydro One.

I know they're quoting the Globe and Mail article, and they talk about that article often, but let's reiterate what that article also talked about, which is our plan: A 25% reduction off bills for people right across this province. That is something that we implemented and something they voted against.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the minister: The Premier and the minister continue to suggest that the government has majority control of Hydro One. If that is the case, and I believe it is, then the minister needs to explain why he allowed the changes that give the CEO a \$10-million severance package. Did the minister at any time ask the board to roll back this change? If not, why not?

1120

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Again, our government understands that affordability is critical for families and businesses. That's why we launched Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan. Rolling back rates, Mr. Speaker—we rolled back rates by 25% on average for all residential consumers and as many as a half-million small businesses and farms.

Our plan is working. Just last week, a report by the Environmental Commissioner reconfirmed that Ontario's families and small businesses pay less on average here than in many other North American jurisdictions. Families in cities like New York, Boston and San Francisco pay more than double the average of Ontario's bills. Consumers in Charlottetown, Regina, Halifax and Moncton are paying more than the Ontario average.

By bringing down prices for customers, we're continuing to increase fairness and create more opportunity for families in Ontario. We'll continue to do that on this side of the House.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Acting Premier. Dawn Bremner is a constituent of mine. She has worked hard her entire life, first in the machining department at Garrison Tool and Die and later at Edshaw. After decades of grinding physical work, she's now living with a disability and chronic pain. She relies on ODSP.

She needs skin graft gum surgery. Her dentist says she needs it, but ODSP won't cover it. After working her entire life, why is Dawn being left without the health care that she needs when she needs it?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I would like to thank the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, as a government, we've done much to look at ways to support different people from around the province. Anyone who is on ODSP—we know that within our budget, when it comes to any type of income security, we've made some changes, some massive changes. In fact, these are the biggest changes in any type of income security in recent times.

In regard to this specific case, when we're talking about health care, I would love to get the information from the member opposite and see how we can work together to find a solution.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Dawn is so disappointed that this government is, in her own words, "playing God" with her health. She needs health care. She needs dental surgery.

She can't get it, and she's not alone. Millions of people in Ontario cannot get the health care or the dental care that they need. Today, one in three working people in our province is working without health benefits and two out of three seniors have no retiree health benefits. After 15 years in office, why has this Liberal government left people like Dawn and so many others without the care that they need and the care that they deserve?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Minister of Health.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Of course, this is precisely why our government has continued to make investments in health care over the time that we've been in office. Every single year, the health budget has increased.

In this year's budget, the 2018 budget, we're making a deliberate choice to invest even more in the care of the people of Ontario by investing more in hospitals, in home care, in mental health and long-term care, and of course even in dental care and prescription medication. We have increased our budget by some 5% in this coming year to reduce wait times and to increase access across the entire health care system. We believe that everyone in Ontario should receive the care that they need, when and where they need it, and this is precisely why we are proposing to make these investments. I hope the members opposite will support our budget.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the Minister of Seniors Affairs. As I'm sure you know, seniors make up the fastest-growing segment of Ontario's population. Today there are more than two million seniors in our province, and that number is expected to double in the next 25 years.

Let's face it: Seniors have spent a lifetime contributing to their communities and the economy; in turn, we need a government willing to make impactful investments in care that will allow seniors at all stages of life to stay independent as they age, providing the supports they need to remain healthy, active, engaged and socially connected with their communities.

This government knows that seniors want to remain in their homes for as long as they can. Just last November, your ministry announced \$155 million in investments to support Aging with Confidence: Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors. Would the Minister of Seniors Affairs please explain to this House about this crucial investment in care that will benefit Ontario seniors?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I want to begin by thanking the member from Kingston and the Islands for this important question and her continued advocacy for seniors.

As the Premier alluded to earlier this morning, I, along with the Premier, the Minister of Finance and MPP Dong, announced that the first 5,000 long-term-care licences have been allocated so that construction of this first phase can continue.

We also know that Ontario seniors have told us over and over again, "We want to live in our own homes as long as we can," or, as the member from Barrie so

memorably put it, no one was going to take her out of her house except the funeral home. That's why we continue to invest to make sure that our seniors can continue to stay at home. That's why in this budget we announced a very innovative and important initiative that we call the Seniors' Healthy Home Program. I look forward to speaking about that more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you, Minister, for reiterating to this House the priority that this government places on providing care for our seniors. I'm pleased to know that this government has a vision and a long-term plan that ensures that seniors have the necessary care and supports for whatever their needs may be.

While our government recognizes the importance of making significant investments in care, it has become clear that not everyone in this House shares this view. However, this government knows that, now more than ever, we need to make these critical investments in care to ensure that seniors are supported.

I was also pleased to have Oasis of my riding of Kingston and the Islands, which is an alternative, innovative seniors' residence recognized by our Premier just yesterday.

Can the Minister of Seniors Affairs please inform this House how the Seniors' Healthy Home Program will help seniors in my riding of Kingston and the Islands and across the province stay independent in their homes?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'd be delighted to tell the member from Kingston and the Islands and this House how the healthy home program is going to help our seniors. What this program is going to do is provide up to \$750 annually to seniors 75 or older for every eligible household. With that extra \$750 a year, our \$1-billion investment will provide seniors across this province with financial assistance to help offset the cost of maintaining a home with services like snow removal, housecleaning or cutting the lawn.

It's really disappointing that the opposite side of the House has no plan. The Doug Ford Conservatives are still without a plan for how they would care for our rapidly aging population. The day before, I was disappointed to see, when the NDP unveiled their platform, that they would cut our \$1-billion investment that would help seniors stay—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry is warned.

You may finish. Wrap up, please.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: As I was saying, the day before yesterday, I was disappointed, when the NDP unveiled their platform, that they would cut our \$1-billion investment that would help seniors stay independent in their homes. Shame. It is clear—

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

New question.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Minister of Energy. The Hydro One board of directors agreed to pay

the Hydro One CEO over \$10 million in severance should he be fired. When did the Premier know about this—

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: You would pay \$12 million when you fire him.

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

Finish, please.

Ms. Laurie Scott: When did the Premier know about this, and did the Premier sign off on this outrageous secret deal?

1130

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The only thing that's secret in this province is what they are going to cut. What are they going to cut? Is it the up to \$750 a year to help seniors stay in their home? Is that what they're going to cut? That's what we think they are going to cut. What about free child care for individuals with children from the ages of two and a half to four? They're going to cut that.

The only thing that's secret is their platform, because no one sees it. No one talks about it. All they do is talk about firing and cutting.

On this side of the House, we talk about care and opportunity. We are going to continue to care for the people of this province, invest in our province and make sure there are opportunities for everyone in this province. That's why we made sure that even tuition for 225,000 people will be free this year, thanks to this government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Again to the Minister of Energy: If the CEO and the board at Hydro One had any respect for their customers, the people of Ontario, if they cared, they would resign. Will the Premier and the minister join us in calling for this outrageous decision to be reversed?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, talking about reversing, it's that party that reverses course more often than a spinning turtle. They sit there and one day will say that they are actually going to keep the fair hydro plan, and they sneak it into the People's Guarantee. The next thing you know, Mr. Speaker, the People's Guarantee has gone out the window; the carbon tax has gone out the window. Apparently, climate change just stopped, according to the Conservatives.

But on this side of the House, we're going to continue to invest in the people of Ontario. We're going to continue to make sure that we bring forward minimum wage—something that they will cut. We know, on this side of the House, that governments are here to make sure that we can continue to invest and help the people of Ontario. That's what we did through our fair hydro plan, which they voted against. That's why we're bringing forward more day care, more medicines for everyone—

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

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre du Logement. There are presently 1,577 households in greater Sudbury waiting for rent-gear-to-

income one-bedroom apartments. One third of those people on the wait-list are seniors. They are told that they will have to wait, on average, five years before they can move out of their house that they cannot manage anymore and move into an apartment where they could keep living in the community.

My question is, why is this government doing nothing to help elderly, vulnerable Ontarians in need of housing?

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: I want to thank the member for the question. Our government takes the issue of affordable housing and creating additional affordable housing very seriously. We introduced the Fair Housing Plan to actually help with the creation of additional affordable housing. Through that plan, we're offering \$125 million in development credits to municipalities to be able to use them with the private sector to waive development charges to encourage the creation of more rental and affordable rental housing.

We're releasing provincial lands for the creation of affordable housing.

In communities across the province, including across the north, we are working with those municipalities and those service providers by offering them funding to build more affordable housing, and housing especially with supports for vulnerable communities.

We have helped with the creation of over 22,000 affordable rental units over the last number of years through programs like investments in affordable housing and our homelessness prevention strategy. Of course, now with the national housing strategy coming forward, we'll be able to do even more. I will elaborate more on that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

M^{me} France G  linas: By downloading responsibility for social housing on to municipalities, the last Conservative government laid the foundation for today's social housing crisis. Shamefully, this Liberal government has continued with the same policies for the last 15 years. In fact, the current budget does not have a single new penny for social housing for this year. The government has more or less kicked the can down toward the next election.

Can the minister please tell me why seniors in my riding need to wait five long years for an affordable one-bedroom apartment?

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: Mr. Speaker, we're working with housing service providers across the province, including in Sudbury. I'm giving them tools and funds for them to be able to create more housing. We're investing \$543 million for the retrofit of social housing units across the province, which will help free up units—which perhaps were uninhabitable—to be able to be offered to individuals. We're supporting investments in affordable housing jointly with the federal government. That's creating thousands of units.

In fact, we have just agreed in principle to the framework of the national housing strategy, and we're finalizing our bilateral agreement with Ottawa on the national housing strategy, which will allow billions of dollars of new housing money to flow into Ontario to help create

new housing units for seniors and other vulnerable people throughout the province.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The clock changed. We're out of time. Even though the change took place, I was keeping track.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just before we move to our vote, I'd like to introduce a family that has a rather interesting history. The Wendling family is sitting in the members' gallery. Mrs. Wendling is here with her five daughters; one of them is a page here. Four out of five daughters were pages, and they sit around the kitchen table and talk about how great the Speaker is. I just thought I'd let you know that.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The fifth daughter didn't participate, not because she didn't want to, but because they were living in Korea at the time. She couldn't get back in time in order to be a page.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 6 relating to the allocation of time on Bill 8, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act and the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000.

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

The division bells rang from 1137 to 1142.

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

Mr. James J. Bradley: Time to vote.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The whip is doing his job.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): How dare they?

All members, please take your seats.

Interjection.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Take your time, by all means.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): He's just checking things out. He's just making sure everything's right.

On April 18, 2018, Ms. MacCharles moved government notice of motion number 6 relating to the allocation of time on Bill 8, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act and the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000.

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

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan

Dong, Han
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John

Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Naidoo-Harris, Indira

Ballard, Chris
 Berardinetti, Lorenzo
 Bradley, James J.
 Chan, Michael
 Chiarelli, Bob
 Colle, Mike
 Coteau, Michael
 Crack, Grant
 Damerla, Dipika
 Del Duca, Steven
 Delaney, Bob
 Des Rosiers, Nathalie
 Dhillon, Vic

Hoggarth, Ann
 Hunter, Mitzie
 Jaczek, Helena
 Kiwala, Sophie
 Lalonde, Marie-France
 Leal, Jeff
 MacCharles, Tracy
 Malhi, Harinder
 Mangat, Amrit
 Martins, Cristina
 Matthews, Deborah
 McGarry, Kathryn
 McMahan, Eleanor

Naqvi, Yasir
 Potts, Arthur
 Qaadri, Shafiq
 Rinaldi, Lou
 Sandals, Liz
 Sousa, Charles
 Takhar, Harinder S.
 Thibeault, Glenn
 Vernile, Daiene
 Wong, Soo
 Wynne, Kathleen O.
 Zimmer, David

FLAG-RAISING CEREMONY

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: We are going to raise the flag at noon outside to celebrate Israeli Independence Day and invite everybody out to join us.

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

The House recessed from 1147 to 1300.

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
 Arnott, Ted
 Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
 Coe, Lorne
 Forster, Cindy
 French, Jennifer K.
 Gates, Wayne
 Gélinas, France

Gretzky, Lisa
 Hatfield, Percy
 Jones, Sylvia
 Martow, Gila
 McDonell, Jim
 Miller, Norm
 Munro, Julia
 Natyshak, Taras

Nicholls, Rick
 Oosterhoff, Sam
 Sattler, Peggy
 Scott, Laurie
 Taylor, Monique
 Wilson, Jim
 Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The eyes are 47; the nays are 23.

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

Motion agreed to.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The President of the Treasury Board on a point of order.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: I wanted to welcome to Queen's Park today a wonderful young man from my community, Mike Quackenbush. He's here at Queen's Park today. Thank you, Mike, for being here, and welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the CEO of Hydro One's \$10-million severance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe–Grey—

Interjections.

Miss Monique Taylor: At least listen to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): How about if you listen to me?

The member from Simcoe–Grey is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from London North Centre.

Ms. Deborah Matthews: I know everyone is going to want to join me today in wishing my seatmate, Liz Sandals, a very happy birthday.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Harinder Malhi: I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome some guests here who are visiting us all the way from India. We have MP Mr. Udit Raj, from Delhi, a member of Parliament in India; adviser to the MP Amarjit Singh Bakshi; parliamentary assistant to the MP Anmol Agarawal; and journalist Kumar Rakesh. Thank you so much for joining us today in our Legislature.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a couple of opportunities I want to take your time with today. First is to introduce my wonderful eldest daughter, Robin Elizabeth Buxton Potts, who is joining us here. She works at Evergreen Brick Works. It's great to have you here.

And my OLIP intern, Mackenzie Taylor: She has been doing great work in my office. It's a pleasure to have you here.

Speaker, if I may seek your indulgence, I would like to seek unanimous consent to wear a sports jersey during my member's statement.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Beaches–East York is seeking unanimous consent to wear his jersey during his member's statement. Do we agree? Agreed.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Mr. Lorne Coe: In November 2017, the Durham Community Legal Clinic and Durham College established a five-year pilot project to create an access to justice hub in the region of Durham. Through this new partnership, the clinic will expand to provide advice on provincial offences and small claims matters. Further, the hub will create a free income tax clinic and work with the region of Durham to develop learning modules for the public service providers on how to access benefits to low-income residents.

The access to justice hub will provide this assistance by combining the knowledge, resources and supervision of the Durham Community Legal Clinic with paralegal students from Durham College. Speaker, this type of program for paralegal students has never been offered in

Ontario, and is an innovative approach to training paralegals.

I want to recognize the great work of both the Durham Community Legal Clinic and Durham College for their partnership, which will be a great resource for many residents in the region of Durham.

CARDIAC FITNESS INSTITUTE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: On Friday, April 27, the Cardiac Fitness Institute at London Health Sciences Centre will close its doors after 30 years of helping Londoners to recover from cardiac events and, more importantly, to maintain their health.

Many of the CFI's 2,000 patients have credited Dr. Larry Patrick, the cardiologist who founded the program, with literally keeping them alive. Dr. Patrick understands the value of long-term cardiac maintenance following acute rehab care, whether that means participating in regular exercise programs or just coming in for annual checkups, monitoring and stress tests.

The closure of the CFI has created huge anxiety for these 2,000 patients. Those who attended weekly CFI exercise classes will be referred to the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging at Western, where CFI equipment will be moved. But the vast majority of the CFI patients—approximately 1,700—only saw Dr. Patrick once or twice a year. Many are still waiting to be connected to another cardiologist. They feel abandoned and are worried about their ongoing care.

This government claims to be committed to evidence-based decision-making. The CFI has 30 years of data, evidence that could be used to measure the impact of long-term cardiac rehab. I am once again calling on the Liberals to step in and stop the closure of the CFI, at least until the data has been analyzed. It may be that the \$300,000 required for the CFI is the best investment government can make to keep cardiac patients alive. Without the research, we will—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Further members' statements?

TORONTO SPORTS TEAMS

Mr. Arthur Potts: Toronto sports teams are on a roll. We are the reigning Grey Cup champions, we are the reigning MLS champions, and the Jays are now off to a fantastic start, with a 12-5 record.

Now, for the second time in 16 years, both the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Toronto Raptors have made the playoffs in the same season.

Toronto is buzzing as we cheer on DeRozan and Lowry of the Toronto Raptors, and Matthews and the rest of the young guns from the Leafs. Not only has this brought tremendous energy and excitement to our great city, but their success has brought great economic benefits as well.

When it comes to sports fans, we know a few things. They like to watch the game live, they like to drink while they watch the game, and they like to eat while they

watch the game. With both the Toronto Raptors and the Maple Leafs in the playoffs, tourism is reaping the benefits.

Tonight, as the Toronto Maple Leafs take on the Boston Bruins, thousands—thousands—of sports fans will be congregating at local bars and down at Maple Leaf Square to cheer on the home team. I know which bar I will be watching the game in tonight.

During last year's playoff run, spending at bars near the Air Canada Centre surged 64%, and spending at downtown bars increased 54%. This revenue has the potential to make a restaurant's entire year. Speaker, I know this.

On Tuesday, when the Toronto Raptors played the Washington Wizards, it was impossible to find a hotel room. Unfortunately, there's another city in Ontario that's not reaping all these benefits, but let's hope next year they'll be able to join us in the playoff excitement for at least a round or two.

So, tonight: Go, Leafs, go. Let's go, Raptors.

MILTON EDUCATION VILLAGE

Mr. Ted Arnott: Early Wednesday morning, I was pleased to be able to get back to Halton region to congratulate and thank officials from Wilfrid Laurier University and Conestoga College upon their plans to build a new, innovative academic centre of excellence in the town of Milton.

Laurier is considered to be one of Canada's top comprehensive universities and is considered to be the top university in the country in terms of student satisfaction. Conestoga's graduate employment and graduate satisfaction rates are consistently amongst the highest in Ontario. Their partnership will become a beacon. This is nothing less than the future of post-secondary education in Ontario.

When completed, the new Milton Education Village will be a 400-acre purpose-built, fully integrated neighbourhood located near the 401 and adjacent to the Niagara Escarpment, with a focus on the STEAM disciplines, meaning science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics. The new post-secondary campus is planned to eventually serve 2,000 students in the coming years.

For my constituents in Wellington-Halton Hills, it represents a new post-secondary learning option, close to home, bringing together theory and practice and rethinking the way we train people, as was said at the event. This project has been in the works for many years—and I know you've supported it, Mr. Speaker—and successive councils and staff, the town of Milton, as well as the region of Halton and the other community partners all deserve enormous credit for their commitment and vision.

As a Laurier alumnus, as Waterloo region MPP from 1999 to 2007, working with Conestoga College and, for the past decade, a Halton MPP, I was glad to add my own voice in support of this proposal and express that support on the floor of the House. We all look forward with anticipation to its completion as, together, we embrace the promise of Ontario's future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I won't say anything about the prop you held in your hand, a Laurier magazine, because I'm an alumni too. So I thought maybe I'd just let that one slip.

HYDRO RATES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Foleyet is an unincorporated community in the northwest corner of my riding. The town population is a little bit over 100. It was created during the construction of the CNR in 1912. They celebrated their 100th anniversary, and they are home to a family of albino moose: They're white; they're beautiful. It sits off Highway 101, midpoint between Timmins and Chapleau. It is over 100 kilometres in either direction to get to the closest pharmacy, funeral home, hospital, dentist, optometrist, high school, long-term-care home, or 400 kilometres to drive to Sudbury, as none of those services exist in their community. It is a typical northern rural and remote community.

The government talks a good game about their fair hydro plan for northern rural communities. It's supposed to bring their bills down by 50%. Well, it's not true, Speaker. William and Shirley Vezina shared their hydro bills with me. They paid \$64 for electricity and \$51 in delivery charges. The Métis association just next door paid \$55 for electricity and \$78 for delivery.

The now-privatized Hydro One decided to reclassify Foleyet as high density. Foleyet embodies northern rural and remote, but not to Hydro One. This is wrong. The people of Foleyet are being gouged. I think it's a parting insult to my constituents from the Liberal Party. The NDP intends to change this, Mr. Speaker, and change it for the better.

1310

ARTS AND CULTURAL SUPPORT

Mr. Han Dong: Good afternoon.

Vibrant communities such as mine in Trinity–Spadina are made stronger when affordable spaces are available for artists and cultural organizations. That is why I'm proud of this year's budget because it shares the city of Toronto's interest in supporting our most cherished cultural spaces, like 401 Richmond, Artscape and many others.

Our budget states the following: "The province will provide the city of Toronto with the authority to design and administer a new program to provide property tax reductions of up to 50% to qualifying facilities that offer affordable spaces for the arts and culture sector. The city will have full discretion to determine which specific cultural facilities will be eligible..."

Our city councillors voted on this and it has passed and this will happen.

We need to keep our arts and culture sector strong and well supported. That is what I've heard from residents and virtually all stakeholders involved in the arts. Artists and community members alike in my riding asked us save 401 Richmond, and our 2018 budget is doing exactly that.

FARMERS

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I rise today to bring recognition to the farmers who put food on the tables of Ontario families. The life of a farmer is not an easy one. There are early mornings, late evenings, and all around long days spent in hard work: planting, reaping, caring for livestock, bringing animals in from the field. Even with modern technological advancements and crop insurance, the weather can be unpredictable, as we've seen this year, as can your yield.

In an age of uncertainty surrounding international free trade agreements and changing weather patterns that threaten traditional ways of farming, small-town farming communities in Ontario often struggle to make ends meet.

As the son of a pork and poultry farmer myself, born and raised on a 100-acre farm in the heart of Niagara, I understand these struggles.

I stand today on behalf of the agricultural community across Niagara West–Glanbrook and Ontario, and farmers who are frustrated that after 15 years of Liberal waste, scandal and mismanagement in the province of Ontario, they pay more, get less and are neglected by a government that is too busy taking care of its insider friends and fat-cat elites to pay any attention to the plight of hard-working farmers and entrepreneurs.

I'm proud to be part of a PC Party that recognizes and celebrates the importance of rural Ontario and our farming communities. I wish to recognize all the hard-working farmers in my riding of Niagara West–Glanbrook and thank them for their contributions. Farmers truly do feed cities, Mr. Speaker. I'm looking forward to change that works for the people, and that is coming soon.

HORIZONS FOR YOUTH

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I rise today to share that for the last two weeks my constituency office has hosted artwork from local artist Isabel Mazzotta. Isabel is the art instructor for the creative arts day program at Horizons for Youth, a fantastic organization and youth shelter in my riding of Davenport.

This display is also very special because it showcases the work of several emerging artists at the Horizons for Youth centre. Horizons for Youth believes in using a strength-based, holistic approach, informed by best practices, which allows the youth to be active members in the creation of content and concepts covered in the arts programming.

At Horizons, youth continuously look forward to participating in the creative arts program as the program provides them the opportunity to connect with their peers, fine-tune their artistic skills and ultimately provides them a temporary escape from the current reality of living in the shelter system.

One individual whom I had the distinct pleasure of meeting on the exhibit's opening night was a young entrepreneur named Joel Zola. A recent CBC article

highlighted the fact that in 2014, Joel founded Street Voices, a magazine giving a platform to marginalized voices, and he did this all while he was homeless. Joel's success is truly inspirational and a shining example of the positive impact that programs like Horizons for Youth have on the lives of young people in my community and across the city every day.

This display will be in my office until the end of April, and I encourage everyone to stop by for a visit to see the amazing work of these amazing youth.

RIDING OF OXFORD

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to report the results of a survey from my recent newsletter. I want to thank everyone who participated and shared their thoughts.

My constituents are concerned about this government's wasteful spending: 92% told me they believe there is government waste that could be better spent on other services, including health care services for seniors. The majority of respondents told me that their health care hasn't improved in the last 10 years, and that is unacceptable. They also struggled with hydro increases that forced them to choose between paying their hydro bills and other necessities. Life for people in Ontario is more and more unaffordable, while hydro executives are getting huge raises.

Another area of concern that was often raised is the proposed landfill site and the risk to our drinking water. In my survey, 94% said that they believe municipalities should have a say in the location of landfills. They believe local governments should have a voice on issues that directly affect their communities. I agree. That's why I introduced Bill 16, the Respecting Municipal Authority Over Landfilling Sites Act. The people of Oxford support their communities, not only by protecting their water but by supporting small businesses, which is why 96% reported that they shop local. It's great to see so many people taking the time to support our local businesses.

Again, I thank all of my constituents who took the time to respond to my survey so I can continue to share their concerns with this Legislature.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE COMITÉ CONSULTATIF D'AMÉLIORATION DES RÉSEAUX DE TRANSPORT

Mrs. Martow moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 57, An Act to require the establishment of a Transportation Systems Improvement Advisory Committee / *Projet de loi 57, Loi exigeant la constitution d'un comité consultatif d'amélioration des réseaux de transport.*

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: The Transportation Systems Improvement Advisory Committee Act, 2018, requires the Minister of Transportation, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police to establish an advisory committee to do the following:

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

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

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

BRUNT AND KENDALL ACT (ENSURING SAFE FIREFIGHTER AND TRAINEE RESCUE TRAINING), 2018

LOI BRUNT ET KENDALL DE 2018 (FORMATION SÉCURITAIRE DES POMPIERS ET DES ÉLÈVES POMPIERS EN SAUVETAGE)

Ms. French moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 58, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 and the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 in relation to rescue and emergency services training for firefighters and firefighter trainees / *Projet de loi 58, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie et la Loi de 2005 sur les collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel en ce qui concerne la formation des pompiers et des élèves pompiers en services de sauvetage et d'urgence.*

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: The Brunt and Kendall Act (Ensuring Safe Firefighter and Trainee Rescue Training), 2018, makes amendments to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, and to the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005, to implement measures to provide for the safe training of firefighters and firefighter trainees in rescue and emergency services.

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PETITIONS

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition from Spots Today for Doctors Tomorrow, and it's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas 25 residency spots were cut in Ontario in 2015;

"Whereas 68 medical graduates went unmatched in 2017, 35 of them from Ontario;

"Whereas the AFMC predicts that 141 graduates will go unmatched in 2021, adding to the backlog;

"Whereas an estimated \$200,000 of provincial taxpayer dollars are spent to train each graduate;

"Whereas the ratio of medical students to residency positions had declined to 1 to 1.026 in 2017 from 1 to 1.1 in 2012;

"Whereas wait times for specialists in Ontario continue to grow while many Ontario citizens are still without access to primary care providers;

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

"(1) Stop any further cuts to residency positions until a long-term solution is well under way;

"(2) Reinstate the 25 residency positions cut in 2015 to bring Ontario back to its previous steady state;

"(3) Create extra Ontario-only residency spots that can be used when there is an unexpected excess of unmatched Ontario grads to guarantee a spot for every graduate every year;

"(4) Pass Bill 18 as part of the solution to develop actionable long-term recommendations; and

"(5) Improve communications between the MAESD and the MOHLTC so that medical school admissions correspond with residency spots and Ontario's health needs."

Of course, I affix my signature and give it to page Abinaya to bring to the desk.

LANDFILL

Mr. Percy Hatfield: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas municipal governments in Ontario do not have the right to approve landfill projects in their communities, but have authority for making decisions on all other types of development; and

"Whereas this outdated policy allows private landfill operators to consult with local residents and municipal councils but essentially ignore them; and

"Whereas proposed Ontario legislation ... will grant municipalities additional authority and autonomy to make decisions for their communities; and

"Whereas municipalities already have exclusive rights for approving casinos and nuclear waste facilities within

their communities and, further, that the province has recognized the value of municipal approval for the siting of power generation facilities; and

"Whereas the recent report from Ontario's Environmental Commissioner has found that Ontario has a garbage problem, particularly from waste generated within the city of Toronto. Municipalities across Ontario are quietly being identified and targeted as potential landfill sites for future Toronto garbage by private landfill operators; and

"Whereas other communities should not be forced to take Toronto waste, as landfills can contaminate local watersheds, air quality, dramatically increase heavy truck traffic on community roads, and reduce the quality of life for local residents; and

"Whereas municipalities should have the exclusive right to approve or reject these projects, and assess whether the potential economic benefits are of sufficient value to offset any negative impacts and environmental concerns, in addition to and separate from successful completion of Ontario's environmental assessment process;

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

"Pass legislation, or other appropriate legal instrument, that formally grants municipalities (both single- and two-tier) the authority to approve landfill projects in or adjacent to their communities, prior to June 2018."

We're running out of time, Speaker; it's nice to see you in the Chair. I fully agree with this petition. I'm going to sign it and give it to Stephanie to bring to the table.

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: "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 affix my name to it and send it down with page Harsaajan.

TOWN OF PELHAM

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that constituents in my riding asked me to bring forward on their behalf.

“Whereas the residents of the town of Pelham are increasingly concerned about the level of debt and taxation required to finance municipal projects; and

“Whereas the town council of the town of Pelham has undertaken a large capital project requiring substantive borrowing against future development charges; and

“Whereas the town of Pelham did by RFP process engage designers and construction managers by questionable means, and the citizens have requested a full interim forensic audit of the construction contracts; and

“Whereas the town of Pelham has acknowledged the existence of a questionable land-for-municipal-credits scheme that appears to violate the Development Charges Act; and

“Whereas the town of Pelham acknowledges that it has entered future development charge revenue as a current year (2016) accounts receivable without an appropriate front-end agreement, as per the capital charges act; and

“Whereas a town councillor resigned from town council of the town of Pelham, citing the ‘unethical and dishonest’ direction being taken by the town council of the town of Pelham; and

“Whereas the same town councillor has alleged that the town conducted an audit which revealed a significant discrepancy between the financial statements and actual bank balances; and

“Whereas the undersigned residents of the town of Pelham no longer trust the town council of the town of Pelham ... to provide accurate financial information to the residents;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, being ratepayers in the town of Pelham in the region of Niagara, do hereby petition ... the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to direct a provincial-municipal forensic audit of the financial affairs ... of the town of Pelham, as per section 9(1) of the Municipal Affairs Act.”

I give this petition to page Will, who will bring it to the table.

POLITIQUES ÉNERGÉTIQUES

M^{me} France Gélinas: J’aimerais remercier M^{me} Pierrette Mainville, résidente de mon comté, pour la pétition.

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

« Entendu que la seule façon de réparer le système hydro-électrique est de s’attaquer aux causes de base des prix élevés, y compris la privatisation, les marges de profits excessives, la surabondance d’électricité ... ; et

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

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

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

J’appuie cette pétition. Je vais la signer et je demande à Curtis de l’amener aux greffiers.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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“Whereas the Ontario Legislature has twice voted unanimously in favour of the benefits of community water fluoridation, and the Ontario Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Municipal Affairs and Housing urge support for amending the Health Protection and Promotion Act and other applicable legislation to ensure community water fluoridation is mandatory and to

remove provisions allowing Ontario municipalities to cease drinking water fluoridation, or fail to start drinking water fluoridation, from the Ontario Municipal Act;

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

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

I sign my name to this petition and give it to page Maxime.

LANDFILL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my signature as I agree with this petition. Thank you very much for the time to present it.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas quality care for the 78,000 residents of (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families; and

“Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in LTC homes to keep pace with residents’ increasing acuity and the growing number of residents with complex behaviours; and

“Whereas several Ontario coroner’s inquests into LTC homes deaths have recommended an increase in direct hands-on care for residents and staffing levels and the most reputable studies on this topic recommends 4.1 hours of direct care per day;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“Amend the LTC Homes Act (2007) for a legislated minimum care standard of four hours per resident per day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix.”

I agree. I’m going to sign it and give it to Dwight to bring up to the front.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition that was collected at the Strong township municipal office regarding health care in east Parry Sound–Muskoka. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare has been considering the future of the Huntsville District Memorial and South Muskoka Memorial hospitals since 2012; and

“Whereas accessible health care services are of critical importance to all Ontarians, including those living in rural areas; and

“Whereas patients currently travel significant distances to access acute in-patient care, emergency, diagnostic and surgical services available at these hospitals; and

“Whereas the funding for small and medium-sized hospitals has not kept up with increasing costs including hydro rates and collective bargaining agreements made by the province; and

“Whereas the residents of Muskoka and surrounding areas feel that MAHC has not been listening to them; and

“Whereas the board of MAHC has yet to take the single-site proposal from 2015 off its books;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario requests that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care ensures core hospital services are maintained at both Huntsville District Memorial Hospital and South Muskoka Memorial Hospital and ensures all small and medium-sized hospitals receive enough funding to maintain core services.”

I support this petition, have signed it, and give it to Faraaz.

VISITORS

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): The Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development on a point of order.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: On a point of order: I would just like to introduce some constituents who are here visiting the Legislature today from the great riding of Scarborough–Guildwood. We have Orville Irons and Sheila Deliva, as well as, seated here, Anthony Simms, the first black man to play Olympic basketball for Canada. Welcome.

Applause.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Welcome to Queen's Park.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**SUPPORTING WINE JOBS
AND GROWTH IN THE NIAGARA
REGION ACT, 2018**

**LOI DE 2018 VISANT À SOUTENIR
LES EMPLOIS DANS L'INDUSTRIE DU VIN
ET LA CROISSANCE DANS LA RÉGION
DE NIAGARA**

Mr. Gates moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 50, An Act to amend the Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act, 1996 with respect to Ontario wineries / Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur la réglementation des alcools et des jeux et la protection du public en ce qui concerne les établissements vinicoles de l'Ontario.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me to rise today and speak about this piece of legislation, Bill 50, the Supporting Wine Jobs and Growth in the Niagara Region Act. This bill has taken quite some time to put together, and with the assistance of the stakeholders in the industry, we've been able to bring this bill forward in hopes of helping the Ontario wine industry grow and expand.

This bill is quite simple. It would amend the Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act to provide an exception for VQA and 100% Ontario wines for the tax that has been set out in subsection 27(1).

This bill takes aim at the 6.1% basic tax that is currently paid by Ontario wineries on the sales that they make at the retail store. This is a tax that is not paid by imported wines. We believe that creating a tax exception for VQA and 100% Ontario wine gives much-needed margin relief to small and medium-sized wineries all across the province.

While the tax exception will include all winery retail stores in the province, small Ontario wineries make less than 20% of their sales through the LCBO and grocery stores.

It's important that before we get too far on the debate on this bill that we really stress the purpose of this bill

and who it will affect. The goal of this bill is to eliminate the 6.1% basic tax for VQA and 100% Ontario wine that is sold on-site at the winery retail store—not at off-site stores. That's a key difference we should be aware of. This bill will not affect the off-site sales of wine. That includes sales at grocery stores or sales at Wine Rack or the Wine Shop stores. Why are they not included? Because tax on sales at the on-site winery retail stores affects all wineries in the province. All wineries, no matter the size, will benefit from this tax exception. So I really wanted to get that out. It's an important distinction.

Another important distinction that should be made is regarding the language in the bill. We had some concerns brought to our attention that the way the bill is currently worded may leave room for Ontario wine that is not 100% Ontario and not VQA, which would primarily be international Canadian blended wine, or ICB wine. I would like to state that including ICB wine is not the aim of this bill. If an amendment is needed for the sake of clarity, I will ensure that the appropriate amendment is presented at the committee stage if this bill is passed today. The aim of the bill is to grow and support the Ontario wine industry. It's important that I make that clear in case any of my colleagues in this House had some concerns regarding the possible inclusion of ICB wine.

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Madam Speaker, the big question for everyone, then, is, why should we do this? Well, a simple answer is this: The wine industry is a big part of this province. They have a large economic footprint. Unfortunately, they do struggle with margin fairness and profitability because of the current tax structure in the province.

I know that everyone is aware of this, and I have spoken about this many times in the House, but down in Niagara we have arguably some of the best wines in the world. The industry down in Niagara continues to grow and is a vibrant part of our community and an important part of our tourism industry. Actually, I think that's an important piece to point out. Ontario wineries are growing tourism destinations. Right now, Ontario wineries are welcoming over 2.4 million visitors annually. That is generating \$847 million in tourism and tourism employment-related economic impact in the province. I think that the tourism aspect of the wine industry can be overlooked sometimes, but these world-class wines are bringing people in at an increasing rate.

Madam Speaker, just in my riding, all within a short drive of each other, you can visit world-class wineries. Over in the riding for the member for Niagara West, he also has some terrific wineries all over the bench region, Jordan Valley and Vineland.

I could go on with my speech discussing the wonderful wine regions in the province, but even though we are producing some high-quality wines in this province, they struggle with market share compared to other provinces. This is important. Right now, VQA wines represent 7% of the market share, with BC VQA wines representing 17% market share in their province. With information

from the Wine Council of Ontario, the BC VQA wine industry receives 10 times the annual support that Ontario VQA wines receive, in margin support—10 times more. I think that's unacceptable. No offence to Premier John Horgan, but frankly, I think Ontario wines are better than BC wines.

All joking aside, promoting local Ontario wines has a real, positive impact. It has a positive impact on our economy, a positive impact on our local wineries, and a positive impact on the young people who are currently seeking educational opportunities to work in the wine industry.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to discuss these three positive impacts now. I said earlier that the Ontario wine industry has a large economic impact on the province and a large economic impact locally in my riding in Niagara. A study commissioned in 2015 of the wine industry in all of Canada found that the total economic impact was \$4.36 billion. Let me repeat that: \$4.36 billion in economic impact. Madam Speaker, that is a remarkably high number. It's a huge industry, and it should be properly promoted by this government.

In addition, another important point is that when a bottle of Ontario wine is sold in this province, it generates \$98.20 in added economic value to the province. That's almost \$100 a bottle. That's just another reason why it's so important that we stand behind our local wine industry in Ontario and ensure they are treated fairly so that they can continue to thrive and create the best wines in the world.

As I stated previously, this bill really helps those small and medium-size wineries in Ontario. We have had some wonderful feedback from wineries right across the province. I'd like to share a few of those comments in the House today.

Sue-Ann Staff, who is the owner and operator of Sue-Ann Staff Estate Winery in Niagara, said the following regarding Bill 50:

"The 6.1% tax that has been applicable on all wine sold in the province of Ontario has been a thorn in my side since my small, quality-oriented winery, devoted to award-winning VQA wine production, opened almost 10 short years ago.

"Knowing that there is not another wine producing region in this country that is subjected to the same fee is an outrage.

"I own and operate Sue-Ann Staff Estate Winery on my family's 200-year-old farm in Jordan, Ontario, located on the brink of the Niagara Escarpment. Our property needs to be managed under several land use policies that include, but are not limited to, the greenbelt, the Niagara Escarpment Commission, the Niagara conservation authority, plus policies demanded by the town of Lincoln, region of Niagara and the province of Ontario.

"This leaves me very little room for diversion and a challenge to find profit.

"For the past three years, VQA Ontario has commissioned Deloitte to perform the Wine and Grape Industry

Performance Study, which has consistently shown that VQA-focused wineries struggle for profitability"—struggle for profitability.

"And yet we are the wineries that are:

"—keeping Ontario's landscape green and under cultivation under the above-mentioned land use policies;

"—keeping our local citizens employed in a variety of job positions with a good income. These positions that range from retail sales to winemakers/cellar masters to marketing to finance. And are jobs in rural communities where we want to keep our youth" working;

"—working on improving our sustainability with our Sustainable Ontario initiatives, including understanding how to best manage our waste water, how to minimize potable water usage, how to minimize our energy use, and much more;

"—adding value to our communities through better and diverse tourism offerings. Often these other businesses such as our accommodators, local attractions, retail shops and parks benefit and are more profitable than ourselves; and

"— ironically, the least profitable ... hence in need of the 6.1%" to be taken off.

"With the ability to retain the 6.1% beer and wine fee within my business, I would use the funds to improve my infrastructure by relocating my production building to a more suitable space on the property.

"Additionally, I'd improve my economies of scale and improve quality with less energy inputs.

"Long term, I'd improve the retail experience with major improvements to the customer service area including potential food service and better tasting areas.

"When these funds are put back into the hands of VQA-producing wineries, positive results will be seen.

"I commend Mr. Gates for the initiative and ask all parties to support this bill, hence supporting the wineries and growers that service this province."

I'd like to share another comment—I don't have a lot of time left, so I think I'm going to skip to my last page, and then I'll add some of those when I have my two-minute wrap-up.

Too many wineries cannot afford to pay these talented young people the same wages or with the same benefits that other wine regions can offer.

If we can work to support our local wine industry, we can help to retain these talented young people coming out of Niagara College and Brock so they can stay in their community and working in our incredible wine industry.

Madam Speaker, the bill is not an attempt to provide potentially uncompetitive local wineries with special tax credits or exemptions, but rather it's a step towards creating fairness—I'll repeat that—but rather it is a step towards creating fairness for Ontario wines.

I thank you for taking the time to debate this bill today and I hope everyone can see how important it is to support this step in the right direction to help grow and support our Ontario wine industry, our local people and our young people.

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

Mr. James J. Bradley: I'm pleased to rise to speak to the bill.

I want to commend, first of all, the member for Niagara Falls for bringing forward legislation which is designed to assist our wineries in Niagara and, really, throughout the province of Ontario. The various ministries will have some concerns about certain aspects of the bill; they always do when any of us try to bring these bills forward. But I think the thrust of this is important. It's designed to assist those in the grape and wine industry. For that, the member should be commended.

I know he would be aware that Ontario wines and ciders already benefit from a reduced tax rate at their on-site retail stores. However, this is designed to be of even more assistance, which is good.

I've watched it change over the years. When they brought in the free trade agreement with the United States in the late 1980s, there were a lot of people in the Niagara region and across Ontario and maybe across Canada who thought that the wine industry was finished in Ontario. There were people ready to throw up their hands and say, "There's no way we can compete." And there were some people—I think of Don Ziraldo in particular—who said, "No, our option is to get better, to compete, not to simply abandon ship."

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The government of Ontario at that time provided some very significant assistance—I think, about \$90 million. Trying to get that out of Bob Nixon, who was the Treasurer at the time when I was trying to get \$90 million to save the wine industry, was like getting blood out of a stone, but Bob agreed to it eventually and recognized the importance of it. It helped to save our industry on that occasion. So I was pleased with that.

There were many changes made over the years. Our laws were pretty archaic. In fact, there were members of the New Democratic Party who, back when they were CCF-ers, were certainly in favour of temperance. That has changed over the years and evolved. You couldn't, for instance, go to a winery in Ontario and buy wine with a credit card. Americans who came over were flabbergasted, as were many Canadians. They couldn't do that. Where you could carry a glass of wine inside the winery, there were all kinds of strange rules there. You could not purchase wine on a Sunday, which many people probably would still agree with. That was changed to accommodate, again, those, mostly tourists, who were coming to the area to take advantage of good wine.

By the way, the wine is top-notch. For my friends who consumed wine at a very young age, perhaps for their first alcoholic beverage, they used to drink something called Old Niagara, which was 99 cents a bottle and worth every penny. Four Aces, I think, was another that was particularly attractive to young people with not much money and even less knowledge of the wine industry. They would have that.

But we've changed over the years. The quality has increased drastically over the years. If you do a blind test today with even the sophisticated wine tasters, they would choose Ontario wines very often in competition with French wines, Italian wines, American wines and so on.

What we have done—the LCBO has become much more helpful than in years gone by as well. The LCBO now provides preferential in-store positioning, over-allocation of promotional programs and discount opportunities, a dedicated promotional month and an over-indexed amount of shelf space. Growth of the Ontario wine market share in the LCBO has accelerated over the past three years.

Members will know that, on October 28, 2016, the government announced the first grocery stores authorized to sell wine, beer and cider together. That's over 200 stores now; there will be more.

There are so many things that have happened to accommodate the needs of the wine industry. Why is that? It's not just parochialism; we recognize that when people purchase in Ontario an Ontario-made wine, then the spinoff effect is very significant. If you purchase a foreign wine—and everybody has the right to do so if they wish to do so, but if you do that, it doesn't have the spinoff impact on our economy that our own wines do.

We now have farmers' markets. They're in their fourth successful year of selling VQA wines. The province extended the program to include Ontario cider and fruit wines in May 2016. There was opposition to that, not from the farmers in particular, because it's an attraction there, but there were just some people who didn't want to see that happen. I must confess to being a bit apprehensive to begin with, but it has worked out extremely well.

As part of the renewed Ontario Wine and Grape Strategy, on April 5, 2017, the government announced investments of \$45 million over three years through two programs. The Marketing and Vineyard Improvement Program helps increase sales of Ontario wines in and out of province, enhances the marketing of Ontario wine regions as tourist destinations and supports vineyard improvements. The renewed VQA wine support program helps increase VQA wine sales in the LCBO, encourages innovation and improves exports and tourism.

The LCBO has many programs that assist local producers and established 20 Our Wine Country boutiques, which focus exclusively on Ontario VQA wine and include hard-to-find products from smaller producers.

I want to say as well that some of the things we do annoy the people who are ambassadors from other countries. The US consul always seems to know whenever we're going to make any change. I ask: Where else in the world would you have an LCBO-like outlet that would be selling Canadian wine somewhere else? The answer is, "Nowhere." So I think they have no complaints to make, but I can assure my good friend from Niagara Falls that the US consul, when his bill passes—and I'm confident it will—will be calling to announce his annoyance with it. But that's just too bad.

We're investing \$73 million in our five-year wine and grape strategy, which created 2,000 jobs and helped to increase wine sales by more than \$270 million since 2009. A recent review of the wine and grape strategy helped boost the VQA support program to ensure that small and medium-sized wineries get to enjoy more benefits from the program. We recognize the important contributions of the Ontario wine sector to our province from tourism, which we in Niagara know about, to exports of our wine. We will continue to work with the Wine Council of Ontario, the Winery and Grower Alliance of Ontario and the Grape Growers of Ontario.

I always appreciate when any one of the members from Niagara and, indeed, anywhere in Ontario—because we have wine in eastern Ontario now, and southwestern Ontario produces high quality—when they bring forward legislation designed to help it out. I want to caution my friend from Niagara Falls, as I did at the beginning, that there are apprehensions which will be expressed by various ministries, particularly about how this would affect our trade negotiations and things of that nature, because I have those apprehensions here, which I will not share with the House because I don't want to discourage the member at all.

There are so many things that can be done to promote our wine. By the way, one of the things we can do to promote our wine is to have entities in Ontario have Ontario wines available. I won't get into individuals because I don't want to get into finger-pointing, but there are significant entities in Ontario that, if you go to them, all you see is foreign wines available. I think it would be very nice that we would have the option available to people, although, parochially speaking, I'd like to say that we should have exclusively Ontario wines. I understand trade agreements and I understand the preference of people in this province for various kinds of wine, but they should at least include them.

I remember speaking in the Legislature a number of years ago about a particular restaurant in Toronto back when you didn't see much in the way of Canadian wines, and chastising them for not having a Canadian wine even, never mind an Ontario wine, on their listings. I got proper heck from that restaurant. I pleaded guilty to wanting to defend what is highly defensible. We're not talking about 50 years ago, when the quality of our wine may not have been up to snuff; we're talking about the 2000s or even the 1990s, when the quality of wine is outstanding.

We are invited to a variety of events which celebrate wine. The grape and wine festival, now known as the wine festival, has a spring festival in June; it has an ice wine festival in January; and, of course in the fall, culminating with a huge parade in the city of St. Catharines, we have the grape and wine festival, as I still am wont to call it.

The four of us from Niagara—the member for what was known as Welland, now Niagara Centre; the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook; and the member for Niagara Falls and I—I think we recognize a couple of things; first of all, the high quality of wine that's produced.

I think the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook has now achieved the age where he is able to consume that wine. He's one year over it by now, and I know he has that opportunity. He has never had it under age; I can assure you of that. But he would have the opportunity.

The member for Niagara Falls, in years gone by, would have enjoyed some of those wines, as do members of his family. Even those on his wife's side, of Italian extraction, would recognize that our Ontario wines are superior even to the Italian wines that are there.

The member for Niagara Centre no doubt has enjoyed our wines as well.

Any time any one of us brings a bill forward that we think is going to be of assistance to our wine industry and particularly to our local wineries, I think you're going to find a pretty good consensus of support.

1400

As I say, I could have read out some of the apprehensions that some of the ministries have, but in the sense of collegiality today, I won't do so.

I wish the member well. I suspect—though I can never predict this to be the case entirely—we're going to see unanimous consent for the bill to move forward to a committee.

It's not only the presentation of a bill and its process through the committee and ultimately passing, but it's the very fact that members bring forward legislation individually as members of the Legislature that focuses attention on an issue. That is why I am delighted to say that—I cannot speak for my colleagues, though I suspect there's much support there, but I want to assure the member that I will be enthusiastically supporting this piece of legislation this afternoon at the appropriate time.

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's a pleasure to rise today on behalf of the fine constituents of Niagara West–Glanbrook and have the opportunity to speak to the member from Niagara Falls' private member's bill, Bill 50, An Act to amend the Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act, 1996, with respect to Ontario wineries—standing up for Niagara wineries.

I just wanted to make a brief introduction as well to Richard Linley from the Wine Council of Ontario, who is in the gallery this afternoon. Welcome to the Legislature. I'm sure this bill is pertinent to many of the members of the Wine Council of Ontario as well as to the Grape Growers of Ontario and the wide variety of different organizations that help represent many of our constituents.

I've got to say, it's very impressive to see the level of support from all Niagara members. The four of us are pretty much unanimous in supporting our grape and wine industry and coming together, whether that's at cuvées or any other events in the area to bring greetings and speak on their behalf.

I want to commend the member from Niagara Falls for his initiative on this. I know his advocacy on behalf of wineries in his riding and on behalf of Niagara and,

really, Ontario wineries as well, because, as the member from St. Catharines mentioned, I think it's so important that we recognize there are now other wine areas that are increasingly growing. I think of the member from Quinte; there's some stuff in the Prince Edward County area, as well as the north shore of Lake Erie. We are seeing an awareness and a growth surrounding wineries in Ontario.

Obviously, they are also faced with certain challenges. I'm glad that we see from the NDP side today some level of interest in reducing some of those challenges and in creating a stronger and more vibrant grape and wine industry in the province of Ontario, as well as in Niagara specifically.

Although I haven't been old enough to drink too much of the divine nectar for too long, I must say I recently had a good chat with the member of the United Conservative Party of Alberta the Honourable Jason Kenney. I'm from the Dutch Reformed background and he's from a Catholic background, but we can say the one thing the Dutch Reformed and the Catholics can get together and agree on is good ales and good wines.

I like to say that when the good Lord Jesus walked the Earth, his first miracle was making wine. I don't think it was grape juice; it was definitely some wine. It might even have been—because apparently it was the best wines—Niagara wines. I think he may have turned the water into some good Niagara wine.

It's an honour to be able to stand and speak on behalf of my constituents. Many of them work in the industry. Many of them are impacted by it.

I did want to touch upon a couple of things before wrapping up today. I do want to pre-empt this by saying—I believe I speak on behalf of all my caucus colleagues—that we intend to support this legislation. It's good legislation. Anything that we can do to reduce the tax burden on our grape and wine industry is a step in the right direction, because truly they are not treated equally when we compare it to other jurisdictions where there is much less in the way of economic burden, whether it's through red tape and overregulation or some of these other issues. I want to touch base on a couple of those.

I want to reference the comments from the member for St. Catharines about free trade, because I think free trade is such an important tool that we can use in a free society to encourage dialogue and economic prosperity and discourse, as well as using free trade to accentuate the best we have to offer, not only internationally but inter-provincially.

I think some of the members in this House who are interested in legal precedence may have known that the Comeau decision came out this morning. Sadly, I would say that the decision is not one that fell on behalf of inter-provincial free trade. I think, as provincial legislators, we should be doing more to encourage interprovincial free trade.

In this case, it was a situation where a fellow, I believe, was bringing some beer back from Quebec to New Brunswick. He was pulled over. He was fined and, I believe, actually arrested simply for bringing a couple of

two-fours over from Quebec. The Supreme Court passed their decision alongside of the provincial legislation on that.

I think therefore the burden falls to us as provincial Legislatures to do what we can to encourage interprovincial free trade. That also pertains to the transport of wine and beer across our borders. I think there are so many people in Alberta—I have a lot of family in Alberta. I know that they like Niagara wine and they would love to be able to access that more readily.

Another one of the taxes—because what we're talking about in this bill, of course, is reducing that tax burden by exempting section 27 of the Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act so that the basic tax rate in respect to the purchase of 6.1% of the retail price of the wine or wine cooler be excluded from certain situations. I think we have to also look at what has happened federally with some of the increasing taxes that have gone on there.

We've seen an escalator tax. Not a lot of us, maybe, have heard about this, but it's something that I think is very concerning for people who are fans of not only Niagara wines but wine more broadly and who are taxpayers as well. We've seen the introduction on April 1. The federal government put in an escalator tax where, like clockwork, every April Fool's Day the federal tax will increase on your favourite brew. We're going to be seeing that this increase of the taxing on beer and wine is actually going to increase the overall costs.

That's also going to reduce the margins because, as we know, it's very difficult for some of our grape and wine producers, especially when that wine enters the LCBO. When they reach a certain price point, people sort of tune it out. You have that \$8 to \$10 bottle of wine, and then you have that \$20 bottle of wine, but a lot of that wine, the ICB, is purchased at that, I would say, \$8 to \$10 mark, or an \$8 to \$12 bottle of wine. We need to be reducing that tax burden because it ultimately has a ripple effect going all the way down to producers.

Another thing that I think I would be remiss if I didn't address, because I haven't heard it here on the floor, is the concern that has been expressed from growers in my neck of the woods as well as other small businesses who have concerns with the rapid implementation of Bill 148 and the impact it is having, as well, in that section of the agricultural sector. I hear from constituents who express deep concern about the rapid implementation of the minimum wage increase, who are having to lay people off, who are aren't able to make ends meet with that.

At the end of the day, I think it's fair to say that if you don't have a job when you wake up in the morning—it's very, very difficult to worry about that minimum wage if you're not able to even have a job that you can go to. There are pressures that have been put on the agricultural community, specifically the grape-growing community that I've heard from in my riding.

I have to say, as a little bit of competition to the member from Niagara Falls, he has some excellent wines; I'll admit that. But I think that if he came down

the QEW a little ways, he would have the opportunity to see even more.

I think of even the member for St. Catharines, who in the upcoming election will be losing a little bit of his riding. I'm going to be running to represent a small portion of his riding, everything east of Third Street Louth. We have a lot of nice wineries in that area. Thankfully, my riding is actually picking up more wineries in addition to the whole—

Mr. James J. Bradley: And more Conservatives.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: And more Conservatives, as the member astutely notes. That is the hope, but I think there are going to be a lot more Conservatives across Ontario after June 7.

I wanted to very briefly just thank the member for bringing forward this type of legislation. It's important. But I also wanted to say that, as he has mentioned, we can't lose sight of the economic impact of wine. I think it's something that, whether you're going to an anniversary or going to a birthday and you're bringing a bottle of wine, it's a nice gesture and an enjoyable community event, as well, to taste some wine and have that experience. But also, the economic impact is very, very important, not only across Ontario but across Canada.

According to information from the Ontario wine and grape industry's economic impact study from 2015, the economic impact of Canada's wine economy is \$6.8 billion across Canada.

1410

Mr. James J. Bradley: With a "B."

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: With a "B," yes, not with an "M." So that's a lot of economic impact.

In Ontario, it's \$3.3 billion, which again is really, really important with 1.9 million visitors coming in as tourists and visiting our local wineries and really creating a huge economic stimulus, I know, in the Niagara region, but also now we're seeing that grow into other areas across the province. So it's a very good time to be involved in the wine and grape industry.

I think of a recent article that came out in Niagara This Week, one of my local papers, where they were talking about some of the local wineries that won awards. I think of Len Pennachetti, who a lot of us would know from the Niagara region as well, who started the Cave Spring Cellars in, again, my neck of the woods in Niagara West. He was really a pioneer in this area and really saw the potential there was in Ontario and took those steps in the right direction. From that, we've seen a whole host of growth, but I think we can do more to unleash that growth.

After 15 years, I've heard a lot of concerns, whether that's with hydro or whether that's with the rapid implementation of Bill 148, and this step that has come forward from the member for Niagara Falls, I think, is a step in the right direction. Anything we can do to decrease the tax burden on our producers and enable them to hire more people, to stimulate our local economies and to give that potential for growth is an important piece of legislation.

I do want to also note that the member for St. Catharines mentioned that there are other ways that we can improve access to local wines. The LCBO has taken some steps in the right direction in that regard, and I'll give the government credit where it's due from that perspective. I think there's more that needs to be done in actually making sure we have our local wines as well in our grocery stores in other areas across the province. I think everyone should have access to it.

I had the chance to travel across the province, as well, with the pre-budget hearing committee. We were in Thunder Bay in the Valhalla Inn. The first thing that was offered to us on the pre-budget hearing committee was a Niagara wine as their special. That was a moment of joy for me. I'm sure many Niagarans have had that experience, when you're in different areas across the country and you get the chance to have home in a glass, so to speak.

Thank you to the member for Niagara Falls for his advocacy on this. It's clear to see that all members from Niagara understand the importance of this work, and I think our contributions in the House, as well, have helped to educate the other members in the Legislature and make them aware of this. Hopefully, no matter who wins after the next election, there will be a consensus to support our wine industry.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate? The member from Windsor-Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker, and good afternoon.

I obviously support the bill put forward by my friend from Niagara Falls. You may not be aware of it, Speaker, but down my way, on Canada's doorstep, at Ontario's front door and Canada's south, on the Pelee peninsula, we have at least 18 wineries now. In no particular order, we have the Pelee Island Winery, Cooper's Hawk Vineyards, Oxley Estate Winery, Muscedere Vineyards, Sprucewood Shores Estate Winery, Colio Estate Wines, Viewpointe Estate Winery, Aleksander Estate Winery, Colchester Ridge Estate Winery, Sanson Estate Winery, Mastronardi Estate Winery, Black Bear Farms of Ontario Estate Winery, Erie Shore Vineyard, North 42 Degrees Estate Winery and Bistro 42, Paglione Estate Winery, Wagner Orchards and Estate Winery, and D'Angelo Estate Winery.

Our wineries date back to 1866, so we're older than Canada.

Canada's first estate winery was actually on Pelee Island. It was the Vin Villa Estates. Today, Pelee Island Winery is one of the largest wine producers in the country. They put out 700 cases a day.

Our region has 1,200 acres of grapes planted, out of the 18,000 in the province. We locally generate more than \$11 million in provincial sales tax and levies, and the economic footprint of our wine industry in the Essex region is more than \$27 million.

When it comes to wine, Speaker, the difference between me and the member from Niagara Falls, who is sponsoring this bill—the guy who claims to have the best

moustache in all of Ontario—is that I actually drink wine. This bill gives me even more incentive to support it: If it's passed, the cost per bottle at my local wineries comes down a little a bit with his proposed reduction in taxes.

Speaker, some things in life still confuse me, even though I must admit that's even before I have a drink. One of the things I have yet to figure out is the hows and whys of the Liberal government's approach to taxing our beer, wine and spirits industries.

I have a distillery in my riding. Hiram Walker started it in 1858, 160 years ago. The men and women in my riding manufacture very good whisky.

In fact, last year we had a taste test here at the Legislature. As you know, we have our official red and white wines selected each year and offered in our dining lounge. The Speaker thought it would be a good idea to have an official Speaker's whisky. I certainly agreed with that; after all, they have an official Speaker's whisky in the Parliament in jolly old England. We sampled six Ontario whiskies. Only one would be chosen to carry the Speaker's label and be offered here at Queen's Park. The winner was J.P. Wiser's Legacy, bottled by Hiram Walker in the Olde Walkerville neighboured in my riding of Windsor–Tecumseh. Ta-dah!

But I digress, Speaker. We were speaking about taxes.

I know of no rhyme nor reason why the Liberals tax distilled spirits in Ontario twice as much as beer and four times as much as wine. VQA wines mean the grapes are 100% grown in Ontario—they're not imported; 100% of the grain in the whisky made in Windsor comes from Ontario. Our distillers don't have the access to consumers that beer and wine producers do, and the Liberals hit them with taxes twice that of beer and four times that of wine. There's something wrong with this picture.

The Liberals allow wine and beer to be sold in our grocery stores now; they won't allow distilled spirits to be sold there. In Quebec, when that happened, sales of spirits plummeted from 40% of the market down to just a 14% share in 10 years. Distillers closed shop, jobs were lost, and I ask, could that happen in Ontario?

Most of us buy our alcohol at the LCBO. The markup on wine from California or France is 70%, and that helps protect Ontario wines. That's a good thing. But, Speaker, the markup on an Ontario whisky is 140%, twice that of imported wines. What's up with that?

Spirits and whisky production in Ontario adds \$1.5 billion to Ontario's gross provincial product. They're the fourth-largest buyer of all the corn we grow. Our distillers export half a billion dollars in finished products to other provinces and countries around the world. They employ 6,000 people, almost all of them unionized.

And there is no level playing field when it comes to taxes on our products containing alcohol.

That brings me back to the bill put forward by my friend the member from Niagara Falls. He wants to level the way taxes are applied on VQA wines sold at the cellar door—at our local wineries—because imported wines aren't taxed in the same way as our local wines

made from grapes grown in Ontario. Imported wines aren't charged the 6.1% basic tax. It makes no sense—not to me, anyway—that we would tax our local products differently and give favourable status to wines from elsewhere. I look over at the Liberal bench and say, what were they thinking?

Our local wineries and grape growers need incentives to grow—to expand—to keep bringing in the tourists and the visitors to wine country.

This bill doesn't affect the tax structure on Ontario wines sold at the LCBO stores or at grocery stores. This is plant gate stuff—at the place where it's bottled—in the tasting rooms and boutiques at the wineries.

It's a bill that makes a lot of sense. It's common sense, and it is an essential part of the growth plan for our local wine industry.

Speaker, allow me to toss out a few neat quotes at you about wine.

Martin Luther once said, "Beer is made by men, wine, by God."

Tanya Masse wrote, "I need coffee to help me change the things I can—and wine to help me accept the things I can't!"

Here's one from Ben Franklin: "Wine is constant proof that God loves us—and wants to see us happy."

The wine merchant and author André Simon perhaps said it best: "Wine makes every meal an occasion, every table more elegant, every day more civilized."

Let's be civilized. Let's adopt this bill. It will help make us a little more happy and convince our grape growers they really are doing God's work.

1420

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: Just to follow up on Percy: Maybe we'd all get along a lot better here if we had some of that fruit of the gods when we're in debates.

Anyway, I wanted to actually take the opportunity to focus in on the grape growers, because without grapes, you wouldn't have wine. I think it's important to talk about that. I had an opportunity today to talk to my good friend and former regional colleague Debbie Zimmerman. She talked about what the grape growers need, and what the grape growers need is to be able to sell more grapes and to make sure that our greenbelts are actually protected—continued protection and making sure that we're not selling off that farmland for development. She said that grape growers need to be sustainable.

Mr. James J. Bradley: Hear, hear.

Ms. Cindy Forster: They need to be sustainable, as well, right? We create sustainability by assisting them in protecting those greenbelts so that they're there for them to increase their sales.

For the first time in 30 years, grapes are the most valuable fruit in Ontario in terms of the farm gate value. They comprise 35% of the total farm value of commercial fruits, and it has been one of the few growth areas in agriculture in the last several years. Over the last few years, the grape growers have actually invested \$125

million in expanding their vineyards to supply wineries' demands for more premium grapes.

I only have a couple of minutes, so I want to take this opportunity—yesterday was the election for the Grape Growers of Ontario board. I wanted to congratulate the new—not new chair of the board; he was actually re-elected: Matthias Oppenlaender. He did such a great job last year that they re-elected him this year again—and to Doug Whitty who continues on as grape king this year.

Richard Linley was introduced, and if he was down here and was able to debate with us—I'm going to quote what he had to say about this bill: "Our members applaud the efforts of the MPP Wayne Gates and his NDP colleagues in raising awareness about the profitability challenges in the Ontario wine industry, especially amongst smaller wineries who are dependent on the winery retail store as their principal sales channel. Tourism is very important across all winery sizes and the basic wine tax is a tax burden on the family farm and agri-tourism in the province. If enacted, Bill 50 will help address structural business challenges for Ontario VQA wineries while supporting future job creation and growth in our sector."

We also talked to Aaron Dobbin, president of the Winery and Grower Alliance of Ontario. They "applaud MPP Gates and the New Democratic Party's proposed support of the Ontario wine industry through 'An Act to amend the Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act, 1996 with respect to Ontario wineries.' The grape and wine industry's ability to invest in the marketing and capital necessary to grow our industry in Ontario has been under pressure for the last few years. Investing in capital and marketing will increase demand for VQA wine, which will increase the demand for Ontario grapes, creating more jobs in rural Ontario and increasing government revenue.

"WGAO, along with other grape and wine industry associations, will continue to seek support from all three parties to help grow our industry that contributes \$4.4 billion in total economic impact, supports over 18,000 jobs in Ontario and attracts 2.4 million visitors to the regions of Niagara, Lake Erie North Shore and Prince Edward County," and, as well, other emerging areas in the province.

I'll just close by thanking the MPP from Niagara Falls for the work that he has done on this bill to try to promote the industry and to actually take some of the burden off of the small and medium wineries. Hopefully, with a bill like this, we'll be able to actually assist those wineries and create some more jobs for people who live here in the province of Ontario.

Thanks for the opportunity to speak to this.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you to the member from Welland. The member from Niagara Falls has two minutes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: First of all, I'd like to thank all my colleagues, particularly the ones from Niagara, that are supporting the bill. I'd also like to talk about my good friend from Windsor. Thanks very much for your comments.

I know that Richard is here today—the president of the Wine Council of Ontario. I just want to say that I welcome him here, but from where I'm sitting I can't see him. So that's why—there you go. Move over; I can see you a little bit. Thank you for coming here and supporting the bill. It's greatly appreciated.

I'll go quick. I got cut off on my 12 minutes. I had more to say.

There are other wineries right across the province of Ontario that are supporting the bill. When they're supporting the bill, this is what they say they're going to do with the extra opportunity to grow their business:

"We would put that money back into our business immediately because we know that to be financially viable we must:

"(1) hire additional staff to deal with the increasing number of seasonal visitors"—the visitors are a good thing; tourists are great;

"(2) plant additional acres of vines in order to produce more wine;

"(3) hire additional farm workers to care for those vines; and

"(4) hire additional sales" staff.

Here's one from a local winery, and this one really, I think, says it all: "The removal of this tax will make a significant positive impact to our business. We have been investing in our winery business and Niagara for several years. We employ five full-time and 10 summer season employees."

This is the one that I kind of like the best of what was said: "We support other local businesses and hire local contractors for everything from electrical work to book-keeping and accounting, to label creation and marketing and technology."

So as we support our local wineries, no matter where you are in the province of Ontario, they're then supporting the local economy and putting local people to work. That's what this is about. When you see the economic impact of almost \$100—in economic impact—compared to, I think, \$1.11 or \$1.21 from an international wine, this bill makes sense. I'm hoping all my colleagues will support it. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you.

Orders of the day.

WASTE REDUCTION

Mr. Norm Miller: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario government should make Ontario a leader in compostable packaging to help address our waste problem by (a) encouraging innovations in waste-free packaging by offering tax incentives to companies that develop and use new certified compostable packaging, and (b) offering incentives to municipalities to create or enhance organics collection programs and streamlining the approvals process for municipal compost facilities.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Norm Miller: “Ontario has a waste problem.” That is how the Environmental Commissioner began her report, issued last October, entitled *Beyond the Blue Box: Ontario’s Fresh Start on Waste Diversion and the Circular Economy*. I agree; Ontario does have a waste problem. I’m proud to have introduced a number of bills over the years intended to help address our waste problem.

I was pleasantly surprised when the government adopted the ideas of the LCBO deposit return bill that I introduced in 2004. I was again pleasantly surprised when the government adopted a version of my product stewardship bill as the Waste-Free Ontario Act. Unfortunately, the Waste-Free Ontario Act is not living up to its promise and is not addressing our waste problem quickly enough.

Today, I want to focus on compostable packaging and diverting more organic waste from landfill. I believe one of the ways to address our waste problem is to increase the use of compostable packaging and provide greater access to organics collection.

As the Speaker will remember, last fall my private member’s bill to require all single-use coffee pods sold in Ontario to be compostable within four years passed second reading with unanimous support.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome representatives from the two companies that inspired the bill and are here to see today’s debate. From Muskoka Roastery in Huntsville, in the members’ west gallery, we have Jordan McKenzie, marketing manager, and Adam Pfrimmer, sales and customer development manager, as well as Chris McKillop, VP of communications and government relations, who’s here from Club Coffee of Etobicoke. Please welcome them.

1430

I also want to introduce Susan Antler of the Compost Council of Canada, and thank her for being here to support this motion as well. Thank you, Susan.

While that bill, the Reducing Waste One Pod at a Time Act, died on the order paper when the Premier prorogued the Legislature, it sparked a great conversation about the amount of waste we produce and how we can reduce that waste.

I am proud to say that the discussion reached across the country. It got press coverage across the country, and this spring a British Columbia MLA introduced a similar bill. I’m pleased to report that the city of Toronto is now doing a test of how well the compostable coffee pod created by Club Coffee will break down in Toronto’s system.

Just last week, I visited the district of Muskoka compost system. I want to thank Andrew Guthrie, manager of solid waste, for taking the time to show me around. He told me about the tests they did on the PurPod100 and how it successfully composted at the district of Muskoka facility. I would say that he ex-

plained that they had to kind of baby it in their system. They had to put a number of them in a mesh bag and sort of move them around manually so that they’d be able to find them again, but in reality, if it was just in the system where there’s mechanical movement of the compost, it would break down even faster, he commented.

But today, I want to talk about more than coffee pods.

Lots of packaging could be made from compostable bioplastics and other compostable materials, and I would love to see Ontario on the leading edge of compostable packaging. To that end, I bring this motion.

It addresses two ways to encourage compostable packaging: first, encourage the research and development, with tax incentives targeted at this sector, and, second, encourage increased access to organics collection and improved municipal composting systems, so they can accept certified compostable packaging.

Compostable packaging represents not only a way to address waste but a business opportunity. Just today, I heard on the radio the talk about England putting in a deposit-return system on plastic containers, and talk about banning plastic straws in the Commonwealth. Plastics have been identified as a pollutant around the world. Recycling is definitely helping, but bioplastics that break down into usable compost are becoming another part of the solution.

Ontario has an opportunity to become a leader in developing and producing compostable packaging. Developing and manufacturing of the PurPod100, for example, has created jobs across Ontario, including in Guelph, where the bio-resin was developed; in Chatham–Kent–Essex, where the bio-resin is produced; in Oakville, where the ring is produced; in Huron–Bruce, where the polylactic acid used in the lid is produced; in Newmarket–Aurora, where the lid is produced; in Ottawa Centre, where the inks are produced; across Ontario, where corn and other crops involved are grown; in Etobicoke North, where Club Coffee manufactures the final product; and, of course, in Parry Sound–Muskoka, where the compostable coffee pod is used by Muskoka Roastery.

Let’s talk about incentives. I suggest that the government target a portion of the Ontario Innovation Tax Credit and the Ontario Research and Development Tax Credit to research into waste reduction technologies like compostable packaging. This could lead to the next great Ontario invention—maybe a compostable drinking straw. Imagine the possibilities.

Something that I believe is already being worked on is a compostable sticker for fruit. This is important because non-compostable stickers are creating a problem in composting facilities.

I would also like to see a tax credit or other incentives for companies that adopt waste-reduction technologies, just like the incentives for companies that put in place energy conservation measures. For example, if a food processing company has to invest in new equipment to transition from traditional plastic packaging to certified compostable packaging, they should be able to apply for

a tax credit for making that investment in our environment.

Now let me talk about the second part of the motion: increasing access to organics collection.

Right now, one of the biggest obstacles to compostable packaging is access to compost, and compost capacity. The National Zero Waste Council recently issued a report entitled *Packaging and the Circular Economy: A Case Study on Compostables in Canada*. This report identified this issue, saying, “The ability to process compostable packaging is currently outpaced by both the volume of food waste and the expanding diversity of compostable packaging.”

About the only negative feedback I got on my compostable coffee pod bill from the public was from people asking what good it was to have compostable coffee pods if they don't have organics collection.

On the other side of the same coin, there were concerns from municipalities. Before I debated Bill 173, my staff spoke to the Ontario municipal association, and their biggest concern was that municipalities wouldn't have the facilities to handle compostable packaging. As I said during that debate, municipalities will need help to ensure that their facilities are able to process compostable packaging. That is why this motion suggests incentives for municipalities to increase organics collection or improve their composting technologies.

Now let me speak about the environmental benefits of greater composting. Composting cannot only keep waste out of our landfill and produce valuable compost; it can also reduce greenhouse gases. When organic waste decomposes in the wet, oxygen-deprived environment of a landfill, it produces methane and nitrous oxide—greenhouse gases. When the same waste decomposes in a compost, where it has oxygen and controlled moisture levels, it produces carbon dioxide, which does not contribute to greenhouse gases. Even organic matter in an open-air backyard compost pile doesn't produce harmful greenhouse gases.

Again, I'm going to quote the Environmental Commissioner's report. Dianne Saxe says, “Decomposing waste in landfills also produces gases that can cause fires, damage vegetation and create unpleasant odours. Some of these gases are powerful greenhouse gases ... that drive climate change. In 2015, 5.2% of Ontario's total GHG emissions—8.6 megatonnes—were reported to come from waste.”

If that isn't a good enough reason, consider this: The Environmental Commissioner believes that number is wrong and that decomposing waste contributes 15% of Ontario's greenhouse gas emissions. If the Environmental Commissioner is correct—and I trust she is—then anything we can do to keep organics out of landfill will make a significant difference in greenhouse gas emissions.

I do recognize that large landfill operators are working to capture and use the gases, but smaller landfills and the US landfills where much of our waste goes aren't necessarily doing that.

Let me talk about the community benefits of greater composting. Ontario right now has about 11 years' worth of landfill capacity, according to the Ontario Waste Management Association. According to the government's own research, the amount of waste produced by Ontarians is expected to increase by 40% by 2050, requiring the creation of 16 new or expanded landfills. But landfills aren't something that most people want nearby. The member for Oxford is working hard to help the community of Ingersoll fight a proposed landfill.

Right now organics make up about 30% of Ontario's waste. If we can reduce the amount of waste going into landfills, we will extend the lives of our existing landfills and reduce the need for unwanted new landfill sites.

Let me talk about another aspect in the motion: streamlining approvals for compost facilities. One thing the government could do to increase organic waste diversion without costing a lot of money is streamline the process that municipalities go through to get compost facilities approved.

Unfortunately, like many government processes, the process for having a compost facility approved is tied up in red tape. The Environmental Commissioner calls the current process “slow, expensive and unpredictable” and makes the following recommendation: “Given the importance of organics diversion, the ECO recommends that the MOECC make the process for approving anaerobic digestion and composting facilities fast and predictable.”

I ask the minister to commit today to review this process and find ways to reduce the red tape to not only help municipalities save money but to help them help the environment.

In conclusion, according to our Environmental Commissioner, 25% of everything we throw out as a society is packaging. We have heard of people who have started to protest unnecessary packaging by removing it in the store and leaving it behind. They make their point, but that packaging still must be disposed of. We need to find ways to reduce the amount of packaging that goes into landfill. Recycling is helping, but recycling alone won't solve the problem. I believe compostable packaging can play an important role if we invest in the research and in our municipal compost facilities.

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In closing, I want to thank Muskoka Roastery Coffee in Huntsville for introducing me to a compostable coffee pod, which inspired Bill 173 and this motion, and I want to recognize Club Coffee in Etobicoke for doing the research to create a certified compostable coffee pod.

I see I'm out of time, Madam Speaker, so I'll end it there.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Indeed it is a pleasure to stand in the House today and speak to motion 29 put in front of us by my friend the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. He's encouraging us to take action to turn Ontario into a leader in compostable packaging.

There is no doubt we have a problem when it comes to handling our waste stream. Much of that difficulty comes from the very packaging that we as consumers tolerate and rarely complain about to the manufacturers of the goods we buy. We can't keep on carrying groceries and packaged goods home in plastic bags. We need to do a better job at conserving space in our landfills. We need to find ways to encourage our larger municipalities to collect organic kitchen waste so it can be recycled and not end up in our landfills.

Speaker, let me go slightly off script here for a moment. I want to give a shout-out to Cameron Wright. Cam is retiring tomorrow. He's the guy who has been managing our waste disposal stream for the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority. Cam has worked for the county of Essex for 30 years. He's in good health, and I wish him continued good health for many years to come.

I worked with Cam during my time on the solid waste authority board, when I was a city councillor in Windsor. He's the reason we do as well as we do in recycling our waste, although, like many other areas, we could be doing better. We don't have an organic waste collection system down in Windsor-Essex. We look at it every few years and we do a review of the costs. Without provincial support, economically it wouldn't work for us; it would just be too expensive.

Cam, thank you for all the work that you've done for us over the years down there, and enjoy your retirement.

This motion 29 is worthy of support this afternoon. It would see the province offer financial incentives to create an organics collection system and streamline the red tape governing municipal compost facilities.

We collect yard waste and we compost it. We do that in all seven of the county municipalities and the city of Windsor. It's a simple old-school approach; it gets cut up, mixed, and left for a year to age and break down in open windrows. Then we bag it, we call it Garden Gold and we sell it. It brings in about \$100,000 a year. It saves us a lot of room in our county landfills.

It would cost us millions of dollars to come up with an organics collection process. We'd likely have to switch our weekly garbage pickups to biweekly, switch the biweekly recycling to a weekly pickup and add a weekly green bin service—let alone the cost of converting the fleet of vehicles that would be required. Someone would have to pay for that: private haulers, or we'd have to contract back in the curbside service we contracted out in Windsor nine or 10 years ago.

Organics are problematic in some areas because of the smell at the collection and storage sites. There would be a very complicated and politically charged site selection process. It's that age-old question: Can we afford to do it versus can we afford not to do it?

Speaker, you and I, and other consumers, perhaps, don't know enough about expiry dates and best-before date labels on our food. I paid another visit, as did the member from Windsor West, to the Unemployed Help Centre in my riding last summer. They run a food bank and a food rescue program. High school students, under

supervision, cook fresh meals for shut-ins, delivered by the Meals on Wheels program.

I was told the best-before date indicates when the product is at its peak quality of ripeness and flavour. The contents are still good, can still be eaten for months and months after that date, without any ill health effects. Mind you, that's not the case for milk, eggs or baby formula. Retailers know that when we shoppers check the best-before date, if it's close we won't usually buy it. So they remove all that stuff from the shelves and donate it, one would hope, to a local food bank. Some good food still gets tossed in the dumpster, and that's too bad. I've read of studies that show food valued at more than \$30 billion is being tossed away in Canada each year. What a waste.

If we, as consumers, want our organic waste to be recycled, we have to convince our local politicians to start collecting it, storing it and recycling it back into our soil.

Interjection.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: What's that, Speaker? Not in my backyard? Actually, in my backyard, we do have a small hill, and my grandkids call it a mountain. We go walking up there through the jungle in the warmer months. At one time, it was a landfill. Of course, it's monitored for gases escaping, and there is a water retention pond at the base on my side of the hill. But it has been landscaped, and we have a mile-long walking trail around Blue Heron Pond. I wouldn't wish to live anywhere else.

But I knew that former landfill was there when I moved in. People who live in the country, with wide-open spaces and natural beauty, would not be as accepting of a proposed storage site for kitchen and garden waste.

There is a private site in Leamington that does a good job of collecting and recycling agricultural waste from the area greenhouses, but over the years it has had its problems with odours from time to time.

This motion is a good one. It will get us all thinking about what we should be putting in our boxes: no more of those greasy pizza boxes. Speaker, you may know this: In Chicago, the home of the deep-dish pizza, they don't allow those deep-dish pizza boxes to be recycled with the cardboard, because it just contaminates too much of the cardboard and too much of the paper. So we have a lot to work on.

There's just too much getting into the blue boxes these days that shouldn't be there. I read the other day about a bowling ball. How are you going to recycle a bowling ball? Some people may think it falls in the plastics category, but I just don't see it.

I know we have to do more down my way. We have to come up with organics. It's going to be very expensive. But I say to my friend from Parry Sound-Muskoka—I thank Mr. Miller for bringing this motion forward, and I hope we all get behind his initiative.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you to the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka for bringing this motion forward

around compostable packaging. There's a lot of talk these days, so I am delighted to see that by bringing it here, the member has helped elevate the discussion and the debate around packaging, specifically around compostable packaging.

As I'll touch on in a few minutes, we have a problem here in Ontario, here in Canada and right across North America: So much packaging and so many products cannot be reused, and that, as has been pointed out, is a waste of resources and a waste of scarce landfill capacity. It's something that we need to think seriously on, and I'll talk in a few minutes about some of the ways that we're addressing it.

Our government is well aware of the challenges surrounding waste reduction, including organic waste, and we are taking strong action to reduce waste here in Ontario. We're committed to improving Ontario's efforts to reduce waste.

On this side of the House, we know that climate change is one of the biggest threats to both our security and our prosperity, one of the biggest threats facing our province. We know that managing waste and reusing our resources is a very critical part of achieving our goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect our land and environment, and create a greener future for the people of Ontario.

Our Climate Change Action Plan outlines the steps we're taking to achieve these goals. There are some 90-plus actions, and they include commitments to reducing emissions from waste and moving Ontario towards a circular economy.

What's a circular economy? It's a good question, Speaker. A very simple definition is: It's an economy where one person's waste is another person's resource, so we can repurpose waste into new products.

This government is committed to moving beyond the linear: You make it; you use it; you throw it out; you have no further thought; it's in the garbage bag at the end of the laneway; it's gone. We need to move to a new model, Speaker, this circular economy where we make productive materials last as long as possible.

1450

I always come back to the introduction of the blue box. That was a seminal point, I think, for the environment here in Ontario, and our kids teaching us about "reduce, reuse, recycle." Those three Rs are still as important today as they were when we first heard them. What we have to do as well in this province is lower the cost of recycling for Ontarians and provide them with more convenient recycling options.

It's two things that I've heard consistently in this portfolio as the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and it's something that I have experienced first-hand when I was a town councillor in Aurora. The burden of the blue box costs was something that was quite serious, quite significant. And we have certainly heard from municipalities across the province that, really, it's just not fair that municipal taxpayers have to carry the burden of disposing of so much waste, so much

recyclable material, something that perhaps most of us had nothing to do with creating, but we certainly have to pay to get rid of it.

By significantly increasing diversion efforts, Ontario is supporting some 13,000 jobs. Speaker, I always like to look for the silver lining in problems in front of us, and this is one. This is the opportunity to grow our economy if we handle our diversion efforts properly. The experts are telling us that, done properly, we could add 13,000 jobs to our economy and some \$1.5 billion to the bottom line of Ontario's economy, to our GDP. That is significant. Not only is this the right thing to do for climate change and the right thing to do for protecting our scarce landfill resources; it's the right thing to do for our economy as well.

We have committed, as well, to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases from landfill. I heard the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka talk about some of those. One of the worst greenhouse gases is emitted from landfills. It's a product of the breakdown of biodegradables. It's methane gas. I'm told that one molecule of methane gas is equivalent to about 20 molecules of carbon dioxide. You've certainly heard me here in this House talk about the evils of carbon dioxide and how it is contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. Well, methane is even worse—at least 20 times worse. I'm told that methane from landfills accounts for about 5% of Ontario's total greenhouse gas emissions. That is far too high.

We're taking strong leadership to transform the way we deal with waste in the province, and we're helping to improve both Ontario's environment and economy. I'm looking forward to further support as we move ahead with implementing Ontario's Waste-Free Ontario Act, which we tabled and passed back in 2016.

With regard to this motion, we're supportive of the general premise of the motion. It really provides, as I said at the outset, a good opportunity to discuss how Ontario can continue to improve its resource management, and it supports innovative solutions such as the Ontario-led innovation on compostable coffee pods. Some of my most favourite coffees come in those pods, so thank goodness. That's a bonus. That's what we call a win-win, when your favourite coffees come in compostable pods. Good on those companies for being at the leading edge; good on Guelph for that science, that technology.

Hon. Michael Coteau: And Norm Miller.

Hon. Chris Ballard: Well, it goes without saying.

Our government is committed to increasing our diversion rates by 50% by 2030. Earlier this year, we posted our Food and Organic Waste Framework to Ontario's Environmental Registry. It's a place where we post these proposals and solicit input from the public, from environmental groups, other not-for-profit organizations and, of course, business. We invite them to comment on what we're posting. The framework included the requirements for producers and retailers to reduce packaging waste—exactly what we've heard here today.

Packaging waste has been something that has bedevilled all levels of government for many years. I can remember even 25 years ago in my work with the Consumers' Association of Canada that we made submissions to government around reducing wasteful packaging. I know then and I know today how batty it drives me when I have to tear through two or three or four layers of wrapping to get at the widget I just purchased, and lying on the floor is a big pile of stuff that has to be thrown out.

Our framework includes a review of the Blue Box Program, which today captures, on average, about 60% of recyclable waste, and transitioning it to a new producer responsibility program. We're continuing to discuss this with municipalities and industries on the best way to implement and how to address the biodegradable packaging that enters the blue box stream.

I can say, with the work that we're doing, we are transitioning the province into a producer-pay model rather than a taxpayer-paid model. If you make the garbage, if you make that packaging, you will be responsible for properly disposing of that—not only properly disposing of it but the cost that's incurred in disposing of it.

When this is used in other jurisdictions, other countries, what we have found is that two similar products will be competing on price. One of the ways they can make the price of their product lower is by having a package material that is easily recyclable, that doesn't cost as much to get rid of and doesn't end up in a landfill site, and that becomes a competitive advantage to the company that makes a product with packaging that's easily reusable. That's where we're going here in Ontario.

We know that reusing and reinvesting resources will allow us to keep our resources within the economy, leading, as I mentioned earlier, to both environmental and economic benefits for Ontario. We're also supportive of initiatives, like Ontario Driven by Innovation, that led to that development of compostable coffee pods, which I mentioned, and has been mentioned, that took place right here in Ontario at Guelph university. We're so happy that at least some of our colleagues across the aisle are getting on board with important initiatives to make our environment a better place.

Compostable products and packaging is a relatively new and emerging waste stream. While packaging in particular has traditionally been part of the Blue Box Program here in Ontario, new types of single-use packaging, such as coffee pods, are creating challenges and opportunities. We need to improve standards to ensure resources from packaging and products can be recovered in municipal facilities, and we need to identify the parties responsible for the operational and—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you.

Further debate? The member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You're doing a great job in the Chair this afternoon. I wanted to start off by saying that.

I also want to commend my colleague the member for Arnstein-Port Loring—actually, Parry Sound–Muskoka, but he knows what I mean. He has done a great job once again with this motion that he has brought before the House this afternoon:

“That, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario government should make Ontario a leader in compostable packaging to help address our waste problem by (a) encouraging innovations in waste-free packaging by offering tax incentives to companies that develop and use new certified compostable packaging, and (b) offering incentives to municipalities to create or enhance organics collection programs and streamlining the approvals process for municipal compost facilities.”

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Madam Speaker, I think that the member has brought forward this motion—and it's a very timely motion. Obviously we're coming to the end of the provincial Parliament, but it's consistent with a number of initiatives that he has brought forward in the Legislature in recent years to enhance environmental protection. I think this particular motion—and I listened to his speech as well—is sensible, practical, well researched and a good follow-up to the private member's bill that he brought into this House last November, I believe it was, that passed second reading: Bill 173, with respect to compostable coffee pods.

I think it's something that is worthwhile to discuss again. I want to express my appreciation to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change for his remarks. He indicated that it's the position of the government that this motion should pass, and we appreciate that very much.

As I said earlier, the member has brought forward a number of private members' bills and resolutions with respect to environmental protection. The one I think that sometimes gets overlooked is the fact that he brought forward the suggestion that there should be a deposit-and-return system for wine and liquor bottles, which was actually adopted by the government eventually.

Sometimes it is said that opposition members can't get as much done as governmental members, and some people believe that. It's actually not true. I've served on both sides of the House. This is a very good example demonstrating how a private member's resolution brought forward by an opposition member from the opposition benches—a good idea, well researched, backed by good evidence and supported widely—was adopted by the government. So, again, I think that is something that he deserves credit for.

I want to add something to the debate, too, because I've learned recently of the efforts that have been taken by Keurig Green Mountain, which is a company that makes the coffee pods as well as the coffee makers. They are doing a lot of research in terms of creating high-value plastic in their K-Cup pods. They have a fair amount of research that they've put together to prove that recyclable K-Cup pods can make it through the waste stream and be processed and captured in a municipal recovery facility.

I think that's an important part of this debate, too: to look at what some of the other companies are doing. I know that Club Coffee has done great things, as well as the University of Guelph research that was referenced by the minister as well as the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka. I represent the Guelph area in the Legislature, and I'm well acquainted with the University of Guelph, obviously.

There has been great work done by a number of companies in this regard. Keurig indicates that fully 94% of Canadians live in a community where these coffee pods can be recycled. I think that's something that the government should look at carefully and see how it can be evaluated to improve the recycling of those coffee pods.

In any event, I think it's a good suggestion by the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka. It's a sensible idea, I think, that builds on a lot of the work that he has done as a member of the Legislature in terms of environmental protection, building on, I think, our proud record as the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario in terms of environmental protection. It's sometimes overlooked and forgotten that it was a Progressive Conservative government that actually created the Ministry of the Environment in the 1980s, and we have a long record—a proud record—of environmental protection achievements.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and congratulations to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents of Windsor West to talk about the motion brought forward by the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, motion 59, with the goal of making Ontario a leader in compostable packaging.

I'm going to share a bit of a story that just happened earlier this week. I have a new assistant. She has been with me up here for about seven months now. I will admit that I have one of those Keurig machines in my office. I probably don't use it like most people do. Although we do have some K-Cups in my office, I don't use them. I use it because it's instant gratification when I want a cup of tea. I put my teabag in the cup and I run it for the hot water, and there you have it. I don't have to wait for the kettle.

My assistant, Sara, who usually also uses the Keurig for tea, decided one morning that she needed coffee. I don't know if it was because I was being difficult that morning and she needed the extra kick, or why she needed coffee, but I didn't realize that she had left the K-Cup in the machine, because usually there isn't one in the machine. I went to boil my water and have my tea, and I noticed that the water coming out was brown. So I flipped the top of the machine open as quickly as I could and ripped the K-Cup out. It's kind of like how—sorry, Tim Hortons—sometimes you go for a tea at Tim Hortons and it tastes a little bit like coffee.

I thought, "I can handle this," so I grabbed the K-Cup—and it's hot—and I threw it in the bin beside her

desk. She immediately groaned and rolled her eyes and said, "That is the recycle bin. You don't put it in the recycle bin. Now you have ruined everything in the recycle bin, because you have soiled it, so it now all has to go in the garbage." I have to give a shout-out to Sara, who is on me on a regular basis, talking about what you can and can't put in the recycle bin and what goes in the garbage bin and what you should be composting.

Unfortunately, we aren't set up in our offices here to do composting, or I would make sure that—you know, I bet you there are several people in this chamber who had parents or grandparents who used to crack open the tea bags and put the grinds—

Hon. Michael Coteau: In the garden.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: In their gardens, along with eggshells and other things. Maybe more would do that here and they could actually use it in the gardens on Queen's Park, if we had the facilities.

I think this motion that the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka brought forward is an important one, because we need to be doing everything that we possibly can to be reducing the amount of waste that goes into landfill and sits there.

I know many restaurants and other organizations, if you go to Tim Hortons, or Wendy's or whatever—not endorsements for any of these places. Go there if you want; I'm not telling you where to go. But I know that when I go to Tim Hortons, if I'm putting a cup away when I'm done with it, I pop off the lid off and I put it in the recycle bin, and I want to put my tea bag in the garbage and my cup in the recycle bin. I now know, thanks to Sara, that my cup probably shouldn't get recycled until I've washed it out.

I know that there are many restaurants and stores that are trying to help us reduce the amount of waste that sits in a landfill, and that's really important. The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka is doing his part to try to reduce landfill and make sure things that are compostable get composted. A big step towards that is making sure that as we have companies that are using packaging, that packaging is compostable. Then you might find your mothers and your grandmothers putting it in their bins, waiting for it to break down and using in their own gardens, perhaps.

For us on this side, the New Democrats, protecting the environment is very important. We want to make sure that we are leaving this planet a better place for our children. In my riding specifically, we have a nature reserve where we have numerous endangered species. We want to make sure we are doing the best that we can to make the environment for our wildlife a safe place.

So I applaud the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for bringing this motion forward. I do have to say that it is heartening to hear someone from the PC caucus, and other members of the PC caucus, talking about the importance of protecting our environment. I just hope that this means that they will see the light when it comes to other ways of protecting our environment. Perhaps, just maybe, we will see them starting to support things

like cap-and-trade and other ways that we can support our environment, not only for ourselves, for future generations and for all of the wildlife that we have on this planet.

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise and add my support to the motion put forward by my friend and colleague the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. This motion will ensure that Ontarians address our waste problem by becoming a leader in compostable or free-waste packaging.

I agree it is important that we address the waste problem in our province. The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka recognized this, and just last year he introduced the Reducing Waste One Pod at a Time Act, which requires single-use coffee pods to be fully compostable. He has done a significant amount of work on waste reduction during his time in office. I commend him for his efforts and stand behind him as he continues to propose new ideas to make Ontario a more environmentally friendly province. From the LCBO Deposit and Return Act, which would have required all liquor to be in recyclable, returnable containers, to the Battery Deposit and Return Act, which seeks to reduce the amount of batteries in landfill and encourages proper recycling of batteries, MPP Miller has continued his fight for the environment.

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Madam Speaker, I also understand the importance of making Ontario a cleaner province. While serving as warden of Oxford, I worked to reduce waste in my community by creating the first mandatory recycling program in the province. One of the keys to the program was charging to take the garbage but not to take the recycling. This encouraged citizens to recycle more and send less to our landfill.

As I have spoken of many times in this Legislature, proposed landfill sites are causing concerns across Ontario. Landfills can have significant environmental impacts on our communities. Currently, waste companies only have to have approval from the Ministry of the Environment, which leaves municipalities without a real say. That is why I recently introduced a bill which would give municipalities the authority to approve proposed landfill sites. Any community outside of the 905 to the provincial border is a potential site for future mega dumps, and under current legislation they get no say. We want to change that.

For example, in my riding there is a proposed landfill site in Beachville on fractured limestone near the Thames River and close to one of the town of Ingersoll's main wells. Should this landfill be built, our water could be at severe risk of contamination. We had numerous volunteers working to stop the proposed landfill site, and I thank them for their efforts to protect our community and their water sources. For example, they have started great initiatives to protect the environment, like ReuseApalooZaha, which I am attending next week. At

the event, people are bringing used furniture and other things that they want to throw away, and people who can use them can take them for free. This not only cuts down on the amount of waste going to landfills, but engages the community in a fun and supportive event.

Madam Speaker, Oxford has implemented a zero-waste plan with the ultimate goal of reducing the amount of waste being produced in and exported out of Oxford, and yet we could be forced to accept the waste from other communities. But it's not just an issue in my riding. Many Ontarians have signed petitions to give municipalities the right to have a say in landfill sites, and municipalities have passed resolutions of support.

I would also like to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for introducing initiatives that help divert waste from landfills and protect our environment and our natural resources. It's imperative that we save landfill space, and that starts with composting more, recycling more and wasting less.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise in support and to say a few words on the motion put forward by the member from my caucus for Parry Sound–Muskoka. Basically, it's saying that Ontario should be a leader in compostable—and we're having a bit of a back-and-forth about whether it's com-PAWST-able or com-POST-able—packaging to help address our waste problem by (a) encouraging innovations in waste-free packaging by offering tax incentives to companies that develop and use new certified compostable—or compawstible; what did we decide?

Mr. Norm Miller: Compostable.

Mrs. Gila Martow: —compostable packaging; and (b) offering incentives to municipalities to create or enhance organics collection programs and streamlining the approvals process for municipal compost facilities.

I just want to say a few things. We have heard mention a lot about Keurig. Yes, I have a Keurig in my office as well, and we all feel bad when we throw the pods in the garbage. It would be nice if we had more composting done in our communities and in our offices themselves. I understand the frustration maybe by my colleague, because he presented this once before and it passed second reading. I was here that day, and today I reintroduced a private member's bill that also had to be reintroduced because of proroguing of the Legislature done by the Liberal government.

We know that compost reduces the need for landfills. The amount of waste in Ontario is projected to increase by 40% in 2050, requiring the creation of approximately 16 new landfills for the province. I don't know where we're going to put that, because people are smartening up to the government's push for more landfills in their community. We all know that we need more partnerships with municipalities, with private industry—getting the individuals on board and giving people an economic reason to care. It's not enough to just give tax credits and incentives to companies to come up with better ideas to

protect the environment. Maybe people have to be more aware and look for the products that are compostable and have what we call in the Jewish community “boycotts,” which means you buy instead of boycott.

I just wanted to share a measure that takes place in York region, which is, of course, where my riding of Thornhill is located. They sell backyard composters to residents for \$20. They can hold around 311 litres of content for composting. This way, residents can accomplish two things at one time: They can get rid of items from the kitchen, and they can create the compost, which they can then use in their gardens. And maybe then they will get one of the city of Vaughan’s beautification program signs that say “Curb Appeal,” which recognize residential spaces, as well as businesses, that maintain exceptional green spaces.

I’m sure that composting can really help with your gardening and maybe your flowers. Maybe we’ll have some warmer weather so that we can actually dream about planting some flowers. It’s hard to believe that it’s the middle of April and we’re still seeing snow on the ground, Madam Speaker.

I really hope we’re going to see some interesting initiatives come forth from this.

We heard from our critic for the environment that it was a PC government that created the Ministry of the Environment in the province of Ontario.

There’s the Blue Box Program that was expanded from a municipal program to a province-wide program—again, it’s a PC blue colour.

And we all know that Brian Mulroney, a Conservative Prime Minister, with Ronald Reagan, a Republican President, passed the acid rain treaty to protect our Great Lakes. Nobody thought that that initiative would move forward.

I’m looking forward to many more initiatives from all three parties, working together—because that’s really what it’s about. There’s no one party that can claim to care more about the environment. I think we all care about the environment. It’s just a question of how we go about ensuring clean air and clean water for future generations.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you to all the speakers who spoke. Hopefully, I’ll get a chance in my two minutes to mention all of them.

The member from Windsor–Tecumseh talked about some of the challenges with organic waste. He mentioned smell. Interestingly enough, I toured the Muskoka composting site last week, and one of the things that surprised me was that it really didn’t smell. One of the things I learned touring that and touring the recycling centre last week was that, in both cases, plastic bags were a huge part of the problem—trying to manage plastic bags in both the composting and in the recycling centre.

Thank you to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change for offering his support. He talked about

the Waste-Free Ontario Act. Certainly, I’ve heard from environmental critics that it just doesn’t seem to be moving—the timelines are so long that it’s a little discouraging with how slow things are moving. As he pointed out, the Environmental Commissioner notes that 5% of Ontario’s greenhouse gases come from waste. He talked about methane—that it’s somewhere between 5% and 15% according to the ECO. I think this can really make a difference in our greenhouse gases.

Thank you to the member from Wellington–Halton Hills and the PC environment critic who brought up the fact that Keurig Green Mountain has been doing a lot of research on the quality of plastic and recycling, which he highlighted.

The member from Windsor West had some K-Cup stories and talked about contaminating recycling. Certainly, if you use any of those single-use coffee machines in this building, I think it all just ends up in waste, which is one of the problems that would be great to have fixed.

The member from Oxford talked about—and I know he has been a great advocate for trying to stop the landfill site in Ingersoll and giving municipalities a say—and also the member from Thornhill.

Again, thanks to Adam Pfrimmer and Jordan McKenzie—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you.

Mr. Norm Miller: —from Muskoka Roastery, Chris McKillop from Club Coffee, and Susan—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you.

Point of order, the member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Madam Speaker, I believe that we don’t have a quorum right now.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Is a quorum present?

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): A quorum is not present.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): A quorum is now present.

Orders of the day.

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MINISTRY OF MENTAL HEALTH
AND ADDICTIONS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE MINISTÈRE
DE LA SANTÉ MENTALE
ET DES DÉPENDANCES

Ms. Armstrong moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 52, An Act to establish the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions / Projet de loi 52, Loi créant le ministère de la Santé mentale et des dépendances.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: What an important bill this is, as are all the bills we bring to this Legislature to reflect the voices of the constituents we represent.

Today, I am presenting my bill for second reading, Bill 52, An Act to establish the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. This bill originally was introduced by my colleague from Nickel Belt in September 2017. Unfortunately, from that time when it was introduced, the House was prorogued and the bill fell off the order paper, so it gave me the opportunity to highlight the mental health and addictions bill, which is very important to all of us.

I've been speaking about mental health and addictions in my capacity as MPP for many years. I'll illustrate later how these things have come to light, being the representative for London–Fanshawe, and why it became such an important issue for us to bring here to the Legislature and really make changes around it.

I think it's fair to say that more people today are speaking out on the topic of mental health and addictions, because it hasn't been given the attention it deserves. A lot of people feel it's not a topic that is brought out in health care and coordinated and has all the continuity of care and services throughout the province it should have.

I think our communities at this point are starting to take action. They want us to address things in a real way, and they want us to make sure that mental health and addictions are not allowed to fall to stereotypes and stigma when it comes to people accessing treatment. They want to put it at the front of when people access treatment, so that it's there for them at all times.

I have heard countless stories from people who have lived experiences, who have slipped through the cracks and still suffer today. I have heard from family members calling about their loved ones; they don't know what to do to get help for them. Families today are looking for help with mental health and addictions and they're telling us their stories over and over again. They're telling us about wait times for mental health that take days.

I mentioned the many stories I have heard recently—this month—at a town hall that was put on by the London and District Academy of Medicine. They invited all MPPs from the area. I attended and heard stories like this one from Dawn and Dave Warren. They spent years trying to get mental health services in London. This month, when Dawn was rushed to the hospital by ambulance, to the ER, she waited five days on a gurney for treatment. Of course, they have now experienced first-hand the crisis of hallway medicine that's happening in Ontario.

When people like Dawn and Dave need urgent mental health care, they need to get it when they're ready, when they access it at the hospital. No one should ever go without the treatment they need and fall through the cracks.

We're also hearing from patients waiting for mental health services that wait times are up to six months to see a specialist, a psychiatrist, for treatment. There were many times we brought stories from our ridings here to

this Legislature to talk about the opioid crisis. There are hundreds of people dying of overdoses, and my city of London has recently opened a safe injection site to try to respond to those tragedies.

These things haven't happened just overnight. The mental health unit at London Health Sciences Centre is overcrowded. It's been running up to 165% occupancy, which is more than double the occupancy levels considered safe. Like I said earlier about psychiatric treatment, when you're waiting for a psychiatrist—our local psychiatrists have even gone public saying that mental health supports continue to deteriorate, especially as the demand for services grows.

To illustrate that, we have to put real-life stories into the legislation that we create, because that's how we learn. We learn from problems in our ridings and we try to look for solutions.

Another story that I had—I contacted Noah Irvine. He's a young man who went public about his family experience. He shared his personal stories about the loss of his parents. He lost his mother. She died by suicide. He lost his father to an accidental overdose. This is a horrible thing to have happen to a family, and Noah is doing his very best to cope with it and is trying to effect change.

He wrote this letter to me, and I highlighted the first sentence. It says, "It is time for politicians to put politics aside." I think we all agree. When it comes to mental health and addictions, there shouldn't be any kind of partisan politics or games being played. We should all be working together to solve the problem.

There was a committee formed in this Legislature in 2009. It was the all-party select committee that was mandated to go out to all Ontario ridings and talk to people about mental health and addictions, and they did that. I think it was for about 18 months. They talked to hundreds—

Interjection.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I see the member from Peterborough nodding. Maybe he was on that committee.

Interjection.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes, he was, and so was the member from Nickel Belt. I know that because she works with us, and works with me, of course, very closely. I'm sure those stories affected these members gravely.

What happened is they came back to the Legislature and they finished a report in 2010 that provided recommendations on how to make the system better for people who are experiencing mental health and addictions issues. At this point, many of those recommendations haven't been adopted, but one of the things they talked about in the recommendations was to have an umbrella organization oversee the coordination and implementation of mental health and addictions.

We went a little step further, and we said, maybe it needs to have a home. Mental health and addictions needs to have a home, and we need to have a ministry for it where it's transparent, it's accountable and we can do

the good work that needs to be done so people don't have to wait in hallways for mental health treatment and people don't have to die, because of an addiction, of an accidental overdose. We want to make sure those things don't keep happening. It's terrible that it's going on.

Another story, Speaker: When I came to the Legislature, shortly afterwards—it was a very disturbing story, as many of these things are when they happen. Jenepher Watt was a young woman in London. We called her the whistle-blower because she was one of the first ones who came out and said—this was in March 2014, and there was an article written about it. Jenepher Watt went to get emergency treatment for psychiatric help with mental health. She and many other patients were forced to wait for days and sleep on the floor. That was happening. That was a situation that should have never happened.

At that time, it says here that Jenepher was 18 years old. For five years, she was working hard to cope with depression and anxiety. When she tried to stand and stretch after hours of waiting, she was ordered to sit down in a chair. At some point, the hospital people who were there allowed them to sleep on the floor.

The tragedy of this situation, Speaker, is that Jenepher succumbed to suicide in June 2015.

These stories are real, and they're happening in our communities all the time. That's why it's so important that we acknowledge that we need to shine a light and find a home for mental health and addictions so that when people access those services, it's coordinated and there's continuity. No matter where you are, if you live in the north, if you live in rural Ontario, you have the same basket of services you can access in an urban area.

This bill does some wonderful things. It has outlined what the duties and the functions of the minister would be under the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. There are just so many good recommendations here, and I only have so much time, but I starred some of them, and one of them is “to ensure that all Ontarians can seamlessly navigate mental health and addictions supports, including supports for housing, income, employment, peer support and other social services.”

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I think that's a really important one, because we know that there are certain primary things in life that we need before, sometimes, we can access health care or mental health and addictions care. Specifically, if you don't have a home, it's really hard to get the help that you need.

That point (7), “to ensure that all Ontarians can seamlessly navigate” those services is extremely important, so they can get on with the business of getting treatment for themselves.

I know that it's so hard. It's a hardship on families when they have a loved one and they're trying to navigate and coordinate all these services to try to get help. There are wait-lists that sometimes take months. There are children on these wait-lists as well. I think right now, we're looking at 12,000 children on wait-lists for mental health services. That is just not right.

Mental health and addictions is an illness like any other illness. By taking it on as a ministry, it will serve

the best interests of the people who are looking for that help. I really think that it's going to make such a world of difference.

When I received the letter from Noah—he's talking about how he wants us to put partisan political games aside. I say that that's what we're here for. When we come to this House, we are here to represent our constituents and their struggles and also, sometimes, the wonderful things that are happening, because that can also promote legislation. If something in your riding is really working well, we can make it work for all our communities. That's our responsibility: to come here and make sure that we work together and we look at this bill today.

I'm looking forward to the debate on this with all my colleagues in the House, so that we can come to an understanding that it's time for action now on mental health and addictions. We can't wait any longer. If we put our heads together, I know that we can make a difference in making this go forward and helping people in Ontario get the help that they need.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Further debate? The Minister of Government and Consumer Services and the minister responsible for accessibility.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, Speaker. You got the whole title in there. That's great.

It is my pleasure to speak on Bill 52 this afternoon, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions Act. I'd like to thank the member opposite for bringing this issue forward, as it does provide another opportunity for all of us to talk about an issue that does affect so many Ontarians.

We know how important it is to support people throughout all stages of life, and we know that 30% of Ontarians will experience a mental health or addictions challenge in their lifetime—30%; that's very significant. If you haven't faced a mental health issue yourself, you probably know someone in your family, a friend in your community or, certainly, constituents. That's a pretty high number, Speaker.

We know, and we always talk about it on this side of the House, that there is no health without mental health. They're two sides of the same coin and of equal priority. Everyone in Ontario deserves access to mental health services, to support them in living fulfilled and healthy lives. We've been making these investments to support our 2011 strategy; that is, the transformation of the mental health system.

But we knew, Speaker, that there was more to do, which is why we spent the last three years working with our Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council on a path forward, to build mental health systems that are there for everyone, no matter what their need, their age or ability to pay. It's a very impressive list of members, a huge cross-section of professionals, people with lived experience, and community people, on our Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council. I want to acknowledge them and thank them for the work they've done.

We've listened; the government has listened to what the council has said. We've listened to people with lived experience—the patients, the families, the mental health and addictions experts, indigenous partners, the clinicians and the front-line workers who sit on our council.

We know that we have more work to do. That's why we created a plan for mental health and addictions. It's comprehensive, coordinated and compassionate—a plan accompanied with a historic investment of \$2.1 billion. Our government is already hard at work to expand the services so that people grappling with mental health challenges can access the supports they need where and when they need them.

We're very glad the third party agrees that we need to invest more in mental health. However, on this side we believe there's more that can be done. It is disappointing to see that the NDP would cut \$500 million from what we have put forward as a plan for this province when it comes to mental health, with no investments in community mental health services and no plans to support Ontarians who are struggling with an addiction—nothing about improving access to treatment, expanding residential care or improving access to withdrawal management. The NDP plan for mental health leaves us questioning how they will support the entire continuum of care without investments in community mental health programs or in acute mental health care.

Our plan for mental health is comprehensive, coordinated and compassionate, and responds to the needs across lifespans and across levels of need. That's the same approach across the entire health care sector—a thoughtful approach that really does address the needs of Ontarians. We need that system that spans across multiple ministries to support people at various points in their lives.

Speaker, it was only a few weeks ago that Mayor John Tory himself said, "Cities don't need new federal or provincial ministries, but better coordination among the existing ones responsible for health, education, housing, policing and others impacted by unaddressed mental health issues...." I completely agree with Mayor Tory's perspective on this.

That's certainly what I heard when I led consultations across the province on our special-needs strategy for children and youth. I met with families, service providers and experts from around our province who informed the special-needs strategy for children and youth and I heard the same thing: The services need to be better coordinated. Families—in this case, children and youth—need to know how to navigate the system. It's very consistent with what Mayor Tory has said.

That's exactly what our government heard at a Mental Wellness Table between many ministries that touch on mental health, like education, corrections, children and youth, justice and indigenous relations. We listen to our partners and stakeholders who see the realities of mental health and addictions every day.

I can speak from my own family's lived experience that coordination, access to information and navigating

the system is what we hear all the time. I certainly felt that in my own family. I like to think, as a mom, I'm pretty informed about how government works, about how the mental health system works, but it's a challenge. It's a challenge to get that information, to coordinate it and to navigate it, in this case on behalf of one of my children.

There has been progress there, but, again, I agree with Mayor Tory in his view that setting up a ministry itself is not necessarily going to address those critical issues that I know I have felt and that the expert panel has advised on as well.

Finding time and money to establish a new ministry—while the NDP was doing that, what this government has been doing is listening to the advice of those who are living those realities, like my family and others that the expert panel heard from. We want to focus on providing supports and services that people need right now, so we're making an unprecedented investment in mental health and addictions that will improve care for those who experience mental health or addictions challenges in their lifetime.

We announced the largest investment in Canadian history in mental health and addictions services, the four-year investment of \$2.1 billion I mentioned, that will reframe the system to deliver more accessible and better-integrated care—care that will make it easier to access supports through public schools, colleges and universities, family doctors' offices and hospitals from urban centres to small cities—a plan that will build 2,475 new supportive housing spaces for those who need additional care and support where they live in their community.

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We'll be providing publicly funded psychotherapy for up to 350,000 more people with mild to moderate anxiety or depression, based on the UK's psychotherapy model, which has already seen extremely positive results. We'll be increasing support for outstanding community organizations delivering results, such as local Canadian Mental Health Association chapters and Addictions and Mental Health Ontario member organizations.

We'll also be doing more to help those with a dual diagnosis; I know that came up in the select committee on mental health, which a number of members here participated on. That is to help and focus on people with a developmental disability as well as a mental health illness.

We're expanding funding by almost \$130 million for addiction treatment and supports for youth and adults, including hiring more peer support workers and opening more withdrawal management and residential treatment spaces. The peer support piece, I think, is particularly important for our children and youth. In the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, not only are there lead agencies in every community for our children and youth, but there's a youth outreach worker program, where often peers of youth struggling with mental health issues work side by side to help youth in their own communities, to connect them to resources, and provide information and peer support, which I think is invaluable and immeasur-

able. For any of us who have kids, teenagers or young adults, you know that that peer relationship is critical. I think it's essential in the context of mental health and well-being.

We will create thousands of new spaces for community services for our children, and I think we're all pretty excited by our plan to have every high school in Ontario have access to additional mental health workers. There will be more mental health services on campuses, so our sons, daughters, nieces, nephews and family can get the help they need if they're struggling with an anxiety or eating disorder.

Once the system is fully up, a new helpline will offer crisis counselling and referrals, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I want to give a shout-out to the mental health support systems and counselling lines that are already there for children and youth, especially Kids Help Phone. They do a fantastic service. I just want to say thank you to the people who make that happen.

Our historic investments will help reduce wait-lists and make it easier for people to access care when they need it. There is an incredible number of investments this government is making. We know there is more to do, and we do have to rely on what people with lived experience and experts tell us in terms of how to keep investing and moving forward to support people with mental health and addictions.

Again, I go back to Mayor Tory's quote: "Cities don't need new federal or provincial ministries, but better coordination among the existing ones responsible for health, education, housing, policing and others impacted by unaddressed mental health issues...."

That whole principle of making sure you get the right information, making sure you can navigate the system, whether you're navigating it yourself or whether a family member or advocate is doing it on your behalf, is so important.

We have many wonderful resources out there. I mentioned our lead agencies for children and youth across the province. They're doing a fantastic job working with other service providers in the community to make the process much more streamlined.

Of course there's more we can do, and that's exactly why we've introduced a historic, unprecedented investment for mental health and addictions going forward.

I'm very proud of this government's record and the work that we've done.

I'm happy that the NDP is raising this discussion further, so I want to thank the member for bringing this bill forward. And I want to thank you, Speaker, for allowing me to participate in this very important debate. As we say, there's no health without mental health.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill 52, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions Act, 2018. I'd like to commend the member from London-Fanshawe for her advocacy on this issue and for bringing it back to the Legislature.

In my role as the official opposition critic for education and post-secondary education, I meet regularly and discuss the current challenges in Ontario schools with students, parents, education workers and a variety of other stakeholders in the education sector. In those discussions, there's unanimous agreement that the growing mental health needs of children and youth are the most significant challenge in our schools and communities today.

To illustrate this challenge, according to the 2018 pre-budget submission from Children's Mental Health Ontario, titled Kids Can't Wait, more than 12,000 children and youth are waiting to access mental health services. In some parts of Ontario, children and youth are waiting a shocking 18 months for mental health treatment, with resulting profound negative impacts on a child or youth's well-being and their families.

The pre-budget submission from Children's Mental Health Ontario also cites the findings of a 2016 audit of child and youth mental health services in Ontario. That audit found that the wait-times are a substantive public health issue, which isn't surprising, and that the government has not allocated sufficient resources to meet the needs of the growing number of children and youth seeking treatment.

In response to some of the challenges that I have just cited and some of which have been long-standing in the area of mental health, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario struck the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions in 2009. Some of the members of that committee are in the chamber this afternoon to join this debate—the Minister of Agriculture, for example.

In August 2010, the committee presented its final report, titled Navigating the Journey to Wellness: The Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Ontarians. This report outlined 23 recommendations related to a comprehensive mental health and addictions plan for Ontarians. I should point out that none of the select committee's recommendations called for the creation of a new Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. In fact, the first recommendation states "All mental health and addictions programs and services—for all regions of the province and for all ages, including children and youth—should be consolidated in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care."

The proposed new ministry would require significant time, money and additional support staff. I offer this opinion, Speaker, having worked in the civil service as a civil servant—in fact, with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Finance. It would cause a large amount of funding to be allocated to bureaucracy, rather than the front-line support that the most vulnerable Ontarians desperately need and deserve—and some of which we've heard, by way of example, earlier in the debate.

When I step back and I assess what is before us today, it's clear to me that it's time for Ontario to replace an approach that is clearly fragmented, related to mental health, with a comprehensive strategy to help the most

vulnerable Ontarians. It's time that mental health issues receive the same attention and prioritization as physical health.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I was one of the very fortunate MPPs who got to sit with some of my colleagues that are here today on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. At the time, in 2009, I had only been an MPP for two years. I came from 25 years in health care; in my mind, I had seen it all and I had heard it all. When we started on this journey of looking into our mental health and addictions system—or lack thereof—in Ontario, I realized that I knew nothing and I had seen nothing. It was a life-changing experience for each and every one of us when we saw how poorly our mental health services failed people, failed families, with catastrophic outcomes. All of it could be prevented. All of it could have been completely avoided had we had a mental health system that worked.

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We came out of those 18 months, after listening to hundreds of people and reading many, many documents, convinced that what we have now—we have some good people who tried really hard, but they are spread across 10 different ministries that have tried many, many times to have an inter-ministry pooling of resources and have an overseeing board to try to organize this, and look where we are. We are no further ahead than we were in 2009. We still have over 440 children's mental health agencies; we have 330 community mental health agencies; we have 150 substance abuse treatment agencies; we have 50 problem gambling centres. The list goes on and on, and yet everywhere you go, people fall through the cracks.

Throughout the province there isn't a basket of services that is guaranteed to be there. There are some excellent programs that happen in some places, but they are not available in others. I can tell you that if you, like me, live north of the French River, north of Parry Sound, there is no children's long-term therapy. There is none. Zero. It doesn't exist. Yet we know that this type of treatment is so valuable to help one of the 12,000 children on the wait-list for children's mental health.

This is why 18 months later we all stood together, all three parties, held a press conference and said that our number one recommendation is to give mental health and addictions a home, to make sure that we have someone responsible for making sure that a basket of services is available throughout Ontario, equitably—it doesn't matter if you come from a First Nation, if you're francophone, if you're a new immigrant to Ontario or if you are a senior with diagnosed depression, we will have a basket of services that will be available equitably to all of us, no matter where we live, because this is what we need.

I have no problem with what the member from the Liberal Party said, that they are going to invest more money into the system. Yes, the system needs more

money, but it also needs a home. It needs a ministry; it needs someone in charge of making sure it happens, because the collaborations that we have seen happening between the existing ministries have failed. They have failed thousands of people with catastrophic outcomes. The time has come for this Legislature to do better.

How do you do this? You put forward a Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. You make sure that you give 28,000 or more Ontarians access to mental health—and this is part of the NDP platform—with 2,200 new mental health care workers. You build more supportive housing—because housing first. If you are somebody with a severe mental illness living on the street, homeless, it is almost impossible for you to get better.

We need supportive housing, and the NDP is committed to 30,000 new supportive housing units. We will cut mental health wait times for children to a maximum of 30 days with a \$590-million investment, and invest in 400 more mental health care workers in order to provide mental health supports in every high school in our province, as well as continue the work that has been done with Ontario's Dementia Strategy with an investment of \$100 million more.

At the core of it all, if we want this to be successful, it won't be simply investing more money into a system that doesn't exist. It will mean giving mental health and addictions a home, putting somebody in charge—somebody responsible for making sure that improvements are done and somebody whom you can hold to account if changes are not done that lead us to better mental health care.

The mission is clear: to reduce the burden of mental illness and addiction by ensuring that all Ontario residents have timely and equitable access to an integrated system of excellent, coordinated and efficient promotion, prevention, early intervention treatment and community support programs. This is what the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions will deliver to the people of Ontario.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I appreciate the opportunity today to add a few words to the discussion that we have had with regard to the suggestions in Bill 52, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions Act, 2018.

I can't imagine that many people become members of provincial Parliament, set up a constituency office and don't discover first-hand what we are talking about today. It seems to me that every one of us has had a family or a family member come in in crisis, and we, as MPPs, are virtually unable to do anything.

When you look at a waiting list of 12,000 children, that waiting list is looking at more than a year of waiting.

I listen to those families that are faced every day with an issue around a particular child in the family, or a family member. It serves to remind me that none of us are free from the potential of mental health and/or addictions scoring on our families. There is no group that is free from this possibility. It doesn't matter how much

money you have. Middle-class or whatever identifier you use; struggling new Canadians; people of every faith and background—there is nothing that ensures that you don't become part of this.

As a member of the PC caucus—we support a greater focus on mental health and addictions, and the delivery of proper services for those seeking help. We join in our commitment to recognition of how terrible it is for families across the province, and for people looking for answers in a timely way.

I believe that this bill was crafted with those kinds of intentions, but I do have some concerns. I am concerned that the creation of a new ministry will create a new layer of bureaucracy that will require money, staff, mandates and more, at the expense of investing in front-line initiatives. Certainly, in my conversations with members of the children's mental health community in York region, they have as their top priority the ability to reach the front line and make a difference for every family.

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's an honour to stand today and speak to Bill 52, An Act to establish the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions.

I want to say that one of the amazing things I'm going to miss for a few months, once we leave this place to hit the hustings, will be the good discussions that are had at private members' public business. I think there's a unique level of openness, perhaps, and honesty about the situations that we see in our constituencies, about issues that are really personal, and also issues that are very impactful in our particular constituencies. We see members bringing forward things that are in the broader public good, but also things that they feel very passionately about. I think that's really a wonderful testament to the nature of the Legislature, in allowing for that personal advocacy and that constituency work.

All Ontario residents benefit from the growing awareness of mental health issues. I think, as we've seen already today, there is a consensus in the Legislature around the need to improve access to mental health services, although we may disagree on how that is done.

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Attitudes toward mental health are definitely improving in the province and stigma surrounding mental health is declining, thanks to help from initiatives like Bell Let's Talk Day and also personal stories shared by public figures. I think of the very personal story shared by my colleague Lisa MacLeod, the MPP for Nepean-Carleton, who has been open about her struggles with mental health as well.

However, there are still very troubling signs that we're not doing as much as we can, particularly for children and youth. Statistics from the Canadian Institute for Health Information show that from 2006-07 to 2015-16, emergency department visits for mental health and substance abuse issues among children and youth aged five to 24 have increased by 63%. During the same period, hospitalizations for mental health disorders rose by 67%.

We see among youth an increasing rise in awareness about mental health and also a need to provide those services.

Children's Mental Health Ontario studied the data and concluded that our current mental health system is not working optimally. I think we can all agree on that. We all know someone, whether it is a friend, a neighbour, a family relation or ourselves, who suffers or has suffered from one of a range of mental health issues. Whether it's depression, anxiety, mood disorders or substance abuse, we have all seen the terrible impact inflicted on individuals who often don't know where to turn until it's simply too late.

Emergency rooms in hospitals are not the best option for early intervention and preventive treatment. We've seen estimates that we can prevent up to 60,000 youth from having to access these last-resort options through strategic investments in community-based child and youth mental health and addiction centres.

I wanted to speak about child and youth mental health issues, because, again, on the pre-budget hearing committee that I was travelling with earlier this year in Sudbury, we heard the story of a young man who came forward and very bravely shared his experience with mental health and how he attempted suicide and has had friends who, sadly, did commit suicide due to lack of treatment that there was for mental health.

I'm glad that the member is bringing forward a bill that gives us the opportunity to, again, raise awareness about mental health. I do want to say that, as the member for—

Interjection: London-Fanshawe.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: No. As Lady Munro said—sorry; I can't remember her riding right now.

Interjection: York-Simcoe.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: York-Simcoe. My apologies.

As the member for York-Simcoe mentioned, we have to make sure that we're not duplicating services, that there isn't simply an increase in bureaucracy, but that we're really pushing and making sure we do have a focus on front-line care and we're taking care of people where they're at and not increasing bureaucracy and the cost of administration.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): The member from Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am very pleased to stand and take my time to speak about Bill 52, An Act to establish the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions.

It is always an important opportunity when we can talk about mental health. I was just thinking about how far we've come as a society and as a broader community, that we speak more freely about mental health and addictions; that we have not just the language and the words, but we're starting to develop a compassion and an understanding, broadly.

However, those are conversations. The real work, or part of that real work, has to be: "Where do we go from here?" This is a very important piece to that story. How do we make the change that we need to see across our

communities, whether they be northern and rural, whether they're in Oshawa, whether it's deep here in the heart of Toronto or everywhere else across the province?

We are in a common struggle. As we've heard, all of us who manage and maintain and do work in our constituency offices know that people don't ever walk through our door with just one issue; they come in with complex needs, and oftentimes, there are mental health pieces, whether for themselves or with their family.

What we see is a patchwork system in this province. As we've heard, what we're talking about today is creating a ministry, a stand-alone ministry, that would have a finger in every one of those pies, that would be the home.

When we look at our communities—and I can't speak about your communities, but I can talk about Oshawa. When we see folks who don't have a place to call their own, who don't have a safe space, who may not have affordable housing or appropriate or safe, predictable housing—when they find themselves living in precarious situations, oftentimes dealing with mental health. Sometimes they're on the street or in our community, tucked into nooks and crannies, because of mental health. Sometimes the fact that they don't have a home or a place to be safe exacerbates or creates those conditions. When you have an individual who doesn't have a space, they find themselves in our other institutions. They find themselves in our emergency rooms. They find themselves in our jails and facilities. They do not find themselves where they deserve to be, and that is somewhere supported.

When we think about those individuals—and I bet everyone in this room can put a face, a name and a personal story to someone they know in their home community, in their office, on their street—if we could find them a home, if we could get them the supports, what a difference that would make to them, and what a difference that would make to their neighbours, and to their future participation.

I'm making that connection because we want a home for mental health. Mental health should not just have to wander and get a little bit in all of our systems. It needs a home. Imagine a ministry that is responsible for all of the ways that mental health connects with our communities. When we talk about our youth, when we talk about our first responders, when we talk about our seniors and everybody in between—these are folks who deserve appropriately designed supports working with the front lines, working with the experts, working with all of these recommendations that come time and time again.

How do we put that together? We've got all of these pieces, but we don't know what the picture on the puzzle box looks like. This is what that can look like. This is that puzzle box. We can actually piece something together that is going to make a difference and make all of us better.

I'm coming here from committee. I was sitting in on Bill 6, about corrections. There are a lot of conversations

about mental health in our institutions and in our facilities, but they talked about that continuity of care—that people who are living and working in our jails also are from the community, go back to the community. We don't have any kind of continuous pathways.

We have changes to our system. PTSD—which we've been talking about a lot in this Legislature these past four years—used to be an anxiety disorder. It has been reclassified now—DSM-5. What that also means is that the people who have to diagnose our officers, our first responders and our folks with PTSD are psychiatrists and psychologists—no longer just your family doctor. Well, what does that mean? Up north, where they don't have psychiatrists and psychologists, does that mean they can't get a diagnosis?

You've got unbelievable pieces to this, and we have to bring all those parts together. We can talk about the waiting lists, but what if you can't get on a waiting list? What if you can't get a diagnosis? What happens to you?

To have a minister to stand up and have to answer questions, or to say, "Wow, I don't know, but I'll get back to you," and actually have a team to start to do that work—you would not just have a home, you would not just have a patchwork system; you would be able to design a provincial plan that is in the best interests of all Ontarians—all the Ontarians who we work for, who we work with, who we are. This is something that Ontarians deserve.

Of course, I fully support this ministry. I've heard the criticisms about bureaucracy, but the idea that they think it should be in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care—it needs a home. Right now, we have a challenged ministry that is dealing with hallway medicine and all of these other things. I don't want to just add one more log to that fire. I want to address mental health and addictions, and this is an opportunity that we should all support.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): The member from London–Fanshawe has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'd like to say thank you to the speakers to the bill: the Minister of Government and Consumer Services and the minister responsible for accessibility, the member from Whitby–Oshawa, the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook, the member from Nickel Belt, the member from Oshawa, and the member from York–Simcoe.

Speaker, once we hear an idea or a change for the better—ideas that we bring forward—sometimes people don't understand those things right now or they can't see the vision in the future for what that looks like. That's why it's really important that we have these debates and that people open their minds to legislation that's brought forward.

1610

These are things that we have to consider. There have been so many good ideas that have come from the NDP that have been adopted recently. There is another way

that we can make change for the better happen in mental health and addictions in Ontario, and that is to have a ministry that can, like I said, be responsible, accountable and transparent for mental health and addictions. It's time to do that. It hasn't been working very well so far. Yes, there has been money thrown at it, but we need a system in order to navigate where those funds are going to work best and where people are going to access treatment when they want it.

I talked about Jenepher Watt. That was in 2014. That was four years ago. She died by suicide. Noah Irvine's father died by accidental overdose in 2015. That was three years ago. These are just two examples of thousands of people in this province who have endured and family members who have suffered. It's time that we truly make a change for the better and really push and make this happen, once we get to committee, to have a Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions today.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

SUPPORTING WINE JOBS
AND GROWTH IN THE NIAGARA
REGION ACT, 2018
LOI DE 2018 VISANT À SOUTENIR
LES EMPLOIS DANS L'INDUSTRIE DU VIN
ET LA CROISSANCE DANS LA RÉGION
DE NIAGARA

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): We will deal first with ballot item number 10, standing in the name of Mr. Gates.

Mr. Gates has moved second reading of Bill 50, An Act to amend the Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act, 1996 with respect to Ontario wineries.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Mr. Gates, which committee would you like to refer this to?

Mr. Wayne Gates: General government.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Is it the pleasure of the House that the bill be referred to general government? Carried.

WASTE REDUCTION

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Mr. Miller, Parry Sound–Muskoka, has moved private member's notice of motion number 29.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Mr. Miller, congratulations.

MINISTRY OF MENTAL HEALTH
AND ADDICTIONS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE MINISTÈRE
DE LA SANTÉ MENTALE
ET DES DÉPENDANCES

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Ms. Armstrong has moved second reading of Bill 52, An Act to establish the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Ms. Armstrong?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Social policy, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Is it the pleasure of the House that the bill be referred to social policy? Agreed? Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ACCESS TO CONSUMER CREDIT
REPORTS AND ELEVATOR
AVAILABILITY ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L'ACCÈS AU RAPPORT
DE SOLVABILITÉ DU CONSOMMATEUR
ET LA DISPONIBILITÉ DES ASCENSEURS

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 17, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act and the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000 /
Projet de loi 8, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les renseignements concernant le consommateur et la Loi de 2000 sur les normes techniques et la sécurité.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 19, 2018, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. MacCharles has moved second reading of Bill 8, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act and the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000.

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 five-minute bell.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Cristina Martins): "Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on second reading on Bill 8, Access to Consumer Credit Reports and Elevator Availability Act, be deferred until deferred votes on Monday, April 23, 2018."

Second reading vote deferred.

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 19, 2018, on the motion for time allocation of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: Here we are debating yet another time allocation motion, this time on budget Bill 31. Having read through the actual motion, I would say it's more draconian than usual. It appears to me to be just going through the motions of actually having a legislative process; it is such a compacted process of committee hearings etc. and extremely tight timelines ending on May 7.

This is the first opportunity I've had to speak about the budget or the budget bill, so there are a few things I wanted to talk about, to begin with, about debt and deficit. After promising balanced budgets last year, this government is back to deficit spending, adding to our \$325 billion of debt. The Liberals don't seem to have any shame about this staggering debt. Let's not forget it was the member for Mississauga–Streetsville who said, "We have tripled [the debt] and we're proud of it."

It is obvious they're proud of increasing the debt because they're doing it again in this budget with a \$6.7-billion deficit. Not just that, but they're projecting six more years of deficits. That's using their new, special type of accounting, which the Auditor General calls bogus accounting, so that the numbers are really quite a bit higher than that. One item alone, the independent electricity operator: If you accounted for that properly, it adds \$1.3 billion onto the deficit. There are a few other aspects in the way they account for pensions that add more, so the deficit is actually far higher than this projected \$6.7 billion, and that should be of concern to people in the province of Ontario. I remember it was about \$140 billion when this government came into power. With those six consecutive years of deficit, it will be up to some \$400 billion.

We're already paying some \$12.5 billion a year—over a billion dollars a month—to service the debt. Remember, that's money that could be used for other purposes. It's crowding out needed funds, like support for our rural small hospitals. It's going to fall on the heads of our children and grandchildren.

What happens when the interest rate goes up, as it has been slowly creeping up? For every 1% increase in interest rates, that's \$500 million more that is spent on interest serving the debt of the province.

I know the finance critic, the member from Nipissing, spoke yesterday. He talked about the Minister of Finance going on a program and making four points, which he then went through very methodically to prove that they were questionable. One of them was that he said that the net debt to gross domestic product was going down. It's actually at 37.5% and it's not going down. It's going the other way.

Just like you and I, the amount of debt we carry impacts our credit rating. The province's credit rating impacts the interest we pay on our debt. This budget, with its \$6.7-billion deficit, has spooked the credit rating agencies to the point where, just this week, Moody's downgraded Ontario's financial outlook from stable to negative. Here's an article headline in the Financial Post:

"Moody's just Downgraded Ontario's Financial Outlook to 'Negative.'

"Ratings agency warns plan to run six consecutive multi-billion-dollar deficits will challenge finances.

"Toronto—A key ratings agency has downgraded its outlook on Ontario's finances to 'negative' from 'stable' in light of the Liberal government's plan to run six consecutive multi-billion-dollar deficits." It goes on. It would be worth reading, certainly if you have the time to read the whole article.

I wanted to talk a bit about the way this government is affecting small business in the province. Unlike the government, small businesses can't just borrow more and more money. This budget makes life harder, again, for small business owners, who create jobs across Ontario. This budget increases taxes on small business by stealth, quietly following on the coattails of their federal cousins, despite the protests we saw to the federal changes.

1620

Small businesses have already been hard hit by this government, between the minimum wage increase and all the other changes in Bill 148, not to mention the huge increase in hydro rates, and increased regulation and red tape.

Just yesterday, I received an email from a coffee shop in Huntsville that is way behind. They're behind, like, \$7,000 on their hydro bill, and they're wondering how they're going to stay in business.

One small business owner, another one from Huntsville, who I've spoken to is struggling to make ends meet. When she hired someone full-time, the Ontario Works program gave that individual \$500 for a clothing allowance, but the business owner can't afford to replace her own clothing and shoes.

Another business owner in Parry Sound told me he would stop hiring part-time staff because of the public holiday provisions that require even part-time staff to be paid a full day's pay for all the public holidays. So if you work three different part-time jobs, for every public holiday you get paid for three full days of work. How does that make any sense? You could go out and get three or more part-time jobs and, for every public holiday, you get paid from every employer.

As a former small business owner who employed full-time and part-time staff, this is absolutely ridiculous. It certainly will encourage businesses to stop hiring part-time people, and that will just hurt those people who are trying to get a job to supplement their income, or as part of their income.

I believe that all members of this House received a letter from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business about this. I hope they will read the letter and

talk to business owners in their ridings about this rule, because it just makes no sense—

Interjection.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'd love for the member for St. Catharines to explain to me how it makes any sense at all, because it makes no sense—absolutely no sense.

While this government will talk about cutting the small business income tax rate, these other measures show the government's lack of understanding of what it's like to be in business in the province. In fact, the member for Barrie actually told business people that if they can't afford the changes, they shouldn't be in business.

Of course in this budget there's also a \$2,400 increase for business, with the changes to the rules for the employer health tax.

There is one business sector that this government is supporting in the budget, and that's craft breweries. There are a number of craft breweries in my riding, so I do want, on their behalf, to thank the government for increasing the maximum amount of beer a small brewery can produce and still be eligible for the Small Beer Manufacturers' Tax Credit. I know the operators of breweries in my riding do appreciate this change.

Many members of the Legislature will be familiar with some of the local breweries from the Speaker's and Ontario Craft Brewers tasting night, which is always a very popular and full event here at Queen's Park. At that event, I was pleased to have a number of breweries from the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. In fact, Muskoka Brewery, Highlander Brew Co. and Lake of Bays Brewing Co. were all represented. I want to congratulate Lake of Bays Brewing on winning the Pilsner category for their Switchback pilsner.

I would also like to recognize my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings for his advocacy on behalf of small brewers. He has introduced a private member's bill to allow craft brewers to sell one another's products. That is something that, when it was debated, the Liberal members supported, so it just is something that hasn't been acted on yet. I hope it will be acted on in the not-too-distant future.

Small business people across my riding understand that businesses cannot be successful without a strong community around them, and the community needs to include hospital services. One thing that has not changed in the budget, or the budget bill, was the funding formula for small and medium-sized hospitals.

The mayor of Bracebridge, Graydon Smith, presented to the standing committee on economic affairs during the pre-budget consultations on this issue. I know the mayors of my riding had been discussing this issue with the previous Minister of Health—who was here visiting today—for a number of years. Recently, the mayors felt he had been listening and they were hopeful that they would see a change in this budget. But there is no mention of a change.

Instead of addressing the funding formula for small and medium-sized hospitals, the government announced

a 4.6% increase in overall hospital funding. That sounds pretty good, except that you get to the smaller and rural hospitals and you find out that they got increases that don't even cover the costs that they have no control over. For Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, which has hospitals in Huntsville and Bracebridge, they got a 1.4% increase. The West Parry Sound Health Centre received a 1% increase, while hospitals in York region received an 11.5% increase.

That 1.4% and 1% increases don't even cover the increases in hydro costs they've had or in contracts that are negotiated that they have no control over, that are negotiated beyond their control. So they're actually still going backwards. That's something that's a huge, huge issue, especially—well, in the whole riding and in many other ridings. My hospitals need more funding in order to maintain core services, but just like this government's approach to rural schools, they just look at the numbers and don't look at the impact on the towns, the people and the businesses in those towns.

Right now, the residents of Huntsville, Bracebridge and all the surrounding towns and villages are nervous about losing either Huntsville District Memorial or South Muskoka Memorial Hospital. Because of the current funding, Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare is considering whether to maintain the two hospitals with existing services, operate one as an in-patient facility and the other as an outpatient facility, or move to a single site.

Madam Speaker, I can see I'm running out of time. I fully support two fully functioning hospitals, and I call upon the minister to ensure that rural Ontario and small-town Ontario receive adequate funding.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Ballard has moved government notice of motion number 7, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 31, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

Mr. James J. Bradley: I've got good news.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): You've got good news? Okay. Let's see the good news. I've got a deferral:

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government notice of motion number 7 be deferred until Monday, April 23, 2018."

Vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Orders of the day. I recognize the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Hon. Laura Albanese: Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Albanese has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

This House stands adjourned until Monday, April 23, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1628.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (IND)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Hon. / L'hon. Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (IND)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
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
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
MacLaren, Jack (IND)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, 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**

Chair / Présidente: Ann Hoggarth
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

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
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
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Sophie Kiwala
Granville Anderson, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Brad Duguid, Wayne Gates
Sophie Kiwala, Cristina Martins
Sam Oosterhoff, Randy Pettapiece
Shafiq Qadri
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
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Jim McDonell, Arthur Potts
Shafiq Qadri, Ross Romano
Liz Sandals, Monique Taylor
Soo Wong
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Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
Joe Dickson, Amrit Mangat
Michael Mantha, Deborah Matthews
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
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Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Lisa MacLeod
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**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
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Lorne Coe, Mike Colle
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