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Jeudi
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 26 April 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 26 avril 2018

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT CONTRACT WAGES
ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LES SALAIRES
POUR LES MARCHÉS PUBLICS

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 25, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 53, An Act respecting the establishment of minimum government contract wages / Projet de loi 53, Loi concernant la fixation de salaires minimums pour les marchés publics.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When we last debated this issue, the member from Welland had the floor.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'm going to be sharing the remaining nine minutes with the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to recognize the member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Some 420 years ago, William Shakespeare wrote a play, *Much Ado About Nothing*. I reference this because this fair wage legislation hasn't received the same reviews as *Much Ado About Nothing*. In fact, some of the players in this Liberal performance say this bill is much ado about nothing because the Liberals didn't need legislation.

David Frame says the Liberals already hold the regulatory authority to bring wage schedules up to date. Speaker, just so you know, David Frame is the director of government relations at the Ontario General Contractors Association. He would star in one of the lead roles if this Liberal production of *Much Ado About Nothing* ever went on the road. I can just imagine the contrast he would provide to Pat Dillon.

Mr. Dillon, of course, would be a headliner in the Liberal play about *Much Ado About Nothing*. Pat's the secretary treasurer of the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario, a long-time supporter and funder of the Liberal Party of Ontario. He has been quoted in the media as saying that not only will this proposed legislation help protect the wages of workers but will ensure safety on the job as well. I hope to have time to talk more about safety on the job later.

My question to the Liberals is, if, as David Frame claims, you already have the regulatory power and authority to adjust wage rates for those working on government projects, why did you see the need for this legislation just days before you call a provincial election?

There will be other players on the stage if this Liberal production ever hits the road. We can see Wayne Peterson out there. He's the executive director of the Construction Employers Coordinating Council of Ontario. He's been quoted by the *Canadian Press* as saying "the industry welcomes the new bill and would have liked to have seen it introduced earlier."

Well, there you have it. We all may have liked to have seen it introduced earlier. After all, the Liberals have been in office with the power and authority to change the regulations on this bill at any time for the past 15 years. So we ask again, why now? Why, on the eve of a provincial election, are we hearing about this legislative change now? I think the answer is pretty obvious, Speaker.

David Frame, the director of government relations over at OGCA, the Ontario General Contractors Association, said he had discussions with the Liberals about a year ago, then nothing, not a word. He was taken off guard when word got out that the legislation was written up and ready to roll. You will recall, Speaker, that Mr. Frame is the guy who said the legislation isn't needed as the Liberals hold the authority to make a wage adjustment in the regulations that govern the government contract workers act or its predecessor.

So, much ado about nothing, or a creation of those hordes of young Liberal staffers wearing red lab suits, slaving away late at night in corner offices dreaming up ways to grab a media headline which might cast the leader and the party in a new light, maybe even launch a favourable media story. I can see them now, Speaker. Shakespeare before Tim Hortons: "Double, double toil and trouble; / Fire burn and cauldron bubble"—a magic brew to help the leader and the party turn the channel, turn the page, after 15 years. The cry goes out, "We need a fresh idea."

This is what they came up with and, yet, even their best friend in the construction business, Patrick Dillon, warned that this move may not be popular with all contractors in the province.

Speaker, I'm going to skip ahead a bit because I know I'm going to run into some time restrictions. One thing I wanted to point out, something that I see as an egregious oversight in this legislation, is that right now it deals with construction workers, it deals with the people who provide security and cleaning services. No one doubts they

deserve a fair wage, but why has the proposed bill neglected to include the men and women who cook the meals, serve the food, and take your cash and credit card at breakfast and lunch? They all work downstairs.

I hope it's just an oversight and it will be corrected. We all know them by name: Lucas, Vlad, Jackie, Alex, Leo, Andrea, Judy, Callie and the many others who work downstairs. They serve at our receptions. They prepare our meals. They wash our dishes. Don't tell me the government is going to bite the hand that feeds them. Treat everyone else on a government contract with dignity and respect and ignore just one classification of workers? Everyone on a government contract in a government building should be treated the same. I know my leader agrees with that. I can't speak for the Conservatives, nor would I want to. But the Liberals could have amended this policy years ago; they could have fixed this. This is what leaves people so disappointed with Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals.

Getting back to health and safety, this weekend across Ontario, indeed across Canada, we'll commemorate the National Day of Mourning. We'll lower our flags in Ontario on all provincial buildings, and all municipal and federal buildings as well. Flags will be lowered at our schools, colleges, universities, fire halls, police stations, libraries and civic arenas. We will mourn the dead and renew our commitment to fight for the living.

Worker safety is important. Last year in Ontario, 54 workers were killed on the job. One is too many; we lost 54. Dozens more died from illnesses from unsafe workplaces. Hundreds of workers were injured on the job. We need to pay more respect to our injured workers. We need the WSIB to treat our injured workers with more respect. We need the WSIB to listen to the medical people treating our injured workers on a regular basis. We don't need the WSIB dreaming up fictional job placements. We don't need them denying claims because they believe, without evidence, there may have been a pre-existing condition that contributed to an injury. It wasn't evident until an injury occurred, so why make it an issue now?

0910

Fair wages are one thing; fair treatment is another. To those who have lost loved ones who never came home from work, you are not alone. We share your grief. We also grieve with the families of at least 15 workers killed in Ontario so far this year—15—Speaker. Just recently we lost a construction worker in Windsor, 24-year-old Michael Gerald Cobb, killed in what has been called a freak accident at a plant where concrete girders are made. Another worker suffered serious injuries in that incident as well.

So, Speaker, when we see the flags lowered on all municipal, provincial and federal buildings this weekend, think of all the workers killed or injured or suffering from work-related illness. Tell your children and grandchildren to make sure they have the safety training they need and the supervision that's required in their jobs so they don't become part of the statistic for next year.

Just in closing, I'll say once again to the Liberals, don't bite the hand that feeds you. Think of the people working in the kitchen and the cafeteria downstairs. Right now, at this stage of the legislation, they're being ignored. They have been shut out. They work on government contracts in a government building, just as construction workers work on government contracts and government projects. Security guards and cleaners are covered. Think of the people downstairs. Don't ignore them. Improve your bill and we'll support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Hon. Daiene Vernile: I'm pleased to join the discussion this morning on Bill 53. Speaker, my colleague across the floor, the member for Windsor-Tecumseh, asked the question, "Why now?" The answer to that question is, because it's always a good time to stand up for workers' rights and to ensure that they are paid fairly. That's why we're doing this now. It's why we have consistently, over the past four years, brought forward legislation that addresses pay equity.

If you work on a government project in the construction, building services and cleaning sector, you should be paid fairly. So to echo what our Premier said recently, every worker deserves to be paid a fair wage, and every business bidding on a government contract deserves a fair shot. We're taking action so that employers aren't going to be able to win a competition by unfairly lowering workers' wages. It's just one of the ways that we are standing up for workers in what is a changing economy.

Our economy is strong and growing; unemployment is at the lowest it has been in almost two decades, at around 5%. It's even lower in my community of Kitchener-Waterloo and Waterloo region, where we have a very robust economy.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I think the local member said there was a depression or a recession going on there, but things are moving—

Hon. Daiene Vernile: Well, that member needs to look at the results that are being turned in by Stats Canada, unless, of course, she wishes to challenge that.

Ontario is also leading the G7 in growth. But, you know, while businesses are expanding and enjoying this growth, I will say that not everyone is benefitting from this wealth and from this growth. That's why we brought forward Bill 148, landmark legislation to modernize our labour and employment laws; it's why we introduced Bill 3, another very progressive piece of legislation; and it's why we introduced Bill 53, legislation to enshrine the principle of fair wages.

I will be supporting this; I hope that members of the opposition will, too.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you to the member for Windsor-Tecumseh for standing and, as always, bringing forward in the debate quotes from those who are part of the historic past of this great nation. I think of Shakespeare and also, of course, some more modern quotes

from some people that I'm surprised to hear him quote but whose quotes are actually perhaps very concerning to this Liberal government. When we hear Pat Dillon, a bagman for the Liberal Party, coming out and saying that there might be something negative to something that the Liberals have done, well, shocker—15 years of failing to stand up for workers and now the Liberal government wants to put through another piece of legislation just to sort of spread their own feathers and try to make themselves look better heading into an election. We know we're only a couple of weeks away from an election, but quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, it's blatant how you can see this piece of legislation was written on the back of a napkin, that this government decided to come forward with this without any real interactions with those who are being affected, as we can see. The Ontario General Contractors Association felt that they had no idea this legislation was coming. They are very concerned about that. We heard a little bit of that from the member for Tecumseh's speech this morning.

The reality is that we can't trust the Liberals to get things right. They've had 15 years to stand up for workers and only now at the end of their tenure are they suddenly deciding to take this approach.

The reality is, the member opposite likes to talk about being progressive, likes to talk about looking forward. Well, there's nothing progressive about weighing down future generations with hundreds of billions of dollars of debt. There's nothing progressive about having every man, woman and child in the province of Ontario owing \$26,000. Even the NDP understood that in Saskatchewan. The NDP understood that in Manitoba. There's something progressive about this Liberal government's actions.

Applause.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I wouldn't clap too loud for the PC Party right away, because do you know what? It's 9 o'clock in the morning and the PCs are standing up, talking about unions. Do you know what? I have spent my entire 40 years—

Mr. Toby Barrett: This is a labour bill.

Mr. Wayne Gates: It is a labour bill. Let me finish. I'm the one talking. I don't want to be heckled at this time of the morning, especially after the Leafs lost.

Let's tell the truth here in this House for a change: I have spent my entire life standing up for workers in the province of Ontario. And, for 40 years, do you know what party I had to fight to make sure that minimum wage was taken care of, to make sure that my workers had health and safety regulations, to make sure that we didn't have to have days of action in the province of Ontario? Do you know who it was? It was the Conservative Party. I understand why the member doesn't know that, because, to his credit, he's a young guy who got elected to this Legislature. I congratulate that. He's actually extremely intelligent. I love listening to him. But the history is the history, and that party has never once—

never once—stood up for workers in the province of Ontario. I want to be very clear, and on this bill it's even clearer.

In 1995 the NDP government brought in the fair wage act, and guess what happened the minute that the Conservatives took over Parliament? What happened? They suspended it. For eight years—eight years—the fair wage policy was never ever reviewed—never, for 8 years. Do you know why? Because they don't believe in fair wages. They don't believe in making sure that people within the province of Ontario have a standard of living that we can take care of our kids and our grandkids, send them to school, put them into hockey. They can say what they want, but I've done it my entire life. I've taken it on. So I wanted to say that.

Then what happened for eight years? Mr. Speaker, you're smiling, but I want you to smile on this: Do you know what the minimum wage stayed at for eight years? \$6.85. That's how much it stayed at.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, it's a great pleasure to stand in this House and speak about Bill 53, the Government Contract Wages Act. As my colleague from Niagara Falls mentioned, when the Conservative Party was in office for eight years, they never increased the minimum wage. It remained the same for eight years. Since the Liberal government came into office in 2003, we increased that minimum wage every year, except in 2009 when we hit a very, very big recession.

We already brought legislation, Bill 148, where we increased minimum wage to \$14, and it's going to become \$15 starting January 1 next year. Also, based on Bill 148, we introduced two paid sick days for all workers, increased vacation times and also introduced equal pay for equal work. This bill, Bill 53, is in fact a continuation of Bill 148.

Mr. Speaker, our economy is growing very fast. We are now one of the fastest-growing economies in the western world. In fact, we are leading the G7 countries, as well as Canadian provinces, in terms of economic growth. Our unemployment rate is the lowest in a few decades.

0920

We are also investing \$230 billion in infrastructure projects. This means that there will be an enormous amount of economic development, and lots of jobs are going to be created based on government contracts. We want to make sure that contractors and employers who are going to bid on government contracts are not going to reduce their wages in their proposals to be able to win the contracts.

That's all about this bill. I'm supporting this bill, and I hope my colleagues in this House will support it as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): One of the New Democrats can now reply.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those who have spoken on the subject this morning.

The Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport, when I asked the question, “Why now, on the eve of an election?”, said, “Because it’s never too late to stand up for workers on government contracts.” I fully agree. We should be standing up more for workers all the time in this House. This should be a non-partisan issue of supporting workers, supporting a \$15 minimum wage; not going back to the days of \$6.85, or whatever it was, for eight years.

Also I don’t think it’s too late to look at your legislation and see that one classification of government contract workers has been forgotten. We’re looking after construction, we’re looking after security and we’re looking after cleaners, but we completely forgot about the men and women who work in the kitchen and in the cafeteria, who serve our food and wash our dishes. When we go to receptions, they look after us. They’re on contracts.

I heard the Minister of Labour say that we should be treating our workers with dignity and respect. I fully agree. But we should be treating the people downstairs with the same dignity and respect that we’re going to be giving to the people who clean the floors in the offices in government buildings, the people who work on government projects, the security guards and the parking lot attendants looking after the security of government buildings. The people downstairs deserve our dignity and our respect just as much as any other worker.

Minister, I applaud you for saying that it’s never too late. I hope your caucus will see that it’s never too late to improve the bill and to include them in there. It’s a bill worthy of support if everyone is included, no one is excluded and no one is left behind. I applaud you for bringing that up this morning.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I’ll be sharing my time with the very distinguished Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

This is a real opportunity to chat about Bill 53, the Government Contract Wages Act, 2018. This is an important piece of legislation. As well you know, Mr. Speaker, I was a city councillor in Peterborough for 18 years, from 1985 until the fall of 2003. Then I got the great privilege and honour of representing the constituents of Peterborough here in the Ontario Legislature.

I recall, when I was a city councillor, that one of the things that we attempted to do in the city of Peterborough, as we were having contracts for a wide variety of things that a municipality contracts for, was make sure that those companies that we were doing business with were paying fair wages. That was something that we certainly embraced as a municipality, to make sure that whether we were doing paving contracts, whether we were contracting for IT services and all those things that municipalities do each and every day—the folks that were doing the maintenance work at the Peterborough Memorial Centre, at Northcrest Arena or at the Kinsmen Club—that their wage levels were more reflective of what was earned by the employees of the city of Peterborough, who were represented so ably by the Canadian

Union of Public Employees, CUPE; to make sure that we treated those employees with the same opportunity. By and large, it worked very successfully in the city of Peterborough in those areas. That’s what, in many ways, Bill 53 is all about.

I want to commend my friend from Windsor–Tecumseh when he’s talking about the folks who work here, who provide excellent service each and every day. I often reflect on the late Senator Ted Kennedy. He wrote an autobiography called *True Compass*, which certainly was a great chronicle of his time in the United States Senate and his various legislative accomplishments.

One of the things he really emphasized with his family—he shared some anecdotal stories about people who would be working in hotels across the United States. When they got good service, whether it was in restaurants in the United States or hotels, the Kennedy family members made sure that was recognized by providing an extra few dollars to recognize that great service.

He was one of those individuals, a very distinguished American senator, who wanted to make sure that everybody had a chance in American society. He recognized, whether you were working in a restaurant in a five-star hotel in New York City or you were working in Houston or wherever, that everybody deserved a chance, with dignity, to have a level of wages to sustain his or her family going forward. In many ways, that’s a very important aspect of Bill 53 that we’re talking about today.

The member also emphasized that tomorrow is the National Day of Mourning. I will take the opportunity to be at city hall in Peterborough. This is an important issue because we, particularly in Peterborough, have been working with GE workers, those individuals who were exposed to a wide series of toxins between 1945 and 2000.

Mr. Speaker, it’s a bit of a personal issue for me. My late father had a career at GE for 40 years. He was a machinist. I was in the plant on numerous occasions over those 40 years during the various open houses. It is personal because my father retired in 1982, after working 40 straight years, and he was dead a year later due to lung cancer.

I share those stories with people. They’re coming to my constituency office and we’re trying to really get these things resolved. We have in many of the historic manufacturers across the province of Ontario men and women who worked hard for many, many years. Then, after they retire, they certainly develop all these cancer—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Speaker, I’m just wondering if a quorum is present.

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

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has the floor.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I will finish quickly because I want to leave some time for my colleague.

It was interesting. My father was—and my friends in the NDP would appreciate this—an organizer for the old UE, the united electrical workers union. It's interesting that my father, when he retired, did not receive, after 40 years of work, one GE pension cheque, because in those days there was a provision in the Unemployment Insurance Act that after retiring, you drew EI for a year because you paid into it all that time. He was left in a position to never, ever draw, after 40 years, one pension cheque from General Electric. That's just the way it was set up in those days.

More work needs to be done, there's no question in my mind. But one of the fundamental principles, I believe, here in the province of Ontario is that men and women who put in a hard day's work deserve compensation that reflects that effort each and every day. Whether it's the minimum wage or Bill 53, this is an important way to build a basic floor for every citizen in the province of Ontario—very important to us all.

I'll now turn it over to my colleague the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

0930

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Chris Ballard: I thank my colleague who spoke before me. He's talking about, obviously, Bill 53, but what is near and dear to his heart, quite evident to me, is the treatment of workers in Ontario, specifically in his riding around issues with the GE plant and in fact his own father. I think a number of us share those types of stories.

Speaker, I know my dad got his start at a GE plant here in Toronto, making water turbines. I had two uncles who worked there as well. All three of them worked together as young apprentices learning their trades. My two uncles spent most of their time working as electricians, up to their arms in PCBs. Now we know about PCBs; we know about the dangers. Neither of them lived a very lengthy life. They both died young, and I suspect it was because of the chemical exposure. My own father died of cancer that I suspect was related to industrial chemical exposures over a life spent building this province. I heard stories throughout his career about how tough it was—and I know how tough it was—working with employers who would lock out their workers every year to negotiate as they began the negotiations.

So I certainly feel for that member and all workers at this time of year. It's why I think Bill 53 is all about fairness and is all about trying to create a more level playing field. Our government is committed to building a strong workforce that's fair and balanced, and progressive policies for Ontario workers and employees. We're doing that, in part, through legislation like Bill 53, that ensures fairness when dealing with government procurement; that fairness is paramount. So I fully support this proposed legislation.

Our Premier said earlier that every worker deserves to be paid a fair wage and every business bidding for government contracts deserves a fair shot. We're taking this action so that employers won't be able to win a competition by unfairly lowering workers' wages. That's a story I've heard for many years and one that, frankly, has made me angry at the treatment of workers over the years, whether it be municipal, provincial or federal competitions.

This bill is just one of many ways that our government has been standing up for workers in a rapidly changing economy. We hear that phrase time and again, "the rapidly changing economy," and we will continue to change. I know deep thinkers—a fellow by the name of Buckminster Fuller, for example, talked about accelerating acceleration. He talked about the totality of human nature and how it's rapidly increasing and doubling, some say as fast as every 18 hours, in terms of the total data that's being collected around the world. So it does make one feel a bit tired with all of the new information, all of the new ways coming about. We have to protect workers in this era of a rapidly changing economy.

But I will say, Speaker, that I think it's in large part because of legislation like the proposed Bill 53 and other legislation, other policies, this government has put in place that Ontario's economy is strong and it is growing. We're told by Statistics Canada, that organization that gathers such information, that Ontario's GDP is expected to continue to outpace Canada. It's expected to outpace the G7 by somewhere around 2% to 2.2% over the coming five years. That's quite a phenomenal level of growth, Speaker.

I know that since the depths of the great recession of 2018 we have created 800,000-plus good jobs right here in Ontario. We're continuing to add jobs day in and day out—good-paying, full-time jobs, I might add, according to Statistics Canada.

I know that in the business sector—I meet regularly with my two chambers of commerce. I'm lucky enough, fortunate enough, to have two chambers: one in Newmarket and one in Aurora. If I'm not meeting members at the local grocery store or at some other event in town, we're sitting down and having discussions around government policy and what's happening in the small business and medium-size business sector within my riding of Newmarket–Aurora—two great organizations, I might add. We talk about a number of very important things.

When we talk about growth here in Ontario, I'm always proud, as my colleague did yesterday, to talk about our clean-tech sector and the rapid growth we have seen—the rapid creation of jobs, the rapid creation of wealth—right here in Ontario. I am told by my local businesses involved in the clean-tech sector and I'm told by businesses from across Ontario involved in the clean-tech sector that they are investing in Ontario. They're creating jobs here in Ontario, because we have a long-term commitment to solving climate change.

But back to Bill 53, Mr. Speaker, I said Ontario's economy is strong and it's growing. Unemployment is the lowest it's been since, I believe, 2000, but there is a prob-

lem. While we are expanding, while our economy is growing, while we are adding jobs, not everyone is feeling the benefits of this growth. That's one of the reasons why we brought forward Bill 148, that landmark legislation that is modernizing our labour and employment laws.

We know that, through Bill 148, we've raised the general minimum wage to \$14 an hour now, soon going to \$15 an hour. We've introduced two paid sick days for all workers. We've increased vacation time. We've introduced equal pay for equal work. And we've increased enforcement of these labour laws. That is so important.

It's why we introduced Bill 3, which is another progressive piece of legislation that ensures we have pay transparency in the province of Ontario. All of these things, all of these pieces of legislation, are connected in order to build this fairer employment system. It's why I'm so pleased that we introduced Bill 53, the Government Contract Wages Act, which would, if passed, protect workers' wages on government contracts.

As I said earlier, the nature of our workplaces has changed and so, too, have governments' procurement practices. We had the fair wage policy dating back to the 1930s, but it was last updated in 1995. Wages are out of date. The bodies that are written into the current policy are also out of date.

Therefore, we're proposing to expand the scope of the original legislation through the Government Contract Wages Act. Through this legislation, if you work on a government project in the construction and building services and building cleaning sectors, you will be paid fairly. I do take note of my member opposite and his comments about those folks who are involved in food services.

The initial scope of Bill 53 would apply to all government ministries, as well as public bodies, as laid out under the public services of Ontario. I understand there are currently 152 public bodies prescribed under this act, including Metrolinx, Infrastructure Ontario and the LCBO.

0940

It is important that we create a sustainable fair wage policy for the sectors before we expand to the broader public service, but the proposed legislation—and I want to emphasize this—does allow the government to add other entities that receive public funding in the future.

This legislation will enshrine the principle of a fair prevailing wage into law and provide the necessary support to enforce it, to make it work. It is what is fair, it is the right thing to do, and it is why I will be supporting this legislation as it goes forward. I will be thinking about not only my relatives who have worked with their hands, who have worked in industry, who quite literally built this province and this country and who were too often treated unfairly in the workplace, whether it be through exposure to dangerous chemicals or through employers who treated their relationship with their employees in too cavalier a way—that has to stop. Bill 53, the Government Contract Wages Act, 2018, will go a long way, I think, to addressing some of the inequalities, some of the unfairness, in government contracts.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions or comments? The member for Whitby—Oshawa.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Good morning, Speaker, and thank you. It's always good to see you in the chair, and today to have the opportunity to respond to the comments by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Speaker, you and other members of the Legislature will know that I've had the privilege of working as a civil servant at Queen's Park for a number of years in a number of ministries. One of the aspects of having that experience is understanding the policy framework that takes place in the development of legislation. In this particular bill, this is not about good public policy. These changes could have been done through regulation. Everyone here knows that. They could have been done through regulation rather than creating a whole separate piece of legislation.

When you read the actual bill, what's clear is that most of the impact of this proposed legislation—yes, it could be done by regulation but, equally important, orders issued by the new director of government contract wages.

Troubling within that particular framework is that this would all be done outside of the legislative process and therefore not scrutinized by members in this Legislative Assembly today, or by the public. I find that particularly troubling in the context of transparency and moving forward with this particular piece of legislation.

I'm also troubled by the lack of consultation. Other members of the Legislative Assembly have talked about that consultation. We know that robust consultation always leads to a better piece of legislation going forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm going to start off by talking about how I had a conversation yesterday, as a number of our caucus members did as well, and we spoke to the provincial trades and construction trades on this bill. They've raised concerns regarding this piece of legislation. I'd like to thank them for coming forward with some of that information.

Right now, the bill does not have an annual review for wage schedules. This is something that is clearly lacking, and I believe the government is aware of that. However, it's certainly important to outline that.

Also, the building trades are telling us they need broader language—best-documented, most prevalent wage rate in each ICI sector, versus just reviewing collective agreements and government stats.

It's a little surprising this late in the game that you haven't had that kind of conversation and dialogue with the building trades.

We're talking about fair wages, and what I've always found interesting at Queen's Park is that the only party that has unionized staff, right here at Queen's Park, is the NDP, which means that our staff have a collective agreement. They have health and safety regulations—as we were talking about the Day of Mourning this week,

where people have lost their lives and continue to be injured on job sites. They have a grievance procedure. They have fair wages. They have language that covers their daily work. If they do have an issue, they can obviously put in a grievance, because they have a grievance procedure.

My question to the Liberals and to the Conservatives, as they all stand up and talk about workers: Why are they not unionized? Why do you not have, right here at Queen's Park, every single worker working in your staff unionized?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'm very pleased to rise today and talk about Bill 53. I'm also very pleased and proud that this government is bringing about fairness in labour and more fair legislation with respect to workers in this province, of many different sectors.

Bill 148 was a landmark piece of legislation that improved fairness in wages. Many other pieces of legislation were within that bill, with respect to vacation time, paid sick days etc. It's also, as the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change brought us up to speed on, why we introduced Bill 3 as well.

I was pleased, as well, to hear the member from Windsor–Tecumseh bring up the National Day of Mourning, something that will be acknowledged as well in my riding of Kingston and the Islands this coming Saturday. I'm very pleased that they are once again bringing forward the awareness that is so absolutely necessary.

I was also heartened to hear the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs talk about his father and, regrettably, the cancer that he passed away from. My brother also has COPD, and it's something that has come about as a result of unsafe workplaces.

But, at last, this bill is very important—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): A point of order, the member for Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I don't believe we have a quorum in the House, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Do we have a quorum?

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. I will give the member for Kingston and the Islands a few more seconds to wind up.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As we know, if passed, the legislation would create a new director of government contract wages who would oversee the fair wage office. I think that this is very important. Once it has been created, the fair wage office will establish fair wages for each sector. Contractors and subcontractors will be required to pay fair wages.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): One last question or comment.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Before I add to the comments already made on Bill 53, I want to quote something from Building a Better Business Climate for Ontario: "Government does not create the good jobs that help families get ahead and make Ontario the economic engine of Canada. Businesses create those jobs."

Now, I have no qualms with Bill 53. I question why we need it, because this is directly related to establishment of minimum government contract wages. You can write it in your contracts because you are doing the hiring. You are setting up those contracts. There is no need for Bill 53 because you can do it when you write the contracts and when you let the bids. So I don't understand why we're spending time on a bill that we don't need.

0950

As many of you know, I'm not a big fan of regulation. I get concerned about how many regulations get passed without proper debate. But this particular piece of legislation is exactly where regulation could be used and should be used. It's government contracts. Write the contracts in such a way that the employees who work and the companies who get those contracts actually have to pay a fair wage. It's very simple. It's very easy.

I don't know why we're doing it and I don't understand why we have to pass legislation to ensure it can happen because, frankly, you can already do it right now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change to reply.

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you to my colleagues from around the House for speaking to the bill—from Niagara Falls, Kingston and the Islands, and Dufferin–Caledon. I certainly have been listening attentively to them. I go back to what both my colleague the Minister of Agriculture and small business and myself started off by talking about: This is about a commitment to build a strong workforce, one that is fair, one that is balanced and one that has progressive policies for Ontario workers and employers.

At the end of the day, this is a piece of legislation that builds on our other legislation: Bill 3 and Bill 148. This is a piece of legislation that builds on that foundation of fairness. It is, at the end of the day, all about fairness. We're ensuring fairness when dealing with the government. It is paramount. It's why, as I said earlier, I will fully support this legislation going forward.

I said it earlier and I'll say it again: We're taking action. We're taking action through legislation and corresponding regulation. We're updating a piece of legislation that was created in 1930, tweaked in 1995 and needs a serious refresh in 2018. We're doing it because now is the second-best time. Twenty years ago would have been an even better time, but now is the second-best time. Through this bill, we will ensure that workers who are employed on government contracts are treated fairly by their employers.

Bill 53, the Government Contract Wages Act, 2018, I think we all—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Further debate.

Mr. Toby Barrett: As we know, certainly from debate this morning, Bill 53 will set minimum government contract wage rates for construction workers and building service workers—cleaners, security—those working under a government contract. We have legislation that would include provisions, certainly within regulation, for market standard rates.

I'm assuming there will be a mechanism to do the research, to really crunch the comparables between public sector and private sector wage rates. This government does recognize that government employees make significantly more money than private sector employees for doing exactly the same work. In my understanding, that's one of the premises behind this particular piece of legislation.

This puts the onus on the contractors and the subcontractors. It's essentially a market intervention by government to let those who are fortunate enough to get one of those government contracts know what they're required to pay their own employees.

When government starts wading into labour economics and wading into the setting of salaries and wages—let alone perks. I don't know how far regulation will go. Does it get involved in other perks: pensions, holiday time, lieu time, sick time? We've seen that with very recent minimum wage legislation, which is exactly what this is. This probably could have been amended or added to—when we talk about a minimum government contract wage, it may well have been better suited to be included in the previous legislation on minimum wage in the province of Ontario.

Obviously, this government supports contracting out. Maybe they have a plan to push additional contract work and additional outsourcing of government work to contractors and subcontractors. They very clearly recognize the public sector makes more money than the private sector for similar types of work. Contractors obviously bid on government contracts. They are now going to have to take these new wage rates—the minimum wage rates—into account.

We've got legislation. From what I can see, it updates the 1995 existing fair wage policy. Apparently, this may be the first update since 1995. Maybe I should know that. That's when I was elected. That's back when Elizabeth Witmer was the labour minister.

As with just about all of the legislation that this present government brings forward, we all realize the devil will be detailed in the regulations, and it will probably be specific to sector, to region. It would have to accommodate existing collective agreements in many cases, somewhat akin to any job-specific minimum pay rate or minimum wage. I mention that in this kind of legislation, we never talk about maximum wage. We think of the CEO of Hydro One; again, something that comes from a

government that privatized that gigantic entity. It does raise a lot of questions.

In this kind of legislation, when you start setting minimum government contract wages, my first question is, how much does this cost? Very clearly, it would cost the employer. It will cost the contractor and the subcontractor. This will also cost the taxpayer. By and large, when you set a minimum government contract wage, it will probably be set at a higher level, not at a lower level, because government workers make more money than private sector workers for similar work in many, many cases.

When we debate legislation, we're given little to go by on this particular legislation, beyond asking how much it is going to cost. Has there been a cost-benefit analysis? Has there been a cost-risk analysis? When I say "risk," what impact will this have on employment? What impact would have this on employees with companies where much of their business relies on government contracts? Are they going to walk away? Are they not going to bid on the next round of contracts in their sector, for example, given the expectation that when their men and women are working on a government job, they will be required to—I'm assuming—pay them more money, not less money? What is the impact going to be on jobs?

Has the research been done? Do we have the comparables? Does anyone do work on the comparables between the private sector and the public sector? I know the Fraser Institute does. When you take in not only wages and salaries, when you include benefits—I mentioned the perks: the pensions, sick time, lieu time, on and on. When you add it all up together, on average, in the province of Ontario, if you have a government job, you're 30% better off than if you have a similar private sector job. You do better if you're working in the kitchen trade in a correctional institution, for example; much better than if you're doing similar work in the kitchen trade in a private sector restaurant.

1000

The Toronto Star reported that Premier Wynne made an announcement at a union local, a training facility on Warden. She said, "Every worker deserves to be paid a fair wage." I agree with that. I was brought up with another mantra, a saying: a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Work and pay obviously go together; should go together. Even in government programs, those two things should be linked: equal pay for equal work. I firmly believe in that, and it doesn't matter if you have a government job or a private sector job. I have never perceived it as being fair that you do the same job under government as you would in the private sector but you make more money and you get a pension. It doesn't seem to be fair, and I do hear that from people in my riding, because they're the ones who are paying the freight. Many of the people who are paying, through their taxes, for these kinds of salaries and wages and pensions and what have you don't make that kind of money and they don't have pensions. At this announcement at the local, Premier Wynne talked about other things, of course: the

government's move to close the gender gap; to ensure part-time workers receive equal pay; improvements to sick days.

So in Bill 53 we're debating the merit of a minimum government contract wage. We know that when you introduce any change to a system with respect to wage rates in the province of Ontario, there will be other impacts that flow throughout the system. Oftentimes you can label this collateral damage, as I mentioned. Contractors, subcontractors may be forced to not bid, to reduce staff; it may go as far as laying people off. Benefits can be taken off the table. We've seen this movie before.

It's very bad for people in Ontario who want to go to work. It's very bad, and this could have impact—and I don't know whether the analysis has been done with respect to the minimum government contract wage. What impact will this have with respect to people with disabilities? There are services provided by government, and the employers go out of their way—and it always pays off—to provide employment for people with disabilities.

So that was an announcement. I think it was the association of plumbers and steamfitters. I get to talk to many fellows in the trades, people I know down my way, friends of mine. I don't necessarily hear them complaining about the wage rates, the rates that they make, whether it's a private sector job or a government job. They complain about lack of labour, lack of entrants coming in. I talk to The Iron Workers, for example. They complain about the fact that young people come in—they want to train young people; very high standards within the Iron Workers' union. The one question they always ask is, what's seven times eight? Oftentimes, young people don't know the answer. That's dangerous. Seven times eight.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's 56.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Excellent. You would make a good ironworker. When you're up there, up top, you've got to get the math right. Somebody has the math right. It could be downright dangerous.

A number of buddies of mine, electricians, industrial electricians—some of them have walked away from that trade. There are so many impacts; the College of Trades, for example. We just have to be cognizant of the negative impact that government can have on the workplace.

In the interests of time, I should change gear a little bit here. You know, when the other minimum wage came out—and there are several categories of minimum wages; this will add yet another category, the minimum government contract wage under Bill 53—CFIB, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, reported late last spring that their organization was blindsided by that 32% increase in the general minimum wage. I don't know: Is this going to be a 32% increase? I would suggest that it could well be a 30% increase because in the public sector if you rolled in everything, it's 30% to the good versus the private sector. CFIB was blindsided by this turn of events.

I will mention, just as LIUNA was blindsided by the schedule 14 changes to the Labour Relations Act—it was

in the media quite recently—which removes the bargaining rights of thousands of workers with the Laborers' International Union—this was a system that had been in place since 1970. That's before Bill Davis. Removing labourers who put up the forms for forming concrete—apparently that, by government edict, would be transferred to a carpenters' union. I really question that.

I've done a bit of that work. I spent many, many summers as a labourer. I was a labourer with tinware. Our local, Can Workers' Local 35, became Steelworkers later on, but that was all through mutual agreement. The Can Workers were kind of diminishing somewhat, and felt that there would be more heft or strength in numbers by voluntarily going over to the Steelworkers.

We've seen this film before with respect to the minimum wage. That has turned out to be a job killer.

It has been very tough on people with disabilities. Invariably, people with disabilities want to work; the remuneration is secondary. They don't necessarily aspire to make big bucks. So many of these young people that I know want to work and want to be happy. That's what it's all about: that feeling of self-worth, that feeling of camaraderie, to be able to go to the lunchroom every day, to maybe grab the bus or get a ride with their parents or a friend, and to have that ritual and to do the same thing every day, and to be just like the rest of us: go to work every day.

When you bring in legislation like this—we saw this before with the minimum wage—setting wage rates in contracts, what kind of impact will this have on productivity? Has this been checked out—the impact on our competitiveness? And, of course, what kind of impact will this have on jobs? How will this stack up with some of our neighbouring competing jurisdictions just, say, around the Great Lakes? It's something we think of with regard to agribusiness. We have to be competitive across the border. Do they have this kind of system to ensure that the required work is being done within government?

My time is running short, Speaker. I do want to stress that, as far as pay equity—I see this as pay equity, as far as contract work. How far do we take this? Is it just wages? Is it just salary?

As I said, do we look at the other perks, those perks that have created an inequity that's something in the order of 30% if you count everything, if you count the total package? Does this generate any kind of resentment in the workplace? You're on a contract. You get a bit more on your monetary paycheque. But the people you're working side by side with have a fairly nice pension, and you don't have that pension.

Again, how much will this cost? We know that it's going to cost the contractors and subcontractors more money. This will cost government more money, and we have to think about this given, certainly, recent announcements. Thankfully, our Auditor General has made very public the fact that we're apparently spending something like \$158 billion this year. This legislation will go through; how much does that add?

I will say that we spent \$158 billion through the Ontario government; half of that expenditure is for public sector compensation. That would include payment to contractors and subcontractors. So that \$79 billion that is directed towards compensation, again, at that 30% premium over, say, other comparable private sector work—so there's a wage and benefit bill. That 30% is something like \$24 billion higher than if government workers were making comparable wages to the private sector.

By the same token, with Bill 53, it would conceivably increase the cost of government, and as I say, that figure we hear from the Fraser Institute, if you include everything, up to 30%. Any credible plan to attempt to balance the books must tackle this issue. It has to take a look at public sector compensation.

I'm not alone in saying this. I would quote a former Ontario Liberal finance minister, Dwight Duncan. As he had indicated a number of years ago, "We can't manage the deficit without addressing what is the single biggest line item in our budget—public sector compensation."

This is what we're talking about here today, indirectly: public sector compensation as it flows to the contracts. The question is, to what extent will Bill 53 help to bring public sector and private sector wages and benefits in line? I guess it will on that particular cleaning contract, for example, but what kind of a broader impact will this proposed legislation have on Bill 53?

We know the bill proposes to appoint a director of government contract wages. I assume that office will grow to be a larger and larger office. It's a lot of work for that person to be involved in because the wages aren't going to be set perhaps by collective negotiation, for example. It looks like a government-appointed person is going to bring down an edict: "This is how much money you're making on that job. End of story." I just hope those kinds of decisions are backed up by research and by making the comparisons between the private sector and the public sector.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): This House is in recess until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's an honour to be able to introduce to the Legislature today Michelle Scobie, who is a lecturer in international law and global environmental governance at the University of the West Indies. She is here visiting today from Trinidad and Tobago.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I want to introduce a very good friend of mine who is visiting Queen's Park, equally a great constituent of mine. Please welcome Jackie Choquette to Queen's Park.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce a good friend of mine in the west members' gallery: Lorne Given from PetroliA. Also joining him later are Stephanie Lobsinger, Annabelle Rayson, Eric Rayson and Cynthia Rayson. Annabelle was a page here in the last session.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have been waiting to see whether or not my colleague from Cambridge would make it into the House, but on behalf of the member for Cambridge and page captain Madeline Buss, I'd like to welcome her parents, Charlotte and Stephen Buss, her brother, Graham Buss, and her grandfather Jack Ruttle. They will be in the members' gallery this morning. Please give them a warm welcome.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Please join me in welcoming, from the beautiful riding of Dufferin–Caledon, Cynthia Oudin.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: We have with us in the members' gallery today a very good friend of mine from North Bay, via Ottawa: Stephanie Delorme.

Hon. David Zimmer: I'd like to introduce the father, Darrin Mulligan, and the grandmother, Jean Mulligan, of my legislative assistant, Sasha Boutilier.

NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

Mr. Mike Colle: Point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that members be permitted to wear pins to recognize the day of mourning and that we observe a moment's silence in remembrance of those who have been killed, injured or suffered illness due to workplace-related hazards and incidents.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence is seeking unanimous consent to wear the pins to recognize the day of mourning and observe a moment of silence for those workers who have been killed, injured and suffered illness due to workplace-related hazards and incidents. Do we agree? Agreed. We may wear the pins now.

I would ask all members in the entire House to please rise to observe a moment of silence for those that have been killed or injured on the job.

The House observed a moment of silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): God rest their souls.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. The response to yesterday's shocking revelation from the Auditor General, that this government has deliberately understated Ontario's deficit by \$5 billion this year, has been swift. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce issued a statement yesterday after the auditor affirmed Ontario actually has an \$11.7-billion deficit. They wrote, "If the province of Ontario were a

publicly held company, we as shareholders would deserve and demand clarity and accountability from our board and auditors. That is similarly our right as Ontarians.”

Speaker, business confidence in this government is shaken. Is the Premier’s re-election bid worth destabilizing investment confidence in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the President of the Treasury Board is going to want to comment on this. In fact, the only reason that we are having this conversation is that this government introduced the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, and therefore there is a pre-election report. That’s why we are having this conversation.

I think that, through the pre-election report—the Office of the Auditor General’s analysis—Ontarians are given the information that they need to make an informed decision.

The fact is that there is an ongoing dispute between professional accountants. That is a reality. It’s been going on for a couple of years. It is absolutely true that there is a disagreement between—

Mr. Todd Smith: No, it’s not.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I’m quite prepared to move immediately to warnings if I hear further outbursts.

Mr. Todd Smith: Outbursts?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, they are outbursts. You’re supposed to be quiet during question period, believe it or not. It’s in the standing orders, and I’m going to fulfill them.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Just to say, Mr. Speaker, it is an ongoing dispute between professional accountants. We recognize that. We respect the perspective of the Auditor General, but that dispute has been going on for a couple of years.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Well, no, Speaker. We’re having this conversation because the government continues to present an incorrect picture of the province’s finances. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce had even more to say. They wrote, “It is deeply concerning that the government of Ontario would be accused of not following the Canadian public sector accounting standards.”

When the Auditor General summed it up, she said, “When expenses are understated, the perception is created that government has more money available than it actually does”—just in time for a pre-election budget. How convenient.

The Premier needs to know the jig is up. Will she admit the government’s numbers are wrong?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: I thank the member opposite for his question, because it provides me with the opportunity to provide some much-needed context to this discussion.

First of all, again, I want to thank the Auditor General for her pre-election report. We appreciate her work to ensure that the public received an independent assessment of our province’s finances.

Let me remind the House and the member opposite of something critically important: We passed legislation to do this, so the notion that we aren’t being transparent is not only factually incorrect; it risks sending a negative and inappropriate message to the people of Ontario. And that is exactly what they’re doing. They’re not—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: If the members opposite want to continue to undermine confidence in our province and our provincial institutions, that’s up to them—

Interjections.

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

Carry on.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: —but here’s precisely what the auditor said, in case the member opposite missed it: “The pre-election report provides a reasonable and somewhat cautious underpinning for the medium-term” fiscal forecasts. She said we were reasonable and cautious—

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Actually, Speaker, we on this side of the House and the people of Ontario understand that it’s the government who put the government at risk, nobody else.

The Auditor General’s job is to state the true picture of Ontario’s finances. Now, based on the auditor’s shocking revelation, here’s more from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce: “The government of Ontario, and through them the people of Ontario, either respect our legislative officers or we do not.” That is exactly why Ontario PC leader Doug Ford has committed to a full audit of the government’s books to restore responsibility, accountability and trust in government.

1040

Can the Premier tell us today, what is the government of Ontario—

Interjection.

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

Finish, please.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Can the Premier tell us today exactly what is the government of Ontario’s deficit for 2018-19?

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Listening to the rhetoric from the opposite side, let me just respond to something very important that the member opposite just said. Implicitly, the leader of the PC party, Doug Ford, is now questioning the Auditor General’s competency. I’ll tell you why: He says that he’s going to provide independent audits. Guess what that discounts? Our professional and

highly competent public servants, our professional deputy minister of the Treasury Board and the Deputy Minister of Finance, who not only sign off on our fiscal plan, but give us precisely the kind of advice and confidence in our books that we need.

By the way, when it comes to some of the issues that the Auditor General outlined in her report, we also had independent advice by some of the most credible accounting firms in the world. We stand by that. We respectfully remind the member opposite that we have a respectful disagreement with the Auditor General. Once again, we thank her for her work.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. The Auditor General was clear: The government's deficit numbers are off by \$5 billion this year, \$5.5 billion next year, and \$6 billion off—almost 100% off—the following year. Those revealed deficits are projected to grow to a total of \$16.6 billion over the next three years.

We now know that in their desperation, the Premier and this government have betrayed the public's trust. That's why our leader, Doug Ford, has today promised that, when elected, we will launch an independent commission of inquiry. This new commission will get to the bottom of the Liberals' deficit scandal and propose timely solutions to solving the deficit problem.

Why does it always take the OPP, the Auditor General or an investigative commission to get to the truth with this Premier?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: It's troubling, to say the least, that the member opposite would conflate a respected opinion of an independent officer of this Legislature with motive or intent. As the spouse of a former OPP officer, I can tell you clearly, Speaker, that this is not about that. What this is about, and we said it yesterday, is a couple of things: number one, reminding the public of the confidence that's necessary in our public institutions and not undermining those, which is precisely what the member opposite is doing.

Second, we thank the Auditor General for her service and we respectfully remind this House and the Ontario public that we have a difference of opinion. That is a respectful difference of opinion, and it will remain so, because we are committed to seeking professional advice from professional accountants. We did that, but we also have a highly respected public service. The member opposite diminishes that when he talks about the credibility of our work as a provincial government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: This is not about a difference of opinion. This is about desperation. We cannot trust anything this Liberal government ever estimates or projects again. Their budget is no longer worth the paper it was printed on. The people of this province are angry, and they want answers. Doug Ford and the Ontario PCs are going to get those answers. It took 15 years for the Liberals to create this mess, and it will not be resolved overnight. But we will restore Ontario to fiscal health in a responsible manner.

Speaker, I'll ask the Premier one more time, why does it always take the OPP, the Auditor General or an investigative commission to get to the truth with this Premier and this government?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite now wants to do an audit of the auditor. I'm not sure what independent auditing team they intend to use. Is it KPMG? Is it Deloitte? Is it EY? Or is it Dougie Ford who's going to go out there and look at the books?

Interjections.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let me be clear—

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

Regardless if the member has status in the House or not, I would ask all members: This is not the time to be disrespectful in this House to anyone. I would ask your indulgence to use proper names and, in this House, titles or ridings.

Minister.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Auditor General does make clear that the pre-election report does provide a reasonable and cautious underpinning of those fiscal forecasts that we made. The Auditor General only reflects on two issues, and they have been the same two issues for the past number of years. It's the reflection of pension assets, which the Auditor General feels we should actually discount but every other auditor, including herself in the past, has agreed with. The second one is the fair hydro plan, which these independent, world-renowned accounting firms have prepared. She says it's not wrong to actually do this kind of rate regulation.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: She doesn't like it, and that's not her—

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: The Auditor General told us yesterday in her news conference that when you get pushback from the government like she's getting, that's the time for Ontario to worry. Now, it's obvious to everyone in Ontario how this election document the Liberals tabled was a 100% sham. None of the care promises were included in the budget legislation. Only the tax increases made it in.

This Premier can never be trusted again, but I tell the people of Ontario that help is on the way. Doug Ford and the Ontario PCs will deliver our commitments, clean up the scandals and the waste, and protect the services that people of Ontario deserve. We will not quit until we have restored responsibility, accountability and trust to the people of Ontario.

Interjections.

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

The Minister of Labour is warned.

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is claiming that they are not going to help the people of Ontario. They're going to cut programs for the people of Ontario. They're going to cut the services, cut the investments and cut the ability for Ontario to be strong and continue to grow.

Mr. Speaker, dated April 24, a couple of days ago, by a rating agency, DBRS Ltd. says that the province of Ontario has, and respectively has confirmed, Ontario Electricity Financial Corp.'s long-term obligations, as well as the province's rating, as AA. "The trends on all ratings are stable," including OPG, IESO and the province of Ontario. They know what's going on, and they are supporting Ontario all the way.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Can the Premier explain to Ontarians why it was more important for her to have the lowest corporate tax rate in Canada than it was to fund hospitals and end hallway medicine?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We believe we have to be competitive and we have to provide services for people in this province. That's actually the role of government. It's extremely important that business wants to be here, that job creation can happen. In fact, since I've been Premier, 400,000 net new jobs have been created, mostly in the private sector.

It's extremely important that those jobs are created. That is how the wealth of the province is created, and then we can make the investments in health care and education that are needed, and we have every year. Every budget, we have increased funding to health care, we have increased funding to education, and we will continue to do so.

One does not exist without the other. It's not possible to have an economy that doesn't include wealth creation and investment in its people.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's about sharing the wealth. That's the issue, Speaker, which is what the Liberals never have been able to figure out.

The Premier's tax cuts have put money in the pockets of the wealthiest Ontarians and into the bank accounts of Ontario's most profitable corporations. Those dollars

came out of hospitals and health care. The result is that we now have hallway medicine in Ontario. Does the Premier think that's right?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I wonder, when the NDP—and they were on this tack yesterday—stand up and basically argue that we should not be a competitive jurisdiction and that we should find ways to be uncompetitive, I wonder where they believe the funds come from to invest in health care and to invest in education.

Mr. Speaker, there is an integral relationship between the ability of this province to create wealth, to create an environment where business can thrive, and to create jobs. In this province, we are at an unemployment low of 20 years. We have not had such low unemployment, and that's because jobs have been created. It's because people can find jobs. It's because we're competitive. At the same time, we are making record investments in health care. Those two things go together.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I do meet with chambers of commerce across Ontario. Over and over, they tell me that businesses count on our health care system. It is one of our best competitive advantages. Hurting our health care system is actually bad for business.

I have a plan to make our tax system fair. Corporate taxes will be below the national average, below states like California, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut and Wisconsin, but it will ask the wealthiest people and the most profitable corporations to pay their fair share so that we can end hallway medicine, something that is in all of our interests, Speaker. Why doesn't the Premier get that?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development and Growth.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As the Premier has said on repeated occasions in response to these kinds of questions from the NDP, we know that we have prosperity here in the province of Ontario because our Premier and our government continue to invest in our people and continue to invest in the core public services that the people of this province depend upon, including public health care, including public education and also including making sure that we have a competitive tax regime in place so that the entire province can prosper. That has been the focus of our work over the last number of years and it will continue to be as we go forward because we know that we have had economic success. But we need the entire province to share in that prosperity and success, and that's what we are exclusively focused on.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Every dollar that the Premier hands to the wealthiest Ontarians comes from somewhere. Under this Premier, it came from hospitals—four years of frozen budgets. It's no wonder that there's a crisis in health care when the Premier refuses to have anyone pay for it. Why is the Premier more interested in tax cuts than fixing health care?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I believe that our health care system is two things: the finest expression of our value system and our belief as a society that we have a responsibility to care for each other, and it is also, as the leader of the third party says, a competitive advantage. She is absolutely right about that. And the reason it's a competitive advantage, Mr. Speaker, is that it is excellent.

When I talk to businesses in other countries that are looking at Ontario and considering investing here or expanding their businesses here, they do look at our health care system. It is excellent, and the reason it is excellent is that we have continued to invest in it. There are more nurses. Our wait times are among the best in the country.

We know that there is more to be done. We recognize that. There is \$822 million in our budget, and there was \$500 million last year, just for hospitals, to make sure that hospitals have the resources they need. But we have an excellent health care system. It is part of our competitive advantage, and it will continue to be.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, unlike this Premier, my value system does not include hallway medicine for the people of Ontario. My value system does not include that.

People are being treated in hospital hallways because the Premier would rather hand money to her rich friends than invest in our hospitals. And if people think that it is bad now, Doug Ford's cuts and health care privatization will make things even worse. It's time, I think, to end the crisis that this Premier has created, and Doug Ford certainly is not the answer. New Democrats will in fact end hallway medicine.

My question is, why did the Premier let things get so bad?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, let's talk about what we know needs to happen at this point, Mr. Speaker. I completely reject the notion that the leader of the third party puts forward that I don't believe that more investments are needed, or that it's acceptable for people to get care that's not adequate.

Mr. Speaker, we have made investments every single year in our health care system. What we are saying now is that there is more investment that is needed. We've been very clear. Earlier I said \$822 million; we know that's the number that we have, working with the Ontario Hospital Association. That investment is in our budget. But last year, there was a \$500 million investment, because we recognize that as the population ages, and as there are growing parts of the province where there's more population and more need, we make sure that those parts of the province and the hospitals across the province have what they need.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there's more that needs to be done, but we have an excellent health care system. It is a competitive advantage and it will continue to be.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What's very clear is this government has been in office for 15 years, and look what we have as a result: a hallway medicine crisis. That's exactly what we have. They had 15 years to deal with it and they made things worse.

A health care system without hallway medicine is good for business. It's good for people. Health care is a basic that people should be able to expect from their government, but for 15 years the Liberal government chose the wealthy and the most profitable corporations instead of health care. We didn't have to end up here, Speaker, but there is hope. An NDP government will fix it.

Will this Premier finally admit that she has created this health care crisis?

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

Hon. Helena Jaczek: It's been two months since I became the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I have had the privilege of visiting health care facilities of all types across this province in those two months, and I can tell this House that Ontario should be proud of the health care system that we currently have. We know we have more to do. We are intent on improving the system, but we have built a system that is doing an incredible job of keeping our loved ones safe, healthy and well.

Our life expectancy for males and females at 65 is now higher than the national average. It's one of the highest in the OECD. When we look at hospital deaths, cancer outcomes or avoidable deaths from health outcomes compared to other provinces and other developed countries, we are in the top level of health care systems. We have one of the lowest rates of potential years of life lost. I want to thank yet again all the health professionals across this province who are doing an amazing job to keep Ontarians healthy and well.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Minister of Finance. The Liberals were caught yesterday with a secret, hidden ledger of the government's finances that proved that they have doubled their deficit overnight from \$6.7 billion to \$11.7 billion. The auditor was very clear that their sneaky way of budgeting is costing Ontario families over \$100,000 if it's a family of four. That's \$23,000 in debt now, and over \$26,000 per person in 2021—and a reminder, Speaker, that this is up from the \$11,000 when they took office.

Ontarians are telling us that they can't afford this Liberal government anymore, with their waste and their mismanagement, and there's massive distrust of this government, because they do not feel there is value for their tax dollar.

Will the Minister of Finance finally admit that the emperor has no clothes and that that government has run out of the people's money?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Again, we thank the Auditor General for the report and we recognize that the Auditor

General made very clear that all of the assumptions the government put forward were cautious and reasonable. Two items are in dispute between professional accountants, not with the government of Ontario, but with other accounting firms and professional accountants in the system. She's arguing, and has for some time, that the pension assets should be amended, notwithstanding the fact that those very same principles have been adhered to for the past 20 years.

1100

On the second point, we are taking \$1.5 billion off the tax base to support reductions of electricity costs, especially for rural communities. Then, there's another proportionate amount that is coming off the rate base to amortize that asset. The Auditor General feels that shouldn't be done that way, yet every other rate-regulated system allows for it.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings is warned.

Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The fact is, there's only one auditor and she said that your projections are not reasonable. She also said that the perception is created that the government has more money than it actually does. There's only one auditor.

This is the government, let me remind you, that brought in the single largest sales tax increase in Ontario's history with the HST. They brought in the single largest income tax in Ontario history with the health tax. They brought in the single largest environmental tax in the province with the eco tax, only to be eclipsed by their cap-and-trade program. All along, these revenues have gone into the general revenue, not to specific programs, and yet they still have an \$11.7-billion dollar deficit using other people's money.

Speaker, Ontarians cannot afford the Liberals anymore and they simply cannot trust them either. Will the finance minister stand in his place and tell us what else he is hiding in the books, or does Doug Ford have to come in and do it for him?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Now the member is questioning the auditor once again. The fact of the matter is, the auditor has reaffirmed all the principles are operating appropriately and all the accounting is in fact accurate. What she's saying is she would prefer that the fair hydro plan come off the tax base, not the rate base. We made a policy decision, as government, to support the ratepayers, reduce the cost of electricity and amortize it over a longer period of time, which is allowed, Mr. Speaker. It is provided by Deloitte; it's provided by KPMG and E&Y.

The auditor goes further. The books of OPG, which is carrying this debt—she acknowledges that it's transparent, that it's there to be seen. She acknowledges that the clean audit by E&Y is accurate and she affirms it.

What's being hidden are the cuts that member and her party are about to do to the people of Ontario. We're going to grow our economy and we're going to continue on our fiscal track to balance and make sure—

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

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. Carol contacted my office. She told us her husband is forced to live in long-term care because he can't get the care he needs. She's concerned for his health; it is steadily deteriorating. But he is still not getting enough physiotherapy. His PSW can only help him with his exercises if there's enough time left over after his basic care is completed. And with only six to eight minutes per session, that just never happens. Carol's husband needs more hands-on care.

After 15 years in office, why has this Premier failed to legislate the minimum standard—four hours of hands-on care—that long-term-care residents and people like Carol's husband desperately need?

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

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Of course, we do require our long-term-care facilities to ensure that each individual patient in their care receives the appropriate level of support that they need. In particular, we have continued to invest in long-term care in our most recent budget. We are investing an additional \$300 million over three years to increase staffing in long-term care.

This is driven by our analysis of the patients, the clientele, who are actually in long-term-care facilities. They are aging. They have complex conditions. It's a good thing, of course, that people are living longer. Our life expectancy has increased. We need to obviously address those conditions that go with aging, and we're doing this on an individual basis on the analysis done by our LHINs in a thoroughly appropriate way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Carol and her husband tried to avoid long-term care, but they live in a rural area. Like so many rural Ontarians, they can't get the home care they need. They looked into retirement homes and assisted living to meet his needs, but at the cost of \$8,000 per month, it's simply unaffordable. So he was forced to live in long-term care, and he could spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair because he's not getting the physio that he needs. It is simply unacceptable. It shouldn't have to be this way, and no one in Ontario should have to live like this.

Why has this Premier left people like Carol's husband without the access to care that they need?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: No one is admitted to a long-term-care home unless they qualify for that degree of assistance, so I would question the member opposite's premise for her question.

In addition to the \$300 million over three years, what this actually means is that every long-term-care home in

the province will benefit from an additional registered nurse. This is part of our commitment to increasing the hours of care each resident receives to a provincial average of four hours per resident per day. This is based on an individual need for each individual patient, carefully assessed by the long-term-care facility staff.

This is going to mean an additional 15 million hours of nursing, personal support and therapeutic care for our loved ones living in long-term care. We will continue to remain responsive to the residents' individual needs for care.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the minister responsible for small business.

Davenport is made up mostly of small businesses. Making sure that Ontario has a competitive business climate where businesses can grow and compete is important to me, and I know that it's important for this government as well.

From reducing the small business tax rate by 22% to saving businesses millions by reducing red tape, the numbers don't lie. Ontario has created over 821,000 jobs since the recession, and our unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in almost two decades. But the summer season is fast approaching, and we have heard from some small business owners that they face some challenges when trying to hire young people.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell us what this government is doing to help lower costs for small businesses when hiring and retaining youth?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Davenport for the question this morning. Exactly two weeks ago, I had the pleasure to announce the Employing Young Talent Incentive with Minister Hunter in my riding of Peterborough. This is an investment of \$124 million over three years that not only helps businesses hire and retain youth aged 15 to 19, but also provides an opportunity for local businesses to provide good jobs for young people like Amanda Gurney, an employee of Morello's in Peterborough, which I shop at every week.

Businesses that hire and retain young employees through the Employment Service or the Youth Job Connection programs can receive up to \$2,000. Mr. Speaker, we know that's a smart investment. In fact, since the incentive officially launched in January, nearly 70 young people in my riding have been hired at various local businesses.

Smart and strategic investments like these are what will ensure small businesses can continue to create local jobs in every corner of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you, Minister, for your answer. It's clear that this government is committed to delivering results for our businesses and communities and that we are choosing to make strategic investments in programs that boost economic growth and help Ontario families, because we know that cutting important pro-

grams and incentives would be the most irresponsible thing to do.

Small businesses play an important role in my riding of Davenport and really, Speaker, across all communities in Ontario. We're delivering on our commitments like eliminating fees on government procurement opportunities and designating 33% of government procurement to small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, this is only a fraction of what this government is doing and has done. Will the minister please tell us more about other initiatives this government has taken to lower costs for small businesses?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Davenport for the supplementary.

There are those who believe that cutting corporate taxes will also save small businesses money. But we know the only ones benefiting from big corporate tax cuts are big corporations. We're making smart investments that will actually save small business owners time and money.

The world of business is changing. We're making sure that entrepreneurs and small business owners have the skills and tools to compete. We recently announced \$12 million for our Main Street Digital Initiative to help small businesses across main streets in Ontario compete and grow. Businesses can receive up to \$2,500 in grants to help them with their digital transformation as they embrace new technology.

1110

Mr. Speaker, just yesterday I had the opportunity to visit St. Catharines, Ontario, with my good friend the member, to take a stroll down St. Paul Street, the main street in St. Catharines. I couldn't believe it: Store to store, small business to small business, they actually told me things are booming in St. Catharines today. They couldn't believe it. Then, as I was finishing my tour, they said they don't understand the doom and gloom from the opposite side of the House, when businesses are booming in every part of Ontario.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Premier. Last night, the government posted a news release announcing 17 new justice of the peace appointments. Moments later, the news release was deleted and removed from the archives. Why the secrecy?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I appreciate the question. I will look into why the news release was removed.

We have appointed 17 new justices of the peace. As the member opposite knows, we have a very strong, independent process to appoint justices of the peace, through our Justices of the Peace Appointments Advisory Committee, also known as JPAAC, which does all the posting, interviews and recommendations, independent of the government. It may be that one or two people were not informed who had been appointed as justices of the peace, and that's why the release was removed.

I'll undertake to get back to the member and get the reason behind it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Or it may be that some of the people who were appointed have too close ties to the Liberal government. We know—

Interjections.

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

Finish, please.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Will the Premier today table those 17 justice of the peace appointees, and let the people decide whether there is a connection that needs to be further explored?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm not surprised that the member opposite would go in that direction. I'm really assuming there is a human error that's involved.

I can assure the member, as the Attorney General, I take my responsibility very, very seriously in appointing the highest of the highest calibre of individuals to serve as our judges and justices of the peace. These people are a class act.

I've been, actually, at events with the judiciary, with our lawyers, in our great province. One of the compliments I continue to hear is the quality and the calibre of individuals who serve as our judges and justices of peace.

We have an extremely strong, independent process by which judges and justices of the peace are appointed. I can assure you I am absolutely confident that when you will see those 17 names, you will realize how competent they are.

I don't know the technical reasons why the news release is down. I will make sure that news release is up as soon as possible.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. In 2012, the Liberal government suddenly and unilaterally decide to kill the highly successful Slots at Racetracks Program. Since then, we have seen the destruction of a once-vibrant horse racing and breeding industry that supplied 65,000 good, rural jobs in Ontario.

A couple of weeks ago, horse people and smaller tracks were blindsided again after the government announced that it had offered a long-term funding deal, negotiated between the OLG, Ontario Racing and the private, for-profit Woodbine Entertainment Group.

Speaker, why didn't the Premier properly consult horse people and smaller tracks on this deal that will determine the future of horse racing in Ontario for generations to come?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you for the question. It gives me great pleasure to reaffirm what it is that we are doing in regard to horse racing. We have now concluded a \$105-million, 19-year contract to enable the horse racing industry to have funding. We're enhancing what's called the Enhanced Horse Improvement Program, ex-

tended for year over year by OMAFRA. We have a new Racetrack Sustainability Innovation Fund of \$6 million over three years to support those smaller tracks and expand their sources of revenue. We have an additional funding arrangement supplement with the racetracks that may be experiencing financial shortfalls, which enables long-term decisions in the racing community.

Furthermore, we're providing a new board, the Ontario Racing board, which actually will oversee the funding improvements and enable the service provider to be determined. On that board will be small tracks and horse people to ensure that everybody is properly represented.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The Minister of Finance's answer is exactly what we're concerned about. This is what the problem is. When Greg Walling, the government's special adviser on the horse racing industry, resigned last fall, he had a warning for the Premier: "Beware of" Woodbine's "dominant position. In the proposed structures of administration not only are they a player, they are the scorekeeper and referee."

The Premier ignored this warning and handed over near monopoly control of horse racing to this private, for-profit corporation. Not only that; she's forcing horse people and tracks to decide by May 1 whether to sign off on this lopsided agreement.

Will the Premier withdraw this arbitrary, rushed deadline and take the time to listen to the concerns of horse people in smaller tracks in rural Ontario?

Hon. Charles Sousa: That's exactly what we're doing. We're ensuring that they have representation on the board. We're ensuring that their voices are heard. We're ensuring that there is no oversight or monopoly on one racetrack over another. We're giving them the opportunity so that they are enabling themselves to be heard and make the appropriate decisions to fund on an ongoing basis. That is the purpose of having that oversight prior to giving the service provider the ability to make those changes.

Furthermore, Woodbine has declining receipts over time as the industry gets stronger. We need to support the small horse tracks. We need to support the horse people and the horsemen, and we have met with all of the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The reason why the minister didn't know I was standing is because he was not addressing the Chair, as all members are supposed to do—both questions and answers.

Mr. Robert Bailey: He's right.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm always right, Bob. My apologies.

New question.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Growth. We've been hearing a great deal of late about jobs, specifically manufacturing jobs, and Ontario's growing economy. We all know that during the last recession, many countries lost

manufacturing jobs; for example, between 2007 and 2010, the United States lost 2.3 million manufacturing jobs. We also know that between 2007 and 2009, real manufacturing output in the US fell by 10.3%. In France, Britain and Australia—for many countries, including Canada—the story was similar.

With few exceptions, the global manufacturing sector was hit hard by the recession everywhere. Yet we know Ontario's economy has been adding jobs steadily for the last years and that, in overall jobs, we've more than bounced back from the recession.

The Leader of the Opposition calls our target investments in Ontario businesses corporate welfare and he vows to cancel these programs. My question is simple: Will the minister please tell us how our strategic investments in manufacturing have helped that sector?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by thanking the member for Beaches–East York for being such an extraordinary champion for the people who I know he's honoured to represent.

He is right, Speaker, he is 100% right: The province of Ontario, not unlike most other places around the world, was hit hard by the global economic recession about 10 years ago, in 2008. Unfortunately, the alternative version of events or facts that the opposition, particularly in recent weeks, has put forward to the people is simply not reflective of what took place. The opposition likes to pretend that, though millions of manufacturing jobs were lost south of the border and around the world, frankly, what happened here in Ontario was unique. Of course, it wasn't.

But here is what is critically important for the people of this province to know and understand, and I can assure you that they do: Our province has created more than 820,000 net new jobs over the last 10 years since the depths of that recession. The fact is, also, that since that recession, in Ontario manufacturing specifically, employment has increased by 40,000. In the last year alone, we in this province have added more than 15,000 manufacturing jobs. That's more than many of our—

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: I want to thank the minister for that incredible answer and his unwavering support for the manufacturing sector in Ontario.

It's important to hear about the successes of our workers and our initiatives that this government is taking in these sectors. The manufacturing sector is diverse, something that we on this side of the aisle know very well but I believe the opposition seems to forget. From the auto sector in Windsor, Oakville and beyond to advanced manufacturing in Welland, the steel sector in Sault Ste. Marie and food processing in my own riding of Beaches–East York, this government has ensured that the manufacturing sector continues to grow.

1120

While instead the opposition is trying to trick Ontario workers, investors and our competitors into believing that our people are failing, we know that, as the minister has

just explained, we are actually adding manufacturing jobs across the province. In fact, we are leaders in manufacturing employment.

Speaker, will the minister tell us more about what this government is doing to ensure that our manufacturing sector remains strong?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member from the Beaches for the follow-up question. I want to continue with the story I was telling a second ago. Since that 2008 recession, manufacturing jobs here in Ontario have increased by almost 11%. We have delivered amongst the most competitive corporate income tax rates in Canada, which the United States is simply now catching up to. Because our government is a very strong partner for all manufacturers, since 2004, our government has announced over \$2 billion in supports specifically for Ontario manufacturers, helping to create and retain over 100,000 jobs in every corner of Ontario.

The workers of this province and the employers of this province have been waiting to hear opposition parties that are prepared to stand up for them, fight for them and be on their side. So far, Speaker, they have not heard that from either opposition party, but they have confidence that we will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with them.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a pleasure to be here. My question is to the Premier. Premier, residents in Sarnia–Lambton are concerned that their drinking water is being put at risk by the development of 12 industrial turbines along the Chatham-Kent/St. Clair township border. St. Clair township council has determined that the Otter Creek wind turbine development just outside the township border is a potential threat to the area aquifer, which many residents in St. Clair township draw their water from.

St. Clair township is asking that the protection of the private water well system in the municipality be included in the mandate of the Thames-Sydenham regional source water protection committee. Premier, will you listen to the St. Clair township council and make sure these wells are protected from contamination?

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

Hon. Chris Ballard: I understand the passion with which those who live in the area have their concerns around wind turbines, but I will say that as with all wind turbine projects, we take the concerns regarding the environment and human health exceptionally seriously.

Let me say at the beginning that my ministry adheres to a very strict renewable energy approvals process. I know that the members opposite in the PC Party have never approved a single renewable energy project ever, or ever spoken in support of any of those here in this House. Our government is committed to a cleaner, greener future, a reduction in the use of fossil fuels, but we do take these concerns very seriously.

I'll have more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is back to the Premier. Premier, the construction of the Otter Creek turbine project will involve deep pile-driving into the same black shale that left 20 water wells in the Chatham-Kent area producing nothing but murky brown liquid. I know that the minister knows about this. The residents of St. Clair township are understandably concerned.

Your government has the opportunity to do the right thing and cancel this project before the aquifer that supplies the residents of St. Clair township with water is put at risk of contamination. Premier, will your government do the right thing and cancel the Otter Creek turbine project today?

Hon. Chris Ballard: Speaker, I'll start by reiterating what I said at the very outset: that our government takes these concerns, the concerns of residents in this area, very seriously, and we take the environment and the impacts on human health of these types of developments very seriously as well.

Again, any project, as it goes forward—any renewable energy project that moves forward—goes through a very rigorous evaluation process by my ministry to make sure that the health of the residents in the area—the health of the environment—is protected. This project as well will undergo and is undergoing those procedures.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, we both know outrageous hydro bills are the norm here in Ontario. To make matters worse, since the Liberals privatized hydro, the Hydro One CEO, Mayo Schmidt, is making over \$6 million a year while people in this province struggle to pay their hydro bills, buy groceries, get prescription medicine and go to the dentist. This Liberal government continues to stand behind Hydro One CEO Mayo Schmidt. They think that his salary is reasonable. I think that is a disgrace, and so do the people of Ontario.

When will the Premier make the right decision and bring Hydro One back into public hands, where it belongs, and put a stop to those ridiculous executive salaries?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm glad to stand up and speak on behalf of the Minister of Energy on this important issue. I think the member opposite knows that we are taking every step possible to ensure that electricity rates are coming down. Our fair hydro plan has resulted in a 25% decrease on average for all residents and businesses and farms across the province. In fact, Speaker, in rural and remote areas, that reduction is, in some instances, around 50%.

These reductions are taking place because of the concerted effort that our government has made in making sure that we have an electricity system that is affordable but also is a system that is clean, that does not burn coal the way it used to under the previous Conservative and the

NDP governments but is a clean, emission-free system which is available to Ontarians at an affordable price.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Back to the Premier: No CEO of Hydro One should be paid \$6 million when people are struggling to pay their hydro bills.

The NDP has tried to put a cap on public sector CEO salaries in the past, many times, through legislation. Unfortunately, this government, along with the PCs, voted against several pieces of legislation to cap public sector CEO salaries.

Speaker, we know PCs are more interested in helping millionaires instead of the people who have to choose between paying their hydro bills and eating. When will the Premier start caring about the people struggling to pay their bills in this province, instead of supporting millionaires on Bay Street?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The Premier is the only leader in this province who has actually taken concrete steps to reduce electricity bills by 25% for all Ontarians, small businesses and farmers.

The NDP's hydro pamphlet is short on details but long on hollow promises. Many of their promises rely on a vague, yet-to-be-determined expert panel, to be convened sometime in the future. That is not going to save Ontarians a single penny on their bills, Speaker. They're basing their calculations on pie-in-the-sky negotiations with the federal government.

The reality is that these vague proposals don't make sense. Their biggest idea—buying more than \$4 billion worth of Hydro One shares—will not take one cent off electricity bills. It will take zero cents off electricity bills, Speaker. All it does is send billions to the stock market, money that should be used for health care, education and infrastructure. We don't agree with their plan.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, we're joined by people across this province, across Canada and around the world in recognizing the Day of Mourning. Together, we pause to remember those workers who have lost their lives or been injured on the job. They're our families, our friends and our neighbours. We should honour their skill, dedication and commitment by making sure all those who follow have safer workplaces.

Minister, I believe everyone in this House agrees that safety should be the number one priority in every workplace and on every job site. One injury is one too many. Every Ontarian should be able to go to work confident they will return home safe and sound at the end of the day. Minister, can you please tell us what we are doing to improve workplace safety?

1130

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for this very important question. The Day of Mourning is one of the most important days of the year for me, as

Minister of Labour, but I think for all members of this House. I hope members will take the opportunity to attend some of the services that will be held around the province.

As Minister of Labour—and anybody that's been the Minister of Labour will know—the minister gets notified each and every time a worker is killed on the job in this province or is seriously injured. It's the worst part of the job and it never gets easier. But each time, it reminds me of the most important part of our jobs here: making sure that, above all else, workers in this province are kept safe.

We've brought forward mandatory health and safety training for all workers, including young workers, those that are new to the workplace; strengthened protections for temporary health workers through Bill 148; and we're improving the support we give to those who are injured by improving WSIB benefits. As a result of this, Ontario has become one of the safest places in the entire world in which you can work. We should be proud of that progress, but not satisfied for one minute.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. John Fraser: This morning, we all donned yellow and black ribbons to commemorate the Day of Mourning. I hope that we will all continue to wear them through the weekend. The black represents mourning and the yellow represents hope for a safer and brighter future—a future where there are no injuries and where everyone returns home safe at the end of every day.

This weekend, people across this province will gather at ceremonies in their communities. Flags will be lowered to honour loved ones, co-workers and friends we've lost. No job is worth a life. No job is worth an injury. When it comes to health and safety, we all have a role to play. We all have a responsibility.

Speaker, I'll be joining the Ottawa and District Labour Council at Vincent Massey Park this weekend for their ceremony. Through you to the minister, can the minister tell us how he will be commemorating the Day of Mourning this weekend?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member from Ottawa South. This weekend I'll be joining Ontario families at local Day of Mourning ceremonies both in front of the WSIB and also at home in Oakville. I would urge all members to do the same thing. There are Day of Mourning ceremonies held around the provinces. You can go online to get the information, find where the ceremony is at, and join those in honouring all those who have been lost or injured on the job.

I know workplace safety is not an issue that should be divided along party lines. I think we can all in this House agree that workplace deaths and injuries are tragic. They're unacceptable and they're preventable. We should all work together to make workplace safety a personal priority—to speak to your constituents, your families and your friends. If we work together, we can ensure our loved ones and our communities know their rights and they understand how to protect themselves.

If we all work together to change society's attitude—and we should not rest, Speaker, until safety is regarded as routine, the same as a seat belt in a car.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. It has been almost five months since you said you would review and fix the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program. Yet today, farmers across Ontario continue to face huge livestock losses because the program you put in place isn't working.

I've personally witnessed and written to you about the damage that predators have done to livestock of farmers like Wayne Caughill in my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. You've heard from respected farm groups, municipalities and individuals, who wrote and spoke to you urging you to fix this mess. Minister, why are you holding up farmers' compensation?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank my friend the honourable member for his question this morning. Indeed, when I had the opportunity to address the annual meeting of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, we made a commitment to look at the wildlife compensation program. I had the opportunity, as I do visiting the back concessions of Ontario—certainly, in my riding of Peterborough, I've been in the fields. I've seen the damage that's been done: coyotes attacking calves and fishers attacking young lambs.

We put a process in place to do the review. We reached out significantly to the OFA, the Christian farmers of Ontario, and the National Farmers Union. We've developed a consensus on a path forward and we're going to start the implementation process. Part of that will be to train the evaluators in municipalities right across the province of Ontario so they have a standard skill set when they're going into the fields to ascertain damage from predators.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the minister: Minister, you have over a year's worth of evidence and complaints about the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program. You know that the program is failing and not achieving its intended goal. One in five claims for predation kills is rejected by your staff—20%. They don't visit the farm. They're not doing groundwork. When farmers call the hotline to lodge a complaint, sadly, some of them have been hung up on.

Your inaction is inexcusable. Our party, and specifically our ag critic from Haldimand–Norfolk, pressed you for answers on this same question just last Christmas. Five months later, you're still holding out on farmers' compensation. It's time for you, Minister, to get down to hard work and fix this mess, so I ask, when will you give farmers their entitled compensation?

Hon. Jeff Leal: Well, Mr. Speaker, contrary to the information that was just provided by the member there, we want to make sure that all our evaluators have a consistent, standard skill set right across the province of Ontario to go into the field, as I have, to look at the remains, the carcasses, from predator issues within rural Ontario. We've consulted widely with Keith Currie of OFA and with the National Farmers Union. It's interesting. Their

view is slightly different from the narrative that may be provided by the member here today, which is that they're very pleased with the progress that is being made. We're looking at ways to actually increase compensation, particularly for those animals that have unique genetics, to make sure our farmers are compensated. There's a consensus building, and they've indicated to us that we're on the right path to get this resolved.

FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The francophone community in east Toronto has been pushing for an école secondaire francophone for over a decade. Recently, they learned that Conseil scolaire Viamonde has leased the former Greenwood school from the Toronto District School Board. Because of the small footprint of the existing building, with no adjacent schoolyard, there's no green space for students. Parents are concerned that a lack of equivalence with English schools that have many acres of green space and better facilities will result in ongoing assimilation of the next generation of francophone students.

What will you do, Minister, to ensure that a fully equivalent francophone high school, with dedicated green spaces for the students, is delivered to this community?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I want to thank the member opposite for this question. Our government is absolutely committed to supporting both French and English school boards across the province to build better schools. In fact, since 2013, we have provided \$208 million in capital funding to CS Viamonde. In this time, CS Viamonde has completed 25 projects, including eight new schools and 17 additions and retrofits. In fact, we recently announced that this year we're providing \$80 million, including more than \$16 million to be invested in the Viamonde school board to support the creation of a new French high school in Toronto. This school will become the fourth public French-language high school in Toronto, and it is absolutely a very important move for the community by the school board.

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

The government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want to inform the House that the announcement relating to justices of the peace will be posted later today. It went up by mistake, as opposed to just a news release, to announce the appointment of a regional senior justice.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's actually not a point of order. I believe it was an answer to a question that could have been given later, but I appreciate the fact that the minister attempted to find an answer.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've got somebody else I have to recognize here.

VISITORS

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

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: Today I'd like to welcome the family members of page Madeline Buss from Cambridge, who are sitting in the members' gallery this morning: Charlotte Buss, Stephen Buss, Graham Buss and Jack Ruttle. Welcome to Queen's Park.

DEFERRED VOTES

PAY TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018

SUR LA TRANSPARENCE SALARIALE

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

Bill 3, An Act respecting transparency of pay in employment / Projet de loi 3, Loi portant sur la transparence salariale.

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

The division bells rang from 1139 to 1144.

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

On April 25, 2018, Mr. Flynn moved third reading of Bill 3, An Act respecting transparency of pay in employment.

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

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Fedeli, Victor	Scott, Laurie
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Smith, Todd
Barrett, Toby	McDonell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Coe, Lorne	Oosterhoff, Sam	Yakubuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 60; the nays are 15.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

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

The House recessed from 1147 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I would like to introduce and welcome my mother, Gwen Campbell, as well as my partner, Scott, and our two children, Paisley and Blythe. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. I can see her, way at the back. That's really cute.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's my honour to introduce a good friend of mine who is in the gallery with us today: Gene Domagala, the unofficial mayor of the Beach.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Your Worship.

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I'm very happy to introduce 14 very important people from my riding. They are from TAIBU, the local health centre. The first is Mr. Lieben Gedremikael; second is Gean Guvera; third is Monica Materson; fourth is Angeline McCarthy; fifth is Anita Rajoorp; sixth is Agnes Browne; seventh is Carmen Adam; eighth is Margaret Haylin; ninth is Aliceson Mclethie; 10th is Lizine Miles; 11th is Carol Crawford; 12th is Mable Macfarlane; 13th is Blossom Sinclair; and 14th is Verona Coley. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to extend a warm welcome to Candace Bovard and Andrea Lokken, who will be with us a little later this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have an introduction: somebody who came all the way from Vancouver. My son, Joe, is with us in the Speaker's gallery. Welcome. Why he wants to see Dad work is beyond me. I'm not sure.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would recognize the member from Windsor-Tecumseh on a point of order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. Yes, on a point of order: I'd like to correct my record. Twice this week I gave what amounts to incorrect figures for the number of workers killed on the job last year in Ontario. I was given a number—54—by the labour ministry. It turns out that the official WSIB number is 81 workers killed on the job last year, and another 146 who have passed away from occupational disease.

REPORT, OFFICE OF THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Seeing no further introductions or points of order, I beg to inform the

House that the following document was tabled: a report concerning Patrick Brown, the member from Simcoe North, from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

Mr. Lorne Coe: In August of 2016, a report from the Ombudsman of Ontario entitled *Nowhere to Turn* highlighted the recommendations from the Select Committee on Developmental Services to improve service delivery for developmentally disabled Ontarians.

For the past nine years, the developmental services sector, led by the Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs, has experienced a lack of annual financial investment. Speaker, 23% of government-funded community agencies are at risk of financial crisis, with an additional 56% at moderate risk after facing nine years of zero increases in their budgets. The longer the Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs goes without additional investment, tenuous situations will continue to grow and negatively impact service delivery for a vulnerable community.

These communities need and deserve the government's support and commitment. It's not right or fair to leave this substantial financial burden on Ontario families.

RIDING OF KENORA–RAINY RIVER

Ms. Sarah Campbell: It is an honour to rise and deliver one final statement in this House as the member from Kenora–Rainy River. Throughout my short time in this place, I have always been a northerner first, believing that northern issues are too important to become a casualty of partisan political wrangling. I held dear the advice imparted to me by the former member from Trinity–Spadina, Mr. Rosario Marchese, who cautioned me to remember who elected me. For me, this was always easy to do as there has always been so much work to do to make sure that northwestern Ontario gets a fair deal.

Much of the work here that I've done has been on ensuring that northerners have a robust health care system where no one is left behind due to their inability to pay or their postal code; a safe, reliable network of roads and transportation options; low hydro costs for residents and industry; a positive, respectful relationship with indigenous populations; thriving local economies with stable employment and resource revenue sharing with northern communities; affordable child care; appropriate senior care; and, overall, respect for our northern culture and values.

I wish the two new members who will represent Kenora–Rainy River following the election the very best of luck. I sincerely hope that they, too, will remember

who elected them and that they remain fierce defenders of the north, above all else. This focus has always meant more to us than party colours.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I, too, want to thank the member for her service.

Further members' statements?

GENE DOMAGALA

Mr. Arthur Potts: Today, it is my honour and privilege to recognize Gene Domagala, "the mayor of the Beach." This past weekend, a local laneway in old east Toronto was renamed the Gene Domagala Laneway, a permanent reminder of Gene's unparalleled contributions to our community.

Gene is a local historian whose volunteering efforts and community leadership are legendary. He helps run a Santa Claus Fund depot in Parkdale and is a tireless ambassador for Community Centre 55, a remarkable Beach institution that runs a daycare, summer camps, a Christmas parade, senior services, and a holiday hamper program that serves nearly 1,000 families.

Gene is a leader who shows others the importance of empathy. He holds up a sign during the Santa Claus Fund depot that says, "We deliver. We do not judge."

Over the past four decades, Gene has led historical preservation projects, including salvaging the Leuty Lifeguard Station, an iconic landmark of the Beach, as well as getting the name right on the Kew Williams Cottage in Kew Gardens.

He also started the Beaches Spring Sprint, a fund-raising run in support of Beaches Recreation Centre that's now in its 31st year, and Slobberfest, a special event for dog lovers whose highlight is a pet/owner look-alike contest.

Gene also runs a whole bunch of historical tours in our community. I had the great fortune of being on one early in my career when he stopped in front of this beautiful house on Lyle Avenue which had a big, three-dimensional lion sticking out from the roof on the front of it. A "grimace," they called it. He gave a bit of the history of the house. Two weeks later, it came up for sale, and I bought it. So with all you've done, Gene, I want to thank you for helping me find my residence in Upper Beach.

Thank you for all you do. You're a great inspiration to our community and a great friend.

TAXATION

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Last week, the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, Doug Ford, made a very exciting announcement that is going to help a lot of lower-income people across the province of Ontario.

Doug Ford's commitment is that, under a PC government, if you are making the minimum wage, you're going to pay no income tax at all. The Ontario PC

leader's tax credit would exempt 623,000 low-wage workers from paying the provincial portion of income taxes, saving them up to \$800 a year and costing the province roughly \$500 million. Mr. Speaker, that's money that our government will put back into the pockets of hard-working Ontarians.

The reality is that the impact of Bill 140 was not well thought out by this government. We've seen the impact on local job creators in Niagara West-Glanbrook and across the province of Ontario, with jobs being lost in agriculture and various other industries, particularly at Tigchelaar berries in my home riding of Niagara West-Glanbrook, where they're competing in an interjurisdictional economy against American companies.

Putting over \$800 back in the pockets of hard-working Ontarians means that they can afford more of a life that has become more and more expensive under an Ontario Liberal government that has failed to listen to the hard-working taxpayers of Ontario, the job creators of Ontario and the families of Ontario.

I'm very proud to be supporting this legislation. I'm hearing lots of good things about it from my riding, and I look forward to supporting it after June 7.

NOLAN CASKANETTE

Ms. Catherine Fife: Today, I want to share the story of Nolan Caskanette and his family. Nolan is nine months old. He has been diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy. His survival is dependent on a drug called Spinraza. Spinraza is not yet publicly funded in Ontario.

Families should not have to endure the slow approval process for public funding as they watch their children degenerate. They should not have to rely on pharmaceutical companies or private insurance for access to this life-saving treatment.

1310

The Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health has recommended that Spinraza be covered for type 1 babies diagnosed before seven months of age who are not on life support. Nolan wasn't on life support at first diagnosis, but he is now; it was the only way to keep him alive.

Nolan has already made great strides. He comes off the ventilator for over an hour each day, but Nolan is still technically on life support. Nolan's parents wanted me to emphasize that the CADTH's position is essentially unethical. Nolan is not lying in a bed dying; he is learning how to live. Not offering—or especially not continuing—Spinraza to a patient on life support is like denying someone a kidney transplant because they are on dialysis. Biogen will fund Nolan two more doses if there is no decision, but if a funding decision is made that excludes him, doses covered by the company would stop.

I want to thank the Premier's office for responding to my letter and contacting Nolan's parents. Ontario can lead in fast-tracking and reducing barriers to Spinraza. Please, let's get Spinraza approved for public funding.

Let's not restrict access to this life-saving drug, so that this beautiful little boy can live.

ERINOAKKIDS

Mr. Bob Delaney: Ontario's largest children's treatment centre, ErinoakKids, now has a new headquarters in Mississauga and three new state-of-the-art facilities to serve families with children with learning and developmental difficulties. New facilities in Brampton, Mississauga and Oakville will enable ErinoakKids to assist children and young adults with autism and other learning disabilities.

Among my first visitors as a newly elected MPP in 2003 were parents of autistic children. Along with my MPP colleagues over the years, including current Brampton mayor Linda Jeffrey, I have worked with the province to expand funding for such programs as the Ontario Autism Program and to bring provincial funding to enable ErinoakKids to offer families more choice and an ability to get some respite, and to offer kids the best staff and technology available to help them learn.

In ErinoakKids' new headquarters, staff can better assess children's needs, can better identify their strengths and goals, and can properly plan interventions to enable kids and their families to live their lives with greater dignity. Congratulations to ErinoakKids management and staff, to the ErinoakKids Foundation, particularly president Bridget Fewtrell, to the founder of the foundation, former president Linda Rothney, to the volunteers, and to the families and the children whose lives will be made better in this very new, state-of-the-art facility at ErinoakKids in Mississauga.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: This week, we learned more disturbing news from the independent and non-partisan Auditor General. The Auditor General outlined in her report that the deficit is not in fact \$6.7 billion, as the Liberal government has claimed, but a staggering \$11.7 billion, nearly double their claim. With the auditor's report, we now know that Ontario's net debt-to-GDP ratio is 40.1%. Ontario's debt is forecast to be \$393 billion—\$33 billion higher than what the government had reported.

The Liberal government created their own accounting rules to make the size of their deficit much smaller than the actual cost. Paying for debt is currently the third-highest expenditure in Ontario. This means that there are fewer tax dollars going to fund hospitals and schools, or to pay for the services we rely on. Instead, more money will have to be spent paying the interest on our debt.

The Auditor General's report shows that the government inappropriately withheld the expenses related to their hydro plan after their years of waste and mismanagement.

I am pleased that my leader, Doug Ford, has announced he will launch an independent commission of inquiry to get to the bottom of the deficit scandal. The independent commission of inquiry will build on the Auditor General's valuable public service work and finally restore integrity in the government of Ontario's financial reporting.

NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

Mr. John Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate and thank the member from Kenora—Rainy River for her service.

Today in the House, we recognized the National Day of Mourning. On April 28, in our communities across Ontario, there will be ceremonies and gatherings that honour those killed, injured and made ill. At those ceremonies and gatherings, we will all also recommit to making all workplaces safe.

This Saturday, I'll be joining my colleagues, the Ottawa and District Labour Council and many others at Vincent Massey Park at the CLC monument, in our ceremony.

The park is not far from the Heron Road Workers Memorial Bridge. Almost 52 years ago, on August 10, 1966, the then-under-construction Heron Road Bridge collapsed, killing nine men and injuring 60 others. Lives were changed forever. I'd like to read the names of those men who lost their lives, to honour and remember them: Leonard Baird, Clarence Beattie, Jean Paul Guerin, Omer Lamadeleine, Edmund Newton, Lucien Regimbald, Dominic Romano, Raymond Tremblay and Joao Viegas.

Wives lost their husbands. Thirty-one children were left without a father. Almost 52 years have passed, and it's important that we honour them through our work to ensure that everyone returns home at night safe and sound.

TAIBU COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I'm very happy to introduce in this Legislature an excellent organization called TAIBU in my Scarborough—Rouge River riding.

TAIBU is a community health centre founded in 2008 and has been funded by the Ontario government. It provides comprehensive primary health care programs and activities from Monday through Friday. This month marks the 10th anniversary for TAIBU.

On Mondays, around 80 women and 20 men from the community meet regularly to break social isolation.

Tuesdays, older adults participate in laughter yoga sessions, and youth are attending the city of Toronto cultural project called "From the Margins to the Centre."

Wednesdays, a free lunch program is provided in partnership with the Muslim Welfare Centre, 42 police division, Malvern Presbyterian Church and One Love Malvern for about 200 socially isolated community members. Up to now, they have served over 21,000 meals.

Thursdays, the Jamaican Canadian nurses' association provides dementia prevention and management programs for seniors.

Fridays, there is a gentle exercise program for seniors.

In 2016, TAIBU was identified as the only primary care French-language service provider.

Another excellent new service is the indigenous mental health and outreach that started in December 2016.

I'm very proud to have supported TAIBU since its inception.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RESTORING PLANNING POWERS TO MUNICIPALITIES ACT, 2018 LOI DE 2018 SUR LE RÉTABLISSEMENT DES POUVOIRS DES MUNICIPALITÉS EN MATIÈRE D'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE

Mr. Wilson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 63, An Act to amend the Planning Act / Projet de loi 63, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, this is the third time I've introduced this legislation. It's the Restoring Planning Powers to Municipalities Act, 2018.

The bill amends the Planning Act to reverse the effect of the amendments made to the act by schedule K to the Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009. Those amendments exempted renewable energy undertakings from the normal application of the Planning Act, including policy statements, provincial plans, official plans, demolition control bylaws, zoning bylaws, and development permit regulations and bylaws.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Good afternoon, Speaker. I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Minister?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(c), a change be made to the order of precedence for private members' public business, such that Mr. Arnott assumes ballot item number 31, Mr. Hardeman assumes ballot number 18, and that notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notices for ballot item number 18 be waived.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister moves that, notwithstanding standing order 98(c)—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispense. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, this Saturday, which is April 28, is a very solemn day in the province of Ontario. On that day, our province's day of mourning, we will pause to remember those workers who have been killed or injured on the job. This weekend, people across the province will gather at ceremonies. They'll be at city squares; they'll be at union halls; they'll be at all sorts of locations throughout the community. Flags will be lowered to half-mast to honour the loved ones, the co-workers and the friends we have lost.

Since 1980, the Ontario government has recognized the Day of Mourning. It's a day that is recognized now in cities across Canada and also in 80 other countries around the world. It reminds us, too, of our ongoing responsibilities. We must make sure that workers in Ontario are properly trained. We must make sure they have the right equipment. We must redouble our efforts to protect workers and their families. This is a day to rededicate ourselves to doing whatever it takes to prevent workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses. It's also a day, though, to honour those we have lost and to acknowledge those who have become injured on the job, because they are our sons, our daughters, our husbands and wives, and they are our friends and neighbours. We honour the skill, the dedication and the commitment they brought to their jobs every day by making sure the generations who follow have safer workplaces.

As part of my job, I'm notified each and every time a worker is seriously injured or is killed in the province of Ontario. As I said this morning in answer to a question, it is absolutely the worst part of the job. Every time I'm notified, I know that another family is about to hear or perhaps already has heard that a loved one is not coming home from work that day.

When it comes to health and safety, we all have a part to play. It's everyone's responsibility. I would encourage all Ontarians to do their part to protect our province's

greatest and most precious resource, and that is our people and our workers. Working together, we can ensure that Ontario is one of the best and one of the safest places to work in the entire world. Some of the members of the House today, if not all of them, will be wearing yellow and black ribbons to commemorate the Day of Mourning this weekend. I encourage all of you to wear these ribbons. The black ribbon represents mourning. The yellow, however, represents hope for a safer and a brighter future, a future where there are no injuries, where everyone goes home safe at the end of the day and where lives are not at risk.

We all know that no job is worth a life. No job is worth an injury. We know we cannot rest as long as one person in this province is injured on the job. You know, Speaker, what I found in this role is that regulation and enforcement are very, very necessary, but alone they are just not enough. We have attitudes to change as well. Workplace injuries must never be seen—and I think they still are seen by some—as a cost of doing business, as if there's an expectation that you will get injured on some jobs. Safety in the workplace should be automatic. It should be as routine as buckling up your seatbelt in the car, something we had to get used to, but something we do almost unconsciously now. We challenge employers, we challenge labour groups and workers and I challenge my own ministry to do their part in building a culture of safety in all Ontario workplaces.

As we honour the dead and the injured today, we must all remember that all of us here in this House also have a duty to advance workplace health and safety. I rise as the Minister of Labour today, but I know I echo the sentiment of all members of this House and past Ministers of Labour right across party lines when I say that workplace deaths and injuries are tragic, unacceptable and they're entirely preventable.

I also speak to you today as parents and members of our community. We must each dedicate ourselves to doing what we can do so that people who go to work every day also return home every day safe and sound.

It's the young people we need to work on, especially. A lot of people are surprised when they hear that the time you're most vulnerable to workplace injury is not in your later years when you're doing harder jobs, or when you're experienced and you might take a shortcut, or any one of the things that come with doing a job over and over again. No, Speaker; the time you're most vulnerable to a workplace accident is the very first few weeks of the very first job you have. That's why it's so important that we talk to our young people.

I'd urge each and every one of the members today to make workplace safety a personal priority, and to not only speak to your constituents but also to your friends and, if you have sons and daughters or grandsons and granddaughters, to them especially. We must all work together to make sure our loved ones and members of our community know their rights and understand how to protect themselves from the hazards of work.

Once again, I'd encourage all members of this House to attend a Day of Mourning ceremony in their own

community this year. It honours those people who have paid the ultimate price for simply going to work in the morning.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the minister for his statement today. I could say "ditto" and sit down because he covered so many of the points that are most important, but I did take the time to prepare this, so we're going to go through it.

This Saturday, April 28, workers, their families and the wider public will commemorate the National Day of Mourning for all those who have lost their lives or suffered injury or illness in their workplace. This is a yearly occurrence, and it allows us to reflect on the great sadness we have for those workers who have died or have been injured while they were simply doing their jobs. It also allows us to think about the dreadful personal cost that all workplace injuries and illnesses have on their workers, their friends and families, and wider society here in the province of Ontario.

What's more, it is an important opportunity to honour workers and to recommit ourselves to workplace health and safety. Compared to decades ago, we have made a lot of progress on this file. This is due in large part to the efforts of workers themselves, in conjunction with their unions, employers and government, to not only make our workplaces safer but to educate the public to be more safety-conscious.

On the labour side of the equation, it is important to remember that this Day of Mourning was started in Sudbury in the mid-1980s by the Canadian Labour Congress. Since that time, a workers' mourning day is now recognized in over 80 countries. Everyone in this chamber and across the province owes the Canadian Labour Congress a debt of gratitude for doing so much to make this Day of Mourning possible.

On the government side of the equation, an example of a fruitful government initiative was in the mid-1990s, when the government of the day gave the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board a new mandate to place emphasis on prevention of injuries and illness. Since that time, the WSIB has had effective health and safety campaigns carried out with other key safety stakeholders.

As they have done in the past, going forward, the key to improving safety is through private and public partnerships at home, at work and in our communities. Along with the Ministry of Labour, some of the prominent organizational safety partners we have in Ontario are the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers, the Workers Health and Safety Centre, the Institute for Work and Health, the Centre of Research Expertise for the Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders, the Centre for Research Expertise in Occupational Disease, the Occupational Cancer Research Centre, and Health and Safety Ontario, which comprises four health and safety associations working together. I want to take this opportunity to thank those groups for the hard work they do every day to help make this province and our workers safer.

Many of us in this chamber are parents and grandparents, so we understand the importance of making sure that when our children and grandchildren are starting to work, we sit them down before they go to do their job and stress the importance of safety in the workplace and the importance of not doing work or going into areas that are unsafe.

Speaker, my son is a tradesperson, and I've had that conversation with him many, many times. He's not that young anymore, but I still have it with him, because he is my son. I know many parents whose children have not come home because of a workplace accident that has been fatal. Nobody wants that to happen to their own. So we still have that conversation.

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Unfortunately, it is often younger workers who are the ones who are hurt because they are unaware of their rights or, because of their lack of age and experience, they are less likely to speak up about dangers. If we are able to internalize workplace safety with our youth, it will be a skill set and a frame of mind that they will take with them for their entire career.

While we are fortunate to live and work in one of the safest places in the world, we must always remain vigilant to improve our efforts. We owe it, as a tribute to those workers who have fallen or been injured, to do better.

It has been repeated countless times, but I will echo this sentiment once again: One worker's death or injury is one too many. I know I speak for every member of the Legislative Assembly when I say that we need to continue to work together to continue these safety efforts.

On behalf of the entire caucus of the official opposition, I want to again thank all workers and unions across this province for all their hard work and sacrifice and wish them a meaningful Day of Mourning this Saturday.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Every single year, on April 28, we commemorate the National Day of Mourning. It is a day when we gather as workers and as people of this province to mourn the dead, but we also fight for the living on that day. It's very important for workers because sometimes work, as we know, can be dangerous, and sometimes it can be deadly. Accidents in the workplace can leave a person debilitated for life, through no fault of their own, and these incidents can happen in any workplace.

Like every Day of Mourning, I always mention a young man who died in my riding, very early in my term. His name was Nick Lalonde. He was 23 years old. He left behind a two-year-old daughter, and family and friends. He fell off a roof because he had never been trained in working at heights. My colleague from Windsor has mentioned that just a couple of weeks ago, a 24-year-old young man named Michael Gerald Cobb was killed in Windsor. So these are fresh. These are families that will suffer and will feel the trauma of a lost loved one in the workplace.

I think and I hope we can agree that all workers deserve compensation when they're unable to work due

to injuries sustained in the workplace, yet this continues to be an issue in the province of Ontario, with the WSIB not honouring claims. Like many of you, I will join hundreds in Waterloo and Kitchener this weekend, as well as hundreds and thousands across Ontario who will hold ceremonies commemorating the Workers Day of Mourning. It's not something we look forward to, but it's essential that we remind everyone of the need for workplace safety.

It's important for us to track the numbers, Mr. Speaker. In 2016, we lost 54 people—54 poor souls who left for work in the morning and never returned at the end of their shift. The WSIB's most recent statistics for 2017 in Ontario recorded 227 workplace deaths. Among those dead, there were 81 traumatic fatalities and 146 occupational disease fatalities. One would have been too many, but we lost 227 citizens of this province last year. This is clearly problematic as the number of people we're losing has gone up drastically this year, and up from the year before. So have we done enough? Clearly we have not.

We need to treat our injured workers with more respect. We need the WSIB to do a better job of assisting our injured workers, full stop. Add to those fatalities the 239,045 total WSIB-registered claims due to a work-related injury or disease, including 60,234 claims accepted for lost time—and the fact that these statistics only include what's reported and accepted by the compensation board. It's safe to say that the total number of workers impacted is even higher.

What these numbers don't show is just how many people are directly affected by workplace tragedies. Just three weeks ago:

"A St. Catharines man has been identified as the victim of a workplace accident which occurred last week at Toronto's Billy Bishop airport.

"Dean Maguire, 60, a father of two daughters, died Tuesday.

"He fell off the roof of the island airport. He was a subcontractor with PCL Construction and was doing cladding work at the facility."

We know the long-standing case of the General Electric workers in Peterborough. Workers at GE, from their experience over the years, have filed 750 claims. The vast majority of those claims have been denied. These are people who worked in a factory and who were exposed to more than 3,000 carcinogens over their careers with that factory. Many of these people have died from a variety of cancers and other respiratory illnesses over the years. We extend our heartfelt sympathies to the families and friends of those involved in these accidents and are deeply saddened by the unfortunate turn of events.

Each worker's death has a profound impact on the loved ones, families, friends and co-workers they leave behind, changing all of their lives forever. We hold our annual service to honour the dead and to fight for the living. We demonstrate to the families left behind that they are not alone. We share their grief. We are doing our part to make working life safer for everyone.

This is our shared responsibility in this House, Mr. Speaker. When you see the flags lowered at municipal, provincial and federal buildings this weekend, use the occasion to speak to your friends and families about the need for workplace safety. Talk to your children, as I do to my son, who is apprenticing as an electrician. It is our shared responsibility, but I understand that we can do better and all of us in this House know that we can do better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Sylvia Jones: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

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

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

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

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, good afternoon to you.

“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 firmly agree. I will sign my name and give it to Harsaajan to bring up to the desk.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition that’s addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It’s sent by a number of residents of the Windsor–Tecumseh area. It’s entitled “Update Ontario Fluoridation Legislation,” and it reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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“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’m pleased to sign and support this petition and to send it down with page Eric.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition today is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It’s called “Spots Today for Doctors Tomorrow.”

“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...;

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

“(5) Improve communications between the MAESD and MOHLTC so that medical school admissions correspond with residency spots...”

I agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and send it down with Stephanie.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: “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 recommend 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 fully support this petition, sign it and give it to page Abinaya to deliver to the table.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. John Fraser: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Update Ontario Fluoridation Legislation.

“Whereas community water fluoridation is a safe, effective and scientifically proven means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by

more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition. I’m affixing my signature and giving it to page Eric.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I, too, have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

“Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced to cut down on essential expenses such as food and

medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills; and

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

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

I fully support this petition, Mr. Speaker. I will sign it and I will give it to page Hannah to give to the table.

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have a petition which reads as follows:

“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 support this, will affix my signature and give it to page Colin to deliver to the table.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. John Fraser: I have a petition here given to me by the member for York South–Weston.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

“Whereas over a century ago, workers in Ontario who were injured on the job gave up the right to sue their employers, in exchange for a system that would provide them with just compensation;

“Whereas decades of cost-cutting have pushed injured workers into poverty and onto publicly funded social assistance programs, and have gradually curtailed the rights of injured workers;

“Whereas injured workers have the right to quality and timely medical care, compensation for lost wages, and protection from discrimination;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to accomplish the following for injured workers in Ontario:

“Eliminate the practice of ‘deeming’ or ‘determining,’ which bases compensation on phantom jobs that injured workers do not actually have;

“Ensure that the WSIB prioritizes and respects the medical opinions of the health care providers who treat the injured worker directly;

“Prevent compensation from being reduced or denied based on ‘pre-existing conditions’ that never affected the worker’s ability to function prior to the work injury.”

I am affixing my signature and giving it to page Ryan-Michael.

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ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to stop Liberal waste and mismanagement.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas in 2016 the Liberals promised to balance the budget, but instead the province is predicting at least six more years of deficit;

“Whereas paying the interest on the debt is costing Ontarians more than \$1 billion a month;

“Whereas these debt payments crowd out the ability to pay for the services that Ontarians rely on; and

“Whereas it is clear that the Liberal government will do, say, or promise anything to cling to power;

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

“To call on the government to stop making last-minute promises and immediately call a general election so Ontario voters can decide.”

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

POET LAUREATE

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

“Whereas poets laureate have been officially recognized at all levels of Canadian government and in at least 15 countries around the world; and

“Whereas the establishment of our own poet laureate for the province of Ontario would promote literacy and celebrate Ontario culture and heritage, along with raising public awareness of poetry and of the spoken word; and

“Whereas Gord Downie was a poet, a singer and advocate for indigenous issues, and designating the poet laureate in his memory will serve to honour him and continue his legacy; and

“Whereas Bill 13, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario in memory of Gord Downie, will establish the Office of Poet Laureate for the province of Ontario as a non-partisan attempt to promote literacy, to focus attention on our iconic poets and to give new focus to the arts community in Ontario;

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

“To support the establishment of the Office of Poet Laureate as an officer of the Ontario Legislature and that private member’s Bill 13, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario in memory of Gord Downie, receive swift passage through the legislative process.”

I obviously fully agree. I’m going to turn this over to Harsaajan to bring it up to the desk.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS’
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**TIME TO CARE ACT (LONG-TERM
CARE HOMES AMENDMENT, MINIMUM
STANDARD OF DAILY CARE), 2018
LOI DE 2018 SUR LE TEMPS ALLOUÉ
AUX SOINS (MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES FOYERS DE SOINS
DE LONGUE DURÉE ET PRÉVOYANT
UNE NORME MINIMALE EN MATIÈRE
DE SOINS QUOTIDIENS)**

Ms. Horwath moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 to establish a minimum standard of daily care / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les foyers de soins de longue durée afin d’établir une norme minimale en matière de soins quotidiens.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. It’s an honour to rise today to speak about this very important legislation. Before I get into the details of what this bill will do for Ontarians, I want to

talk about why this simple private member’s bill is so extremely important.

For years, New Democrats have been raising the alarm bells about the state of long-term care here in the province of Ontario. Long-term care in Ontario is broken. The system is in crisis, and we all know exactly how we got here. The last Conservative government made deep cuts to our care systems and the staff that we depend on. They fired 6,000 nurses, they closed 28 hospitals and shuttered 7,000 hospital beds.

The current government has been doing even more damage. Over the last 15 years, wait times for people who urgently need long-term care and are waiting in hospital until a bed becomes available—those waiting times have increased by 270%. Those are weeks, months and sometimes years where people are in the wrong facility, stuck in an urgently needed hospital bed when they would be much better cared for in a different facility.

Across the province, more than 32,000 seniors and others who need long-term care are waiting on a waiting list for a spot, seniors like Donna Barnes’s parents. I want to talk a little bit about a woman I met named Donna Barnes. I met her in Oshawa. Her mother is in long-term care and her father is on a wait-list to join his wife. But she has been waiting for a spot for her father for two years. Sadly, her father is also caring for his special-needs son, despite his own age and deteriorating condition.

Speaker, no couple should ever be in a position where they cannot in their golden years remain together. They must be united in long-term care. No parent should have to jeopardize their own health caring for their children because the appropriate care is not available.

But the problems, as we know, do not end once families get a placement for one of their parents or loved ones in long-term care. Those that do find long-term care also worry. They worry daily that when they visit their parents next or their loved ones next, they will find more unexplained bruises or disturbing allegations of misuse and mistreatment—like Dr. Deanne Houghton, who I also met in Oshawa in January. Her mother, Elsie, is in care. Deanne has become very worried about her mother’s safety, so Deanne decided she was going to put some cameras up in her mother’s room, some video cameras. She became, as a result of those video cameras, aware of some incidents that have occurred that otherwise she would not have known had happened—multiple unreported falls, one of which ended up with broken bones. She saw her mother being restrained unnecessarily in these videos, and having force used against her. But her requests to have her mother transferred out of that particular home to another location have not been granted.

Imagine being so worried about the quality of care that your elderly parent is receiving that you feel compelled to install video cameras in her room, only to then have your suspicions confirmed. What if Elsie didn’t have a daughter like Deanne looking out for her? Every

Ontarian, every single Ontarian, should be able to live in a long-term-care setting, if that's what they need, in dignity, in safety and in good health. That is fundamental. It's a value that New Democrats hold, and I would suggest that all Ontarians believe that our most vulnerable senior loved ones who are in long-term care deserve that, at the very least.

Speaker, we know that the Wettlaufer murders, those heinous crimes that occurred in Woodstock and London, have shown us just how far we are from that reality. The reality is that many Ontarians worry about their loved ones in long-term care. They worry about arriving to find new bruises, their parents traumatized by rough care, or, worse, they fear the phone call to let them know their loved one has passed away before their time.

Thanks to the great work done by the Ottawa Citizen, we know that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care does track such offences. They also track the care homes that they consider to be at high risk to offend. But for some reason, they don't think that the people of the province should have access to that vital information. They don't think you should be able to get the information required to then be able to make an educated decision on a safe home for the people in your life, for the loved ones in your life, even though that information is available and at the fingertips of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

I can't even fathom the justification behind a decision like that, that they keep this information secret. It is absolutely unacceptable. This is a government that for years purported to be all about transparency. Well, it's not very transparent when it comes to a vital decision like where you are going to place your loved one if you are not providing the information about the homes that are at risk of inadequate care for your loved ones. I do know that Ontarians, those in care and the thousands of dedicated caregivers that are working in the system, and every family that is worried about their loved ones, all deserve much better than that.

1400

I want to be very clear about something: I know that Elizabeth Wettlaufer does not represent the tens of thousands of amazing caregivers working across this province each and every day. The vast majority of nurses and personal support workers in Ontario are hard-working, dedicated, caring people. They work in this field because they have a calling to really help our vulnerable seniors, and they're doing their best in a system that is failing them, like it is failing the residents of long-term care as well.

To those hard-working front-line workers, I want to say thank you. You deserve our thanks. I also want to tell you that we firmly believe that you deserve so much better as workers in this field than what you're getting right now. Staff are stretched extremely thin. In many cases, residents are only getting minutes of care a day, not because the staff don't want to provide more, but because they can't, because they're worked off their feet.

I'm sure many members of this House saw the six-minute challenge that was circulating in 2017. Personal

support workers across this province challenged Ontarians to get out of bed, clean themselves and get ready for breakfast in six minutes, because that's how long they have to get people like Elsie, for example, ready each and every morning: six meagre minutes. That is absolutely impossible, Speaker, but that's what has happened after 20 years of Liberal and Conservative governments who have allowed our care system to crumble and become unsafe. It is the workers and residents who are paying the price, and that is not acceptable.

I'm here today to tell Ontarians and let them know that it absolutely does not have to be this way in our province. We can make change for the better in Ontario, and we can turn our long-term-care system around so that the workers and the residents are able to have a decent workplace, and a place of dignity and respect in their golden years if they're a resident.

The Time to Care Act will begin to undo the years of damage that have been done by Liberals and Conservatives in our care system by requiring a minimum of four hours of hands-on care. It is going to make a huge difference in people's lives. Personal support workers and nurses should be able to give four hours of hands-on, direct care to each and every resident in long-term care. It will mean a healthier, happier and more dignified life in long-term care for residents. It will mean less stress and worry for all those family members who are so concerned about what's happening to their loved ones in care. And it will actually provide the staff the opportunity to provide the quality of care that they want to provide to the residents, who they actually care deeply about, in long-term care.

The bill, of course, was previously introduced by my colleague France Gélinas, the member from Nickel Belt, and I want to thank her for the great work that she has done on this file for many years, advocating for people across Ontario. Unfortunately, for those people in long-term care, the progress of her bill was halted when the Liberal government decided to prorogue the Legislature. But New Democrats aren't ready to give up on this important issue. For Elsie, for Deane, and for the 32,000 Ontarians who are waiting for long-term care, let's get it right. Let's actually get something done.

I hope that members from all parties will support the bill, but the reality is that the government chose to stall this bill in committee once before, wiping it from the legislative agenda, and Conservatives only have a plan to cut and privatize the services that we all depend on. People know that that's what happens when Conservatives take the reins of this province. Any promise that the Premier will make now—she's had 15 years to get something done, and instead, we have seen a worsening of the conditions in long-term care and a worsening in the ability of our treasured front-line long-term-care workers to do an adequate job for the people who are living in long-term care. After 15 years of being let down, people are not buying anything that the Liberals are saying anymore.

If the Liberals and Conservatives won't pass this legislation now, an NDP government will pass this

legislation after the coming election. We will also create 15,000 long-term-care beds initially and 40,000 long-term-care beds over a 10-year period. We guarantee that couples can stay together in care. And we will expand the scope of the inquiry into the Wettlaufer murders. The inquiry into the Wettlaufer murders is too narrow, and we will make sure that we expand that inquiry to get to the heart of the issues that continue to plague our long-term-care system. Long-term care in Ontario is broken, but it does not have to be this way.

This legislation is the start of change for the better for families like Deanne's, families like Elsie's, and family members of people all over this province. This is the start of change for the better, Speaker. Bill 43 is a bill that will take care of all Ontarians in long-term care. I hope we get the support of all parties.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: I'm happy to speak to this bill. It's a pleasure. I did speak to it when it was Bill 33, put forward by the member from Nickel Belt. I supported it then and I will support it again today. I want to thank the leader of the third party for bringing it forward again.

I want to disclose that I have family in long-term care, and consequently, I spend a lot of time in long-term care. I'm in there every week, maybe a couple of times a week, at the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre in Ottawa. They have a great staff who have provided excellent care to my family. I want to thank them and commend them for that.

I want to start by talking about the investments that were made in the 2018 budget that will address this bill and a number of other things in long-term care. What I want to say before I start that part of my remarks is that I believe the vast majority of the care in long-term care is excellent care, delivered by dedicated and loving health care practitioners, whether a PSW, a nurse, an RPN, a doctor, a physiotherapist or an occupational therapist. I was glad that the leader of the third party said that. I think there's a risk here of characterizing a whole sector of our health care system as not providing excellent care, and I know that they do. I know they do that because I know it personally.

That's not to say it's not without its challenges, so there's no question that additional resources are needed in terms of hands-on care. Acuity, especially to do with cognitive behaviours, cognitive dementia or Alzheimer's, has increased.

In this year's budget, there was a commitment of over \$300 million over the next three years. What that means is that every long-term-care home will have a registered nurse. I was happy to be at the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario annual general meeting last week to talk about that and a few other measures.

We've also made it part of our commitment to increase the hours of care—and this will address what the member's bill addresses as well—for an average of four hours of direct care per day based on hours worked. We'll ensure that every home in the province has a staff

and specialized training in behavioural supports for residents with cognitive impairments. This means an additional 15 million hours of nursing, personal support and therapeutic care for our loved ones who live in long-term care.

As well, there's an additional \$10 million for Behavioural Supports Ontario, bringing the total investment for behavioural supports to \$74 million to enhance behavioural supports for residents living with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

There's \$5 million more for enhanced staffing under the ministry's High Intensity Needs Fund, which is a fund that will help homes address the needs of residents who have diabetes or another chronic condition that needs to be managed. The way that model works, they don't have enough funding to be able to do that in their envelope, so there's an additional envelope that says when you have these high-intensity needs, you can access it.

1410

There's a \$9-million investment to support increased staffing in small long-term-care homes that will receive enhanced funding to retain at least one RPN.

Those are the numbers, but I think the thing that we need to talk about is people. My mother-in-law, up until January this year, was a resident of the Perley and Rideau veterans' home. She was there for about four months. She passed away. I was fortunate to spend her last few days with her. I was lucky enough that the home made arrangements for me to stay with her in a room overnight. I often say that it was my first two days in long-term care. It was an interesting experience being with her and one that I feel honoured to have been there for.

Also, you don't sleep. First of all, the pillows are more like balloons. That's one thing, I think, that kept me up a bit, but I also wanted to make sure I could hear her.

I could listen to what was going on on the floor at night and to what kinds of challenges the caregivers—the night staff—have there. If you've got two or three people who are in distress or having a challenge and you get one more, you've got a big challenge on your hands. That reminded me that we need that kind of care, but we also need support. There's a leadership piece to this as well. I ask myself sometimes, "How does one home provide such an excellent standard of care and another home that gets the same resources in the same place not do as well?" I think it's the leadership that exists inside the management.

I've been in business; I've been a manager; I've been on the other side of that. I think that's a critical piece as we go forward. We can talk about investing in direct, hands-on care—and we need to do that—but we need to ensure that the leadership is there to make sure that people are served, that people are taken care of. The biggest priority every day is to make sure that people's needs are met. The other things should be secondary.

I come from the grocery business. This is a simplistic analogy, but if people were lined up 10 deep at the cash registers, nobody was sitting in the office. Those are the

kinds of things that have to happen to ensure that we put focus on residents' priorities, their daily needs and their care.

The leader of the third party mentioned couples in care. This is something I've been following for about 12 years, trying to find a solution. You put in policies as to how that is designated as a priority. To be frank, we kept fixing it and then we had to fix it again. There has been a change—and the leader of the third party may know this: There is what is called a priority bed. In every long-term-care home in Ontario, there is at least one priority bed for spousal reunification, which means that if there's someone to be reunited there and a bed comes empty, they'll get it.

I think that's a great solution. It's the same way veterans' beds work. I think it's an effective way of doing it. There's no perfect system. It's hard to plan how all these things happen where people need care, but spousal reunification has changed and I'm really glad it has. It changed about two months ago. I think it will benefit the residents of long-term care and their families because it's really distressing when that happens—really, really distressing. We all have those situations that we see in our ridings. I want to make sure that the members opposite know that so they know that that exists in every long-term-care home.

With all due respect, the ministry has a website that does produce information in terms of where a long-term-care home is on the list. I can't remember the colour code, but you can find it on the Ministry of Health website. It talks about who is in compliance and who has some challenges. There are four categories. That has been up for, I think, about three weeks. It's very important. People at home: You can go and look at the homes that you're choosing. You'll be able to ask questions when you get to those homes if there are challenges that you see there or you find that they are not where they should be. It will also provide an opportunity for homes to want to get there. So I want to let the member know that as well. It can be found. It would have been good if that had been there earlier, but it is there.

It's a lot of information to pull together. If you've gone to look at the compliance reports that exist on the ministry website, or at incident reports, it's a lot of information. It's one of the most highly regulated sectors in North America. It's a book of regulations. That can produce its own challenges as well.

The last thing that I want to say—and, again, I want to thank the member for bringing this bill forward. I think that it's important. Our measures in the budget address what the bill is trying to achieve.

I had the pleasure of being with the member from Nickel Belt and the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook in Hamilton on Tuesday night, where we were talking about palliative and end-of-life care, which is something that's very important to me, something I've been very fortunate to have as my mandate inside government for the last four years. I think we've made some good progress. There's tons more work to do.

But we talked a bit about long-term care and aging and frailty. Palliative care inside long-term-care homes is important, because most people are there for—the average is around 18 months now. That's a little bit skewed, because we saw people who had been in a home for a long time, but the people coming in are higher acuity and they tend to be there shorter. So it's the last stop for a lot of people. Many homes provide excellent care. OMNI homes in Ottawa provide excellent care. They provide excellent care at St. Pat's in my riding and at the Perley in my riding.

We have an investment to enhance training for PSWs in palliative care that should be rolling out very shortly. It's something that I have worked on. I think it's important to remember that we need to make those investments there. I'm going to continue to push for those investments in palliative care and make sure that we take care of those people who took care of us at some point.

I want to thank the member again for bringing forward the bill and for the opportunity to speak to it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm pleased to speak to Bill 43 and in support of the Time to Care Act.

As members here know very well, in my role as the PC Party critic for long-term care, seniors and accessibility, I've been very vocal about calling on this government to immediately commit to better care for seniors and more long-term-care beds for seniors.

Last year, I also introduced a bill to call for guaranteed funding of seniors by tying long-term-care funding, at a minimum, to inflation so that we are able to provide better care, including feeding seniors better than prisoners, who were being fed on \$9.73 a day, versus seniors on \$8 a day, and including more touch care for seniors in nursing homes.

Personally, I am distraught by the years of neglect of seniors from this government. They have failed to care for seniors at the end of their lives. Under the Liberal watch, the wait-list for long-term care has now ballooned to 34,000 seniors. That's 34,000 frail seniors without access to 24-hour nursing care, without access to assistance with daily living tasks like eating, bathing and toileting, and who are not being monitored for safety and well-being or even monitored to take their medications on time.

Is queuing up seniors for care the best this government can give at the end of their lives? Were these 34,000 seniors on your mind when you were wasting \$8 billion on the eHealth scandal, or when you were wasting billions of dollars on the gas plant scandal, or when you were wasting \$700 million on the Ornge scandal, or \$820 million on the Ontario Northland railway scandal, or over \$300 million on the SAMS computer scandal?

Do you know how many hours of care and how many beds could have been provided with the billions of dollars you've wasted on scandals? For every billion dollars this Liberal government has wasted, you took away one year of long-term care for 17,000 seniors; you

took away home care for 55,000 people; you took away 3,558 palliative care beds for one year. And how many nurses and PSWs in long-term care could these billions have paid for?

If this isn't evidence of your neglect of seniors' needs, then I don't know what is. You've certainly set a very low bar, the lowest in our country, sadly, for what caring for frail seniors in long-term care means. This is why I support what this bill is looking to do.

It is also pushing us to think about staff morale and staff retention in long-term care at a time when we could be facing a shortage of some 100,000 PSWs in Ontario.

1420

It's none of the issues this government has dealt with in its 15 years in power. Whoever inherits their mess will have a lot of heavy and hard work ahead of them to make up for the lost decade in Ontario.

Finally, I want to touch on another important piece of the system they neglected, and that's the redevelopment of long-term-care beds, Mr. Speaker. Just earlier this week, I joined the Minister of Seniors Affairs on a panel on seniors' care. I have to share with you something she told the audience there. She said that they had come out with 5,000 beds. I just have to repeat here: In the last three budgets, there was not one single dollar for long-term-care beds, and all of a sudden when we're in an election year they come out with 5,000 beds.

She said that those 5,000 beds they announced ahead of the June election have all been allocated now. It's kind of perverse to make this statement when it conflicts what is actually happening on the ground.

Two things, Mr. Speaker:

(1) They neglected to rebuild the older homes on time. Some 60% of long-term care beds must be rebuilt before 2025. In their 15 years in power, they have accomplished just one third of the needed renewal.

(2) We are hearing that they've rejected any new beds for homes in southwestern Ontario and that, no, not all 5,000 have been allocated. We're also hearing that many, many operators have been turned down for redevelopment despite their homes needing immediate redevelopment.

Their redevelopment strategy is not working. This bill is just one piece of so many that need to be fixed. I'm pleased to support it. We believe seniors deserve better care by the bedside, and we want it to be care beside the bed, with people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to join this important debate in Ontario's Legislature today concerning Bill 43, the Time to Care Act. I can tell you that I put out the call for voices and perspectives on this piece of legislation in my riding of Kitchener-Waterloo. We've taken the petition door to door, and people are greatly concerned about the state of our long-term-care facilities in the province of Ontario. They're very happy—and actually relieved—that a piece of legislation like this, setting a minimum standard of care for patients in homes,

as well as a reunification plan so that seniors who are married are not separated when they go to long-term care, is being debated in this House. And they are going to be paying attention, I think, to how parties position themselves in this upcoming election, because they are ready for leadership on this file. They are desperate for leadership on this file.

Our leader mentioned that France Gélinas, the member from Nickel Belt, had brought this forward as Bill 33 back in the fall. It fell off the order paper when the Premier conveniently prorogued Parliament. But going back to the original introduction, this bill was written with one thing in mind: protecting the health and dignity of our seniors living in Ontario's long-term-care homes. Families in this province are concerned about the level of care their loved ones are receiving in long-term care.

If we want to protect our most vulnerable citizens, a minimum standard of daily care is a must. You have to measure it; you have to legislate it; you have to fund it, otherwise, it will not happen. We are specifically talking about hands-on care. When I think of this morning, when Myrna, the personal support worker who came to talk to us—first of all, it takes so much courage to come to this place, to leave your workplace and to share your story. As a woman in that workplace, she entered that field because she cares about people and she wants to care for them.

It's emotional labour for her. You could see it on her face this morning, that it is hard for her to not be responsive in the way that she wants to be, as a professional in long-term care. It is hard for her to say, "No, I can't listen to your story;" "No, I'm sorry, I don't have time to sit down with you and feed all of your dinner to you;" "No, I can't take you for a walk in the garden." This is not the system that we should be proud of, Mr. Speaker.

I was incredibly proud of her, just as in the fall, when another personal support worker came and said that the majority of the residents are over 85 in one of these homes. Three quarters have some form of Alzheimer's. We heard from the member from Ottawa South that the level of acuity of patients in our long-term-care homes has risen. They need greater care, because it has taken them so long to actually get into that long-term-care facility.

We heard this from the provincial association. Citizens used to be able to walk into long-term-care facilities because they weren't on a wait-list for years. The wait-list in the province of Ontario, depending on who you talk to, is anywhere between 32,000 and 34,000 people. That means they are in their homes, not receiving the appropriate home care, and so they are less well walking into that place. They are at a state where they need specialized care. And because we have not invested in these homes, because we have gotten to a crisis point, we now need to bring in a piece of legislation which actually just legislates a level of compassion.

When I think of the voices of the people whom I've heard from in Kitchener-Waterloo, of course I think of Don Deighton. I've brought Don Deighton's story to the

floor of this Legislature so many times—and this is on the reunification piece. He and his wife, Patricia, will have been married for 65 years in June—65 years. Someone should give you a medal if you can stay married for 65 years. He misses his wife because she is in a long-term-care facility at University Gates. He is not ready to be in long-term care; he needs some assistance in a retirement home. The thing is, for some reason, there has been no strategy or plan in place to create a plan so that people can age in place, but can still be with each other.

We have seen many cases across this province where people who have been married have to be separated. There is no dignity or integrity in that model. Quite honestly, it affects the health of the married couples. Patricia experiences great stress because she's not with her loved one.

Don goes there every single day. I have the pleasure of driving him every once in a while when I'm back in the riding, and to see them together breaks your heart. It breaks your heart.

This is not the system that we would ever have designed. We can do better. We can pass this legislation. It will be in our platform, and we will proudly say to every Ontarian, "This is the system that we will build, but you need to vote for the NDP to make it happen."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Dufferin–Caledon to speak on the proposed legislation, the Time to Care Act. The legislation would, if enacted, ensure that, on average, residents in long-term-care homes receive at least four hours a day of nursing and personal support services.

This initiative is an important one. Before the government's prorogation, I spoke to this legislation when it was being proposed by the member from Nickel Belt. At the time I was happy to support this legislation, and I still am.

It's an opportunity to ensure that our seniors and loved ones receive the care they deserve. I know that residents in Dufferin–Caledon are struggling to find the long-term-care beds that they need. That is why I have been advocating on behalf of the region of Peel for their support to redevelop the long-term-care beds at Peel Manor.

Peel Manor is over 100 years old and is the oldest long-term-care facility in the region of Peel. The region has an innovative plan to redevelop the 177 beds at their facility and make it a hub for seniors' care, with expanded day and respite programming as well as specialized areas for dementia. Despite this, the government has decided that the redevelopment is not eligible for any current funding for redeveloping long-term-care homes. I'm pleased, however, that when I asked the Premier about whether she thought the redevelopment of Peel Manor was a worthwhile investment, she did leave the door open to making this important change.

I know we need more beds and better beds because the wait times are so long. In my local health integration network, Central West, the wait times for a long-term-

care bed are extensive. At Avalon in Orangeville, the wait time is almost 500 days; at Dufferin Oaks in Shelburne, the wait time is 536 days; at King Nursing Home in Bolton, the wait time is 640 days; at Shelburne residence, it's over two years; and, finally, at Vera Davis in Bolton, the wait time is over 850 days, or nearly two and a half years.

That is why I'm proud of the PC Party's commitment to build 15,000 long-term-care beds within five years and 30,000 beds over 10 years. The backlog in our long-term-care system is putting a serious burden on our hospitals and our health care system. We need to ensure that when people need a long-term care space, they receive it.

We all know that the demographics in this province are changing. In 2010, on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, we were told about the "coming tsunami of Alzheimer's disease." The need is growing and becoming more intense, which is why I support the initiative by the third party to discuss how we can ensure more care and better care for our seniors and loved ones in long-term-care facilities.

I'm pleased to support this legislation on behalf of the people of Dufferin–Caledon.

1430

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It truly is my honour today to speak to this very important bill that is before us, the Time to Care Act. I'll shorten the title of it, because it is a time to care. The time to care is that four hours of hands-on care that we need to make sure every resident in long-term care receives.

Speaker, I've been to three debates so far; two this week, as a matter of fact. The topic at hand was that people wanted to raise—they sent the questions ahead of time. They want to talk about long-term care. They want to know what each party in this Legislature in Ontario is going to do for long-term care: How are they going to help the residents of long-term care? We have many, many ideas to improve long-term care, and this is just one of them.

We need to act now to ensure our province is a leader in setting a mandated minimum standard of daily care. With over 78,000 residents living in long-term care right now, with countless family members and loved ones, this is an issue that will affect nearly all of us. Our long-term-care system needs to be one that people can rely on and they can put their trust in, because there are doubts right now about the care that people are receiving. We have, on this side of the House, heard from our constituents many times. These are real-life stories that are happening.

We know that our seniors, our loved ones, deserve the care that protects their health and safety and, especially, their dignity. Our moms, our dads, our grandparents spent their lives caring for us, working to build this province. We owe it to them to make sure that they have a standard of care when they enter their golden years.

We need to talk about workers. This bill will also help the work environment in long-term care. This bill helps

families not to worry about their loved ones when they're in care, it helps the residents who are receiving that care and it also helps the workers who deliver that care. It's a multi-faceted bill. It's just not focused on one particular thing, because any time we create legislation in this place it rolls over to many areas that affect the lives of people. Current staffing levels make it impossible to provide the amount of hands-on care that residents need.

This morning I was with my leader at a news conference—and Myrna is a PSW who has been working in long-term care for 14 years. She brings experience, compassion and desire to care for people. She entered long-term care because she wants to help people. She wants to make a difference in people's lives.

They're nurturers. Health care is—as the member from Kitchener–Waterloo said and as I believe as well—a calling. People enter health care because they want to help people. They want to make a difference in their lives.

Part of this time to care bill—of course we need to make sure that people get their showers, get their meals and they're dressed. One thing that Myrna pointed out, and I've heard this countless times from residents in London–Fanshawe, is that people want to talk to someone during the day. When you live in long-term care—they're residents, they live there. That is their home. Of course they want to have social interactions. And who is the first person they probably see when they get up in the morning? It's the PSWs, the front-line workers; perhaps an RN, perhaps an RPN or perhaps a nurse.

It makes a lot of sense that we make sure that we're looking after residents in long-term care, and the way we can do that is we make change for the better. The NDP has brought a platform that is so thoughtful and speaks to what the needs of people are. You know why that is? It's because we have been listening and we have been asking people in our ridings. We've been asking families, we've been asking workers, and we've been asking owners and operators of long-term-care homes what it is that they need. What they're telling us they need is a government that is going to make change for the better.

They need four hours of hands-on care, and we are going to do that. We are going to legislate time to care: hands-on care, four hours per resident per day. In this Legislature, when we become government and when Andrea Horwath is the Premier of this province, long-term care is going to have change for the better. We know that's possible. We know that here on this side of the House. I, myself, as an MPP from London–Fanshawe and my colleague Peggy Sattler from London West know that change for the better is on the horizon, and it starts with the NDP. It truly does, because we have it in our platform. We are dedicated and we believe in what we're going to be doing for long-term care.

There's more to long-term care than the four hours of care. As an MPP, when I first started, I followed long-term care and the seniors file very closely. I'm very proud that we also have a find-and-fix solution, because there are so many things we can do much better. We need

to start doing them. We need to get them done. We can't just keep talking about it. We can't just say, "We've done this, but there's much more to do." Let's do the "much more" now. There's no time to wait. The time to care is now. Seniors deserve it.

We all want to give that to seniors. How do we accomplish it, Speaker? We accomplish it by legislating the Time to Care Act today. Wouldn't that be great if the government would speed this up and we could have third reading and royal assent? Wouldn't that be great?

I am so delighted that we are bringing this forward again and talking about it. We want to make sure this gets done. The way to do that is to vote NDP—time for a change—and Andrea Horwath as the Premier of this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I rise today to speak to Bill 43, the Time to Care Act. One of the assumptions upon which we have designed our province is that all residents are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. Ontario should have the best standard of care. Long-term-care residents deserve dignified, quality care, and they and their families should never worry that their health and safety may be at risk. Further discussion and planning is also required on how to best staff the more diverse and medically complex needs of long-term-care residents.

The Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus supports the intent of Bill 43 and better hands-on care for Ontario's 80,000 seniors living in long-term-care homes, particularly as Ontario staffing levels are proportionally some of the lowest in Canada. Never before have we had such compelling reasons to move forward with this change, to better serve older Ontarians and their families. We need to work towards further identifying and addressing the ways we can do better as the needs of older Ontarians continue to evolve over the coming years.

Speaker, I've heard, through my years advocating both as a civil servant within the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat and now as the MPP for Whitby, a clear call to place as much importance on adding life to years as we do on adding years to life. Above all, I continue to hear, to recognize our aging population not as a challenge but rather as an opportunity for Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I stand today to also speak to Bill 43. I speak in support of Bill 43 this afternoon. I wish to thank the leader of the third party for bringing forward this bill to raise awareness about the dire situation that we have seen in the past and are continually seeing in our health care system, as well as, particularly, in long-term care. I think it's absolutely a good thing that we should be looking at how we can expand services to provide residents with at least four hours a day of nursing and personal support services, averaged across the residents.

As the member for Ottawa South, I believe, referenced earlier, I had the opportunity to speak with him and the

member for Nickel Belt at a panel that was held in Hamilton, and this issue came up as well. We talked about this bell curve, we talked the aging demographics in Ontario and throughout, really, Western society. As we're seeing the baby boomers starting to age through and move through these institutions, we see an enormous amount of pressure.

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I hear a lot of critique from the third party, I hear a lot of critique from the government about the Mike Harris days of doom and gloom, but the reality is that when Mike Harris was building long-term-care facilities, I do know that there were those who were saying that they were building too many long-term-care facilities. The PC government of the day was being mocked as building too many beds. I think that the idea of having too many beds today is a distant dream, so I hope that those glasses that they're wearing, although they're not rose-coloured, may not be completely cracked as well.

I want to say that there are a lot of areas that we can improve on in long-term care, and this is one of them. I think of my visits to local long-term-care facilities in the Niagara region. I was at Linhaven not too long ago in St. Catharines. There I spoke with registered nurses who talked about having one or two registered nurses in an overnight shift, where they were taking care of whole floors at a time, and yet, because of the burdensome regulation that has been placed on them—it's overly burdensome. I understand, of course, that there is a need for regulation to make sure that we're taking consideration for health and wellness, but they spoke about having so much time that they're spending filling out their paperwork and covering their butts that they're not able to actually spend more time with residents and spend more time helping those who need that care.

I think we have to look at not only what we can do to support a province-wide average of four hours of care a day through increasing PSW services, increasing those services in our long-term-care facilities and increasing beds—I know that the PC Party plans on building 30,000 new long-term-care beds over the upcoming 10 years: an incredible and significant expansion of the services that have been provided. I hope, by the end of our next four-year tenure, to have the taunts of, "Too many beds! Too many beds!" That would be something, I think, that would be definitely preferable to the situation that we have today in the province of Ontario.

At the same time, I think we need to take a good, hard look at how we can better utilize the services that exist in these long-term-care homes and make sure that health care professionals are able to provide the services that they need.

I support this bill and I look forward to voting for it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I believe that the time has expired for the debate for all three parties, so now the member for Hamilton Centre has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to thank the members who had the time to say a few words about this bill: the

members from Ottawa South, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Kitchener-Waterloo, Dufferin-Caledon, London-Fanshawe, Whitby-Oshawa and Niagara West-Glanbrook.

I would, first off, like to go back to the beginning and say quite clearly that, notwithstanding the member from Ottawa South's comments, the system that's currently in place for reunification of spouses in long-term care is not working. We can talk about what's being done, but the fact of the matter is that it is not working. There is a big difference between the compliance orders or reports being online versus the government openly identifying which homes have been offenders when it comes to some of the heinous crimes that have been committed in these homes and flagging the ones that are at high risk to offend. It's a totally different issue, so let's not pretend that there aren't problems that need to be fixed in long-term care, because there are.

What we know for sure is that after 15 years in government, the Liberals have not fixed our long-term-care system. In fact, they've allowed it to deteriorate in such a horrifying way that the workers in long-term care—many of them are here with us in the gallery, actually; PSWs, particularly, organized and represented by CUPE, have joined to watch this debate—can't do the good job that they want to do because this Liberal government has allowed the long-term-care system to fall apart.

The Conservatives talk a good game, Speaker, but they're going to be cutting corporate taxes. They're going to be cutting people's taxes. They're going to be cutting, cutting, cutting taxes, and that means they're going to be cutting, cutting, cutting services. There's going to be no money to provide four hours of hands-on care. There's going to be no money to build new long-term-care facilities. So let's not pretend that the Conservatives are the answer.

If you want change in Ontario in long-term care, choose change for the better. Choose the NDP.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The vote on this bill will take place at the end of private members' public business.

ONTARIO FORESTRY
REVITALIZATION ACT (14 STOREY
WOOD FRAME BUILDINGS), 2018
LOI DE 2018 SUR LA REVITALISATION
DE LA FORESTERIE EN ONTARIO
(BÂTIMENTS À OSSATURE DE BOIS
DE 14 ÉTAGES)

Mr. Fedeli moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 with respect to the height of wood frame buildings /
Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment en ce qui a trait à la hauteur des bâtiments à ossature de bois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's a great honour to again be introducing the Ontario Forestry Revitalization Act on behalf of the forest industry and on behalf of all of northern Ontario. The act would amend the Ontario building code to allow for wood frame construction to be used in mid-rise buildings up to 14 storeys, instead of the current six storeys. This change will further boost the northern forestry industry and create jobs and growth.

Forestry, Speaker, as you know, is a vital part of the northern economy, and it has been hit very hard over the past decade. Over that time, some 60 lumber mills have closed across the north. That's 80% of all mills and 10,000 resource sector jobs that have disappeared.

It is my hope that this bill will help reverse the damage that has been done in the forestry sector throughout northern Ontario. This change could provide a tremendous boost to the forestry industry by increasing domestic demand for lumber and stimulating the 103 forestry-dependent communities, primarily in northern Ontario.

I would like to talk a little bit about the history of how we got to this point. My first private member's bill on this topic was introduced in this Legislature in 2012, seeking an increase in the maximum height of wood frame buildings at that time from four to six. That bill received all-party support on second reading and eventually went through the committee and passed committee hearings as well. It was a very good and well-received bill.

While it was awaiting third reading, the Legislature was prorogued that fall. That was tremendously disappointing, having gone so far, but this legislation was far too important, especially to northerners. So it was reintroduced in 2013. Again, my bill received all-party support at second reading, but again, it died on the order paper due to the election.

Not being deterred, thankfully, the government realized this was the right thing to do, and the change to allow six-storey wood frame construction was eventually adopted by the government in 2015 through regulation.

In May of last year, I introduced a bill seeking an increase from six to 12 storeys, which would accommodate a building being planned by George Brown College here in Toronto. I'd like to read an excerpt from a letter from the president of George Brown College, Anne Sado. She writes:

"As you've seen, the Arbour, our future Waterfront Campus building"—she's speaking about George Brown now—"is poised to become Ontario's first tall wood, low-carbon institutional building. We plan to use it to drive forward advancements in sustainable innovation and green building throughout Canada.

"As the future home of Canada's first Tall Wood Research Institute, it will allow students and researchers to generate innovative ideas and research in mass timber construction, while serving as a public example of how sustainability can be incorporated into the buildings where we learn, work and play.

"Tall wood construction is a truly forward-thinking idea, and as such, its adoption will depend on the support and collaboration of many stakeholders."

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There's about another half-page from her here, Speaker.

"The bill you've introduced to allow for wood frame construction in buildings up to 14 storeys is an important step forward in the advancement of sustainable building practices in Ontario.

"Not only is this change pivotal to the construction of the Arbour; it also has the potential to inspire many other tall wood projects in the future.

"This, in turn, would create increased job opportunities for Ontarians in the forest industry, while reducing the carbon footprint of new buildings.

"We appreciate your support for this innovative form of construction."

Now fast-forward to last October. I introduced Bill 169, which seeks to increase this to 14 storeys, and there's a reason for that as well. It was revealed that U of T, our University of Toronto, has such a building in the works. Let me read from a letter of support from Andrew Thomson, the chief of government relations at U of T:

"It is intended that the tower become a prototype for the use of mass timber/tall wood both nationally and worldwide. It is expected this project will showcase the strong sustainable effort driving the project, while promoting the use of Canadian material and technology."

Again, prorogation killed this legislation, which is why I've now brought Bill 19 for debate here today.

As in the past, I hope to rally all-party support for this legislation, because it's a win-win solution. This is an opportunity for Ontario to show leadership in innovation. We have worked very closely for a long time with the industry to develop this legislation.

The Ontario Home Builders' Association has recognized the merits of this idea and this legislation and is formally endorsing passage here today. In our gallery are both Stephen Hamilton and Michael Collins-Williams from the Ontario Home Builders' Association. I welcome you to Queen's Park.

The CEO, Joe Vaccaro, wrote: "On behalf of the Ontario Home Builders' Association, we are pleased to support the proposed bill amending the Building Code Act, 1992 to provide that the Ontario Building Code shall not prohibit a building that is 14 storeys or less in building height from being of wood frame construction.

"OHBA has been a strong supporter of building science innovation and adoption of advanced construction technology. OHBA previously supported amendments to the Ontario building code to allow six-storey wood-framed buildings"—and I thank them for that—"and have promoted tall wood and provided industry education in the construction of tall wood buildings.

"The continued use of wood within the construction industry will help address climate change by storing carbon in buildings and by offsetting emissions associated with other construction materials." They go on to say, "OHBA recognizes and supports these changes required within our industry to improve the energy efficiency level of buildings and support government

objectives to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.”

Mr. Vaccaro also notes, “Innovation in the construction industry to utilize wood in tall buildings will support Ontario’s forestry industry.

“This is especially important today due to political uncertainties and trade disputes with the United States.

“While Ontario should be leading the world in tall wood construction innovation, many other jurisdictions in North America, Europe and Asia are ahead of us.” He goes on with an example about a 20-storey apartment in Stockholm.

It’s worth noting that BC enacted their Wood First Act in 2009 and fast-tracked changes to their building code in 2009—nine years ago.

The Canadian Wood Council has written a letter in support of Bill 19. President Michael Giroux writes: “Adoption of Bill 19 will position Ontario as a code development leader in the tall wood opportunity for Ontario and Canada, while ensuring full compliance with code’s core objective.”

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities has also supported my previous bills on wood frame construction, and this quote from FONOM still holds true. They wrote, “The increased use of wood has the potential to sustain current jobs and provide an opportunity to create new ones; to encourage investment and innovation into new processes and technologies; and contribute to the economic prosperity of,” in this case, northeastern Ontario.

With Ontario’s population projected to rise by nearly 35% by 2036, the demand for more higher-density, multi-family residential buildings will continue to increase. Market experts estimate the mid-rise sector could represent 8% to 10% of the entire multi-storey market in Ontario in the next 20 years, up from 3%.

As well, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Places to Grow Act, Ontario, and almost all municipalities, are committed to reducing urban sprawl.

I come from the city of North Bay in the riding of Nipissing. We have 70 manufacturing companies within our community. In my riding of Nipissing, Mattawa, Bonfield, Calvin, Trout Creek and others were all dependent on the wood sector. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring back the forestry sector and bring life back to communities like Mattawa that were so heavily dependent on the forestry sector. This is an opportunity for the 10,000 resource-based jobs that were lost throughout northern Ontario and an opportunity for our communities devastated by closures in the forestry sector.

In closing, Speaker, I want to reiterate that we will respond to all issues of the stakeholders. I want to thank all the parties for supporting my previous bills, which led to six-storey wood frame construction becoming a reality in Ontario.

Bill 19 will create jobs and growth in northern Ontario communities dependent on the forestry sector while reducing construction costs and helping southern Ontario

meet targets to reduce urban sprawl. Wood frame construction will also reduce the carbon footprint and increase the energy efficiency of mid-rise buildings. This is a win-win-win-win situation. This isn’t some dream or hopeful quest; this is real. It’s happening around the world. It’s happening in BC.

I must say, I was proud to attend the unveiling of George Brown College’s shortlisted design bids at a ceremony hosted by the school in Toronto last month. Speaker, it was absolutely amazing to look at these wood buildings that they have designed. You would never believe how beautiful they are. I can’t even begin to imagine how they’re going to pick one out of those four spectacular designs, which will be constructed, hopefully, very soon on the waterfront of downtown Toronto for George Brown College.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: It’s a pleasure for me to rise and be able to weigh in on this motion that has been brought forward by the member for Nipissing.

The sad reality is that the forest industry has been hit hard, and some would even say decimated, all across the country over the last decade and a half. That has been due to a number of factors, including global market factors. But we do have an important role to play here in this Legislature in the province of Ontario in doing all that we can to foster a very open and positive environment to have a strong forest industry.

There are a number of things that have historically been done that we need to continue doing, things like making changes to the electricity rates. The NIER program has been very helpful. There are changes to the wood allocation itself that need to be made. Those are some ongoing issues that need to be addressed. Also, there are some challenges that are associated with the success of the industry, especially around the Endangered Species Act.

According to the Globe and Mail, as recently as 2004, there were 308,664 Canadians working in the forest industry, but a decade later, that number dropped to 190,651, which amounts to a loss of about 118,000 jobs. That’s about one third of the industry’s workforce.

In Ontario, many of these workers were located in small, northern, single-industry towns, many of which were located in my riding, as is the case for many other northern members. In fact, this downturn in the forest industry has had a devastating impact all across the north, so I can understand the desire of a northern MPP to think about ways in which we can support this industry and our communities.

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That being said, what we really need is a comprehensive strategy to revitalize our struggling forest industry. We need to take steps to not artificially but in a meaningful way bring down the cost of electricity, over and above programs like the NIER program. We need to make changes to wood allocation that would support employment close to home.

When I talk about wood allocation, one of the examples that comes to mind in my riding is what is happening in Fort Frances. In Fort Frances, we have a building that is very capable of being used. We have a wood supply, we have a local workforce, but what we need is a willing company to operate the mill close to home, using the existing nearby wood supply. What's happening is, we have a company that owns the building, retains the wood rights and is actually shipping the wood, and essentially the jobs, to a nearby facility that they also own that is outside of the community. This has had a devastating effect because it is essentially bypassing the local workforce. In these resource-based communities such as Fort Frances, that has had a devastating impact, and that is an issue that I have raised time and time again in this House, asking for some of those changes.

While this bill would be very good in helping to create some more demand for our wood, it does fall short of addressing some of the other larger systemic issues that I think need to be addressed and I would expect to be addressed by something with the name of the Ontario Forestry Revitalization Act. I think it falls a little short in that regard.

Looking at 14 storeys, that might seem a little high to people who just have a cursory knowledge. It seemed a little high to me, actually, until I looked it up. I found that this is already being done all across the world. We have a great example here in Canada that was alluded to by the member who presented the bill, and that is the Brock Commons student residence at UBC in British Columbia. It is an 18-storey wood-frame building that has been constructed. What I found amazing about it is that it was completed 18% or four months faster than a typical construction project by using wood. It is presently the world's tallest wood building. It is the first mass wood, steel and concrete hybrid project that is taller than 14 storeys in the world.

The other interesting piece is that 14 storeys is not as high, or 18 storeys is not as high, as is presently being examined the world over. There are some projects that are 20, 40, 60 and even 80 storeys that are in the proposal, planning and approval process all across the world. It needs to be stated that there are numerous economic and environmental benefits that are associated with these wood-frame buildings, not to mention the most obvious: that wood is a sustainable and versatile building material that stores rather than emits carbon dioxide.

We know the impact that this would have on our small northern communities, so for that reason—that reason alone, really—I support this bill. But there are numerous benefits that can be felt the world over.

On that note, I want to thank the member for bringing forward this bill, and I look forward to supporting it here at second reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: It's indeed a pleasure to rise to speak to private member's Bill 19, the Ontario Forestry Revitalization Act. This is an issue on which I

am quite passionate. I applaud the member across for continuing to advance the cause of mass timber construction and the construction of increasingly taller buildings with wood.

Mr. Speaker, we have made great progress in Ontario on this. We have updated the building code to allow for timber buildings of up to six storeys. It's somewhat going back to the future, because of course 100 or more years ago there were many warehouses and other buildings that were three, four, five, six, seven or maybe up to eight stories high that were built in timber. Unfortunately, at the time, the means for fire protection didn't quite advance with the ability to build tall wood buildings, and that's why we retreated back from what is a fundamentally very sound and stable way of building our buildings.

I applaud the member for this bill and I certainly am very supportive of it. I do think, though, that it's not ambitious enough because really, as we have already heard from a number of speakers, we know that at the University of British Columbia, a student residence is being constructed at 18 storeys. There are buildings that are far taller than that being proposed in other locations.

Our consultation on updating the Ontario building code has been out for a number of months. As our building code evolves to being a more performance-based document as opposed to a highly prescriptive document—that things must be of such a dimension or such a height—I'm hopeful that the actual updates to the Ontario building code that we might see in another year or so would simply denote performance standards that would be required when mass timber or tall wood structures would be built. While 14 storeys would be great, there is no reason why it shouldn't be 18 or 20 or even more if the right performance measures were put into place. I think we can do much better than even this bill, but this certainly advances the cause.

We know that this could be extremely beneficial to our economy in the north and in other parts of the province, where, whether it's the forestry industry and the harvesting of lumber or the various processing mills that take the trees and process them into timbers or glulam timbers or other types of mass timber products, this would open up a tremendous new market and business opportunity for them both here in Ontario but potentially elsewhere as we show what this technology can do.

I'm somewhat disappointed and disturbed that the party opposite wants to do away with the cap-and-invest program, which actually speaks to looking at innovative technologies and means of being able to sequester carbon and have a low-carbon economy. Within our cap-and-invest program, there are actually a number of initiatives that would support precisely what the member wants to achieve. We are supporting, through the cap-and-invest program, mass timber innovation research and development that would help develop the technologies for stronger and lighter wood members to help make these buildings taller. It also would support the construction

skills development and training which we need in order to teach our tremendous construction sector workers about new technologies, new means, new methods and new materials that they would have to work with as we make taller mass timber wood buildings. Also, of course, it could support tall wood demonstration projects with the broader public sector, whether it's the University of Toronto or George Brown College or others.

While I applaud the member for his initiatives over many years in this regard—and they have been well thought out, well meaning and have achieved some success—I want to put it to the member that it's important that we continue to support this and invest in this not just through changes in the building code, but by supporting the research and innovation that need to go along with that to ensure that our businesses, our employers and our skilled trades have the skills to really make this a reality.

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What I really would like to finally say before I wrap up my remarks is, this is something that's very important to Ontario. I agree with that. But we need to set our sights higher, beyond 14 storeys, because there is no reason why we should limit ourselves to that. The way to achieve that is, really, through a very careful review of the building code and ensuring that as we do that consultation on the building code, it develops the appropriate performance standards for mass timber and wood construction so that individual developments can proceed to the height that is appropriate for those developments—which they can do today through the building code. The building code does not limit the height of mass timber building; it just says that you have to go through an alternative mechanism to convince the local chief building official to issue the permit.

We're going in the right direction. I applaud the member opposite, but I tell him, through you, that we should actually be even far more ambitious than this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's an honour to be able to stand in this House and speak to the legislation that we have in front of us here today. As I believe I mentioned last week as well, I really am going to miss Thursday afternoons as we break for the election.

I think we have some very interesting, fascinating and quite innovative policy ideas that often come forward from private members. Today is no exception, as the member for Nipissing, the parliamentary Leader of the Opposition, brings forward a bill that exemplifies not only his dedication to improving the economy and innovation in the economy of Ontario but also his dedication to his hometown of Nipissing and northern Ontario in general. I want to commend the member for Nipissing for his amazing work on this and for the bill that he brought forward today, which I am more than happy to speak in favour of because I think it's one that is very important.

I was pleased to hear the Minister of Housing speak in favour of this. I wasn't sure exactly where he was going when he said first that the member for Nipissing has done

his homework, that he has done very thoughtful, well-thought-out research on this, and then went on to say, "We're sorry; we can't do this unless it's done through changes to the building code."

I think, very simply, we could vote on this here, have unanimous consent on third reading right now, and get it in to royal assent as well before the House rises, if it's as simple as that. I think the minister as well indicated that he thinks this is a very good piece of legislation and that the member for Nipissing has been thoughtful and well considered in his deliberations on this.

I'm not going to get into some of the quotes that the member referenced, but I do think that one of the really important things to note as well that we heard in the quote from George Brown College is that this is a prime example of a case where we can be environmentally friendly, where we can help in our fight to reduce emissions and to combat climate change, without endangering the economy, without thinking that somehow the only way to improve our lakes and water and the future sustainability of our economy, as well as Canada and Ontario, is through somehow taxing everything.

The Liberals have this dependency on taxes. It's really quite staggering when you look at how much not only income taxes but all other types of taxes have gone up—the health tax, to think of a few that have gone up under their watch, but now we look at the carbon tax, or the cap-and-trade system that they plan on pushing down the throats of Ontarians. Yet there are very practical, common-sense types of policy changes that can be made, such as the one that's being brought forward today by the member for Nipissing, where we heard from George Brown College about the green, innovative nature of this.

I did like the Minister of Housing's comments about how this is kind of going back to the future, because actually this morning I was speaking to a Clerk, and we were talking about looking around here and seeing all the wood that is in this Legislature. When you go, as well, to the east entrance and you look at that area, which was not burnt down, there is a lot of wood there that was being used.

I think we do have to look at ways that, through this type of legislation, through practical changes, very easy changes that recognize the advancements in building technologies and that recognize the forward-looking innovation that's taking place in our home-building sector as well, we can actually begin to utilize the incredible natural resources that Canada has here.

I had the chance to visit the north a couple of times already this year. One of those times, I was in Fort Frances. It was nice to hear the member from that area speaking about Fort Frances, because it is beautiful town. Obviously, they've had huge concerns there, trying to compete with American neighbours as well, and having the government push down a lot of issues, whether it was the endangered species protection act or a lot of the other changes. Now we see an increase in stumpage fees coming their way. There are a lot of concerns.

I had the chance to travel through northern Ontario—not that far up north—with the member for Nipissing on

the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, where we travelled as part of our pre-budget consultations.

We heard from a lot of different stakeholders in those consultations. I just wanted to point out a couple of different people we had a chance to interact with.

We met with Rick at the Valhalla Inn in Thunder Bay, who talked about Norbord and the fact that they have 17 plant locations throughout the United States, Canada and Europe, and that they employ 2,600 people. These are good jobs. These are well-paying jobs in the sector, especially in northern Ontario. To hear that we've seen the loss of 60 mills and 10,000 jobs in the forestry sector, as the member for Nipissing noted, is truly devastating.

If we can take a page out of the suggestions that have been made by these stakeholders, and look at what we can do to increase our own consumption of timber here, so that we can reduce our very carbon-heavy emissions as it pertains to other building materials, and look at these types of innovative ways going forward to expanding this, with building technologies advancing the way that they are, I think it's definitely something that should be supported by all members in this House.

The fact that we've seen his bills supported at prior dates just goes to show that members in this House also recognize the excellent work that the member for Nipissing has done, advocating for the north and advocating for his constituents, for the betterment of the environment and the betterment of all of Ontario.

I look forward to supporting this bill when it comes forward to a vote later this afternoon. I wish to commend the member for his excellent work on this. I look forward to visiting the north soon, to see part of the revitalization that I'm sure will occur due to the passage of this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour for me to be able to stand on behalf of the good people of Timiskaming-Cochrane, to be their voice in this place.

Today on Bill 19, presented by the member for Nipissing, regarding allowing taller buildings up 14 storeys to be built from wood, I would like to say that I wholly support this legislation, and for no small reason, because just a few of the related industries in my riding are Eacom, a dimensional lumber sawmill, a very modern sawmill, in Elk Lake; the Rosko sawmill, in Kirkland Lake; Tembec, in Cochrane, a dimensional sawmill; Rockshield, in Cochrane, a plywood mill; Georgia-Pacific—who could forget Georgia-Pacific?—a huge OSB manufacturer—and I've got a few more.

The thing we have to remember about wood is that wood is the most environmentally sustainable product there is. It's a natural product. It grows and it regrows. As it grows, it actually cleans up our atmosphere. If we can use those products to build structures—this structure is wood. I've had the privilege of being above the ceiling here. If you go above the ceiling, there are big beams up

there, and they're all wood. This building is pretty old, so wood is a long-lasting structure as well.

In previous iterations of this bill—I believe the member got a bill like this passed, with six storeys—I was part of the committee hearings, and I remember that there was some controversy regarding fire safety. I remember that the cement people weren't that happy.

We're not talking about risking people's lives. We're going to have to make sure that elevator shafts—that everything is built to top safety standards. There is no reason why a building whose construction is made out of wood products cannot be built as safely as a building made out of concrete. There's no reason why that can't be done. It is being done in other parts of the world.

1520

We have such a great industry that could support that construction. We have the natural resources. We actually have in Ontario, due to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, the best-managed wood resource, certainly in North America and probably, I would hazard to say, in the world. There are very few reasons why we shouldn't.

I also enjoy Thursday afternoons. You get to hear people more off the cuff. I enjoyed listening to the Minister of Housing, whom I respect, but I have to say that it was a bit rich when he said that the member for Nipissing wasn't ambitious enough. For someone on the government side to say that a private member's bill isn't ambitious enough when the government had the ability to do this themselves—I think that's a bit on the rich side.

We, both the Progressive Conservatives and the NDP—and this might change on June 8—continually put forward ideas and bills that the government, in some cases, has acted on. If this bill is too ambitious or not ambitious enough, the government could have been a little bit more ambitious and acted on it already.

Just on a personal note, it's the first time I have ever seen anyone accuse the member for Nipissing of not being ambitious enough. That's the first time I have ever heard that.

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'm not the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. John Vanthof: Okay, sorry. I thought I said "housing"—Minister of Housing. I apologize.

Again, the focus of this is: We have a resource in this province that is fully renewable. We have full expertise. We have the need for these structures because, in many cases, wood can be designed to be more economical so it will provide options that we don't have now. We should move on this as quickly as possible.

I commend the member. I disagree with the member philosophically on many issues, but when it comes to issues that we can work together on for northern Ontario, I will always continue to support him, as he will me, because in northern Ontario, when you realize something is a good idea, it doesn't matter who proposes it or why it's proposed or how it's proposed; we need to move on it together. Specifically, the wood resource in northern Ontario is a resource that could benefit the whole province more than it does now. In return, that would

benefit the people who work in that industry in northern Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you, Speaker. Nice to see you in the chair.

I always enjoy Thursday afternoons. The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane referred to this in his comments, and I heartily agree that it's a really great chance to bring innovative ideas forward via private members' bills and a chance, sometimes unfortunately, an all-too-rare opportunity to talk about how we support one another in this place. I say with some regret, I suppose, that sometimes the external view of what we do here sees us in broad disagreement most of the time. I'm one of the members of this House—I'm sure so many of us do this—when I go to schools and I talk to young people about what we do here, sometimes what they see is finger-pointing and raised voices, when in fact what I say to them is, "When the cameras are off, all we are doing is working across the aisle and in co-operation with one another." This is an opportunity for us to really talk about what we agree on and have in common.

In fact, the member from Nipissing has brought forward a very worthy consideration today, something that I think we all would say we agree with in broad strokes, for sure. While the innovative ideas are best brought to this place for debate, sometimes they're made stronger by other innovations that spring up in debate.

I salute the member from Nipissing for this idea, and I, too, join with the Minister of Housing. The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane was saying that it was perhaps a bit rich for the Minister of Housing to say it's not far enough. I would contextualize that by saying that that was less criticism and more encouragement, I think. One feels encouraged to reach higher when we say we really like this idea, but we think we could go bolder. I think the ideas behind today's private member's bill really promote the economy. Of course, I don't live in northern Ontario, but there are sawmills right across the province; in fact, there are some in the great region of Halton and one in Flamborough, not far from me. It's a place where those of us who have the opportunity to be doing a house project can go and buy lumber, and we appreciate that.

Again, the Minister of Housing was talking about the idea that more boldness could be brought to this. We say that by way of encouragement to the member from Nipissing, not by way of criticism.

But the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook was speaking earlier about the environment. I just want to contextualize his comments a little further. He mentioned a carbon tax, which, of course, is not what we have in Ontario. We certainly don't have that. But what we do have is the Climate Change Action Plan. Within that, we've established the Ontario Mass Timber Program, which supports mass timber innovation, research and development, construction skills development and training, and tall wood demonstration projects. Fourteen storeys is absolutely great but, as the Minister of Housing

suggested, perhaps we could look at reaching for the sky and going a little bit beyond that.

Last fall, our government released Ontario's Tall Wood Building Reference to help encourage this kind of construction and innovation. We've seen four major project proposals come forward as a consequence of that—well over \$300 million of private investment in mass timber buildings. As members across all sides of the House have said today, this kind of private member's bill not only fosters innovation but is good for the economy, and that is why I think that it has broad support on all sides of the House.

Wood frame buildings referred in this bill can be built today, actually, and that's why, again, we would encourage more boldness. If the bill goes to committee, perhaps the member can introduce an amendment that recognizes the fact that we can go beyond 14 storeys. While our government continues to create the conditions for innovation and prosperity here in Ontario, it's important that that ethos of prosperity and innovation, which we find in private member's bills such as this one, maintains that kind of broad support.

I would, again, just assert that we support the general premise of this bill. I wish the member well with it. I think it's a good idea. He is, of course, from the north, but there are sawmills right across our province. In fact, I used to live in the Eganville area, and the member for that part of our province knows well that there's a very strong lumber sector in Renfrew county and that thousands of jobs are related to this industry.

I'm happy to speak to this today and speak in support of it. I'll close with some thoughts that, perhaps, are obvious, but they speak to the fact that tall wood buildings are not new to Ontario. I'm fortunate enough to live in a wood structure. That's my cottage. It's entirely made of wood. It's not a tall wood structure. But when I renovated it—I had a large tree fall on my cottage last year, an 85-foot pine. I was sad to lose the tree. It fell during a devastating storm. It pretty much destroyed my cottage. So I used wood and local contractors, created jobs and added to the economy.

That's just a small example of why endeavours like this one are important and wood-based building products have such a tremendous environmental advantage. Thanks for the opportunity today, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 19. By increasing the limit for wood frame construction projects, Ontario can effectively respond to lowered export demand for softwood lumber products and aid in stimulating the forestry sector in Ontario, particularly in northern communities. If passed, Bill 19 would result in a significant boost to an industry that has seen more than 60 lumber mills close and thousands of forestry jobs lost over past decade under the watch of the Liberal government.

In contrast, Speaker, this bill aligns with the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party's priority to bring jobs

back to Ontario, with Bill 19's focus on creating jobs and growth in northern Ontario communities. At the same time, Bill 19 will reduce construction costs, help Ontario's municipalities meet provincial targets to reduce urban sprawl, and also add to the supply of affordable housing.

1530

Speaker, I continue to hear from constituents in my riding of Whitby–Oshawa, and other residents from adjoining Durham region ridings more broadly, that affordable housing continues to be a challenge. In an effort to address the many challenges of housing, including the supply of affordable units, the region of Durham struck an Affordable and Seniors' Housing Task Force. This task force made 34 recommendations focused on those actions that could be taken by the region directly, and identified a number of supplementary actions that partners and other levels of government would be encouraged to embrace, as no single organization can address housing affordability challenges alone.

Furthermore, Speaker, the region of Durham, through its At Home in Durham housing plan, has allocated \$5.5 million under the Social Infrastructure Fund: Social Housing Improvement Program for critical repair and renovation work at 14 social housing projects.

While the proposed provisions in Bill 19 would increase domestic demand for Ontario lumber and consequently have an impact on the costs of affordable housing units in Ontario, there are also opportunities in the realm of post-secondary education and learning opportunities for Ontario students. As the official opposition critic for education and post-secondary education, I'm well aware of the innovative initiatives under way on community college and university campuses in Ontario, specifically those that would create good, high-paying jobs.

As the member for Nipissing alluded to earlier, both the University of Toronto and George Brown College have expressed interest in tall wood infrastructure projects on their campuses. Unfortunately, Speaker, they cannot move ahead with these projects until the proposed provisions in Bill 19 are adopted by the Legislature. Both the University of Toronto and George Brown have written to the leader of the official opposition expressing their support for his private member's bill.

I'm going to quote the University of Toronto correspondence that spoke specifically to this issue.

"It is intended that the tower" that they would like to build at the University of Toronto "become a prototype for the use of mass timber/tall wood both nationally and worldwide. It is expected this project will showcase the strong sustainable effort driving the project, while promoting the use of Canadian material and technology.

"Thank you to Mr. Fedeli for bringing this bill forward."

Similarly, the president of George Brown College had this to say:

"Tall wood construction is a truly forward-thinking idea, and as such, its adoption will depend on the support and collaboration of many stakeholders."

The bill that Mr. Fedeli has introduced to allow for wood-frame construction in buildings up to 14 storeys "is an important step forward in the advancement of sustainable building practices in Ontario."

Speaker, it's absolutely clear that successful passage of Bill 19 would create jobs and the construction of affordable housing units in Ontario. It is imperative that this bill be passed for the sake of many northern Ontario communities who have seen thousands, absolutely thousands, of forestry jobs disappear over the past 10 years, and for the thousands of Ontario families who need good, safe, affordable housing but cannot find any in their local communities across this great province of Ontario. We have an opportunity, together, to make a difference with respect to this important bill today. I would urge all members to stand up and support Bill 19. Stand up and support the member for Nipissing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? Further debate?

The member for Nipissing, then, has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I want to thank my fellow members who spoke, from Kenora–Rainy River, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Niagara West–Glanbrook, Timiskaming–Cochrane, Burlington, and Whitby–Oshawa.

In the remaining two minutes, I wanted to read a further passage from the Ontario Home Builders' Association. They said, "While Ontario should be leading the world in tall wood construction innovation, many other jurisdictions in North America, Europe and Asia are ahead of us. For example, Folkhem has proposed four 20-storey apartment towers in Stockholm to be constructed entirely in Swedish pine. Tall wood construction is utilized safely with advances in technology occurring in many countries and it is time Ontario not only catch up to the rest of the world, but lead the world." I would agree with the home builders' association.

You've also heard the words earlier from FONOM, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities. You heard from George Brown College, who have got a spectacular 12-storey building designed for Toronto's waterfront. We heard from the University of Toronto, who have got a 14-storey building that would be located very close to the corner of Avenue Road and Bloor Street, so certainly they would be within sight of Queen's Park. All of these organizations are looking to innovate in tall wood frame construction, and they have voiced their support today for Bill 19.

It is my hope that members of all parties, especially my colleagues from northern Ontario—whom we've heard from from the third party, which I want to thank them for—will indeed support Bill 19 in the Legislature today and support further innovation in wood frame construction in Ontario. Speaker, this helps the south with expensive real estate that they can build taller, and it helps the north by creating good-paying jobs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The vote on second reading of Bill 19 will take place at the conclusion of private members' public business.

FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE PHILIPPIN

Mr. Colle moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Filipino Heritage Month/ Projet de loi 10, Loi proclamant le mois de juin Mois du patrimoine philippin.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Mike Colle: I just want to say mabuhay to everyone here. Welcome. Kumustá. Magandang hapon to everyone. We have many guests here from the incredible Filipino Canadian community. I'm going to read some of them. I hope I don't miss anybody, but since they took the trouble to come to Queen's Park, I want to say, again, welcome. We have:

—Michele Serrano and the famous Monina Serrano;

—Ramon Estaris, who is the Liberal candidate in York Centre, hoping to be the first Filipino MPP;

—Norma Carpio, who is the head of the Mabuhay philanthropic organization;

—Rolly Mangante, who is the founder of Taste of Manila back in 2014, a great iconic figure; I'll talk about that later;

—Ben Corpuz and Paulina Corpuz—by the way, Paulina is really one of the driving forces behind this bill. It has been a lot of work. She's also the founder of the Filipino Heritage Month committee; and

— Susan Llanera, Sam Bustos, Yvette Yu, Agnes Miranda, Antonio San Juan with that beautiful name, Jocelyn San Juan, Pedro Carpio, Aurora Elefano, Nicole Leung, Ed Joaquin, Nick Rivera, Ted Dayno, Michael Lublin and Fir Closa.

I'm sure I missed someone. Welcome to Queen's Park.

1540

As Michael Lublin knows—he's not Filipino, but he loves Filipinos—I had another bill passed in this House. I had the Jewish Heritage Month bill pass. So I think this is very appropriate, since the Jewish community lives very closely together with the Filipino community in my riding. It's very fitting that I introduce Filipino Heritage Month here in this Legislature.

I just want to say that this is an exciting time to do this, for many reasons. The community has been trying to get this bill passed through a number of different attempts. It's hard to explain to people why we can't do this thing that is very, very important to the community.

I think we've got over 250,000 people of Filipino heritage who live in Ontario—250,000. In fact, the Taste of Manila—and I invite everybody to come—has 350,000 attendees. We hear about all these wonderful things in Toronto—the Beaches Jazz Festival, Caribana and the Pride Parade—but the Taste of Manila doesn't get the attention and the praise it should unless you go there—350,000 people. It's at the corner of Wilson and Bathurst. If you want to come and listen to incredible

music—dancing, karaoke—it's in August. Last year, it was in the middle of August. I've got to check the actual date this year. Anyway, the Taste of Manila—forget the Italian food. Come for the Taste of Manila. In fact, the Filipinos have this sweet spaghetti that you've got to try. It is incredible, the Filipino food.

As you know, there was a huge celebration in Scarborough. The member from Scarborough—I don't think she was there. Maybe she was. Oh, she was there, with the Premier.

The Jollibee opened up there, at the 401 and Kennedy. I haven't gone yet because the lineups are too long. Forget McDonald's; forget Chinese food. Come to the Jollibee. They have some incredible tasty food. The hamburgers with the pineapple on top—you've got to try them.

I mentioned the Jollibee, Mr. Speaker, because whenever we celebrate these communities like the Filipino community, we're celebrating our own entrepreneurs, our own cultural inclusiveness. Filipinos have come here to work, to raise families, and they do it with a smile.

I sometimes talk to my grumpy Italian relatives and friends, and they say, "Oh, we work too hard." But the Filipinos are working in every endeavour possible, usually in caregiving, where they do so much compassionate work. They always smile when you see them. I go to Baycrest hospital, which employs so many Filipino Canadians, and they're all smiling and working. "Hello, Mike. How are you doing? Would you like something?" It's an incredible attitude that they have.

Remember, the Filipinos work so hard—I mean, we say that about all our immigrant groups, and they all do. But what's special about the Filipinos is, they save every penny they get, and they send so much money back to the Philippines, to help their families back there—their grandmothers, their grandfathers. They do that because they won't spend extra money on some of the things that some of us spend on, because they want to send that money back. I think the Philippines gets maybe \$2 billion back from Canada from the hard-working Filipinos who are here and in the United States. That's an incredible sacrifice they make.

They work hard. They smile while they work. They're in our hospitals; they're doctors; they're nurses; they're PSWs. They're in construction.

They're entrepreneurial. They love opening up businesses all over the place. They're in every line of business: real estate, and the food business. They also add music to our city. The jazz festival is fantastic, but have you ever done karaoke in a Filipino club?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have, in Japan.

Mr. Mike Colle: It's about time you did, because it engages everybody. People get engaged. They don't just sit there on their hands. They actually get up and sing and celebrate. I know it's tough for us sometimes to get up and sing, but they'll get you to get up and sing, which is wonderful.

We want to declare June as Filipino Heritage Month because that's the month when they celebrate Philippine

Independence Day, on June 12. That's when they proclaimed independence from Spain in 1898. That's why we are picking June as the month.

They would basically ensure that everybody in our great province could celebrate. The Filipinos aren't just in my riding; they are all over this great province. There's a huge population in Mississauga, in Scarborough, and even in the Beach. They can afford to live there, even. Anyway, they are everywhere in our great city and province; it's not just in one part.

They are so engaged in their community. I have been very fortunate. I was able to work with the Filipino community a number of years ago on a very difficult issue. It's not all roses when you come here as an immigrant. I found out through my friend Dale Brazao, who was working at the Toronto Star, and through some of my Filipino friends, that our Filipina nannies were mistreated by some of these recruiters, who were taking their live savings, recruiting them from Hong Kong and then keeping their passports, keeping their bank books, making them work.

One Filipina, a young woman, wasn't even allowed to go to Mass on Sunday. Her employer said, "You can't take two hours off on Sunday." That's when I introduced a bill called the Caregiver and Foreign Worker Recruitment and Protection Act, in 2009, because the caregivers weren't under Ontario's labour laws. Eventually that bill was passed and now they are protected by Ontario labour laws, and there are more checks and balances on these recruiters and employers who were, in many cases, keeping these young women, usually, almost as hostages and taking kickbacks from their pay. We got that done, and I want to thank all of the people who worked on that. Some of you are here.

I also want to thank the incredible bond the Filipino community has with their churches—their evangelical churches, their Catholic churches. I'm fortunate. In my riding I've got Father Ben at Our Lady of the Assumption; I've got St. Eugene's Chapel on Bathurst at Ranee; and I've got St. Thomas Aquinas church on Eglinton, where they even have a food bank on Saturdays. The churches are also cultural centres. They are community drop-in centres. They're really multi-use facilities. I shouldn't forget St. Margaret of Scotland church on Avenue Road, which is very active. These active churches are very much part of Filipino life. That's why we need to recognize and appreciate all the contributions the Filipino communities have made.

I was talking to my friend from the Beaches here about these cultural months. And as much as the recognition of and respect for the culture—there is no doubt that that is important—when we support these activities, what happens is, it's like a little cottage industry that develops. In these months, the activities that take place—they have food trucks, they have music festivals, they have cultural events. It really is like a shot in the arm economically for a community, like the festivals you have out your way; it's the same thing. We say, "Oh well, it's nice that you are doing this event," but there is

an economic benefit to it, never mind the cultural and social benefits.

I think it's about time that this province, with so many Filipinos—we've recognized the Jewish community, we've recognized the Italian community and the South Asian community—it really is about time that we recognized and respected their culture, their contributions, their entrepreneurship. We are so lucky.

Sometimes some of the older immigrants say to me, "Well, all these new immigrants who come here, they don't work like we do." I say, "Really? You want me to tell you about the newcomers from India or the Philippines, where they work two or three jobs and then save money to send it back home, living in modest accommodations while they save money?" I say, "Look, aren't we lucky in this country that we've had so many incredible immigrants, from Asia, from China?" Very few people disagree when I tell them, "Aren't we darned lucky in Toronto, and Ontario, that we've had so many Filipinos who have chosen Toronto and Ontario as their home?" We sure are lucky. So let's pay some respect and recognize June. It's about time we did it.

1550

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: On behalf of my leader, Doug Ford, and all the PC caucus members, I'd like to warmly welcome all the Filipino friends to Queen's Park. I love Filipinos, and they love Raymond Cho. You'll find out why.

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing the time allowed to us with the member from Dufferin–Caledon.

It is my privilege and honour to rise in this Legislature to support Bill 10, the Filipino Heritage Month Act, introduced by the member from Eglinton–Lawrence. I applaud the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for introducing this bill after the government members actually blocked similar motions introduced earlier by the New Democrat member from Toronto–Danforth and myself.

The bills introduced by the members from Eglinton–Lawrence and Toronto–Danforth are extremely similar and simple. The one I introduced had an extra-long preamble that was written after extensive consultation with a number of Filipino Canadians in the GTA. I hope that the member from Eglinton–Lawrence would be amenable to borrowing the preamble from my motion, to give this bill more substance and give the Filipinos in Ontario the just reasons to proclaim June as Filipino Heritage Month.

Canada is a proud country of immigrants, or descendants of immigrants, with the exception of our indigenous Canadian people. Canada's diversity is the envy of every other country in the world. Nowhere else in the world do you have people from so many different backgrounds, religions and ethnicities living in harmony and peace. At the present time, there are more than 100 different ethnicities and more than 200 different languages spoken, and all of them call themselves proud Canadians.

Amongst all these ethnicities are the proud people of the Philippines.

The first Filipinos came to Canada in the 1930s. In the 1960s, immigration of Filipinos from the United States and the Philippines started to surge, and these migrants settled in Canada as nurses, physicians, health care technicians and administrators, and later as workers in the garment industry.

Through family reunification programs from the 1970s to the 1990s, Filipinos came to Ontario to join their relatives, to prosper, contribute to Ontario and raise their families. More recently, Ontario has become the home of thousands of Filipino contract workers who have settled in the province after having completed the federal Live-in Caregiver Program and who have sought to migrate their dependants to Ontario and become Canadian citizens.

Today, Ontario is home to approximately 340,000 Filipino Canadians. Filipino Canadians contribute to all facets of Ontario's economy and society, across many fields: medicine, education, science, administration, the food industry, business, arts and culture and sports.

Notably, Filipino Canadians have helped to build Ontario into a multicultural success story with their willingness to integrate into Canadian society. Their friendly, artistic and compassionate nature and their strong work ethic, as well as their love for family, have contributed positively to the social fabric of Ontario, breaking down barriers through dialogue, integration and genuine friendship within and among the different communities in which Filipino Canadians have made their homes. Filipino Canadians continue to help foster growth, economic stability, peace and social cohesion throughout Ontario.

The ward I represented as a Toronto city councillor for 25 years had the highest number of Filipinos in the city of Toronto. I met many Filipinos in those 25 years. Today, among those Filipino friends is my good friend Monina Serrano. Her lovely daughter, Michele, is sitting there.

I visited their homes. I attended many celebrations and events. I also frequented their churches. A church I often go to is the Friends of Jesus Christ. Congregation members—I don't know whether they are there—Leticia Jonayon, Nenuca Domingo and Purita Orda are here in the gallery. Thank you for coming.

Mr. Speaker, I have visited the Philippines three times, twice to Parañaque and once to Quezon City, to build houses for the victims of a typhoon. I brought high school leaders from Global Youth Leaders, which I founded nine years ago, and I contributed five houses. In the Philippines, each house in the typhoon-affected area is 2,500. I literally built the houses with the high school students.

I learned so much from Filipinos in the Philippines. Some concerns were kind of negative, but mostly very positive. In the concerned areas, I noticed the gap between the haves and the have-nots was so wide. In Manila, I saw so many Mercedes-Benzes, Lexuses,

BMW's etc., but the public transit—the bus is a half-ton truck, overcrowded, and pollution is very unbearable.

At the same time, the area where we built the houses—I have never seen such a poor and, pardon me, needy—but they're most generous, very kind. When we went there, each time the children approached and sang in choirs, and the mothers brought food and shared it with us. I said at one event that when I go to heaven when I leave this planet, I think I will see most Filipinos in paradise because they are the most generous, kind and compassionate people.

I'm so glad that the MPP from Eglinton–Lawrence is moving this bill, and I'm sure every member in this Legislature will support the motion.

Mr. Speaker, another great Canadian Filipino community leader was the late Senator Tobias Enverga. We had been close friends even before he became a senator. He was a school trustee in my area. I was at an event with the late Senator Enverga a few days before his untimely death. His last words to me were to do my best to recognize the contributions Filipino Canadians have made in Ontario by passing my motion to recognize June as Filipino Heritage Month. June is an important month for Filipino Canadians as June 12 is Philippines Independence Day.

Proclaiming Filipino Heritage Month enables Filipinos in Ontario to be recognized. It also allows all Ontarians to celebrate and appreciate the heritage of Filipino Canadians.

Long live Filipino Canadians. Thank you. *Salamat po.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

1600

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a genuine pleasure for me to rise today, as the MPP for London West, to speak to Bill 10, the Filipino Heritage Month Act. I want to thank the member for Eglinton–Lawrence for bringing this bill forward. I also want to, in particular, recognize my colleague the member for Toronto–Danforth for his contribution to this debate. He introduced a similar private member's bill back in November. I also know that the member for Scarborough–Rouge River brought in another similar bill in December. Certainly, the fact that members from all three parties have brought in private members' bills to declare June as Filipino Heritage Month demonstrates the widespread and enthusiastic support for this initiative.

I'm very proud of the efforts that have been made by New Democrats to acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding contributions of Filipino Canadians to our cultural fabric in this province, as well as to our social, political and economic well-being.

I want to give a shout-out to Councillor Neethan Shan from the city of Toronto, who successfully brought in a motion in November 2017 to unanimously have June designated in the city of Toronto as Filipino Heritage Month. That made the city of Toronto the first government in Canada to officially create a heritage month for Filipinos. Part of Councillor Shan's motion was to call

upon the government of Ontario and the government of Canada to follow their lead and bring in similar legislation. I understand that there has been a motion brought forward at the federal level, and I'm very pleased that we are having this debate today in Ontario.

If this bill passes and is actually enacted into law, it would make our province the first in Canada to designate June as Filipino Heritage Month. Certainly, that recognizes that Filipino Canadians are one of the fastest-growing segments of our population. There are about 800,000 Filipino people living in Canada, more than 300,000 of them here in Ontario. They are the third-largest Asian group in our province.

It's significant that, since 1992, Filipinos have consistently been at the top, the most immigrants who come to Canada in the independent immigrants category. These are people who are selected on the basis of skills and ability to contribute quickly to Canadian society and the Canadian economy. That speaks to their incredible work ethic and to their desire to participate fully in our society, to engage in meaningful employment and to make connections throughout our communities.

In 2014, the Philippines became the principal source of immigrants to Canada. That year we welcomed more than 40,000 permanent residents from the Philippines. We know that the Filipino immigrants who come to our province generally have high levels of education, which enables them to integrate very successfully and quickly into our communities and become actively involved.

There are more than 1,000 Filipino associations across our country. These exist at the provincial level or at regional levels, and also in a number of our post-secondary institutions. I just wanted to highlight a couple of these organizations that exist in my community, in London.

In London, although we have a small Filipino population, the Philippines is among the top 10 immigrant places of birth for recent arrivals—this was shown in the last census—and also the top 10 immigrant places of birth for all immigrants to our communities.

We do have a growing number of Filipino Londoners who are arriving in my community. This is shown by two very vibrant and active organizations that we have in London.

The Filipino-Canadian Association of London and District has existed in London for more than 50 years. They put on an annual heritage event that celebrates Philippine Independence Day. They organize very colourful and exciting cultural dances, music and other performances. We know that the Filipino community is renowned for the quality of their arts and their dancing, and so it's wonderful to have the opportunity to highlight their cultural activities.

We also have in London an organization that is known affectionately as WOOF, the Western Ontario Organization of Filipinos. This is a very active student club at Western University. It was established in 1990. It will be celebrating 30 years at Western. Its mission is to serve as a cultural ambassador for Filipino culture among Western

University students and to provide an outlet for both contemporary and traditional Filipino expression.

With that, I'm going to close my comments, because I know the member for Toronto–Danforth wants to say a few words, but I really want to express my strong support for this legislation before us today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Han Dong: I'll be sharing my time with the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development and the Minister of Seniors Affairs.

It is absolutely my pleasure to speak to today's bill, which, if passed, will declare June as Filipino Heritage Month.

I remember when I first got here, I used my very first private member's second reading debate slot to debate the bill that I put forward to recognize Multiculturalism Day, June 27, and to ask the province to officially adopt that day, which was declared by the federal government back in the 1990s. The reason for it was that as a first-generation immigrant, what attracted me most to this country and what led to my most profound appreciation of this beautiful country is the multiculturalism, the sense of inclusiveness. I don't feel like a guest, like a newcomer; I truly feel like a member of this wonderful society.

Filipino Canadians are Canadians. They are contributing members of our society, and in a lot of cases, they are seen as the most active and effective contributors to our society. I want to say that Filipino culture is a happy culture. They are an artistic culture. They have a culture of performing. I've seen some of the best performers and designers coming out of that community.

I remember when my family used to own a coffee shop in Scarborough and I got the graveyard shift. From time to time, I would have a group of young men come into the coffee shop, and all night, the entire night, they would do nothing but practise singing a cappella style. I remember they'd do Boyz II Men's End of the Road, and they did a better job, in my mind, than the actual singers. They're natural performers.

I had the pleasure of volunteering my time and working with the Philippine Independence Day Council. Every year they come here on June 12 to raise the flag in front of the Legislature. I had the pleasure of working with the council. Also, I'm very proud of the government, especially this year, for providing funding to the Mabuhay festival through the Celebrate Ontario fund from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Again, to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence: He mentioned the Taste of Manila. I participated in that event, and I can tell you that it is packed. There are just so many people coming to Taste of Manila. We should definitely go and check it out this year.

1610

To the member from Eglinton–Lawrence: As a veteran, he gets this right. He does it the right way by presenting a private member's bill, so that we have an opportunity to debate this bill and every party gets a

chance to speak about this bill. I look forward to throwing my support to this bill.

Last year, I went to an Anderson College graduation. This is a private college in my riding. When I went to the graduation, over half of the graduates were coming from the Filipino community. They are nurse professionals, technicians and PSWs. They're the people who are ultimately going to look after us.

To the community: I want to express my deepest appreciation. Thank you very much.

I urge all members of this House to support this private member's bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to add my support to the Filipino Heritage Month Act on behalf of the people of Dufferin-Caledon, the PC caucus and our leader, Doug Ford. Bill 10 would add to the already existing Filipino Heritage Month celebrated every year in June in Toronto and across the world.

A key part of what this Legislature does and represents is celebrating and talking about the great contributions of the Filipino residents in Ontario, who make this province so special. Over 700,000 Filipino Canadians live in Canada, and 340,000 Filipino Canadians call Ontario home.

During Filipino Heritage Month, it serves not only as a time to celebrate Filipino heritage but also a time for Ontarians to reflect on the tremendous contributions that members of Ontario's Filipino community have made to our province's prosperity and cultural heritage.

Filipino Heritage Month is an important way to acknowledge these contributions and for all Ontarians to learn more about and share in Filipino culture and heritage.

There are many reasons to support Bill 10, but for me, I'm happy to, on behalf of my sister-in-law, a very independent and creative young lady called Bhing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise in support of this bill. As you're well aware, I'm sure, Councillor Neethan Shan brought forward the first recognition of Filipino Heritage Month at any level of government in November of last year. I think he deserves an awful lot of credit for coming forward with that and bringing it to Toronto city council and, on top of that, taking the support of council and appealing to the federal and provincial governments to follow Toronto's lead.

I was very pleased last November, following Councillor Shan's recommendation, to bring forward a Filipino Heritage Month bill. I was very pleased that my colleague from Scarborough-Rouge River did likewise, very shortly thereafter. Now Mr. Colle, from Eglinton-Lawrence, has done the same. I think that there's a cross-party recognition that it's about time that the Filipino community and its heritage and contributions were recognized in this province.

Given the size of the community and the visibility of the community, it's surprising to find that it was only in 2017 that the idea of recognizing Filipino Heritage Month first came forward. This is not a community that one can ignore. You're not an invisible group, obviously. From entertainment to health care to the economy in general, Filipino Canadians are an integral part of what makes this city and this province work. So I'm glad that this is moving forward. Again, I'm surprised that it was not something that happened earlier.

At 160,000 members, the Filipino community is one of the fastest-growing communities in Toronto. As of 2016, as I think my colleague from London West and the member from Scarborough-Rouge River also noted, the Philippines has become one of the central, most important places for new immigrants coming to Canada.

I knew that Filipinos were a significant part of the population here in the GTA. What was surprising to me, when I started digging around, was finding that, in fact, much of the initial presence of Filipinos in Canada was in Winnipeg.

Speaker, if anything speaks to resolve and resilience on the part of Filipinos, it's that people would come from the warmth of the Philippines to Portage and Main at minus 30, and stay—and stay: clearly not a shy or withdrawn or quiet people, but people with great, great strength.

Clearly, people discovered the GTA—not that it's as warm as the Philippines, but somewhat warmer—so now roughly one third of Canada's Filipino community lives in the GTA. It makes them the fourth-largest visible minority group in this community. With that, as I have mentioned before, comes that whole ecosystem of media: radio, television, newspapers. This is a community that talks. They talk to each other, they talk to everyone else, they keep abreast of what's going on, and they make sure, as best they can, that the rest of the world knows what's going on.

Speaker, we're a country here in Canada with non-native roots that were primarily at one point from western Europe. That has changed, and that has changed very fundamentally. We've grown, we've evolved, and now our roots span the globe. One of those roots, one of those bases for our community, for our society, is now deeply rooted in the very warm soils of Asia, of the Philippines, and we all benefit from that.

In having this motion come forward, the member for Eglinton-Lawrence has done this Legislative Assembly and this community a great service. Recognition of such a rich, varied, and—what can I say?—high-contributing community is to all of our advantage. I look forward to this bill being passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Chair. Kumustá. Mabuhay.

I'm also pleased to rise in this Legislature to speak to this bill to recognize June as Filipino Heritage Month here in Ontario. On behalf of the large and thriving

Filipino community of Mississauga, I want to quite simply say three words: It's about time.

I've had the privilege of representing and interacting with the Filipino community, and I have come away with nothing but admiration. They're a community that has perhaps one of the strongest work ethics, but they also know how to celebrate and how to party.

I heard the member from Toronto–Danforth say that Filipino people like to talk, but I think they also love to dance. They are just amazing dancers. As an MPP, it's my privilege to attend any number of cultural community events in my riding, but I have to say the Filipino events are among the most fun, because the music is great and everybody dances. Sometimes I'm the only person who's not dancing.

Hon. Reza Moridi: You have to learn.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I do try to learn, but they don't just dance; they have steps. It's like everybody goes to dancing school and music school. Everybody sings and everybody dances, and that is such a pleasure. It's such a pleasure to see a community that knows how to enjoy itself and, of course, works very hard.

Hard-working, industrious, successful, with a fierce devotion to family, community and church, the Filipino community has helped make Canada a better place and has helped make my own city, Mississauga, a better place.

To understand how central the Filipino community is to Mississauga, consider this: When the famous Seafood City—we all know Seafood City—came to Canada, guess which city they picked to open their store. Of course, Mississauga. I know Jollibee started in Scarborough, but I also know they're now in Mississauga. It's great that the Filipino community is so vibrant in Mississauga. I can say that I love attending the annual Fiesta Filipina in Mississauga.

I just wanted to say very quickly that it was back in 1898—June 12, 1898, to be precise—that the Philippines got its independence from Spain. This year, the Philippines will mark 120 years of independence. It has always struck me, as somebody who is from Asia myself, that there are very few nations in Asia that can say they have been independent for 120 years. Bravo to that.

1620

Nothing would be more fitting, Mr. Speaker, than to make sure that we pass this bill immediately so that June 2018 can be officially celebrated as Filipino Heritage Month in time for the 120th celebration of Philippine independence. All I want to say is, let's do it.

Remarks in Tagalog.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: It's such a pleasure to rise in the House today and to support my friend and colleague the member from Eglinton–Lawrence on Bill 10, Filipino Heritage Month.

Speaker, when I was first elected in August 2013, I remember so clearly going down to the waterfront and joining the Premier at the launch of the Mabuhay festival

event. I remember how warmly I was received and welcomed by the Filipino community. It truly has just been a great relationship.

I want to also recognize some of the leaders who are here. I can't go through the full list because I only have a few minutes, but Tiya Norma is really someone who is a force. I remember that she invited me to the Mabuhay basketball. I thought it was going to be a small event, but I went to this arena and it was packed. There was a pageant and it was such a wonderful occasion. I just want to say to the Filipino community, Ontario is Ontario because you are part of the community.

The Premier and MPP Soo Wong and I attended the Jollibee restaurant in Scarborough, and what an exciting event that was. There were lineups. There was wonderful food. There was joy. People were coming in from New York and all over Ontario to experience this chicken. I have to say, I enjoyed the peach mango pie. It was fabulous. It's a taste of the Philippines, and that's what we were told when we were there.

But I want to say that in order for the Filipino community to have full participation, it's important that we do things like recognizing Filipino heritage. That's what this bill is doing.

I also noticed that the Toronto Catholic District School Board is making Filipino heritage part of the curriculum in the school board. A local school in my community of Scarborough–Guildwood, St. Ursula, is participating in their geography program, and the students are engaged and they're learning and they feel that pride in sharing their heritage. In fact, one of the students said that they were so surprised about remittances, that \$2 billion is wired from Canada to the Philippines each and every year. It just demonstrates how our two countries and cultures are tied together and are integrated.

It's a wonderful expression of what it means to be Canadian, what it means to be part of our community here in Ontario, that you can express your culture and express who you are, living here in Ontario. I fully support this bill. I am so pleased to have the opportunity to stand today and to celebrate it.

I want to close with a personal story, because the Filipino community is actually so close to myself and my family. There's an amazing love story of Chris and Christie. It's my uncle and his wife, who is from the Philippines. My uncle visited the Philippines. He loved it so much that he moved there. In order for his wife, Christie, to see him, she eventually had to move back to the Philippines, and that's where they now reside. So our cultures are one; we are united.

It's such a wonderful and vibrant part of Ontario, and I am so happy to celebrate this wonderful bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? Further debate?

The member for Eglinton–Lawrence has two minutes now to respond.

Mr. Mike Colle: I want to say thank you to all the members who really spoke from the heart on this bill: the member from Toronto–Danforth, the member from

Caledon, the member from Scarborough–Rouge River, the member from Trinity–Spadina, the minister of higher education, and the minister of seniors. Did I miss anybody here? London West—yes, you were great, too.

Listen, it was really an expression of heartfelt support for this recognition of these incredible Canadians. That's the one thing I wanted—to just wrap up. I know we talk about them being Filipino Canadians, but the other commonality with Filipinos who have come to Canada—they love this country. They have nothing but respect. They enjoy fully being Canadian. They do that. They're loyal patriots. As much as we're all connected, and they're connected back to the Philippines, they are genuinely connected to Canada. They love Canada. Let's not forget that. They demonstrate that continually. They just have this great appreciation of what Canada has done for them and their families.

I know the minister of higher learning mentioned the love story. Well, my nephew married a young Filipino woman last summer, so it's spreading. They just got back from a two-week vacation to the Philippines, and, I'll tell you, it's a pretty attractive place, from what I hear. I know my nephew's new wife's relative owns a little hotel back in the Philippines, so I'm going to have to go.

But listen, let's get this bill passed. It's long overdue, as the member from Toronto–Danforth said. It's long overdue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

The time for private members' public business has expired.

TIME TO CARE ACT (LONG-TERM
CARE HOMES AMENDMENT, MINIMUM
STANDARD OF DAILY CARE), 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE TEMPS ALLOUÉ
AUX SOINS (MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES FOYERS DE SOINS
DE LONGUE DURÉE ET PRÉVOYANT
UNE NORME MINIMALE EN MATIÈRE
DE SOINS QUOTIDIENS)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We will deal first with ballot item number 13, standing in the name of Ms. Horwath.

Ms. Horwath has moved second reading of Bill 43, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 to establish a minimum standard of daily care.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Which committee would we send the bill to?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'd like the bill to go to the finance and economic affairs committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Agreed? Agreed.

ONTARIO FORESTRY
REVITALIZATION ACT (14 STOREY
WOOD FRAME BUILDINGS), 2018
LOI DE 2018 SUR LA REVITALISATION
DE LA FORESTERIE EN ONTARIO
(BÂTIMENTS À OSSATURE DE BOIS
DE 14 ÉTAGES)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Fedeli has moved second reading of Bill 19, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 with respect to the height of wood frame buildings.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I would ask the member for Nipissing which committee he would want the bill sent to.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: The standing committee on finance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Agreed? Agreed.

FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2018
LOI DE 2018 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE PHILIPPIN

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Colle has moved second reading of Bill 10, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Filipino Heritage Month.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I look to the member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to move the bill to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Agreed? Agreed.

Orders of the day.

Mr. Mike Colle: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Eglinton–Lawrence on a point of order.

Mr. Mike Colle: I am seeking unanimous consent to discharge the order of the House referring Bill 10 to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

That the bill be ordered for third reading, which order shall be immediately called; and

That the Speaker shall put the question without debate or amendment; and

That should a recorded division be required, the vote be deemed deferred until deferred votes on Monday, April 30, 2018.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Colle is seeking unanimous consent of the House to discharge the order of the House referring Bill 10 to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

That the bill be ordered for third reading, which order shall be immediately called; and

That the Speaker shall put the question without debate or amendment; and

That should a recorded division be required, the vote be deemed deferred until deferred votes on Monday, April 30, 2018.

Is there consent? I heard a no.

Orders of the day. I recognize the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Hon. Laura Albanese: I move adjournment of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Ms. Albanese has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The House adjourned at 1631.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
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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**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Michael Mantha
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Catherine Fife
Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Bob Delaney, Catherine Fife
Michael Harris, Monte Kwinter
Michael Mantha, Mario Sergio
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Han Dong
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Mike Colle, Han Dong
Brad Duguid, Ann Hoggarth
Lisa MacLeod, Cristina Martins
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Arthur Potts
Yvan Baker, Grant Crack
Lisa Gretzky, Sophie Kiwala
Sam Oosterhoff, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi, Lisa M. Thompson
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
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

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
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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
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
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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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Lisa MacLeod
Liz Sandals
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
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Grant Crack, Joe Dickson
Jennifer K. French, Jack MacLaren
Deborah Matthews, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Bill Walker
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