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Monday
7 May 2018

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Lundi
7 mai 2018

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Président : L'honorable Dave Levac
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 7 May 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 7 mai 2018

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This being the first sitting Monday of the month, I ask everyone to please join in the singing of the Canadian national anthem.

Singing of O Canada.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would the members please join me in welcoming, in the Speaker's gallery, a guest of mine: the former member of provincial Parliament for Hamilton Centre during the 35th and 36th Parliaments; the member of provincial Parliament for Hamilton West during the 37th Parliament, and also Deputy Speaker during the 37th Parliament; and currently serving as the member of Parliament for Hamilton Centre since 2002, Mr. David Christopherson.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Joining us in the east members' gallery, we have Kim Moran, CEO of Children's Mental Health Ontario; Lauren, who is Kim's daughter; Karen Young, Youth Action Committee member; and Jonathan Tsao, director of Children's Mental Health Ontario. They are in the Legislature today to commemorate Children's Mental Health Week.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I would like to welcome the youth justice workers from Arrell Youth Centre in Hamilton and the president of their OPSEU local, Len Mancini. Thank you for being here.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to extend a warm welcome to Janza Giangrosso, from my riding of Kingston and the Islands. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Miss Monique Taylor: I would also like to welcome David Christopherson to the House today, a fellow Hamiltonian.

Also, we have already introduced her, but I have the opportunity, and always the pleasure, to introduce Kim Moran, the CEO of Children's Mental Health Ontario; her daughter, Lauren—welcome to Queen's Park, Lauren; and Karen Young and Jonathan Tsao. My understanding is, they're here to release the new numbers for children's mental health today.

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's a pleasure for me to welcome to the east gallery Gail and Kim Aagaard, who are new constituents of mine and the parents of Lindsay Aagaard,

who works in the Premier's office. She also is a constituent. I'm hoping I'll get three votes in the election.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Today, I'm very, very happy to have five very important and special guests in the members' gallery. We are joined by my wife, Utilia Amaral; my daughters, Talia Del Duca and Grace Del Duca; and my mother and father, Margaret and Ben Del Duca. Thank you very much for being here today.

Mr. Bob Delaney: On behalf of the member for Durham and page captain Sophie Hamilton, I'm pleased to introduce Sophie's parents, Jennifer and John Hamilton, and her grandmother Dianne Mott. They will be in the public gallery this morning. Please join me in welcoming them.

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll turn to the member for Kingston and the Islands on a point of order.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that members be permitted to wear pins to recognize youth mental health day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kingston and the Islands is seeking unanimous consent for the privilege of wearing the pins for youth mental health. Do we agree? Agreed.

The Minister of Labour on a point of order.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 38, I be permitted to introduce a bill at this time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Labour is seeking unanimous consent to introduce a bill. Do we agree? I heard a no.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

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

We now know that Hydro One has signed a deal to make \$50 million worth of payouts to US energy executives. The Liberals are once again missing in action as the latest hydro rip-off occurs.

People are struggling to pay their bills. Families are deciding whether to heat or eat. Mr. Speaker, how can the Liberals be prepared to send \$50 million worth of payouts to US energy executives?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Everything in that question is not accurate. Hydro One customers have not paid one penny—not one penny—to US hydro executives at Avista, nor will they in the future.

Doug Ford doesn't seem to know what he's talking about when it comes to this issue, or any issue, which is troubling from a self-described sound businessman, Mr. Speaker. Either that or he is deliberately trying to talk to something that is not accurate, for the people of Ontario. Regardless, that is not true.

In 2017 alone, the US company that Hydro One is purchasing, Avista, turned a profit of over US\$150 million. Salaries and severance payments do not come from Hydro One customers.

As the opposition should well know, this acquisition of Avista will not cost Ontario customers a dime. In fact, this acquisition will benefit Ontario customers, employees and shareholders, and rates in Ontario will not be impacted.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Deputy Premier: They can say all they want, but the Liberals read the same documents we read, where the Avista executives said that they will now be able to spread their costs over their new Ontario partners—that's the Ontario ratepayers. Deep and buried in the documents is a series of US securities filings where the evidence is absolutely clear: The secret millionaires' club at Hydro One would be making \$50 million worth of payouts to their US energy executive counterparts.

First, Hydro One changes their own severances, adding in a \$10-million poison pill, and now, secondly, they agree to pay out \$50 million to their US coal company.

Are these US energy executives really worth another \$50 million?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, the question isn't accurate. Hydro One customers have not paid one penny to US hydro executives at Avista, nor will they in the future. In fact, this acquisition will benefit Ontario customers, employees and shareholders, and rates in Ontario will not be impacted by this purchase.

Similar acquisitions are increasingly common practice for Canadian-owned utilities. This includes, for example, Newfoundland and Labrador-based Fortis's purchase of Michigan-based ITC, and Edmonton-based EPCOR Utilities's purchase of two US water utilities.

Sadly, one of the things that Mr. Ford admitted last week—but unreported by his personal media team—was that his headline-grabbing plan to fire the CEO and board of Hydro One doesn't affect hydro rates directly. That was said at the Thunder Bay rally.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Deputy Premier: As usual, the Liberals say one thing, but, in this case, the US securities tell us the real truth. Their filings reveal that the Hydro One management and board have authorized

more than \$36 million in payouts to the top five managers of their US energy company, and an additional \$14 million in payouts were authorized to another eight Avista executives. This is all part of an arrangement that is explicitly referred to as a "golden parachute." Speaker, this is literally a golden parachute.

The worst part about this is that at the same time that this government is mailing out disconnection notices, they are agreeing to a \$50-million payout.

Does the Liberal government support this golden parachute?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Again, Mr. Speaker, he's making it up as he goes along. Hydro One is actually extending the disconnection ban until further into June. So they don't even know what to talk about when it comes to Hydro One.

What they're talking about with Avista, as well, is absolutely not true. As I said before, and I'll say it again, Hydro One customers have not paid one penny to US hydro executives at Avista, nor will they in the future. This is common practice with similar acquisitions that have been done with Canadian-owned utilities. This includes, for example, when Newfoundland and Labrador-based Fortis purchased Michigan-based ITC and when Edmonton-based EPCOR Utilities purchased two US water utilities.

We'll continue to advocate and work on behalf of the people of Ontario. They can continue to make things up as they go along.

HOME CARE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Deputy Premier. Service Employees International Union's Working Ontario Women have started running ads attacking the opposition. Is this their thank you to the Liberals for handing over control of Ontario's home care agency?

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

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'm very pleased to speak to our plans for a new agency to look after that small number of home care patients with chronic and complex situations who require one-on-one care with a really trusted PSW. This is a model that has been very successful in a number of jurisdictions. I certainly believe that it's going to add to our spectrum of services for people who do require home care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Deputy Premier: Looking at the SEIU-backed model used in the US reveals some staggering results. The media stories were extensive. Currently, there are lawsuits in each of the states where this model has been adopted. In the end, the SEIU was also charged for concealing political contributions.

Are the WOW ads SEIU's way of concealing donations to the Liberal Party?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: As it relates to this type of self-directed care, we know that Ontarians want more control and choice over their home care services. That's why we

are introducing two new innovative, self-directed care models that patients could opt into. Of course, this will be entirely voluntary for both clients and PSWs. One will provide home care clients with the funding to purchase services in their care plan or to choose the people who will provide these services. Again, this opportunity for people to have a choice, I think, is something that the vast majority of people would be very much in favour of. I really find it very difficult to understand the opposition's reluctance in this regard.

We're piloting these programs in three local health integration networks. I'll have more to say in the final question.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Deputy Premier: Well, the Liberals didn't listen to the people yet again. This SEIU-backed home care agency doesn't make any real sense. Providers are against this, patients are against this and the workers are against this, but the SEIU is in favour of this.

Will the government order the Minister of Health to cancel this SEIU-backed agency as her final job as minister?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: We are certainly committed to piloting this particular type of program as part of the roster of services for home care patients where they require a particularly close relationship with their personal support worker. We did consult widely, and, after careful consideration and feedback from the sector, we made sure that there would be no disruption to the existing system. It will be in parallel to our existing home care system, and it will serve a small, targeted client population, as compared to the more generally available services.

These new initiatives will be evaluated for cost-effectiveness and on meeting patient need and patient outcomes, to ensure the programs work for our clients and for PSWs.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question to the Acting Premier: A few weeks ago, the government issued a request for qualifications for the regional express rail project. Once again, the government is using costly private financing. The Auditor General said private financing and procurement is vastly more expensive than traditional procurement, with no evidence of value for money.

But we also learned that the Premier plans to sign a long-term operations contract. When did the people of Ontario vote to hand over the GO rail system to a private investor for 30 years?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: To the Minister of Economic Development and Growth, on behalf of the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I know this particular member from the NDP asked a transit question last week. Perhaps he has decided to come back with a follow-up because—

Mr. James J. Bradley: Suddenly interested.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Well, yes, in some respects perhaps because there's sudden interest, but also perhaps he didn't like the answer he received last week with respect to the unprecedented amounts that our government is investing in transit.

In all of my time here in this Legislature, including a stint for three and a half years as the Minister of Transportation, it never failed to amaze me that Ontario's NDP, who purport to want to see more transit expansions take place in Toronto and elsewhere, would consistently vote against moves by our government to make those unprecedented announcements.

Regional express rail is a \$13.5-billion transit expansion, the likes of which this province has never seen before. For a party that suggests that it is progressive from time to time, I would have thought they would want to support this initiative. It's really clear to me that they don't, based on the kinds of questions that they have been asking on this topic just here in the last couple of weeks.

I'm looking forward to the next two rounds of this question.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm not surprised the minister doesn't want to address the question of privatization. The Liberal government privatized the hydro system and sold off Hydro One without a public mandate. This helped the Premier's Bay Street friends and Liberal campaign donors, but it has hurt Ontario ratepayers and the public. Why is the Premier doing the exact same thing with public transit?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I can certainly understand why the NDP member from Toronto–Danforth wouldn't want to talk about the unprecedented amount that we are investing in public transit.

Speaker, I've got to tell you: Just a few days ago the Premier of our province signed an MOU with the city of Toronto, and in budget 2018 there was a significant amount of money that was contained to help deliver on projects that I know constituents in Toronto–Danforth want to see built—for example, funding in our budget for the Toronto relief line, for the Yonge Street north subway extension and for more transit options in Scarborough—and also the waterfront LRT. That's the other project I should mention as well.

But he asked a question about regional express rail. He talked about GO regional express rail. Why in the world would Ontario's NDP not want to see two-way, all-day GO service, with trains running every 15 minutes? It's beyond me. I would have thought they'd want to stand and applaud this initiative. Maybe they'll—

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I think it's entirely clear why the minister doesn't want to touch the word "privatization": because he knows what impact it has. He avoids the question profoundly. The Liberals could have modernized Ontario's hydro system without selling it off. In-

stead, they signed inflexible, long-term contracts with private financiers, locking Ontario ratepayers into decades of high prices.

Now the Premier is doing the same thing with public transit, locking Ontario riders into a long-term private contract for the GO rail network. She has already pulled off Hydro One with no public mandate and added billions in private profits onto Ontario hydro bills, just to help her Bay Street friends and the Liberal Party. Why would she make the exact same mistake with public transit?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: After four years of opposing every single initiative taken by our government designed to expand public transit, it's not at all shocking to me to see that member from the Toronto area from the NDP caucus, on the eve of an election campaign, trying to make up for lost time.

I know people who live in Toronto–Danforth, and I know they want to see the Toronto relief line built. Our government is helping to build it. I know that people who live in Scarborough want to see more transit options; our government is funding the initiatives that will help provide that transit for them. I know people who live in Willowdale and Richmond Hill, and they want to see the Yonge north subway extension get built. That's what we're doing.

In addition to that, on GO regional express rail, two-way, all-day GO service every 15 minutes; trains will be electrified; expanding to Niagara; expanding to Bowmanville; making fares cheaper; running the Union Pearson Express at overcapacity because it's so popular; opening a subway in Vaughan last December.

Our government has built, expanded and plans to do more in transit than any other government in history. I would have thought the NDP—

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

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is to the Acting Premier. Good morning.

The lack of affordable housing is squeezing young people out of the neighbourhoods where they want to live. Major cities are becoming segregated by income, divided into rich and poor.

Ontario needs more affordable housing. The Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada says that even after signing on to the national housing strategy, Ontario will still need to build an additional 45,000 affordable housing units over 10 years.

Why has the Premier committed exactly zero additional dollars to new affordable housing investments for the current fiscal year?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: To the Minister of Housing.

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thank you to the member for the question. I appreciate his long advocacy for affordable housing. That's why I'm puzzled as to why he isn't congratulating our government on all of the steps that we've taken to enhance affordable housing over a number of years:

—our investments in affordable housing, focusing on those who are chronically homeless and those who are in danger of homelessness, where we've prevented thousands of people from falling into homelessness and we've brought many homeless people into permanent homes with supportive housing;

—our commitment to establishing an inclusionary zoning regime in this province and our delivering on that; and

—giving broad-based inclusionary zoning powers to every municipality in this province so they will be able to partner with the private sector and build more affordable housing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, maybe the minister wasn't listening to the question. Even after signing on to the national housing strategy, there will still be a massive gap between the supply of new affordable housing and what is needed. We still need to build an additional 45,000 new affordable homes over 10 years.

The Premier has provided no additional funding this year for the construction of new affordable housing. If and when money eventually starts flowing under the national housing strategy, it will still not be enough.

Why has the Premier failed to provide a plan to fill this remaining gap?

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: Mr. Speaker, indeed I did listen to the question, and the member should listen to his own question, because the NDP platform speaks to 65,000 units of affordable housing but does not speak to how they're going to pay for it.

Our plan does include additional funds through the national housing strategy—\$250 million in additional funding in the early years. We've secured hundreds of millions of dollars of renewable funding through the end of agreements with the federal government, to ensure that our existing stock continues to be well maintained. Through our cap-and-invest program, we're providing \$647 million to social housing providers across this province to retrofit existing housing and ensure it stays open for those families who need it.

Mr. Speaker, we are putting our money where our mouth is. We are funding it. The NDP platform is silent on how they will fund their promises.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, the minister should read the platform. The NDP believes that people have the right to a home that is safe and affordable. That's why we have committed to building 65,000 new affordable housing units over 10 years.

Why won't the Premier make the same commitments?

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: Mr. Speaker, I'll say once again, I applaud the NDP for coming forward and supporting affordable housing. It's unfortunate that they wouldn't support our budgets that provided funding for it. I have reviewed their platform and they do not speak to how they will fund their promise.

We know the Conservatives have no position on affordable housing other than, perhaps, whatever secret

deals that Doug Ford has done with the development industry.

Mr. Speaker, we're committed to building affordable housing. We've spent over \$1 billion on affordable housing each and every year, and we will continue to do so, and we'll work with our partners and municipalities and the federal government to deliver on more affordable housing.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is for the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

Speaker, the York University strike is now entering its third month, impacting more than 51,000 students' careers and the many parents supporting them. Over 7,000 students were expecting to graduate in June. This strike has now gone on for over two months. Why?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Mr. Speaker, this situation is very much at the top of our priority list. We know that the students at York University have been impacted by this strike, and both parties have been asked to consider consensual arbitration. Will Kaplan introduced his report last Friday. I spoke with both representatives of each side to recommend that they follow the commissioner's report. A neutral party, a very experienced mediator-arbitrator in this province and in this country, has examined the situation and has concluded that the parties are at an impasse and that the way forward is through consensual arbitration. That is exactly what we are encouraging them to do and what we are asking them to do, Mr. Speaker, to bring this to a close.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Back to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development: In a matter of hours, the writ will be dropped and we'll be in an election.

More than 51,000 students' careers have been put on hold by this strike and by this government. Why did the Liberal government take two months to finally act?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Mr. Speaker, you can see, from the question that has been asked by the PC Party, that there is no respect for the collective bargaining process on that side of the House.

On this side of the House, we respect the collective bargaining process. We respect the opportunity and the rights of each side to come to an agreement. The best deal that is to be had is at the table, Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We're doing very well today—just to let you know.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: To reach that deal, it requires a compromise on both sides. If you're thinking about the interests of the students, if you're thinking about the impact that this strike has had on the students, it requires a compromise on both sides.

That's why we are calling on both parties to enter into consensual interest arbitration, to bring this dispute to a close and get students back into the classroom where they belong.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Acting Premier. In Ontario, we are facing a crisis in child and youth mental health services due to a lack of funding by this government over the past 12 years. We know that 70% of adult mental illness begins in childhood. By the age of 40, half of all Ontarians will struggle with a mental health problem. Yet today in Ontario, kids have to wait up to 18 months for treatment.

Will the Acting Premier take immediate action to ensure that kids will no longer have to wait for services?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to thank the member for the question. The member knows that over the last several years, we've committed to a process called Moving on Mental Health, where we've gone out across the province and talked to many different agencies.

We've built a whole new system, with lead agencies in different regions across the province. There are 33 lead agencies that will exist. I think that currently, we're at 32, and we're going to move forward.

In Toronto, we have East Metro Youth Services. What they're doing is coordinating the services so that there's a single point of entry and young people get the services that they need and that they deserve.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: Just this morning, the Canadian Institute for Health Information released its latest data on children and youth mental health. The numbers are absolutely shocking. Between 2006 and 2017, there has been a 72% increase in the number of kids seeking help in hospital ERs, and a 79% increase in the number of kids being hospitalized. This is happening because they have nowhere else to turn for help, due to this government's failure to properly fund community-based mental health services.

When will this government finally provide children with community-based mental health services when and where they need it?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to take a minute to recognize Kim Moran, from Children's Mental Health Ontario, who is here joining us. I want to thank her for her advocacy, working hard on behalf of families here in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, what's shocking is the fact that when it comes to both the Conservatives and the NDP, their mental health investments would result in cuts in the system.

What we've done is make a commitment to put \$2.1 billion into mental health services over the next four years, in comparison to what the Progressive Conservative Party has put forward; I believe it's \$1.9 billion over 10 years. If you look at the history of funding, it would actually end up being a cut in the system. It's unacceptable.

We're going to make sure that families get the resources they need when they need them.

FIRST NATIONS REVENUE SHARING

M. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour le ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines, l'honorable Michael Gravelle.

Speaker, as you'll be aware, our government is committed to working with indigenous communities throughout the province as we embark on the journey towards reconciliation. In the report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, one of the many important recommendations was to ensure that revenues that the province receives from natural resources are shared with local indigenous communities from whose lands the resources were taken. Last week the government took an enormous step forward on that journey and announced a resource revenue sharing arrangement with several First Nation communities throughout northern Ontario.

Speaker, my question is this: Can the minister please give us details about how these arrangements were arrived at and how resource revenue sharing will benefit First Nation communities across the province of Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I want to thank the member for Etobicoke North for that very, very important question. He's absolutely right. Our government has worked tirelessly for months with communities represented by Grand Council Treaty 3, Wabun Tribal Council and Mushkegowuk tribal council to provide 45% of forestry stumpage fees and 40% of mining tax and royalties earned from active mines in the traditional territories of our partners. The communities involved certainly could not be more excited to begin sharing in the prosperity and wealth that will now be available to them that hasn't been in the past, and we look forward to more people joining.

If I can give an example, Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh of Grand Council Treaty 3 said, "The Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty 3 has long awaited to receive and become partners in resource revenue sharing, and moving towards acknowledging the treaty.... The forestry and mining resource sharing agreement with the province of Ontario is an important step towards more meaningful discussions on reconciliation, economic prosperity, and continued improvement in relationship building between the Anishinaabe Nation and the crown."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I think all Ontarians appreciate the minister's leadership on this journey towards reconciliation, particularly, for example, learning about how the Wabun Tribal Council believes this is in fact a culmination of decades' worth of work on behalf of the province and their own leadership.

As parliamentarians, we know that major agreements like these do not happen overnight, that the path to reconciliation isn't begun on a podium—or, by the way, on a bumper sticker—and you can't fire your way to reconciliation. On this side of the House, we know that it takes thoughtful deliberation and respectful co-operation on behalf of all parties involved—and willing partners, of course.

Speaker, my question is this: Can the minister please elaborate on the negotiated process and share further how

these historic agreements will benefit all Ontarians, and particularly our First Nations communities?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

L'hon. Nathalie Des Rosiers: Merci à mon collègue le membre d'Etobicoke-Nord pour cette bonne question.

Indeed, I want to thank Minister Gravelle and all his team who continue to do the good work of reconciliation and negotiating these agreements. I think the teams of both ministries worked really hard with our partners on the indigenous side to come up with these agreements, which are truly the right step on the path to reconciliation.

I want to quote Jason Gauthier, who is chief of the Missanabie Cree First Nation, Mushkegowuk Council. I'm going to use his words because they are quite telling: "Resource revenue sharing is a step in the right direction towards reconciliation. Our communities are continuing to take steps towards the long-term goals to achieve financial independence and sovereign wealth. We as communities can be ambitious in achieving our goals while retaining our position as the stewards of the land and the first peoples of Turtle Island."

I want to recognize how important this engagement with our First Nations communities was in achieving this process. Indeed, Jason Batise also was calling this announcement a step in the right direction.

I'm very proud that on this side of the House we are committed to reconciliation.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. The emotional and financial cost to Ontario families and businesses has skyrocketed due to the lack of funding and support for children and youth mental health services by this government. In fact, Mr. Speaker, according to Ipsos data, 25% of Ontario parents are missing work because they are concerned with their child's mental health.

When will this minister take immediate action to help children in Ontario and address the growing crisis in children and youth mental illness in this province?

Hon. Michael Coteau: As I mentioned with the earlier question, when you compare the Progressive Conservatives' approach, their platform to finding solutions and supporting families when it comes to mental health, their actual investment is much lower than what we're currently investing and far below what we're proposing to invest in the future.

1110

Mr. Speaker, \$1.9 billion is actually a cut to the system. Over a 10-year period, based on inflation and other factors, it would actually be a cut to the system. Those cuts will result in a lot of people losing their employment providing services for people.

In addition to that, this is a party opposite that is proposing to cut \$6 billion from the budget, and we know

where that's going to come from. My ministry alone is a \$5-billion ministry. What are you going to do? Just get rid of children and youth services?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: That response was an insult, not only to the children and families of this province, but to Kim Moran, who's here in the House today, who has been an advocate for children's mental health for years upon years.

For 15 years you've done nothing with children's mental health, and the statistics are showing it. The data released today: It has been a 72% increase in the number of young people going to ERs for mental health concerns. That's up from last year's 69%. It's a 79% increase in the number of young people being hospitalized.

When all the other data for youth are going down, mental health is going up because this government has ignored it, and it's only because of an election that they're deciding to maybe announce to do something about it. It's pathetic. How can the people of this province trust this government any further? It's time for a change.

Will the minister commit to actually following through on their plan today?

Hon. Michael Coteau: When it comes to this government, we've always stood up for children and families here in the province of Ontario.

Do you know what's unacceptable? What's unacceptable is the track record of the party opposite. This is a party, when it comes to children and youth services, that made massive cuts to the system. In fact, we know, when it comes to children and our efforts that we've put forward—for example, to put forward free medicine for children—that party voted against it. When that party was in power—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish.

Hon. Michael Coteau: When it comes to supporting children, we know it's that party and their leader who clearly said, when speaking about children with autism, they "can go to hell. I don't even care."

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

The minister will withdraw.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

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

LABOUR DISPUTE

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Acting Premier. Sixty youth justice workers in Hamilton, some of whom have joined us here today, are out on the street, locked out by their employer. Despite the fact that Arrell youth detention centre houses 16 young offenders, the direct employer is not the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services but Banyan Community Services, because the previous Conservative government

partially privatized the youth justice system and the Liberal government has continued to do so.

The issues at stake are a demand for concessions in their benefits and a 20% premium on their benefits. These front-line workers average \$10,000 a year less than their ministry counterparts, despite the fact that the Banyan CEO was on the sunshine list: \$150,000 in 2017.

We're not talking about widgets idle on a line, but vulnerable youth who have been displaced by this lock-out. What is this government going to do to right this ship?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to take a moment to recognize the men and women who work in the youth justice sector here in Ontario for the extraordinary work they do every single day.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour will weigh in on a couple of points in the supplementary, but I just want to say that when we're talking about the success within that sector in regard to supporting young people, we've seen a 75% decline in any type of interaction with youth facilities. We've seen a 43% drop in youth charges in the province of Ontario, I believe, over the last 10 years. So we're seeing some drastic changes, and those changes come because we have men and women who are dedicated to making sure that young people have opportunities.

Again, on behalf of the government of Ontario, I want to thank every single one of them for the hard work they do every single year.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: These workers are not looking for acknowledgement; they're looking for fairness.

These justice workers, housing provincial young offenders, don't even have workers' safety insurance—that is shameful—despite the fact that Banyan's CEO is on the sunshine list.

These youth justice workers are willing to bargain; they're ready to go. Seeing as this employer is a privatized contractor providing services on behalf of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and on behalf of this Liberal government, what is the Acting Premier—the former Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services—going to do, after 15 years in power, to improve the situation for these workers?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Ontario, as I've said—I've risen in this House on a number of occasions—has got an excellent track record when it comes to labour relations. The collective bargaining process is one that we respect. It results in a settlement 98% of the time—98% of collective agreements are reached by the parties at the table. From time to time, Speaker, groups need assistance, they need arbitration and they need things like mediation in order to overcome some hurdles to reach that settlement.

Ontario has got some of the best arbitrators and some of the best mediators in the world, and they've got an

excellent track record too. I know that we have mediators in with the parties, speaking as I speak, and they're involved.

What I would urge is for both parties to get back to the table. Let's get an agreement reached with the assistance of the MOL mediators and let's get these people back to work.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Minister, child and youth mental health is so important. We know that many young adults with mental health problems report that their symptoms began in childhood. I can tell you, as an elementary teacher, I have seen it in the schools.

This is why it is so important that services are available to children and youth when they need it and where they need it.

As the minister knows, with our government's support, the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre in my riding of Barrie opened their child and mental health wing back in December, which will help over 300 inpatients and 3,000 outpatients every year.

Minister, could you share with us what else our government is doing to support the child and youth mental health sector?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to thank the member for the question and for the great work that she is doing in her community to support families.

Again, I'd also like to take a moment to thank CHMO, who are here today. Our government and this party are committed to historic investments when it comes to mental health, and your advocacy has played an incredible role in getting us to this point. Again, thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to invest \$2.1 billion over the next four years to mental health and addictions. Our goal is that no matter where someone goes for the first time when they experience a mental health issue, we want to make sure they get the care that they need and the care that they deserve.

When it comes to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, we're investing an additional \$570 million over the next four years. It's an incredible amount, and, Mr. Speaker, just that investment is more than what the Conservatives have put forward over a 10-year period. We're supporting—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Your mike is off. Thank you.

Supplementary?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you to the minister. This commitment will truly improve access to mental health services and go a long way in helping to identify and treat mental illness as early as possible. This is what we need to be doing: investing in care, not cuts.

1120

This is a commitment that is not being matched by the parties opposite. Minister, can you talk more about why this investment in care is so important to the people of Ontario?

Hon. Michael Coteau: This investment is about care over cuts. It's very clear that the NDP has made a commitment to mental health, but it's actually, I would say, a cut as well.

The Conservatives under Doug Ford have just dusted off Patrick Brown's People's Guarantee, and they've brought forward a \$1.9-billion investment which, again, is not enough money for the system. This represents a \$1.2-billion cut in mental health services over the next four years, compared to our plan.

We need to make sure, again, that every young person in this province, when they have a mental health challenge, will be able to go and get the service that they deserve.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Acting Premier. The Ontario Liberals' failed and destructive energy policy means that almost 600 people in Sudbury could be on the verge of having their power cut off. They may have banned winter disconnections, but years of disastrous electricity policy that has caused hydro bills to go up by 300% means that, for thousands of Ontarians, the bills keep piling up.

Why is the Premier continually making the millionaires' club at Hydro One bigger, when people in Sudbury and other communities across the province are having to choose between paying their grocery bill or paying their electricity bill?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: It was our government that brought forward last winter our legislation that bans winter disconnections. We've worked with all utilities to make sure that that happened. Now that that ban is ending for many of these utilities—not all, but for some—we're continuing to work with individuals to let them know about the programs that are there—the ones that we put in place, the ones that they voted against—that help low-income individuals, that help First Nations individuals and that make sure seniors can save more money on their electricity bills. Those are the things that we did to actually help.

We rebuilt the system. We made it affordable. We made it clean, and it is reliable. It is something that they actually voted against continuously and we will continue to advocate for, and work on, on behalf of the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Todd Smith: The minister gets up and he bellows about all of the plans that are in place. But do you know why those plans are necessary, Mr. Speaker? It's because of the disastrous energy policy of this minister and this government over the last 15 years. We have amongst the

highest hydro prices in all of North America. That's why they've got to put in this unfair hydro plan.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Mr. Todd Smith: The price of electricity under the Ontario Liberal government has increased by 300% in parts of—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thought I might be able to get through this. The Minister of Advanced Education, come to order.

Finish, please.

Mr. Todd Smith: If it's so fair, how come thousands of Ontarians can't afford to pay their electricity bills and are about to get cut off? Mr. Speaker, what is the government going to do for those people?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: We've made sure that we brought forward the fair hydro plan, which I know that they're actually using because they had no plan. Our plan is so good that they're keeping it, and I understand that.

We're going to continue to find programs that will work to help people, because under this government, we've never had a blackout that lasted three days. Under that government, they did.

Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? We've made sure that we have invested in a system that is now reliable, clean and affordable. There is no more coal being used in our electricity grid. We are 96% GHG-free. And I know they want to change that. I know they want to change that because, you know what, Mr. Speaker, they have no plan and they have no ideas. All they do is meet with developers in the backroom and talk about paving things over, rather than thinking about the people of Ontario.

NURSES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Start it; I'll finish. The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, come to order. I will go to warnings if I have to. Let's just keep it.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Merci, monsieur le Président. Ma question est pour le premier ministre par intérim.

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario and the Ontario Nurses' Association held a joint press conference this morning, on the first day of Nursing Week. Happy Nursing Week to my colleagues.

The ONA and RNAO came together to draw the public's attention to a critical issue facing Ontarians. Ontario hospitals have 10,000—yes, 10,000—vacant RN positions, not because they cannot recruit more RNs, but because our hospitals don't have the money to fill the vacant RN positions. Their message is clear: Patients are not receiving the care they need. Hospitals are, on average, short-staffed by 17%, with occupancy rates well over 100%.

Will the Premier admit that it is her government that created this crisis in our hospital system?

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

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Our government is really proud to have stood alongside nurses since we took office in 2003. Of course, we want to recognize the contributions of all our nurses in the system. Happy Nursing Week to the member for Scarborough–Agincourt and to the Minister of Transportation.

Obviously, we're very aware of the incredibly important work that nurses do in our hospitals and in all sorts of different settings across the province. So, since we took office in 2003, more than 30,000 more nurses have begun work in Ontario. Just over the last year—1,200 more nurses were employed in Ontario compared to last year.

We truly recognize how crucial they are to our health care system, and we're continuing to support nurses in many different ways, including supporting education for nurses by committing \$4.9 million toward critical care training.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ontario has the lowest RN-to-population ratio in the entire country, and the trend is getting worse, not better. The government has had 15 years to improve this situation, but instead, they have made things worse—this, after the Conservative government laid off 60,000 nurses and closed 28 hospitals and 28,000 beds when they were in power.

The RNAO and ONA state that the research is clear: RN care reduces the incidence of patient complications like pressure ulcers, pneumonia, cardiac arrest, falls, sepsis, infection and medical errors—and the list goes on. Yet the Wynne government decided to give zero base budget increases to our hospitals for four years in a row.

The first step in solving a problem is to admit that you have a problem. Does the minister agree that it is her government that has created those problems in our hospitals?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: We have increased hospital operating budgets year over year, and in particular in this budget, which I hope the member opposite will join us on this side of the House in supporting. We're making an investment of \$822 million for Ontario hospitals that will help our nurses serve their patients even better.

We've made an additional investment of \$300 million over three years through our budget, so that every long-term-care home in the province will benefit from an additional registered nurse. We've expanded the scope of practices of nurses as well and we now have 27 new nurse practitioner-led clinics, which means faster access to family health care for more than 60,000 patients in communities across the province.

We truly value the contribution of our nurses and we will continue to support them through our budget. I hope the member opposite will vote with us on that budget.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the minister responsible for early years and child care.

Minister, I know that our government is committed to making sure families have access to high-quality, inclusive and affordable child care. Under Doug Ford's plan, families will receive a rebate of just \$34 per month. This proves how out of touch he is with the needs of families on the ground.

In my riding of Kingston and the Islands, I have heard from families that they face challenges when it comes to the affordability of child care, and I want to know what our government is doing to address this.

Minister, please tell us what supports will be provided to help families struggling to access affordable, licensed child care.

1130

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the member from Kingston and the Islands for this very important question.

Doug Ford's child care plan actually winds up to be nothing more than a scheme to cut \$1.3 billion out of our child care plan for Ontario families. Think about that, Mr. Speaker. Ontario families have told us that they need help when it comes to child care. Instead, Ford's massive cut to our child care commitment will leave families with little support—in fact, just slightly more than \$1 a day.

Our plan is for free child care for preschoolers until kindergarten. This major commitment will save Ontario families an estimated \$17,000 per child. That's in addition to \$6,500 that they will save in kindergarten. Instead, Doug Ford's tax rebate will save families just \$34 a month, and they'll have to wait a full year to apply to try to receive it.

Speaker, we're building a solid foundation for the workforce and spaces for families. Doug Ford's plan will not reduce fees, will not build spaces and will not make child care more affordable.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you so much to the minister for that answer. I have to say what a pleasure it has been to work with you over the course of this past session.

Our commitment to free child care for preschool-aged children is a historic step in transforming the way that child care works in Ontario. I am proud to be part of a government that cares and is committed to providing support for families that need it.

Can the minister please expand on how our government will be able to introduce such historic change to the child care sector?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to answer the member's question. Work is already under way to build more spaces and grow the workforce for this massive commitment, and we have the track record to do it. To offer free preschool child care, there must be enough spaces available for children to access that care. So we are already building 100,000 quality, licensed child care spaces over five years. In fact, we're creating more than 34,000 of those spaces right now.

But we're not only building spaces; we're also ensuring that we have the tens of thousands of early childhood

educators we'll need to look after our kids. Beginning in 2020, a wage grid will improve compensation for all ECEs and program staff. This will align wages with those working in full-day kindergarten.

Mr. Speaker, it's about fairness and equity. By building the spaces, investing in the workforce and providing families with free preschool child care, we're transforming the system. Our plan delivers care, not cuts, to child care.

SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Acting Premier. Your Minister of Community and Social Services cut off supports for a 38-year-old woman with Down syndrome when she left Ontario to spend time visiting her brother, who is in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

But your government delivered an even bigger disappointment to the family when they returned home to Neustadt, in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. Sheri Karn sadly found herself among the thousands of Ontarians with disabilities whom you wait-listed for Passport funding. No one knows when Sheri's funding will arrive. She could be on the wait-list for three years or even longer.

Acting Premier, is wait-listing the best level of care you can give a severely disabled Ontarian?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: The member opposite can let his constituent know that help is on the way. In our recent budget proposal, we put forward an increased amount to Passport. That means every single person on the wait-list will receive Passport funding at a minimum of \$5,000. This is a pretty significant step for people in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting, coming from the Conservatives. When they were in power, they cut developmental services by 22%. How can the member stand up and defend a record or an approach by a Conservative government that attacks the most vulnerable people in our community?

Mr. Speaker, they should rethink their strategy when it comes to supporting people with developmental disabilities. On this side of the House, we believe that every single person should have the opportunity to have some type of funding.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the Acting Premier: Well, Minister, Sheri's parents are very distraught about your government's actions. First you punished their daughter for spending time with her brother by cutting off her supports; then you wait-listed her for Passport funding.

But you see, the disappointment with your government didn't stop there. On March 28, your Minister of Children and Youth Services wrote to the family to say, "We tabled the 2018 budget ... for the first time in the province's history, every eligible adult ... would get at least \$5,000 a year...."

Ken and Nancy's immediate question was—and these are their words—“Is this a trick?” They called the regional DSO office, which knew nothing about your \$5,000-token letter they received. So they could only draw one conclusion—and again, these are the words of the parents of a child who was wait-listed after many years of having services.

Acting Premier, is your government seriously bribing the people on wait-lists with \$5,000—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member knows better, and he will withdraw.

Mr. Bill Walker: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting: The member brings up one of our budget's pieces, which I think is an important piece. That \$5,000 is something that we're proposing in our budget. I would just say to the member opposite that he has a choice to make when he votes on the budget: He's either going to vote for it or against it.

Again, I just want to mention that this is the same party that cut 22% out of developmental disabilities and cut over 20% for people on Ontario Works. Can you imagine a political party in this country cutting over 20% to our most vulnerable people? They should be ashamed of themselves.

On this side of the House, we believe in investing in people in Ontario.

Let your constituents know that help is on the way.

FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Education.

Year after year, francophone children in the east end of Toronto are assimilated in local English schools because their community lacks a French-language high school.

Anglophones in the east end of Toronto have high schools with sports fields, auditoriums and many amenities. No such high school facility is available to francophone children.

Article 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms gives francophones in Ontario the right to schools that are equivalent to those of the local English majority.

Will the minister uphold the charter right to equivalence and ensure that the francophone kids in the east end of Toronto are not treated as second-class citizens?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, we recognize the tremendous advantage students have when they speak more than one language, and that's why we are supporting the vitality and sustainability of the francophone community. We have increased annual funding for French-language boards by 25% since 2013, which is more than \$340 million. To me, that says commitment.

We also know that in the east end of Toronto, families are looking for French education. That's why, since 2013, we've provided \$208 million in capital funding to CS Viamonde. We also recently announced this year that

we are providing \$80 million to support nine capital projects for French-language boards.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that the member from Beaches–East York has been a strong advocate for these schools.

And I want to point out—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.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Minister of Education: Minister, the only school on offer for francophones in the same neighbourhood lacks a sports field, has fewer amenities and is landlocked on less than an acre of land.

On April 30, Premier Wynne publicly stated that the government must always ensure that support is in place for minority communities that will allow them to have equal success. Given the realities of assimilation and the equivalence requirements of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, given the need for the province to provide leadership to defend those rights, and given the Premier's commitment, what will this minister do to uphold the charter rights of francophone secondary students in east-end Toronto?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I want to thank the member opposite for this question.

Once again, we recently announced this year that we're providing \$80 million to support nine capital projects for French-language boards, including the \$16 million to be invested in the Viamonde school board.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out that the member opposite would have us think that students in the French-language board are not doing well. But the reality is that enrolment is increasing. In fact, in 2016-17, over 105,000 students were attending French-language schools.

Test scores continue to rise. Over 76% of students in French-language schools have met or surpassed the provincial standard in reading, writing and math on grade 3 EQAO. For grade 6 tests, over 81% of students have consistently met or surpassed the provincial standard.

Mr. Speaker, all this is to say those students in the French-language board are doing extremely well. I'm very proud of the work of the educators in that system and proud of our investments.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Daiene Vernile: Very quickly, I want to mention that page Colin Robinson of Kitchener Centre has his grandparents here today: Rose and Doug Robinson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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

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

The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BLUEWATER OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

Mr. Bill Walker: Outdoor education continues to be an important component of environmental education in my great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. So I rise in the House today to pay tribute to a group of forward-looking local educators who made this happen 45 years ago when they rallied around the idea that children would benefit from far greater exposure to nature. In 1973, they turned their belief into action by persuading the then education board to purchase a 320-acre farm near Oliphant which at the time consisted of an old farmhouse, a great barn, and frontage on two lakes.

This brilliant decision is why 2,000 students continue to have the opportunity to experience the great outdoors, surrounded by a UNESCO biosphere reserve, each year in my riding. Since its creation 45 years ago, the Bluewater Outdoor Education Centre is today recognized as foremost in the province.

Of course, the program would not have been possible without the people behind the Bluewater Education Foundation. The foundation created a trust with the sole objective of sustainable child environmental education in the outdoors. Thanks to them, we have new dining and sleeping accommodations as well as a full-fledged observatory, in conjunction with the local astronomical society.

Most importantly, the outdoor centre's sustainability in the future cannot be secured without the support of Bluewater District School Board. With more children spending time in front of screens—they average 50 hours each week—outdoor education programs are more important than ever, as it's when they get to unplug, connect with nature and learn to care for the environment.

I invite the members to join me in congratulating my community on the 45th anniversary of the Bluewater outdoor education program and in encouraging the local school board to support the program and to ensure that this valuable resource is sustainable. I would like to thank all the boards of directors—past, present and future—and all of the people who financially support this wonderful program.

ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I have a request to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services for action. A relatively new condo building in my riding, at 1190 Dundas Street East, has severe elevator concerns and a lack of service from Otis elevators.

Their latest set of elevator problems began in November 2017. One elevator had issues requiring repair, and repair was attempted but failed. The residents of the condo were promised repairs in January; that was moved to February, March and then April. They have three elevators: Two go to the 12th floor; one only goes to the

ninth floor. The second 12th-floor elevator was taken out of service around Easter. The condo was without both 12th-floor elevators for about a week.

The minister knows that legislation is coming, but people with elevators in their buildings need assistance now. Otis gives a time frame for repairs and repeatedly fails to meet their deadlines. The big four elevator companies have a monopoly but can't seem to keep parts in stock and have issues with relatively new devices. People have a right to the services that they pay for, and they need to have the government backing them.

Speaker, I'm asking the minister to contact Otis today and demand that they put things right.

MEMBER FOR MISSISSAUGA– ERINDALE

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, I have decided not to seek re-election. Fifteen years have passed much quicker than I could have ever expected.

MPPs are generally offered an opportunity to make a maiden statement when they are newly elected. Unfortunately, I missed that opportunity. My statement this afternoon will serve both as my maiden as well as my last statement in the House.

Since I was elected in 2003, the wonderful colleagues of this Legislature have humbled me—who have devoted themselves to this province and its success. They deserve our very sincere gratitude. I am especially thankful to our former leader and Premier, Dalton McGuinty, for providing me with an opportunity of a lifetime to serve in the Ontario cabinet for the better part of 10 years. This was a great learning experience and a personal highlight.

During my time in cabinet, I had the pleasure of working with the extremely dedicated members of our executive council, including our current Premier, as well as the staffs of various ministries. My own staff provided me with solid advice and inspiration every single day. No matter what challenges we faced, I was always supremely confident in their abilities and impressed with their tireless enthusiasm. To each and every staff member that I have had the honour of working with, I will forever be indebted.

As my first foray into public service, I was fortunate to serve as a board member of the Credit Valley Hospital and to oversee the finances and business operations of the Peel District School Board. It is there that I became aware of how critically underfunded our schools and hospitals were, and this became a driving force for me in my four election campaigns.

Of all that our government has accomplished in the last four terms, I am most proud of the progressive work that has been done in the arenas of education and health care to increase funding for our most in-need schools and hospitals.

It has been a true honour and a privilege to represent my constituents as their elected representative for four consecutive terms. I want to thank each and every one of

them for their support, guidance and constructive feedback.

Most importantly, my very sincere thanks to my family, and especially my late parents, as none of us can do this job without the encouragement of our loved ones. Words cannot describe the pride I feel in having raised two wonderful daughters, who were born and raised in this province and have worked hard to achieve success in their professional and personal pursuits. I would also like to thank my wife for her steadfast and unwavering support. We have a new addition in our family, my adorable grandson, who I look forward to spending time with after June 7.

To my fellow MPPs, current and former, thank you for supporting, teaching and challenging me. It has been a pleasure working alongside of you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, as well, for your dedication and outstanding service to Ontario and our Legislature. I concur with a lot of the observations that you have recently made about the changing role of MPPs. Partisanship often clouds our decision-making and thinking. The best ideas, however, no matter where they come from, should be incorporated into our policies.

Let me take this final moment to offer my very best wishes to my colleagues who are running in the upcoming election, and thank the others—and there are quite a few of them—who have chosen to step down for their years of contribution to our great province. No matter the outcome on June 7, let us keep in mind that our common goal remains the same: to continue bettering our province for all Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A very short maiden speech, but that's okay.

LISTOWEL CYCLONES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Last week, our local Junior B team, the Listowel Cyclones, made history by winning the Sutherland Cup. Last Tuesday, May 1, the Cyclones became the Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League champions. This is the team's first provincial title. They won 4-1 against the Caledonia Corvairs in front of a full house at the Steve Kerr Memorial Complex in Listowel. The next day, the boys celebrated with a parade through town. Talk about hometown hockey pride.

Under team coach Jason Brooks, the Cyclones have had an amazing journey. Key to their success: hard work from every player.

As coach Brooks told the Stratford Beacon Herald, "It's a special group. I really can't explain it. They had a bond the last two seasons like I've never seen in a team before."

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The Cyclones also won the Cherrey Cup last year and this year. Holdyn Lansink, who has been with the team for three seasons, said, "The Cherrey Cup meant so much to us last year, and I think the difference was this year it didn't feel like we were done when we won it. It was a quick night and we were right back to work."

In other words, whatever we achieve, there is always room to improve; always room to work harder and do even better. That's a great lesson for all of us. Mr. Speaker, this is what teamwork is all about: dedication and striving for excellence.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I rise today to talk about the privatization of public services and the effect it's having on communities in the northeast, including in my riding of Nickel Belt.

The Liberal government decided to sell off the cell service and Internet connectivity service to the private sector. In my riding, it was to Bell. Well, now Bell is threatening to remove its equipment. This would leave the communities of Foleyet and Ivanhoe Lake and surrounding businesses, outfitters, cottages and people travelling through the area on Highway 101 without cell service or the Internet.

To quote the president of Pineland Contracting, Mr. René Blanchette: "I have 25 full-time employees plus another 25 full-time subcontractors and truckers who use these services" daily. "The loss of these services put our safety in jeopardy, and we cannot function properly if these services are terminated by Bell Canada."

Speaker, business needs stability to operate, but in Kathleen Wynne's Ontario they can lose the tools they need in the blink of an eye.

The people of Ontario paid to have the tower built in the name of increased access for people of the north. However, it's about to turn on us and we're about to lose it.

I'd like to quote from the chairman of the CRTC, Jean-Pierre Blais, who stated, "Access to broadband Internet service is vital" and essential to life and success—essential to the life and success of the businesses, the students, the seniors and all residents of Foleyet and Ivanhoe Lake.

MEMBER FOR SCARBOROUGH CENTRE

Mr. Brad Duguid: I rise today to speak as the MPP for Scarborough Centre for the final time in this Ontario Legislature. To some, that might be sad; to others, they may be happy. There are some smiles I see in the Legislature.

To this day, I find it hard to believe that this scrappy little kid from Scarborough somehow made it here and was able to survive in this place for 15 years after serving for nine years on Toronto city council as a councillor from Scarborough. I almost find it unbelievable that I could have achieved this kind of privilege.

I have been privileged to serve for over a decade in the cabinet of two great Ontario Premiers: former Premier Dalton McGuinty and, of course, Premier Kathleen Wynne. Really, it has been the honour of my life to serve under their leadership and observe first-hand the incred-

ible commitment and passion that both of those individuals have had for making life better for Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, it has been an honour to serve with you, someone I consider to be one of the most accomplished Speakers that I've observed, and I've been in this business for 30 years. I was here during the Peterson days. Mr. Speaker, you've done a phenomenal job keeping decorum in this place. Your love of this place, I think, comes through in the work that you've done, and you've done a great service to the people of Ontario keeping the Legislature relevant—

Applause.

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

Mr. Brad Duguid: I guess I'll stop there.

Interjection: Keep going; keep going.

Mr. Brad Duguid: Keep going; he wants me to keep going. But, Mr. Speaker, more than anything at all, I want to thank you for your friendship. You and I go way back. Your words of wisdom to me in my early days, in particular, I think really helped me get through those early days. For that, sir, I thank you very, very much.

I want to thank the hundreds of staff members that I've had the privilege to have on my own direct staff. It's hard to believe that after seven portfolios you have so many—and often young people come through your offices. I think one of the best privileges that we have is to mentor some of those young people, regardless of which side of the Legislature you're on. You've all seen that talent come through, and to me, that gives me hope for the future more than anything else. I want to thank them. I've been blown away by the level of talent that some of these young people who have worked for us all over the years have shown.

I want to thank the officers of the Legislature here today and all the thousands of public servants that I've had the privilege to work with. They do a phenomenal job for our province. They also make life pleasant for us here. There are times when the hours get long, but the folks here share those hours with us, and I want to thank you for making life not only bearable but enjoyable for all of the members here.

I want to, of course, thank my wife, Crystal, my sons, Kennedy and Jordan, my parents and my family for understanding how important this work has been to me through the years and never, ever complaining while my responsibilities often took me away from them or my attention wasn't there when it should have been because my mind was on what we're doing here rather than where it probably should have been: at home.

Finally, as I take my leave, I want to thank all of my colleagues, all MPPs here in the Legislature from all sides of the House. One of the things I take a great deal of pride in is the fact that while I did my job as a loyal and committed Liberal MPP and minister, I was never truly a person who was partisan in nature. I always believed that—and I know I could be partisan in this place when I was told to be or when I had to be, but you always knew that I had respect for every single member in this Legislature.

All of you worked very hard to get here. All of you deserve to be here. All of you are working extremely hard on behalf of the people of Ontario, and I want you to know that I've always valued that. I've respected the members in this Legislature on all sides of the Legislature and will always do that. To me, of all the things I've had the privilege to participate in, serving with each and every one of you has been the privilege of my life, and I want to thank you for that. I want to wish all of you well in the next election campaign and thank you for all the years of service that each and every one of you has given as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I was going to let you go on for another 10 minutes if you were going to speak about me.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In a good way, though.

Further members' statements?

RIDING OF HURON–BRUCE

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: First of all, it's a pleasure to stand today and congratulate all the retiring MPPs and, most importantly, thank them and their families for the public service they have invested in Ontario. We won't forget what you've done to stand up on behalf of your constituents. I sincerely thank you.

I'd like to take this moment to talk to the constituents of Huron–Bruce. I thank them for bringing their concerns to my attention so I could act on their behalf.

For instance, my motion to create more agri-food awareness in terms of the amazing careers that are out there is something that I feel so passionate about. In 2015, we had unanimous consent to move forward on this initiative, but unfortunately I attended an AGM for AgScape last week and it was reported that there has been very little action to this date. High school majors: There has been work done; check mark on that. But we still have to work on making sure people are aware of the amazing jobs that exist in the agri-food industry.

I'd also like to raise awareness about a motion I just introduced last week that has gotten a lot of legs. It's with regard to improving access for service dogs that are in training to support autistic children. Deanna Allain, you've been an amazing advocate. Thank you for that.

My bill that I introduced earlier this year on Great Lakes awareness day is now on the radar of the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus, and our colleagues on the American borders of our Great Lakes are now thinking about taking June 7 on as an awareness day as well.

Lastly, I'd like to thank the government for picking up on my motion putting ticks on the map with the report you came out with last week. The very first person I met in Huron–Bruce was Doris Sanders; she's a survivor of Lyme. We can't do enough. Thank you for taking my motion into consideration.

RIDING OF KINGSTON AND THE ISLANDS

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I am thrilled to rise today in honour of the final member's statement of the 41st Parliament. As I reflect on this term, I've had the privilege of delivering 74 member's statements that were dedicated to causes, events, stories and people who matter a great deal to me.

Mr. Speaker, each and every sentence, second and moment counts. It is in the public record forever. We should never take this for granted. We should also do our best to ensure that the words that we bring forward are delivered with respect and dignity. Unfortunately, as we know, this does not always happen.

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Mr. Speaker, the nature of politics is such that discourse and debate are necessary. However, it is important to represent every constituent in the province for the sole reason of improving their lives. That is what politics is all about, after all, for me. I have a special place in my heart for Kingston and the Islands. Kingston is a place where history and innovation thrive. It is home to Canada's top hospitals. We will soon see the addition of the Third Crossing, which has been a dream for many in Kingston and the Islands for 50 years, thanks to our government's investment of \$60 million; as well, a \$500-million investment in the Kingston Health Sciences Centre, which is another area that needed renovation—in some cases, for 50 years.

Kingston is a place where people care about each other and work tirelessly to make their community a better place for all. This has been and will continue to be the source of my daily inspiration.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a pleasure to work with you. You have been such an inspiration. I thank you for your service to Ontario. I knew I had to say that to get a few extra seconds in.

In closing, it has been an honour to work with each and every one of you on all sides of this House for this term; our Clerks' table, as well. Thank you so much to all of you. Good luck. Thank you. Merci beaucoup. Meegwetch.

NORTHERN ONTARIO

Mr. Norm Miller: Mr. Speaker, as this may be the last time I will speak while you're in the chair, let me take this opportunity to thank you for your service and wish you the best in your retirement, if it is retirement.

I rise today to welcome the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities to the great riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. Starting on Wednesday, FONOM will be holding their annual conference at the Stockey Centre right at the harbour in Parry Sound. The theme of this conference is “Leading the Way Through Innovation.” Kapuskasing mayor and FONOM president Al Spacek and his team have put together a very good agenda, including speakers on forestry, the Ring of Fire,

transportation, economic development, and many other important issues facing northern Ontario communities.

Despite the great agenda, I do hope that delegates find some time to get out and explore all that Parry Sound and area has to offer. There are great shops in the downtown just a short walk from the Stockey Centre, and plenty of good restaurants as well.

On another municipal organization note, I want to congratulate Bracebridge mayor Graydon Smith on being elected chair of the Ontario Small Urban Municipalities organization. Mayor Smith has been a great advocate for our community and for equal services in towns across Ontario. One only needs to look at the presentation he made to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs during the pre-budget consultations earlier this year about the need to review and change the funding formula for medium-sized hospitals in Ontario. Congratulations, Mayor Smith, on your new position.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements, especially the ones that were kind to me. I will say that that's not going to get you any leniency in question period tomorrow.

Anyway, thank you very much. I appreciate your comments.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

YORK UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2018 LOI DE 2018 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL À L'UNIVERSITÉ YORK

Mr. Flynn moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 70, An Act to resolve labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903 / Projet de loi 70, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail entre l'Université York et la section locale 3903 du Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On division.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On division. So ordered.

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: This legislation would require that any strike or lockout at York University be terminated. The strike currently impacts thousands of students, their families and their communities. If passed, striking York University workers would be required to

return to their jobs, and all outstanding issues would be referred to binding mediation arbitration.

MOTIONS

MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT ON HARASSMENT

Hon. Laura Albanese: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice to adopt a members' code of conduct on harassment.

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

Minister?

Hon. Laura Albanese: I move that the members' code of conduct on harassment, as set out in the Report of the Speaker's Panel to Establish a Members' Code of Conduct on Harassment, sessional paper 16, April 11, 2018, be adopted, and that the code shall come into force on June 7, 2018.

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

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Motions? The Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to end the York University strike by putting forward a motion to pass Bill 70 immediately.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion. Do we agree? I heard a no.

Motions? The Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mitzi Hunter: I seek unanimous consent to get York students back into the classrooms by putting forward a motion to pass Bill 70 immediately.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Advanced Education is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion. Do we agree? I heard a no.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

NURSING WEEK

Hon. Helena Jaczek: It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to celebrate the incredible work and dedication of nurses across our province on the occasion of Nursing Week. I cannot express enough how important it is that we recognize the tremendous value that nurses bring to our health care system. That is why our government has consistently made nurses a top priority and why we continue to invest in the nursing community.

Since 2003, our government has added over 30,000 nurses to the workforce, and the number of nurses

employed in nursing in Ontario has increased for the 13th consecutive year. Our strong partnership with nurses has led to a number of innovative initiatives that are helping patients across Ontario.

We continue to support education for nurses by committing \$4.9 million towards critical care training for our nurses. This will open the door for 624 new nurses and 188 mid-career nurses to enter into critical care practice.

Through our partnership with the RNAO, \$750,000 will go towards the co-creation of a program that will offer pre- and post-natal care for indigenous women in communities affected by tobacco use.

We are also investing \$2.3 million over three years to the Project ECHO/WoundPedia initiative. This will increase coordinated interprofessional wound care capacity in Ontario, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

We know how critical nurses are to our health care system, which is why we expanded the scope of practice for nurses so patients have more access to services when they need it. Last spring, we amended the Nursing Act to allowed registered nurses to prescribe drugs for certain non-complex conditions and to communicate a diagnosis for the purposes of prescribing. Also, all nurse practitioners can now order ultrasounds and X-rays for patients, and we're working towards expanding access to ordering CT scans.

We also recognize that nurses, being on the front lines, are first responders themselves. They're also often some of the last people to ask for help as their focus is on the care and well-being of others. It is our responsibility in government to care for those who selflessly commit their lives and safety to help millions of people across the province. That is why, last December, along with Minister Flynn, we announced the expansion of the PTSD presumption to all front-line nurses providing direct patient care.

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Nurses are also critical in our strategy to ensure that everyone in the province has access to primary care. We have created 27 new nurse practitioner-led clinics, which means faster access to family health care for more than 60,000 patients in communities across the province. We have also created 75 full-time nurse practitioner positions in long-term-care homes.

Speaker, building on this, this year's budget includes an investment of \$300 million over three years so that every long-term-care home in the province will benefit from an additional registered nurse. This is part of our commitment to increase the provincial average to four hours of daily care per long-term-care resident by 2022.

Our budget also includes a commitment to invest an additional \$650 million in home care over the next three years. Part of this investment includes \$180 million in new funding in 2018-19 that is estimated to make available 2.8 million more hours of personal support, including caregiver respite plus 284,000 more nursing visits and 58,000 more therapy visits.

We've made these commitments on behalf of people across Ontario because caring for people is a core value.

In 2007, our government created the Nursing Graduate Guarantee, providing new graduate nurses in Ontario with temporary full-time employment to support their successful transition to permanent full-time employment. Since its creation, nearly 20,500 new nurses have participated.

We also created the Nursing Education Initiative, which supports continuing education and professional development for nurses through funding for education grants, fellowships, research projects and best-practice guideline development and implementation.

To support the retention of nurses, our government created the Late Career Nurse Initiative. This initiative provides salary replacement dollars to organizations, allowing late-career nurses aged 55 and older to utilize their knowledge, skills and expertise to advance projects that improve patient care or the quality of work environments.

Speaker, we know that when we invest in our hospitals, we are also investing in our nurses. Our investment of \$822 million for Ontario hospitals will help our nurses to better serve patients across the province. Our government understands that nurses are the backbone of our health care system, and I'm happy to stand here to recognize the incredible contribution that they make to the people of this province.

EDUCATION WEEK

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise today as the Minister of Education in recognition of Education Week in Ontario. Each year, during the first week of May, Ontario's education community comes together to celebrate student achievement and education excellence. It's a time to celebrate those who work tirelessly every day to support Ontario students. It's a time to celebrate the amazing work under way in Ontario's education system. And it's a time to celebrate the remarkable young people in our school system who are our future.

Speaker, I want you to know that Ontario's education system is stronger than it has ever been, built through the hard work, dedication and commitment of parents, teachers, staff and students. This is what it's all about when it comes to creating a system that works for everyone.

I'd like to thank each and every one of the 222,000 teachers, educators, administrators and staff who work hard every day so that Ontario's two million amazing students get the best possible start in life and are ready for the future. It's because of their hard work that we have a stronger generation of students learning transferable and essential skills and graduating at historically high rates in our province.

This year's Education Week is themed "Equity in Action." It's a call to action for all of us, a pledge to promote equity and inclusion in our schools and a commitment to ensure that everyone in our publicly funded education system—everyone—feels engaged, accepted

and included regardless of their background or personal circumstances. This is so important, because all our kids and staff should feel welcome in our schools.

Education Week is an important opportunity for all of us to talk about our hopes for the future, but it's also a great opportunity for all of us to talk about the strides that we have made so far. As a result of Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, launched in 2009, all publicly funded schools in Ontario now have equity and inclusion education policies and religious accommodation guidelines in place. This is something we should all be proud of.

In 2017, we introduced the province's first education equity action plan to remove discriminatory barriers and biases that still exist in our education system. Speaker, this was such an important step. Our equity action plan is a powerful tool, a tool that strengthens our publicly funded education system by ensuring that every student in our province—every student—has the ability to reach their full potential and that every student has the opportunity to succeed regardless of race, religion, ethnicity or individual identity.

Speaker, the implementation of our equity action plan is already under way in Ontario schools. Twelve boards are now participating in culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy initiatives, and regionally based equity networks are in place in school boards to help identify and address local needs. Intensive, two-day professional development training programs were held for trustees on human rights, ethical leadership and good governance—and there's more work under way.

We're establishing formal human rights support structures in schools and school boards. Just think about that. These offices will find local solutions to challenges on the ground.

These are just a few of many examples of the transformation under way to enhance equity in schools and school boards all across Ontario. This gives our schools the tools and resources that they need to ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve success and well-being—so important if our young people need to learn.

During Education Week, schools across the province will be alive with events, activities and celebrations that will bring equity to life in their hallways, classrooms and libraries. I encourage all my colleagues here to take the time to recognize the remarkable contributions of our students, parents, teachers and education workers in Ontario. Use your voices, use your networks and your social media to share the details of Education Week activities in your neighbourhoods—so important. Just use the hashtag #EdWeekON2018 to tell your local community stories.

Speaker, the well-being and academic success of every student and child are top priorities for the Ministry of Education and our education partners. That's why equity is one of the most important goals outlined in our vision for education, along with improving student achievements, promoting well-being, and enhancing confidence in the publicly funded school system.

It is my honour and privilege to stand today in the House and extend my best wishes to every student, every parent, every teacher and every education worker who works tirelessly every day to do their part to support and champion equity inclusion and human rights at school. Speaker, together we are paving the way to equity in action and building a strong path forward for all of kids.

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

NURSING WEEK

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I rise today on behalf of the PC Party and our leader, Doug Ford, to acknowledge Nursing Week and to thank all of the nurses in our communities who, day in and day out, provide care and advocacy for their patients. As Doug has said numerous times, nurses are the backbone of our health care system.

This week we celebrate the important contributions of Ontario's registered nurses, registered practical nurses, nurse practitioners and nursing students. It is a week where we also reflect on what is needed to optimize nursing care delivery.

Nurses build strong connections with the people, families and communities they care for, and are therefore key partners in our health care system. Their relationships give us a strong sense of what is needed to improve our health care system.

Unfortunately, under this Liberal government, we have the lowest RN-to-population ratio in the country. The latest figures show that there are just 703 RNs for 100,000 people in Ontario, compared with 839 RNs per 100,000 in the rest of the country. Between 2011 and 2017, Ontario's population grew 7%; however, RN employment rose by just 2%. For five years, this government froze base funding in our hospitals, which resulted in nursing job losses and over 10,000 unfilled RN positions. This has negatively affected patient care and has led to hallway medicine.

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Nurses are an invaluable resource. Our leader, Doug Ford, and the PC Party have committed to listening to nurses to fix our health care system. A PC Party will end hallway medicine and address wait times in this province. This will be accomplished working with our nurses: RNs, NPs, RPNs and nursing students.

On behalf of Doug Ford and the PC Party, we want to thank all of the nurses for their tireless dedication in Ontario. We commit to working with you for a better Ontario.

EDUCATION WEEK

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to speak to Education Week as the official opposition critic for education and post-secondary education.

Speaker, education has the power to put aspirations within reach and help make real the promise of opportunity that defines Ontario.

In an increasingly competitive and interconnected global economy, nothing is more important than preparing future generations for success from their earliest days of school.

Education Week provides an opportunity to celebrate the collaboration, dedication and commitment of students, teachers and other education workers in schools and classrooms across the province.

Every Ontarian willing to work hard deserves a chance to pursue a higher education, no matter who they are, where they come from or what their circumstances are. We have a responsibility to ensure that every child has a pathway to success. The future of our province depends on having an educated and highly skilled workforce. The work of preparing our youth for that future is happening every day in our schools.

Since becoming the official opposition critic for education and post-secondary education, I've had the opportunity to visit schools across the province to meet staff and students and to see first-hand the important work that goes into supporting student success. Every day, teachers and education workers inspire and support students to reach their fullest potential. Education Week is a way to celebrate student achievement and acknowledge the efforts of teachers, education workers, administrative personnel, library technicians and maintenance workers.

As the father of an educator, I'm very proud to celebrate the incredible work done every day by workers in the education sector. They're dedicated, skilled professionals who enhance the learning environment for students across this great province. From challenges like physical or learning disabilities to new Canadians learning our language and customs, each member of the education team supports and builds on the learning path of our students.

This week, let us pledge together our support for all of our province's education workers and students by reaffirming the ideal that everyone should have the chance to use their talents and abilities to contribute to our province's success.

EDUCATION WEEK

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm pleased to be able to talk to the issue of Education Week. I want to start by thanking the teachers, the education workers, the principals, the trustees—all those who work extraordinarily hard to make our education system function well; all those who work every day to provide the next generation with a good education. I also want to recognize the efforts of the students themselves, who are preparing themselves for the life to come, and of their families who give them the support at home.

That said, all those who make the system work deserve a government that backs them, and right now they don't have that. All too often, teachers and parents feel abandoned or forgotten by this Liberal government. Nothing says, "We forgot about you," like a leaking roof and pails in a classroom to catch the water, or a mouldy

portable. That is the strongest statement you can make about how much you care about education. Letting the repair backlog grow from \$5 billion under the Progressive Conservatives to \$16 billion under the Conservatives—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Under the Liberals.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Sorry; under the Liberals. My apologies.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Same thing.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: They blend together, Speaker.

Allowing the Liberals to grow that deficit, that backlog, to \$16 billion, shows an absence of care, and it's irresponsible.

Last Friday, I met with secondary school teachers. Teacher after teacher told me about the lack of help for special-needs students, told me about the difficulties they have in providing the education that they know those students need and they know they can't give them.

Others not working with special-needs classes just talked about the large numbers of students in those classes, classes that are packed, and the inability to provide that person-to-person contact and mentoring that you really need in so many cases. I've talked to teachers in kindergarten—30 children under the age of six in a room—just about the emotional toll on them and, frankly, on some of the more vulnerable kids, the emotional toll on those children.

The funding formula for education in this province was set up by the Progressive Conservatives. It didn't work when it was initially launched, and years of Liberal duct tape and paper clips have not improved it. It needs to be rewritten. This party, the NDP, is prepared to do that, and to actually honour the education system.

NURSING WEEK

SEMAINE DES SOINS INFIRMIERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: It gives me great pleasure to celebrate Nursing Week and to thank the hard-working nurses out there. To all the nurses who work in our hospitals, in primary care, in our jails, in the health units, in long-term care, in home care, in mental health, in addictions, and the list goes on, I say thank you.

This year, I want to take a special opportunity to say thank you to all the members of the Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association. Many of them live and work in northern Ontario, where I'm from. Those nurses make a huge difference in the lives of aboriginal people by improving their health and well-being physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. They work tirelessly to promote awareness of the health needs of aboriginal people and to facilitate and foster increased participation of aboriginal people's involvement in decision-making in the field of health care.

The association was formally formed in 1975 by several nurses who shared a common vision from their unique perspective as aboriginal caregivers to aboriginal people. The organization was started by nurses Jean

Goodwill and Jocelyn Bruyere. From humble beginnings to what they have accomplished, I want to say a special thank you to indigenous nurses of Ontario.

Aujourd'hui, il me fait très plaisir de souligner et célébrer la Semaine des soins infirmiers. J'en profite pour remercier l'infirmière Sylvia Primeau Beasley. M^{me} Primeau Beasley travaille depuis 20 ans comme infirmière praticienne au poste de soins infirmiers de Gogama.

Sylvia s'occupe de tous les résidents. Des bébés naissants aux personnes âgées, la promotion de la santé jusqu'aux soins palliatifs, les problèmes de santé chroniques qui nécessitent des suivis réguliers aux problèmes de santé mentale ou de dépendances, aux accidents du travail, de chasse, de pêche—on parle d'un hameçon qui s'est pris dans à peu près n'importe quelle partie du corps—aux accidents plus graves nécessitant un transfert d'urgence à l'hôpital, Sylvia les a tous vus et elle les a tous aidés.

J'ai décidé de lui dire un merci spécial en ce début de la Semaine des soins infirmiers parce qu'après 20 ans comme seule infirmière praticienne en charge de la clinique de Gogama, elle a décidé d'accepter un travail à Timmins. De la part de tous ses patients et patientes, les gens de Gogama qui se joignent à moi pour te remercier, Sylvia, de tout ce que tu as fait pour eux, de tous les soins que tu leur as offert, le village de Gogama est chanceux d'avoir eu accès à tes services pendant les 20 dernières années. Merci beaucoup. Tu nous manques déjà.

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

PETITIONS

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Ted Arnott: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas employees are now entitled to two paid emergency leave days after just one week of employment and that is less than the standard three-month probation period for employees;

"Whereas employers are not able to provide a fair assessment of employees' job suitability after just one week, yet the employer would still be required to pay for two emergency leave days to a potential unsuitable employee;

"Whereas employers are now put at a greater, unfair financial risk because the three-month probation period does not apply to paid emergency leave days;

"Whereas a greater financial cost for emergency leave days is put upon employers who have part-time employees that work less days per week than those employers that have full-time employees;

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

"To change the time period for entitled paid emergency leave days to three months after an employee's

first day of employment; to recognize that employees should receive benefits based on their contribution to a business and that benefits need to be in proportion with hours and days worked; to re-evaluate mandatory paid benefit requirements to employees that work less days per week to ensure that the paid benefit is fair both to employees and employers.”

1350

I want to thank Evelyn Gould of Jester’s Fun Factory in Fergus for putting this petition together.

DISASTER RELIEF

M^{me} France G linas: I would like to thank Annie et Yvon Gervais from my riding in Gogama for the following petition.

“Whereas at 2 a.m. on March 7, 2015, a Canadian National train derailed in Gogama;

“Whereas this derailment caused numerous tank cars carrying crude oil to explode, catch fire and spill over one million litres of oil into the Makami River; and

“Whereas residents continue to plainly observe oil and find dead fish in the Makami River as well as Lake Minisinakwa, despite the fact that the Ministry of the Environment has declared the cleanup complete;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“That the Ministry of the Environment require CN to continue the cleanup of Gogama’s soil and waterways until the residents are assured of clean and safe water for themselves, the environment and the wildlife.”

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

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: It’s a pleasure, one last time, to read this petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly entitled, “Update Ontario Fluoridation Legislation.” 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;

“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.”

Speaker, I am pleased to sign and support this petition and send it down with page Curtis.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Norm Miller: I have another 188 hospital petitions from the Bracebridge area. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I support this petition and will give it to Will.

LONG-TERM CARE

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

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

“Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in LTC homes to keep pace with residents’ increasing

acuity and the growing number of residents with complex behaviours; and

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

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

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

I fully agree. I’ll sign and give it to Sophie to bring down the table.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Mike Colle: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“That community-based residential facilities for former federal offenders, halfway houses for former offenders, group homes for correctional purposes, or supervised apartments of former offenders, not be permitted to operate within a 1,000-metre radius of any school within the province of Ontario.”

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

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

“Whereas the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) empowers the provincial government to create a minimum standard;

“Whereas a study done in 2001 by the US Centres for Medicaid and Medicare Services cited 4.1 worked hours per resident day as a minimum target, which was later confirmed in a 2004 observational study and in a reanalysis by Abt Associates in 2011, and reinforced by the 2008 Independent Review of Staffing and Care Standards for Long-Term Care Homes report by Shirlee Sharkey, who recommended a four-hour minimum target;

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

“To legislate a care standard of a minimum four hours per resident each day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix.”

I agree with this and pass it off to page—

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

INJURED WORKERS

Ms. Cindy Forster: “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 support this petition, will sign it and send it with page Mia.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. James J. Bradley: “A petition to the Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas the province created the greenbelt in 2003 in order to protect our natural environment in Ontario, which now has the largest permanent greenbelt anywhere in the world; and

“Whereas every year, tens of thousands of acres of farmland, wild land and wetlands, including ravines and rivers, were being encroached by new development; and

“Whereas our greenbelt protects nearly two million acres of valuable land and water, and we expanded the greenbelt last year to protect an additional 10,000 hectares, or the equivalent of almost 20,000 new football fields; and

“Whereas we’ve also extended the greenbelt-like protections for natural heritage, water and agriculture to the entire greater Golden Horseshoe area to further ensure that sensitive lands are protected for generations to come;

“Therefore, we call upon all parties in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to formally agree to the protection and expansion of the greenbelt, prior to June 2018.”

I affix my signature as I am in full agreement, and I give the petition to Curtis.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The patient member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

1400

“Whereas 123 medical graduates went unmatched in 2018, 53 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 residency positions to medical students has declined from 110 positions per 100 students in 2012, to 101 positions per 100 students in 2018;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this, will affix my name and send it with Will.

ENERGY POLICIES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Diane Audet from Val Caron in my riding for this petition. It reads as follows:

“Petition to Fix Hydro Now.

“Whereas hydro bills in Ontario have become unaffordable for too many people, and that reducing hydro bills by up to 30% for families and businesses is an ambitious but realistic target; and

“Whereas the only way to fix the hydro system is to address the root causes of high prices including privatization, excessive profit margins, oversupply and more; and

“Whereas Ontario families should not have to pay time-of-use premiums, and those living in a rural or northern region should not have to pay higher, punitive, delivery charges; and

“Whereas returning Hydro One to public ownership would deliver over \$7 billion back to the province and the people of Ontario;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Reduce hydro bills for businesses and families by up to 30%, eliminating mandatory time-of-use, ending unfair rural delivery costs, and restoring public ownership of Hydro One.”

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

FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Mike Colle: “Whereas the Filipino community in Ontario has contributed greatly to the economic, social and cultural life of this province:

“Whereas over 300,000 Filipino Canadians call Ontario home;

“Whereas Filipino Canadians have made significant contributions to the province of Ontario through their hard work, dedication and entrepreneurship;

“We, the undersigned, support ... Bill 10 declaring June as Filipino Heritage Month in Ontario.”

I support this petition and I sign my name to it.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Percy Hatfield: “Stop School Closures.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas internal documents show the Ontario government has closed nearly 300 schools since 2011 and;

“Whereas there are currently 300 more schools currently under review for closure and;

“Whereas local schools play important roles in supporting neighborhoods and acting as community hubs, but internal documents show that value isn’t taken into consideration by the Ontario government;

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

“That there be an immediate moratorium on any further school closures until the process for calculating school utilization rates and the pupil accommodation review guidelines are both amended.”

I agree. I’m going to give it to Ekroop to bring up to the front.

CANNABIS SALES

Mr. Bob Delaney: On behalf of the member for Oakville, I’m pleased to table this petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Please stop proceeding with the implementation of brick-and-mortar retail cannabis stores in Oakville until clear regulation, policy and assessment have been provided to the public on how to mitigate risk to protect youth and public safety.”

Mr. Speaker, I’m pleased to sign and it send it down with page Mia.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Laura Albanese: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private bills.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is seeking unanimous consent to bring forward a motion with respect to private bills. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Laura Albanese: I move that the orders for second and third reading of the following private bills shall be called consecutively and the questions on the motions for second and third reading of the bills be put immediately without debate: Bills Pr79, Pr80, Pr81, Pr82, Pr83, Pr84, Pr85, Pr86, Pr87, Pr88; and

That Mr. Walker may move the motions for second and third reading of Bill Pr80 and Bill Pr81, on behalf of Mr. Harris and Ms. Martow.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Ms. Albanese has moved that the orders for second and—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Dispense? Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

KINGSTON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE ACT, 2018

Ms. Kiwala moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr79, An Act respecting the Kingston Health Sciences Centre.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

KINGSTON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE ACT, 2018

Ms. Kiwala moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr79, An Act respecting the Kingston Health Sciences Centre.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

EMMANUEL BIBLE COLLEGE ACT, 2018

Mr. Walker, on behalf of Mr. Harris, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr80, An Act respecting Emmanuel Bible College.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

EMMANUEL BIBLE COLLEGE ACT, 2018

Mr. Walker, on behalf of Mr. Harris, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr80, An Act respecting Emmanuel Bible College.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

HOME AIR SUPPORT INC. ACT, 2018

Mr. Walker, on behalf of Mrs. Martow, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr81, An Act to revive Home Air Support Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

HOME AIR SUPPORT INC. ACT, 2018

Mr. Walker, on behalf of Mrs. Martow, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr81, An Act to revive Home Air Support Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

504260 ONTARIO LTD. ACT, 2018

Mr. Rinaldi moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr82, An Act to revive 504260 Ontario Ltd.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

504260 ONTARIO LTD. ACT, 2018

Mr. Rinaldi moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr82, An Act to revive 504260 Ontario Ltd.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

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ESQUIRE VENTURES INC. ACT, 2018

Mr. Dickson moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr83, An Act to revive Esquire Ventures Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

ESQUIRE VENTURES INC. ACT, 2018

Mr. Dickson moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr83, An Act to revive Esquire Ventures Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

2297970 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2018

Ms. Wong moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr84, An Act to revive 2297970 Ontario Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

2297970 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2018

Ms. Wong moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr84, An Act to revive 2297970 Ontario Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

TENCREST REALTY LTD. ACT, 2018

Mr. Colle moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr85, An Act to revive Tencrest Realty Ltd.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

TENCREST REALTY LTD. ACT, 2018

Mr. Colle moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr85, An Act to revive Tencrest Realty Ltd.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

LUSO CANADIAN CHARITABLE
SOCIETY ACT, 2018

Mr. Delaney moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr86, An Act respecting the Luso Canadian Charitable Society.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

LUSO CANADIAN CHARITABLE
SOCIETY ACT, 2018

Mr. Delaney moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr86, An Act respecting the Luso Canadian Charitable Society.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

2258733 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2018

Ms. Wong moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr87, An Act to revive 2258733 Ontario Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

2258733 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2018

Ms. Wong moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr87, An Act to revive 2258733 Ontario Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

JAMES WILSON HOLDINGS
LIMITED ACT, 2018

Mr. Potts moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr88, An Act to revive James Wilson Holdings Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

JAMES WILSON HOLDINGS
LIMITED ACT, 2018

Mr. Potts moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr88, An Act to revive James Wilson Holdings Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACT WAGES
ACT, 2018LOI DE 2018 SUR LES SALAIRES
POUR LES MARCHÉS PUBLICS

Mr. Flynn moved third 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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to rise for third reading debate on Bill 53.

I have a guest in the members' gallery: Gareth Jones. Gareth and I used to be very good friends when we were in our twenties. We lost track of each other for a number of years. Then I find that Gareth has involved himself with the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety while I became the Minister of Labour. So we've sort of come back together again, Speaker, in the same field. I just wanted to welcome Gareth Jones to the House today and thank him for the work he does, keeping people healthy and safe on the job.

It is a real pleasure to rise today to speak to our proposed wage legislation. What we've done with Bill 53 is introduce legislation that's going to ensure that people who are working in construction, in building cleaning or in security jobs, under contracts with the government of Ontario, are going to be paid a fair wage and a prevailing wage in those sectors.

The proposed Government Contract Wages Act, 2018, would, if passed, allow Ontario to establish minimum rates of pay for workers in—as I outlined—the construction sector, the building cleaning sector, and security services work.

What that would do is, for anybody who bid and was successful on those contracts, it would require those contractors and subcontractors to pay according to the rates that were established. How we would do this is by enabling the fair wage policy through legislation.

If you look at the status quo, if you look at what we have today, you will find that, currently, Ontario has a fair wage policy which sets rates for government contracts in certain sectors of the construction industry as well as, as I said before, contracted building services and security. The policy is contained in an order in council—it's not contained in legislation—and it's aimed very, very specifically at ministries and agencies within the government.

Those of you who have followed this issue will know that this policy has not been revised or updated since 1995. Obviously, with changes in rates of pay, inflation, technology and all of the changes that have taken place since that date, you will find that these rates that we have contained are very, very outdated.

1420

Just to show you how outdated the policy has become, three out of the four agencies that are in this current order in council no longer even exist, Speaker. When this policy was established, a number of ministries were directly issuing contracts for construction and for building services. We've changed our system of procurement since that time. We have a different system in place. To streamline and make it more effective, a significant por-

tion of procurement is now managed by the organization called Infrastructure Ontario. It's an agency of the Ministry of Infrastructure. To no one's surprise, Speaker, Infrastructure Ontario is not mentioned in the current fair wage policy, simply because it didn't exist at the time.

We've changed our procurement rules and we've changed our procurement processes since that time, Speaker. You will find that a lot of it is outside the scope of the current policy we have; therefore, the need for changes.

The Premier is very supportive of this legislation. I would like to echo her comments when she announced that we would be looking at this type of legislation. What she said was:

“Every worker deserves to be paid a fair wage. And every business bidding for a government contract deserves a fair shot. We're taking action so that employers won't be able to win a competition by unfairly lowering workers' wages. It's just one of the ways we are standing up for workers in a rapidly changing economy. We know that a \$15 minimum wage, compensation ranges on job postings and equal pay for equal work is the right thing to do for everyone in Ontario. All workers deserve to be compensated and treated well.”

That was the Premier's comment on this proposed legislation. As the Premier said, workers deserve to be treated fairly.

The legislation we have before us today would build on historic actions we've already taken, intended to create more opportunity and security for workers and to help them get ahead in a rapidly changing economy. Our government has already taken action to ensure that fairness is a defining factor in all workplaces in Ontario. We've heard across the province people's concerns and problems and their hopes for a better life, and we've responded to those concerns.

We know that Ontario's economy is strong, and it's growing. We know the unemployment rate has been below the national average each month for over two years. That's why we can't forget those who have every right and reasonable expectation to join in this prosperity.

Speaker, in the province of Ontario, job creation has been averaging about 500 jobs a day. So when we all lay our heads down tonight, we'll know that 500 more Ontarians were working at the end of the day than when we all woke up this morning. That has been the pattern day after day. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, right through every day of the week: 500 more people working at the end of a workday in Ontario than when that day began.

We took action, Speaker, to make sure that people can join in that prosperity. We raised the minimum wage. We believe that Ontarians deserve a minimum wage they can actually live on. Before the Legislature passed the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, the median hourly wage in Ontario was about \$13 an hour for part-time workers. Over the past 30 years, part-time work has grown to represent nearly 20% of total employment.

Before Bill 148, 30% of Ontarians earned less than \$15 an hour. That's millions of people in this province. How can we expect people to support a family on such a low wage? How could they properly raise their children? How would they be able to save for a portion of their children's education? How would they pay those ordinary bills, Speaker? These are the questions that were asked by people, and these were our responses: We raised the minimum wage to \$14 an hour. Next January 1, it will go to \$15 an hour. We noted that many people were forced to work part-time, so we're ensuring that those part-time employees receive equal pay to those full-time employees they work with who do substantially the same jobs. It's only fair, and fairness has been an approach to reforming all of Ontario's labour laws.

We know that a lot more companies are looking at the prospect of perhaps hiring part-time employees. Sometimes that's just the way they conduct their business, Speaker. But using part-time employees should not create an unfair workplace in which some are paid less than others who do exactly the same job. Paying people the same rate of pay for substantially the same work is simply fair. That's why casual, part-time and seasonal employees who do substantially the same work as full-timers are now paid the same rate of pay.

We increased minimum vacation entitlements up to the national average. After five years with a company in Ontario, an employee is now entitled to at least—and this is the floor, Speaker—three weeks of paid vacation a year.

We have established fairer rules for scheduling, rules that give greater certainty to workers while maintaining flexibility for employees. We know now that if a shift is cancelled with less than 48 hours' notice, the employer is required to pay three hours' wages. It is just about fairness. Workers deserve a degree of certainty, especially when you need those shifts in order to make it through a month.

It is only fair that we are all able to respond to an illness or to the death of a loved one.

We have also approached our reform of labour laws with not just fairness in mind, but we've approached it with compassion to those who also experience or are threatened with domestic or sexual violence: up to 10 individual days of leave and up to 15 weeks of leave without fear of job loss for employees who have been threatened with or have actually experienced domestic or sexual violence and have been employed for at least 13 weeks with a company. The first five days of leave in each calendar year are paid; the rest are unpaid.

We modernized the rules around those people who want a fair decision to be made around organizing a union in their workplace. We extended card-based certification, for example, to vulnerable sectors: the home care and community services industry, building services and temporary help agencies.

This is all about fairness, and it is something that I would hope would enjoy the support of all the House. Ontario's original fair wage policy was developed in the

1930s. All parties in the House have their fingerprints on it. It was last updated in 1995. I think most members in the House would agree that it is time to update it again and to keep it updated.

Supporting this bill will allow that to happen. I look for the support of the entire House on this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I won't overlook the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I listened intently to the minister, who spoke very little about time allocation or Bill 53. He did speak a lot about Bill 148, but I guess it's near the end of the session and much latitude is being given not only to the subject matter, but to the length of time that people are allowed to speak in the Legislature as well, as we witnessed during members' statements today.

To the retiring members who are not seeking re-election and have chosen to move on to different stages of their careers, I certainly want to take this time to wish them the very, very best, not only on my own behalf, but I know on behalf of the entire PC caucus. I think I speak for all members of the Legislature when we wish them nothing but the best in whatever the future brings to them outside of this Legislature, and whatever challenges they face as well. I'm sure they will be doing some things that bring new challenges, because most members who leave here want to face something—they want to have an interesting career ahead of them yet, because we are not people who just want to put our feet up. We want to be involved and be part of our communities and be contributing members of those communities. I expect that that's what the retiring members will be doing, and we look forward to hearing from them and perhaps having them return as visitors in the future—not only retiring members but, I mean, for each and every one of us who is not retiring, this is democracy, and we face an uncertain future as well, Speaker. We don't know who will be coming back and who won't be coming back, and I certainly am thankful for the time that I have been here as well.

I think of my friend Gord Brown in Leeds–Grenville—I guess it is Leeds–Thousand Islands, the new riding. I'm not exactly sure of the name of it, but it's the riding that has been created as a result of redistribution. I'm sure that this was not the way that he expected his political career to come to a close. But we don't know. We don't know the hour or the day. It could happen to any one of us, and certainly my condolences go out to his wife and children and all the family and friends that will be bidding Gord goodbye later this week, and to all his colleagues in the House of Commons, who will miss him as well.

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My father's career came to an end in a not dissimilar way. He was elected in 1963. In 1987, although he wasn't seeking re-election, it was, interestingly enough and almost surreal, on the day that Premier Peterson called the election, July 31, 1987—the riding that previously existed, Renfrew South, existed no more as a result of redistribution—my father was not seeking re-election

but he died on the same day. You want to talk about a political career that ended in a timely fashion: politically timely; personally, probably not what he was thinking of or hoping for. But, again, as I said with respect to Gord Brown, we know not the hour nor the day.

I want to say that I've cherished my own time here in this Legislature and have been honoured, on four occasions, to be elected by the people of my riding, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, as many of us have. Many here have been elected more times than four. My colleague here from Timmins–James Bay—what is it? Eight, maybe?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Eight, yes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Eight; there you go. And you, Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Seven.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, the Speaker says seven, and he was the same year. Somebody has got trouble with math.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I lost one.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, did you lose an election before—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, no—I thought it was eight.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay, well, seven, eight—I know one thing for sure, Speaker: It's more than four. We don't even have to be math geniuses to figure out that 1990 came long before 2003.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm counting the next one.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, he's counting the next one. Well, good for him. I'm not even looking that far ahead because it's 28 days and so many things can happen in that period of time.

I do want to say that I was walking up to the building the other morning last week, and I just said, "I've been here now for almost 15 years, and I still have to pinch myself and remind myself of how fortunate and blessed we are to be elected to this Legislature." Currently, only 107 of us in the entire province of Ontario—some 14 million people—get to share in this honour of being chosen by their peers, by their own citizens, to represent them in this chamber. I don't think it is something that we should take lightly, and I don't think members here do. But when you look at the numerical equations, when you think of how many other occupations have hundreds of thousands of representatives in the province of Ontario, and we, as elected, are only 107 of us—I know that after June when the Parliament returns, there will be 124, but it is still a very small number and a humbling honour to have bestowed on us.

Speaker, I want to extend my thanks to my constituents in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for having sent me here on four occasions and let them know that I will be travelling the riding over the next four weeks trying to convince them that I deserve a fifth trip to the Legislature. We'll see how that goes on June 7.

But back to the—I guess not "back" because I haven't even spoken about the bill. But on Bill 53: We're here in third reading because this is part of a time allocation motion. In my 15 years here, I don't think I've ever seen

a situation where there has been zero committee and 30 minutes of debate—or response; it's not even debate. I mean, 30 minutes allocated equally between the three parties, which is 10 minutes per caucus, 10 minutes per party, in the Legislature to discuss the third reading of the bill—no committee; therefore, no amendments, not even an opportunity.

This is the kind of thing that when we go and traverse our riding and we talk about democracy and we talk about how fortunate we are to live in a country like Canada, in a province like Ontario, where this is how we do business, by our peers and our citizens at home deciding who their representative should be and, by virtue of the numerical totals, determining what party would govern in this province—and then we come here and we experience things that look like anything but democracy.

We are expected to come here to debate legislation that, obviously, the government believes is there to improve the lives of the citizens of this province, and we can have that debate. As opposition, we are compelled to talk about the faults of legislation and to bring forth what we believe is something that the government is doing wrong. We are supposed to be the eagles that are watching the government closely, to ensure that what they're bringing forward to the people of Ontario has been duly considered.

Well, how can something be duly considered if you haven't even had the opportunity to debate it? How can you say that something has been duly considered if you haven't even allowed the public, the stakeholders—those people who will be most affected by it, those people who will be responsible for carrying it out—the opportunity to offer opinion or views as to how that legislation might be changed, altered, improved, or have some parts of it swept away altogether, because they're not in the best interests of the people who will be most affected?

When you have a time allocation motion such as this, that restricts the debate to a minuscule 10 minutes, you really have to ask yourself if the government is acting in the best interests of the people or it is acting in what it considers to be the best interests of itself. Because, you see, it has got itself up against the wall here, as far as timing is concerned. They feel that they need to get this piece of legislation out there because there's a constituency out there that they want this piece of legislation passed for. They feel that it is a good piece of legislation, to go to that group and say, "Look at what we're doing; look at what we've done. We need your support to get us back in there, so we can make sure that this legislation is enacted in the way that is in your best interests."

But if you are not considering the views of others, if you're not considering the right of the opposition to bring a different view that might make that legislation stronger, then you are not acting in the best interests of democracy.

Democracy will be tested on June 7. I trust the people of Ontario.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'm glad to have at least 10 minutes to speak on this bill. I did have a few minutes, I think, at second reading. But, unfortunately, the government chose not to have any committee hearings and not to allow for any presentations by any of the interested parties.

Every time that I got up and spoke in this House most recently—because everything has been time-allocated; I think 75% of the Liberals' bills have been time-allocated—there are about 50 of us over on this side of the Legislature, who are elected by the people in our ridings to do the work of this Legislature. When we don't have the opportunity to weigh in on bills and hear presentations from our stakeholders—and we often have different stakeholders, depending on the bill—that is not democracy in the making.

I heard the Minister of Labour quote the Premier, when he had his 10 minutes, saying that “we are standing up for workers” in an ever-changing economy. “Workers deserve to be treated fairly.” Well, Andrea Horwath and New Democrats who are here with me today and, of course, all of our caucus, believe that all workers—every worker—should be treated fairly. Every worker should have access to the Employment Standards Act, to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act and to the Occupational Health and Safety Act. But that isn't the case in the province of Ontario.

As you heard today, we had the youth justice workers here from Arrell, I believe the name of the facility is, in Hamilton. These are workers who do the same job in a youth centre that was privatized by the Tories, with continued privatization by the Liberals. They do not have access to worker safety and insurance.

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Then, in the same breath, we are unveiling a monument today for correctional workers and probation and parole workers who were killed in the line of duty—19 of them, over, I think, about 140 years. These same youth justice workers have no access to worker safety and insurance. That is really shameful. Somebody needs to be doing something about that, and I think Andrea Horwath and New Democrats will do something about that after June 7.

The Minister of Labour talked about all of the things that they did during their time. But unfortunately, all of those things were done in the last year leading to an election. Imagine if some of those bills had been passed over the 15 years that they have been in power: equal pay, the minimum wage, the pay transparency bill, the fair wage bill, and Bill 148, which provided some improvements to employment standards and to the Ontario Labour Relations Board. People had to wait 15 years to get that tabled because the Liberals wanted to use all of that to try and woo their stakeholders to vote for them in this upcoming election.

Most of them were just half measures, Speaker; they were not whole measures. If the Liberals really wanted to represent fairness for workers in this province, they would have put in card-check certification for every

worker in this province, because we all know that the ticket to a middle-class economy is by joining a union and having a voice and having a collective agreement, with hours of work and pay and benefits that you can count on.

Precarity of work is on the rise. Since 2000, I think there's been a 30% increase in part-time, temporary work. Precarity can be an hourly wage. It can be that you have a high wage but you're not getting enough hours, like we hear so often in colleges and universities.

We even hear it sometimes in the hospital sector. Today, we heard from the Ontario Nurses' Association and the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. Here's a place where occupational health and safety—the health sector has the second-highest injuries in this province, yet the government has done nothing about ensuring that the 10,000 vacancies in hospitals across this province are actually filled, which would greatly reduce the number of violent incidents that front-line health care workers have to endure day in and day out. That is just in the hospital sector, let alone the lack of registered staff and front-line workers in our long-term-care facilities and in our community sector as well.

The fair wage policy—just to spend a couple of minutes on that—is only really talking about wages. For more than 15 years, there has been no update to the wage schedules. When we met with ministry staff, they told us that the last time they updated the wage schedules, it took two years to actually accomplish. So this piece of legislation is really going to do nothing immediately, unless the Liberals find some whippersnapper of a worker and get them out there reviewing those wage schedules so that they can move along with this.

If we'd had an opportunity to talk to the stakeholders—I've got a couple of reports here from the Workers' Action Centre and from the Ontario Federation of Labour, who represent more than one million workers from all regions in the province. They say that this doesn't go anywhere far enough to address the issues that need to be addressed for workers in this province, and that it's far too narrow in scope as to who it covers. I think the member from Windsor–Tecumseh talked about that briefly last week, that in fact it doesn't even include food services in provincial buildings, where government agencies are contracting food service workers and they're not included in this legislation.

The report that went to the government was in 2008, but it took 11 years for it to actually get here, and now we have a watered-down piece of legislation. The stakeholders that I heard from—and I'm sure that the government heard from those people as well—wanted it to be expanded to include the broader public sector, the MUSH sector—municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals. It would also cover organizations receiving more than \$1 million in funds.

The policy shouldn't just include wages; it should include hours of work, and being paid on a timely and consistent basis, because we've seen, in this sector, contract flipping. These workers, who they call either

dependent contractors or independent contractors—it happens in both cases—many times are not even getting paid when these contracts flip.

There should be limits on the use of temp agencies and on temporary foreign workers, as well, in these wage policies. Under Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats' amendments to Bill 148 and in our platform, we would limit the use of temporary workers to three months and to no more than 20% of the workforce.

The coverage of building services is limited. It should be expanded.

Translation services used to be covered but now, today, under the Liberal government, they are not covered. So you have many people in that sector of workers who actually do not fall under the fair wage policy.

There should also be penalties for violations. We are not seeing any of that in the legislation, unless, I guess, that will fall to regulation.

Workers should be able to make complaints through a third party, because many times workers are very fearful of complaining for fear of losing their job. They're already in precarious work—they're already temporary or perhaps casual or contract—and they're afraid to make a complaint and then find themselves without a job.

In my last minute here, I just think that the Liberal government could have done a lot more for all workers during this period of time. They could have wasted a lot less money in their 15 years on things like Presto cards; smart meters; the provincial retirement pension plan, where they wasted \$700 million; gas plant cancellations; Ornge air ambulance—to name a few. A lot of that funding actually could have been used to provide the public services that people rely on in this province.

In my last 12 seconds—it will probably be the last time that I am on my feet, as well; I've already done my swan song—to those of you who are retiring or going on to other careers, or who are staying, are re-elected or are defeated, I wish you well in your future lives.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 2, 2018, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Flynn has moved third reading of Bill 53, An Act respecting the establishment of minimum government contract wages. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have.

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

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I wish to inform the House that I have received a request, signed by the chief government whip, asking for a deferral of this vote:

“Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I'm requesting that the vote on third reading of Bill 53, the Government

Contract Wages Act, 2018, be deferred until deferred votes tomorrow, Tuesday, May 8.”

It's signed by the chief government whip.

Third reading vote deferred.

PLAN FOR CARE
AND OPPORTUNITY ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2018
LOI DE 2018 POUR UN PLAN AXÉ
SUR LE MIEUX-ÊTRE ET L'AVENIR
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Sousa moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 31, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I look to the minister to lead off the debate.

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Hon. Charles Sousa: I'm pleased to rise today for third reading of Bill 31, the Plan for Care and Opportunity Act (Budget Measures).

The 2018 budget lays out our plan to continue to grow the economy of Ontario and to continue to be world leaders in economic growth. We are world leaders thanks to the hard work of the people of this province. Thanks to them, Ontario's economy has grown more than Canada's and all of the G7 countries' since 2014. As a result of this economic growth. Our unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in almost two decades. Last year alone, 500 net new jobs were created each and every single day in Ontario. The majority are full-time and in the private sector. Our debt-to-GDP has fallen steadily, lowering a burden that would otherwise be passed on to future generations.

This economic growth was achieved while building up the programs and services that Ontario families rely on. We boosted investments in health care at near record levels, such as providing all children and youth under the age of 25 with free prescription medicine under our OHIP+ program. Since January 1 of this year, over one million children and youth have already filled about 4.2 million prescriptions at no cost.

We invested in higher education. It has been critically important, because building the economy of the future means we need to be the best-prepared and highest-trained workforce.

By revamping OSAP, we are making admittance to post-secondary education based upon your ability to learn, not just your ability to pay. This year, over 235,000 are attending universities and colleges across Ontario for free, with an additional 175,000 students receiving generous grants and loans to cover expenses, from Cambrian College in the north to the University of Windsor in the southwest, from Queen's University in the east to Sheridan College in central Ontario.

On top of that, we committed to making investments of \$230 billion over 14 years in hospitals, schools, public

transit and highways. It is the largest infrastructure investment in our province's history. Over the next 10 years of investment, it is expected to support about 140,000 net new jobs, on average, per year, driving strong economic growth.

We created a business climate where Ontario's businesses can compete and win, maintaining a competitive tax rate for businesses. Our corporate income tax rate is very competitive with neighbouring US states. In fact, we cut the small business corporate income tax rate by 22%, from 4.5% to 3.5%. We provided supports to help small businesses grow, scale up and access export opportunities.

We accomplished all of this while being disciplined in our spending. We invested in key priorities and eliminated waste and programs that no longer offered an adequate return. Ontario spends less per capita on programs than any other province in Canada. In short, we made strategic investments to create growth in our economy, which ultimately benefits the people of Ontario.

But while we're proud of this economic growth, we cannot rest on our laurels, because in this rapidly changing world, new challenges now face us. While our growth is strong relative to neighbouring economies, we estimate it will be around 2% next year and thereafter—being more cautious, than, in fact, independent economists, and to be reasonable in our growth assumptions, as has been reaffirmed by the auditor and the FAO.

To continue to make strides in improving the lives of all Ontarians, we know we must do better to overcome new challenges, which include an aging population, moving more people out of work and into retirement; the prospect of rising interest rates, in light of higher household debt; and Buy American campaigns and other protectionist measures from our largest trading partner.

Additionally, we recognize that the benefits of our province's recent prosperity have not reached enough people. We are running on all cylinders and are at full capacity, and yet there are families still in need and, in some regions, lagging behind. We cannot afford to leave others behind. We must work to ensure opportunity reaches everyone: women, students, seniors and young people looking to establish their careers and start a family. We must ensure that the benefits of a growing economy are shared by them too.

When I travelled throughout this province conducting pre-budget consultations, the people across Ontario were clear in what they wanted to see in the 2018 budget. They wanted our government to continue to manage government finances effectively, and they asked us to also help families manage the burden of their everyday costs so that they, too, can get ahead.

That is what the 2018 Ontario budget is all about, Mr. Speaker. It's about recommitting Ontario to continue to diversify our economy and grow our GDP. It is about ensuring more job opportunities, to ensure that these benefits are more widely shared across the province. It is about enabling Ontario to remain competitive, to continue to be a top destination for business investment.

It is about protecting our environment in a way that is economically sustainable as well. It's why we chose to join the Western Climate Initiative with Quebec and California in a cap-and-trade wholesale arrangement, as opposed to a more expensive carbon price alternative. Our program also builds on the new green economy, enabling us to have greater success.

Let me touch upon a few of the investments we are proposing in the 2018 budget, Mr. Speaker.

We are proposing to provide universal preschool for children aged two and a half and older until they are eligible for kindergarten. This measure would save families about \$17,000, on average, for each child. More importantly, early learning has been demonstrated to improve children's academic performance throughout their lives.

These investments not only give our kids the best start in life, but they will also provide parents with a choice: a choice to return to work earlier, further strengthening our economy.

Furthermore, research suggests that about one in four working-age Ontarians does not have extended health benefits. About 60% of seniors do not have a plan that covers dental services.

That's why, in this budget, we are proposing a new Ontario drug and dental program. This applies to those without workplace health benefits or who are not covered by other plans. This program would reimburse 80% of eligible prescription drugs and dental expenses each year, to a maximum of \$400 for every single person, \$600 for couples and \$700 for a family of four with two children.

Ontarians are proud of our health care, but demographics are changing rapidly. We have a growing population, and it is putting demands on our hospitals. That's why our government is proposing an additional \$822-million investment in 2018-19, as well as investing approximately \$19 billion over 10 years to build new and renovate more hospitals.

These investments would provide better access to care, reduce wait times, address capacity issues and better meet the needs of Ontario's growing and aging population.

One in three Ontarians over the age of 15 will struggle with mental health or substance abuse challenges. We want them to get the quality of care and supports they need as well. That's why, in this budget, we made commitments to invest more than \$17 billion in mental health and addictions services over the next four years. These investments would build a stronger mental health system by making it easier for up to 350,000 people with mild to moderate anxiety and depression to get psychotherapy; by giving every Ontario high school access to mental health support within the next two years; and by adding 525 more supportive housing units for people with complex mental health and addictions needs.

In total, our budget commits a historic investment of an additional \$2.1 billion over the next four years, creating an integrated, high-quality mental health and addictions system for people of all ages.

The population of seniors in our province is expected to grow from 2.4 million people today to 4.5 million by 2040.

Seniors have unique needs and, along with their families, many struggle with added costs related to maintaining appropriate health care and their well-being. That's why this budget proposes a number of new initiatives to help Ontario seniors live healthy, independent and active lives.

We are proposing to extend OHIP+ to make prescriptions completely free for everyone 65 and over as well. That would ensure that no senior citizen will ever need to go without those necessary drugs.

By eliminating the Ontario Drug Benefit annual deductible and copay, this would save the average Ontario senior about \$240 per year.

1500

The 2018 budget also proposes to establish the Seniors' Healthy Home Program. We recognize that many seniors want to stay in their homes as long as possible. They deserve our help. We're proposing a benefit of up to \$750 annually for eligible households led by seniors who are 75 years old or over to offset the cost of maintenance in their homes.

For those seniors requiring long-term care, we're creating 30,000 new long-term-care beds over the next 10 years, with 5,000 new beds by 2022. These new beds will help those who can no longer live independently and provide peace of mind for families who care for them. These new beds are in addition to the 30,000 existing beds being redeveloped now.

These are just some of the new initiatives we are taking in the 2018 Ontario budget, Mr. Speaker.

I've had the privilege of preparing and delivering six budgets now—well, seven, if you count the 2014 budget, which I had the privilege of delivering twice. It has been an honour. It has been a real privilege.

This 2018 budget is a budget that reflects the values that we share as people who live and work together in our province. It's a budget that builds upon our province's economic successes, a budget that provides more opportunities so that all in our province may get ahead. It's a budget for care and opportunity.

I would also like to add my appreciation for the participation of all members in this House. It has been an honour working alongside all of you. I wish to express, especially to those who have chosen not to run and to now retire, my personal thanks for their extraordinary contribution, not only to their communities but to the province of Ontario, for having taken the time to commit to this civic duty and, more importantly, to the public good. So few of us ever have the opportunity and the privilege to represent our communities and our great province, especially, so I thank you all for doing so.

The decisions and the actions that we take do have a profound impact on our society and our economy. This budget, like all the others that I've had the privilege of being part of, does have a profound impact, and it goes

far behind election cycles. The work that all of you do in this House—as do you, Mr. Speaker—has a tremendous impact for our future generations. I just want to congratulate everyone and all my colleagues for the work they do in this regard, especially my parliamentary assistant, Yvan Baker, who will also be adding his comments to this debate today. We all do our part, and you are all to be congratulated.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to the opportunity.

I have got to be quite frank. I have notes prepared on what to deliver. I've spoken on Bill 31, this budget bill: an hour the first time, an hour the second time. I've spoken quite a bit about this, but I've got to tell you, Speaker, that was quite a handful we received from the minister.

I'm going to talk for a moment about page 103 of Focus on Finance 5, the latest book that's out, because I speak about the minister on page 103.

The book, by the way, Speaker, went online today at fedeli.com. You're free to upload it or download—whatever suits you. For those who enjoy the actual hard copy, they're here as well. You will find it in the library; all five books are in the library.

But why I bring this one here up is because of what the Minister of Finance just had to say. I'm telling you, I was walking in and I'm spinning, shaking my head, thinking that he obviously has not actually read this budget, because it absolute refutes what he said a moment ago. It refutes, quite frankly, what he said on TVOntario.

The night of the budget, the opposition critics meet at TVOntario. We sit and kibitz for a minute and we watch the finance minister, who is being taped across the street. This time he had a dilly. He said, right off the hopper—and I'm quoting now—that he has “slayed the deficit.” I'm going to refer to the budget in a moment. Then he said they have “balanced the books.” Then he said, “We're projecting 140,000 new jobs every year.” Then he said, “We are the top in foreign direct investment,” the top destination, and, “Our debt-to-GDP remains the same and will be tapering down.” Speaker, I've got to tell you, that's quite a speech that was given on TVOntario by the finance minister because, quite frankly, none of it is accurate whatsoever.

I will ask you: How can the budget deficit be “slayed” when the budget reveals deficits for the next six years? The deficits that they say and the deficit that our legislative officers say are quite different, but I'll get to that shortly. Nonetheless, he himself is forecasting a deficit for years to come, but somehow he has “slayed” the deficit. So we know that that is just wrong.

Then he said that the books are balanced—except they're artificially balanced by using the reserves and by using the one-time sale of assets. Again, that statement is refuted by the Financial Accountability Officer. I'm going to deal with that in a few minutes, but I just wanted

to talk about his first two comments that are absolutely nonsense, Speaker.

Let's get into the more serious numbers that he's talking about now. He says that the actual job creation numbers will be 140,000 per year. I just heard him. He just said, minutes ago—he doubled down. He said they are going to create 140,000 new jobs, on average, per year. Speaker, we just heard him say that here, and he said that on TVOntario.

I will refer him to the Liberals' budget, page 193, when it talks about the declining jobs, not the 140,000, on average, per year that the minister just claimed. We are talking here about 121,000 budgeted in 2018, down to 77,000, down to 66,000, down to 62,000. His own document refutes what he just stood in front of this Legislature and told us. Who are we to believe—the earlier version or today's version; the version that we see in print here or the version that the minister claimed on TVOntario? Are we to believe the version that's in the book, the minister's, or the Auditor General and the FAO? I'll tell you, I will always side with the Auditor General of Ontario and the Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario.

It gets better, Speaker. It's not just the 121,000, down to 77,000, down to 62,000 in jobs that the minister spoke incorrectly about; he also said we are the top foreign direct investment destination. Well, that's not true; that's simply not true. At one time, before this government took office, we may well have been—and several years ago, we were number one. No question about that. But we've now fallen to third. We are the third foreign direct investment destination in North America; we're not the top like the minister just said. He just said that. How can anyone trust a word that this government says ever again when right here, just minutes ago, we heard the minister?

Then he doubled down on another inaccuracy, because he said our debt-to-GDP remains the same and will be tapering down. On what planet? On what planet is that true? Because it's not on planet Earth, Speaker. I can tell you, we are the highest indebted subnational on the entire planet Earth. That's where we are. We certainly do not have a debt-to-GDP that is falling. In fact, he says it's falling—or he says it remains the same and will be tapering down. But just today, earlier, he doubled down. He exaggerated it further. He said our debt-to-GDP was falling. Again, Speaker, here we are. In the budget document, you will read that it is not falling, as he just said; it is not the same, as he said on TVO; it's actually increasing. So here we are. Our debt-to-GDP was up by half a per cent, from 37.1% to 37.6%, and it's not—what were his words?—"tapering down." It's in fact going up. Every year, it's expected to rise: 38.2% and 38.6% the year after. That's if you believe the government's numbers and the book.

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So I don't know how the minister can stand here and just tell us with a straight face that it is falling. I wrote his words down as I was walking in—"falling." I thought,

"Wow, what the heck happened between the day that he printed this budget and the day the FAO said we're not falling?" We're going to hit over 40%, if you look at the Financial Accountability Officer's number. I'll get into that a moment.

Then he said, "But we are not going to rest on our laurels." Well, good gracious, I hope not. We're a disaster, Speaker. We're an absolute embarrassment on the world stage—the highest indebted subnational on the planet. Look at us. We used to be number one in a lot of things. We used to be number one in foreign direct investment. We've fallen—not what the minister said. We used to be the number one mining jurisdiction in the world. Today we're 23rd. This is unbelievable. It's no wonder why there is such concern in the mining sector.

I can tell you, Speaker, that I was worried. After reading the budget, I was thinking, "Wow, is it just us? Are we this concerned with this nonsense that we're reading in the budget?" But I will tell you that the Toronto Star agrees with us. Their editorial right after the budget was entitled, "Ontario Liberals' Ambitious Budget May Be Too Much for Voters to Swallow. ...so much at such a ... cost will strain the credulity of voters, who may well wonder why the Liberals didn't do more during their 15 years in office."

They go on to discuss the importance of the many ambitious programs. They deduced that "these aren't announcements from a government with a clear path to turning them into reality." What they're trying to say is that the nonsense that the government is saying—none of that is ever going to happen. They're not going to turn into reality. If you ever wanted to know whether that was accurate or not, just pick up the bill we're debating today. We're debating Bill 31.

The Premier talked about a lot of things that end in "care": health care, senior care and dental care. They don't care. They don't care, Speaker. The only thing they care about is getting re-elected, and the proof of that is in Bill 31, where none of that is actually brought in the bill. But what I can tell you is that in the bill are all the taxes; that they care about. They care about digging deeper into your pocket. They're going to dig \$2 billion more in taxes out of people's pockets—1.8 million people in Ontario are going to pay more in personal income taxes. Tens of thousands of businesses are going to pay more in business taxes. In fact, there are 20,000 who will be paying \$2,400 a year more in the employee health tax. To add it all up, we're at \$2 billion over the next three years in brand new taxes. They cared enough to put those in the budget. That's what they cared about, Speaker.

They also cared about their assault on small business. We've talked about this many times in the Legislature. There is absolute assault by the Liberal government on small business. The latest is interestingly enough called the Revenue Integrity Act. We're going to be voting on that tomorrow. I'll be looking at the Liberals as they vote to impugn small business even more.

"Every person carrying on a prescribed business in Ontario shall"—and by "prescribed business," they told us that they're talking about matching the federal guide-

lines, so businesses with \$30,000 in revenue or more that pay HST. The new subsection 2(1) would require these businesses to record all “sales transaction information in an electrical cash register that meets prescribed requirements” and to transmit the sales information “to the minister within the prescribed time and manner and ... form.” So what they’re saying is, “If you’re a hairdresser running a small business at home, we don’t trust you to be sending us your tax cheques. We want you to spend \$3,000”—that’s the number we got from the Ontario Convenience Stores Association. “We want you to buy a \$3,000 cash register that has software built in so that we can monitor your business. We want to know your traffic. We want to know your sales. We want to know your taxes.” That is what they’re doing.

We’re going to be voting on this tomorrow. In fact, they double down and they tell you, under inspections and examinations, that if you have a small business in your home and if the Liberals suspect that you’re not using a cash register, expect them to go and get a warrant to enter your home. That’s what they say here. They say, “Entry with a warrant ... except under the authority of a warrant issued under subsection (2).” They will go get a warrant when they think Debbie the hairdresser, my hairdresser, is not using an electronic cash register that’s linked to the minister and reporting her taxes in the prescribed time, manner and form. I told Debbie about that when she cut my hair on Friday and I thought she was going to pass out. It’s unbelievable what they’re going to be doing to small business.

If you don’t do this, Speaker, they have the right to fine you \$10,000. That’s what they put here in schedule 30, the Revenue Integrity Act. That’s what they’re about to do to small business. That’s part of them impugning small business, saying, “We don’t trust you. We don’t trust any of you. We don’t believe you. We’re going to monitor your business for you and we’re going to take our fair share.” That’s what this act is about.

As I look here, I see so many of them who have never been in small business before. They don’t understand. I can almost forgive them for not understanding because they’ve never had to write a paycheque. They’ve never had a banker phone them at 7:30 on a Friday morning and say, “Vic, how are you going to make your payroll today?” I’ve had that. I’ve been an entrepreneur all my life. I know exactly what that phone call is all about and I know exactly what this is going to do to small business—and so do they, quite frankly; so do they. You have to appreciate that they’re going to continue to put their hands in the pockets of families and small business. We saw that in this bill.

I’ll carry on with the Toronto Star, because I know how much they enjoyed reading these passages. The Toronto Star editorial concludes with, “With election day in Ontario just over two months away, voters are bound to see them for what they are—\$20.3 billion worth of promises from a government and party”—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I’m going to ask the government members to please come to order. I need to hear the member for Nipissing.

The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you. I’ll repeat that: They conclude with, “With election day in Ontario just over two months away, voters are bound to see them for what they are—\$20.3 billion worth of promises from a government and party fighting desperately against the odds for re-election.” Speaker, I’m pleased to know I’m not alone in my thinking and that our party is not alone in our thinking.

But we heard more from RBC Economics Research. They prepared a sobering budget report entitled *Deficits by Choice*. It’s interesting, because this ties in a lot to what the Auditor General and primarily what the Financial Accountability Office just told us. This is by choice. This government has told us that they are going to run a \$6.7-billion deficit by choice. Well, that is absolutely wrong. That is absolutely not true in two aspects. Number one, the Financial Accountability Officer said, “No, that’s not true. It’s not a \$6.7-billion deficit this year. First of all, it’s \$12 billion, but of the \$6.7 billion the Liberals are talking about, \$3 billion is already a deficit.”

This was carried over. They never did balance. They had a \$3-billion deficit. The other \$3.7 billion is on these shallow and hollow promises the Liberals have made. It was interesting to know that this cumulative deficit of \$20.3 billion is going to take three years, but it’s eerily close to the \$19.8 billion that is the actual deficit. This is all nonsense. They’re making all of this up.

What the RBC said: “What is worrying about this plan is ... most of the measures ... are recurring entitlements.” That means we’re going to be paying for these for the rest of time. “It makes the ... choice fraught with risk.” That’s according to the Royal Bank. So while the government offers a return to balance in seven years, they also say, “There are no details on how they will achieve it. This is concerning since so much spending kicks in late in the fiscal plan.”

That’s what the Financial Accountability Officer told us. They’ve made all of that up. There is a deficit today, right now. They made all of that up.

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They also said, “If Ontario is running large deficits when the economy is performing at capacity, what happens if a recession comes along? A pre-existing deficit and an elevated debt burden will limit the government’s ability to respond and virtually guarantee a rapidly deteriorating fiscal situation.” That’s from the Royal Bank.

Let’s hear something from somebody just a little closer to home. We are going to hear from our Auditor General, because she had some blistering comments to make about this government and the stories that they have told the people of Ontario year after year. Right after her introduction and the niceties—hello; who I am; what I’m doing here—her first sentence: “After a thorough analysis, we have determined that the pre-election report” from the Liberals “is not a reasonable

presentation of Ontario's finances." Boy, you don't get clearer than that, Speaker. She said, "We say this because"—this is our Auditor; this is the Auditor General of Ontario saying this—"it dramatically understates the expense estimates for two major items."

She's telling us that the budget is 75% off this year, 85% off next year, and 100% off the year after. My heavens, when you have Minister Sousa saying, "We're not going to rest on our laurels"—we don't want you to rest on those laurels. Being off by 75% is not something you should be proud of; being off by 85% the following year is not something you should be bragging about; and certainly being 100% wrong in year 3 is nothing I want to hear them crowing about, Speaker, I can tell you that right now.

She also said several words that I want to—actually, I'm not sure that I can read those in the Legislature. I just realized that now. Not one of them is parliamentary. I don't think that I would actually get away with reading them. I urge people to download the Auditor General's report and read these words, and I urge people to download the Financial Accountability Officer's report and read the words. They, unfortunately, cannot be repeated in this Legislature. They are that unparliamentary and that damning to the government. I did read them on the day that the auditor gave us these comments, and I was ruled unparliamentary. So I won't be taxing the Speaker today.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It was a different Speaker.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It was a different Speaker, but nonetheless, they were the same words.

Speaker, here we have got the Auditor General telling us that the government has given us two sets of numbers that are wrong: one was all about pension numbers, where they added too much, and one was about the so-called fair hydro plan, where they didn't add enough. Both stretched the credulity of the numbers. She said that it appears that there's money when there isn't—that's our auditor. She is offering that she may give an adverse opinion. That means: "I will not sign the government's book." She's given us what's called in accounting a qualified opinion for two different years in a row. It's the first time in the history of our province that we got a qualified opinion. What that means is, "I don't really trust the books. You can get away with it, but I don't really trust them. I'm going to show you what I think is wrong." She has done that. This time, she said, "If you put that nonsense in your books again, one more time, I am giving an adverse opinion." That's exactly what the auditor has told us.

She said that there is cash going out the door and the expense is not recognized. She said that's because the Liberals came up with something called "legislated accounting." That's a very polite way of saying that they made up the accounting rules. Those were her words as well: They made up the rules; they changed the accounting rules just for Liberals. Those are the Auditor General's words. She called it "legislated accounting." They legislated rules of accounting. There is no such thing in

real accounting. That's fake. It's "legislated accounting"—those are the words from the Auditor General.

She also called it a scheme—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Sorry to interrupt. I would ask the government members to please come to order.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker.

The Auditor General called this a scheme. When you hear an auditor referring to your finances as a scheme, that's when you really need to worry.

In fact, the auditor actually said—I wrote this down during her press conference—that if there are defensive tactics, which is what we're hearing from the member from Guelph and others, there should be worry. That's what the Auditor General said about the Liberals trying to defend the indefensible and impugning the Auditor General's reputation, which they all continue to do. They impugn the Auditor General's reputation. They feel that that's the best way. When you don't have anything intelligent to say, you bark and you yell and you scream. That's all they're doing. The auditor said that when you hear that, worry. You're hearing that here. The people of Ontario should be darn worried.

She said that the government, in the hydro scheme, as she called it, is paying the power producers—they're paying them now, full rate—with borrowed money, making the payments but not recording the cheques. This is the auditor telling us that you've "made a payment and didn't record the cheques." Those are her exact words. She said, "How can they do this? They legislated that those expense payments, those cheques they wrote, are an asset." That's her quote. They legislated that those expense payments are an asset. So instead of going to the "paid bill" column, it goes to the "money in the bank" column. That's how she explained that to us: Instead of being a paid bill, it's money in the bank. "How can a bill that you've paid be cash?" That's what she said. When does a debt become an asset? When you do what the Liberals did: You legislate that your bills that you owe become an asset.

She also said that you should worry about this so much that—if they're allowed to get away with this tomorrow when they pass this nonsense, we may never see a deficit in Ontario again. Oh, there will be deficits. We'll owe \$370 billion when the next term is up. There will be deficits and there will be debts—\$370 billion in debt and \$20 billion more in deficit. We'll see that, but it will never show in the books, because they have a legislated asset, something that they absolutely made up, period. How can that be? How can the people of Ontario sit idly by and let them get away with something?

I'll tell you, Speaker, this is Enron 2.0. If you were in the private sector and tried to pull a stunt like that, you'd be carted out of here in a very different way. You'd be hearing more than jail bars slamming on deleted emails. You'd be hearing a lot more.

The auditor said—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I ask the House to come to order.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Vic, do you want to correct it?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Davenport will please come to order.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: For heaven's sake.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Guelph will come to order.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I choose my words wisely.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm warning the member for Davenport.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Point of order, Speaker: I think the standing orders prohibit members from imputing motive, and I believe the member opposite is doing just that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member has the floor.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I was speaking about deleted emails—that they deleted emails. They, the Liberals, top Liberal operatives, deleted emails. That's who's carted away with the sound of jail doors slamming. Let's just be very, very clear.

Again, let's go back to what the auditor said. She said, in talking about this legislated accounting, "How can that be?" When you've got an Auditor General asking how you can do that, this is very serious.

They try to say, "Oh, it's an accounting issue." It's not an accounting issue; it's right or wrong. It's black or it's white. There's no middle ground here with accounting, plain and simple. Numbers are numbers. Assets are used to pay off liabilities. You can't use a liability to pay off a liability.

She was very, very serious. She ended by saying, "How can a paid bill be an asset?" That's what the Auditor General—she said it's hypothetical revenue; it's not real money. She said, "There's no cash behind it."

So it gives you that illusion that there is more money than there really is. She says that it creates the impression there is more money. This should be very concerning to the people of Ontario.

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Then we heard from the Financial Accountability Officer, and he backed up the Auditor General. He went out and said the same thing: that the deficit is not \$6.7 billion; it's \$11.8 billion. He and the Auditor General— independent officers— independently came to the same conclusion. If you look at all their math and their paperwork along the way, they both used different structures, different formulas and different avenues of accounting, but they got to the same number independently, and within the same week. That should set alarm bells ringing.

When you've got the legislated accounting that the Auditor General told us should not be accepted—she said that the Liberals created their own rules; these are all quotes I wrote down—we've got an issue of trust. It's all about trust, and there is none here today.

You've got the Financial Accountability Officer telling us that he doesn't trust the numbers. You've got the Auditor General telling us that she doesn't trust the numbers. What we in our party and our leader, Doug Ford, will be doing is calling in an independent investigative commission. This is the only way we're going to get to the bottom. Not only do we want to know who got rich off all of this, but we also want to know how to resolve this and how to fix this. The PC Party will be taking a responsive approach to this, trying to find out why the deficit was 75% higher. I can tell you in a sentence: It's because you can't trust a word, not one word, that the Liberals across the aisle say, have ever said or are saying to us—

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: That's enough. Come on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I think I have to ask the member to withdraw again.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Let's just go back to how all this started, in the minute and a half I have remaining. We have the finance minister telling us that he "slandered" the deficit, when the Financial Accountability Officer and the Auditor General said, "No." We have the finance minister saying that we've balanced the books, when the Financial Accountability Officer and the auditor are saying, "No, you didn't."

We've got the finance minister saying that there are 140,000 new jobs every year—today he said, "On average, per year," when their own document, on page 193, said that that's absolutely not correct; it's as low as 62,000 in just 2020.

Then we've got the finance minister saying that we're the top in foreign direct investment; again, that's not accurate. At one time, we were; we've fallen to third, and they won't acknowledge it.

Then they say that our debt-to-GDP remains the same and will be tapering down. That's just absolutely incorrect. Today he said it was falling; that is absolutely not true. The debt to GDP went up in the budget, had he read his document, and it's also going up every year. It is not tapering down.

I don't know how we're ever expected to trust one word that this government says. They have told us five stories here today that their own book and the independent officers say are not correct whatsoever. Speaker, I say to you, that's very disappointing. It's very concerning for the people of Ontario to have such senior people be telling us one thing when the complete opposite is actually true.

I present those, Speaker, and I look forward to having our team continue the debate.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a pleasure to be able to rise and talk about this 2018 budget bill. There are a number of things I want to touch on in my time, but one that really caught my attention was schedule 3, which amends the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act. It allows \$366 million to be charged to the greenhouse gas reduction account for reimbursement of expenditures made between November 1, 2015, and March 31, 2017.

I have to say that I find this a very concerning item. I don't know what's going to be allocated here. I don't know whether, in fact, these funds are going to be used to fight climate change or not. My understanding, when cap-and-trade came in, was that the money that we were raising was to allow us to go forward—not to reimburse old programs; not to deal with projects that had been set up, expensed, committed to, but to actually try and get us to move forward so that we would meet our climate change targets.

I think that people, rightly, can be very skeptical about this item. There is no itemized list anywhere. We don't know exactly what these funds are going to be used for. If they're not being used to meet our climate targets, then there are profound questions. Even as is, this government's climate plans don't show us meeting the targets for reducing emissions from Ontario—a very substantial matter. Given everything that has been said about this government regarding the importance of taking on climate change, taking out almost \$400 million for an unspecified list has got to be of great concern.

Speaker, I don't think a lot of people should put great store in this budget. Others have spoken to it, and others will speak to it after me. I was around in the minority government situation, when the Liberals committed to reducing auto insurance rates by 15%. We never got anywhere close to that, Speaker; not even close. Recently, I think it was the trial lawyers association talking about the huge amount of money that flowed into the hands of the auto insurance companies—money that could have been used to reduce rates.

Speaker, I was here—I think it was the 2015 budget—when this government dramatically reduced the amount of money that was payable to those who had been in catastrophic accidents. We had a fellow come into the committee room in a wheelchair. He was close to being quadriplegic. He had some control in his hands, but not much. He was talking about how, under the rules that were amended by the Liberals—I think it was the 2016 budget—he would not be living the life he lived now, with all the support he had. His life would be far more difficult than it was. Frankly, when you have lost most of the control of your body, that is a pretty rough life. But to condemn people to a situation where, most of their waking hours, they are bedridden doesn't strike me as responsible.

I think that people should be extraordinarily cautious about this Liberal budget. Their record on not delivering

on promises with regard to auto insurance, and then cutting back catastrophic coverage, speaks ill of what is going to happen here.

Many have noticed that as the polls have become poorer and poorer for the Liberals, they swing more and more to the left. In fact, the Minister of Finance was talking earlier about the wonderful things that he is doing. He talked about the pharmacare plan; as some have said, it's not quite worth the napkin it was written on. He saw what we brought forward, making sure that there was universal pharmacare, that everyone was covered. I was very glad that there was coverage for people under 25; it's a good thing. There just needs to be coverage for everyone.

I was going door to door last year, Speaker, talking to people about pharmacare and the need for universal pharmacare. I talked to people who use insulin, who have diabetes. They were telling me that it was costing them about \$800 a month for all their supplies and medications. The amount that the minister was talking about—what was it, \$700 a year, somewhere in there?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Yes.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: That's just about one month's worth—not quite, but just about one month's worth of supplies. That's not a pharmacare plan. It is a foundation for a line in a leaflet, and nothing more than that.

The minister talked about their dental care plan—also a napkin not in really great shape, scribbled on with a “how do we deal with this particular political problem” kind of ethos. The amount that was allowed for children was \$50 per year. It's not even a cleaning, Speaker. It's wild stuff.

It was interesting to me—I think it was the member from Nipissing talking about his hairdresser, his barber. Well, my barber, Tony, and I were talking about the budget. Tony is a great guy. He doesn't have as much to work with as he used to, but he does what he can.

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I was talking to him after the Liberal budget came out. I had seen these polling numbers, with some people liking it but a lot of people having even greater negative feeling toward the Liberals, based on that budget. I hadn't talked to many people. I was asking Tony, while he was clipping away, “So, what do you think of this budget?” He said, “Man, everything but a pony for every child.”

It raised the cynicism to new levels: the air of, the appearance of, the reality of desperation on the part of a government trying to promise whatever it could, to save itself. We have a government at the end of its term—likely at the end of its period in this Legislature—on that side of the chamber, trying to do whatever it can to grab straws as it slips over the cliff.

We saw similar things with rent control. In April 2017, roughly, I brought in a bill to change that old rule that said that buildings built after 1991 would be exempt from rent control. We saw huge coverage in the papers about people who were being driven out of their units, out of their homes, with giant rent increases. So I brought

in a bill. I don't think it was five or six days later that the Minister of Housing brought forward a bill replicating everything I'd brought forward. I then understood that a lot of really useful polling had taken place. Someone had determined that this was a huge vulnerability for the government, and they were acting.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Did they give you credit?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: No. Thank you, member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I tabled that bill about six years ago.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes, my colleague from Welland had tabled a similar bill, a bill the Liberals could have acted on six years ago. But their poll numbers were better then, so they didn't act on it.

As I say every few years, Speaker, thank God for elections, because if there weren't elections, with the Liberals, we would never get anything. But, coming up to elections, they suddenly realize that there is a box they can open and they can bring out treats. So, there is some extraordinary cynicism that gets generated by this kind of politics.

The fair hydro plan: I have to say that the member from Nipissing had a really good point, talking about Enron-style accounting. I found it extraordinary that this government would take on a liability of \$40 billion in order to get through an election and say they have lower hydro prices.

You remember the state of this chamber, Speaker, the state of the newspapers, when the Liberals blew a billion bucks to save four seats with the gas plants. Clearly, that was just a test balloon, to see how much they could blow to save seats.

When you're talking \$40 billion, you're talking serious change. You're talking a real, real hit to the provincial treasury, and a burden that people will be carrying for decades to come. It's extraordinary to me that not only did they do that, but that they put the funds in an account set up as a fiction that they could call an "asset."

For those of you who have time late at night, when you're trying to get to sleep and you just don't know what to do, there is a really good documentary on YouTube called *The Smartest Guys in the Room*. It's all about Enron and their adventures in accounting. I think that those who support the "fair hydro plan" would be well served to watch that documentary. I have to say to you, Speaker, that Enron grew, drew in investor dollars and was able to become extraordinarily wealthy, before they crashed and burned, by setting up exactly these kinds of special-purpose asset accounts that were not assets. We don't have an asset here. We have a big hole in the books, and we are going to be asked to fill it.

On top of all that, going into debt to make the bills look good for few years is bad enough, but because they've set up this special account, we're having to pay higher interest rates than we otherwise would have been, just borrowing the money straight out—\$4 billion wasted, just to make the books look good for the Liberals

in advance of an election. It is no wonder that they're in trouble. It is no wonder that people are cynical about them. They should be, because when you behave like that, when you throw away tens of billions of dollars and damage the province's finances, people should be cynical about you. They should be cynical about you.

One of the things that's been interesting to me is that the Liberals and Tories tell the truth about each other on a regular basis. The Tories have been saying they will cut \$6 billion over the next few years to make all their plans work, and the Liberals rightly say, "Those aren't efficiencies; that's just cost-cutting. That's brutal stuff," and they're right. Strangely enough, they're right.

What should be said on the other side—and this came out with the Financial Accountability Officer—is that billions of dollars in austerity are buried in the projections the Liberals have in their budget, only they don't call it austerity or cuts; it's "efficiencies" as well. They're both saying that one or the other would be the worst government ever, and they're both right. It's a tough fight, but they're both right. I can't help but note that.

The Liberals are having real trouble with their finances, and part of it is that they have run out of stuff to sell—I mean, not entirely run out. They sold Hydro One; that was a chunk of cash. It helped make the books look better. For those who may have followed my question this morning, which the Minister of Economic Development avoided studiously, there was this idea that the government of Ontario's GO regional express rail is going to be turned over for 30 years to a private company. It's staggering—staggering.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Kind of like the 407.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Sort of like the 407, the member from Welland—sort of like that. In fact, it's the twin project.

There's no getting around it, Speaker. When your basis for running the province's finances is selling stuff off and privatizing, you have run out of everything. You are coming to the end.

One of the things that Patrick Brown had in his *People's Guarantee* was this uptake or this takeover of the subway in Toronto by the provincial government. I knew what that was. It was a set-up for a sell-off at a later date. But then it shows up in the Liberal budget, with—what's that really neutral line, "an examination of ownership alternatives"? We went through this on Hydro One prior to the 2014 election. I heard all kinds of euphemisms.

Ms. Cindy Forster: "Expanding the ownership."

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes, "expanding ownership" is one of the favourites. Expanding ownership—an extraordinary line.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Broadening.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: "Broadening ownership." Ah, the member from Windsor–Tecumseh nails it on the head. Great euphemisms. "The place is on fire," or, "The place is bright and shiny": Take your pick.

This budget represents the last and not-very-glamorous gasp of a government that has sold whatever it could sell, mortgaged whatever it could mortgage, to look good. We are all going to be stuck with the cost of that for decades to come.

Speaker, others want the opportunity to speak to this budget, and I won't hold them back. But I do want to say that voting for this government's budget, with its Enron-like features, its set-up for future sell-off, its set-up for future austerity, can only be a mistake.

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

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'm very proud to get up and debate Bill 31, the Plan for Care and Opportunity Act, the provincial budget. Over the past four years, since being elected to the Legislature, I have had the opportunity to work first as parliamentary assistant to Minister Matthews at the Treasury Board, and then to Mr. Sousa in finance. I have to say I've been proud to work with both of them and with many other colleagues to make sure that we are planning for the future in Ontario, that we are facilitating opportunity for people, that we are providing supports for people, that we are delivering services that people rely on and care about that make a difference every day in people's lives.

1550

I've been proud to be able to bring my background to this work, as someone who comes from the world of business and finance, to help make sure that we're making those expenditures wisely, that we're getting the best bang for the buck, the best value for money for people, and that we're also planning for our fiscal future.

I just wanted to take this opportunity, as it will be probably the last before this term is over, for me to say what a privilege it has been to work with both of them, with Minister Sousa most recently, and with all my colleagues on this side, not just on this budget but on legislation that we have passed in this Legislature that has really made a difference for the people of Ontario and for the people in my community, in Etobicoke Centre.

Speaker, I have some prepared remarks that I've pulled together and I look forward to sharing those with you, but I can't help but take this opportunity to respond to what I just heard from the members opposite, especially the leader of the official opposition. What I heard from him was incredibly disappointing because I don't think it was an accurate portrayal of what is in this budget. I don't think he accurately portrayed the comments made by others. I think it's important, for the record and for the people watching at home, that I clarify some of those points and refute some of those points.

At one point he said to the members opposite here that they've never been in small business: "The folks over there have never been in small business." He actually said that that's why people on this side were reaching into the pockets of taxpayers. Aside from that characterization of my colleagues and myself, which I resent, it's actually highly inaccurate to say that members on this

side have never been in small business. There have been a number of folks on this side who have been in small business.

Interjection: I grew up in one.

Mr. Yvan Baker: The minister grew up in one. So, first of all, folks on this side of the aisle are very knowledgeable about what it's like to be in small business, to take the risk that's involved in building a small business and operating one, and to make some of the tough decisions that it takes to operate a business successfully.

I will speak for myself personally in that I've spent my entire career in business. I have two business degrees. I taught at the business school at York University. I had my own consulting practice. I worked for a management consulting firm called the Boston Consulting Group. I know a lot about finance and I know a lot about these issues, so I resent the member opposite suggesting that the members on this side are not competent or qualified to be making the decisions that we are. Quite the contrary.

The thing that I would say as well is—there were a number of points that he made. First of all, he tried to suggest on a number of occasions that the Minister of Finance wasn't telling the truth. He said that the Minister of Finance talked about how we are number one in foreign direct investment. We are number one in Canada in foreign direct investment. Even if you compare us, we are number three in North America in foreign direct investment. The only jurisdictions that receive more foreign direct investment than the province of Ontario are the states of New York and California, both of which have much larger populations than Ontario. On a per capita basis or on a per population basis, we're performing better than California and better than New York.

We're definitely number one in Canada, and we should take pride in that. We should take pride in being number three in North America, given our population base. That speaks to the fact that this is a province that is one that investors want to do business in; that we're a jurisdiction where we have a competitive advantage over others. I think that says a lot about the people of Ontario and the opportunities ahead for people in Ontario and businesses in Ontario.

He talked about how—and this is not just the Leader of the Opposition; this is members of the opposition. In committee the other day, I heard a member talking about—and these are the member opposite's words—how Ontarians are now paying \$2 billion more in taxes. Those were his words just now. He's trying to suggest that this is because we have raised taxes. The reality is that as the economy grows, tax revenue increases. That's the case under this government, it was the case under the NDP government and it was the case under the Conservative government.

In fact, what's interesting, Speaker, is two points: One is that this is not happening because we raised taxes; this is happening because of economic growth. But more importantly, if he wants to talk about the people of Ontario paying more taxes year over year, the Harris

Tories presided over Ontario for eight years and during that time they had record economic growth. We had global record economic growth and the Tories were in power at that time. Taxes would have risen under them more than under any other government in Ontario's history. So, to me, it is hypocritical for them to stand and suggest that we've raised taxes—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw the unparliamentary comment.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I withdraw.

So if I think about that line of argumentation, Speaker, I think it is incredibly weak and it shows a refusal to face the facts of what they did when they were in office. But it's also not a fair and accurate characterization of what is actually happening, so I resent that.

Then he talked about debt-to-GDP and he tried to suggest that the Minister of Finance wasn't telling the truth again. If you look at the budget projections and you look at the amount of debt-to-GDP, the projections are that debt-to-GDP will continue to come down in the out years of the budget. So he should just face that fact and not suggest that the Minister of Finance is not telling the truth, first of all, because he has been telling the truth, but secondly, by doing that, he is making the people of Ontario believe something that isn't true either. He himself isn't telling the truth, and I think that's wrong and needs to be corrected.

Then the Leader of the Opposition went on to talk about the Auditor General, and he talked about accounting. Speaker, I would suggest to him that perhaps he thought he was talking, as he said earlier, to a group of people who don't know very much about business and so they're not able to see through the weakness of his arguments. But his arguments were incredibly weak. He used language that was completely unparliamentary, Speaker, around jail bars and other unparliamentary language, and I think he should be ashamed of that. But he talked about it in the context of the accounting that was used.

The people who prepare the books for the province of Ontario are professional accountants. These are people who spend their entire lives in accounting. This is not me sitting there and my colleague sitting there trying to figure out how to populate the budget with numbers. These are professional accountants who report on the books of the province of Ontario, just like they would at any other business. So when he is impugning the credibility of the accounting practices of this government, he is impugning the credibility of every single civil servant in the Ministry of Finance and in the Treasury Board and anybody else who worked on this budget. I think he should be ashamed, because those people are upstanding folks who do the best they can to report on the finances of the province of Ontario.

In addition to that, he talked about how we've reported two issues that the Auditor General alluded to. One was the numbers on the pension—how we account for pension contributions. For years, this government has

been declaring those contributions as an asset and amortizing them, as is common in accounting, year after year, as those benefits out of those pension funds are paid out. In fact, this Auditor General signed off on that approach to the accounting year after year after year after year.

Last year, the Auditor General had a change of heart, and suddenly now the accounting practices that had been put in place are no longer, in the Auditor General's view, the appropriate ones. But I can tell you, Speaker, that what we did was, the President of the Treasury Board at the time brought in an independent panel of the leading experts in the country on public sector accounting. It was an independent panel, and the President of the Treasury Board agreed to accept the ruling, the advice, of that independent panel. What did that independent panel say? That independent panel of leading public sector accountants and auditors said the government of Ontario had it right; the public servants who prepared the books had it right; the President of the Treasury Board and the Minister of Finance had it right. So we accepted that.

What's interesting is that the member opposite talks about Doug Ford, and he talks about how Doug Ford is going to bring in an independent panel to review the province's finances, to review the accounting, and yet he won't accept the advice of the independent panel that we brought in last year to look at how we account for the pension assets. How convenient. When you don't agree with the independent panel, you impugn its credibility and the government's credibility and the civil servants' credibility. But when you need a different outcome, then you find a different independent panel to serve your interests. I think that says a lot about the Leader of the Opposition's approach and, frankly, Doug Ford's approach to how he would manage if he were Premier of this province.

1600

One of the issues on the accounting side, with reference to the Auditor General, that the member opposite spoke to was the accounting around hydro. I would like to read to you a passage from a Globe and Mail article—from today's Globe and Mail, I believe—written by Jatin Nathwani. He's a professor and Ontario research chair in public policy for sustainable energy at the University of Waterloo. I'm reading to you an excerpt. The author writes:

“If we stick to a principled approach to the recovery of the costs from the users of electricity, then the criticism by the Auditor General's office of a \$3-billion to \$4-billion cost differential on the regulated asset base is not germane. For example, Enbridge is a private sector regulated utility that provides gas delivery to Ontario homes and industry. As part of its business operations, Enbridge incurs maintenance and investment costs and borrows on the capital markets as necessary. These costs are recovered through delivery charges on gas consumers but approved by the Ontario Energy Board.

“In a similar vein, when the regulated electricity sector agencies (Hydro One, OPG and IESO) borrow money on

the capital markets—albeit at a higher financing cost in relation to government borrowing—to build and maintain regulated assets, where is the principled argument for assigning that cost to the broader tax base? That is precisely what the Auditor General seems to propose.

“Ms. Lysyk’s conclusions are not convincing and fail to provide a compelling public-interest rationale for loading up the electricity system borrowing costs onto the province’s debt obligations.” And then the author goes on.

What the writer is basically saying is, the way in which the finances are handled for hydro in this province, and have been, is that costs incurred to generate, transmit and deliver hydro to people’s homes are recovered on the rate base. In other words, rates are approved to cover those costs by the Ontario Energy Board and then consumers reimburse those costs on their hydro bills. That is how the accounting has been handled for a long time.

What has happened with the debt related to hydro is that the way we’ve treated the fair hydro plan debt is the same way we’ve treated the debt—this is what the author is writing—for Enbridge and for other parts of the hydro system. That debt, just like the expenses, is incurred by those entities that generate or deliver that electricity or service, and then that is recovered on the rate base. It’s not put on the tax base.

So, to me, it doesn’t make sense to have the debt incurred to provide relief to folks on their hydro bills suddenly now on the government’s general books. That hasn’t been done in the case of Enbridge; it hasn’t been done in the case of Hydro One; it hasn’t been done in the case of OPG. Why would you do it now? I disagree with the suggestion that the auditor makes: that we should put this on the government books. That’s not the way to account for this, because it’s inconsistent with how this government and previous governments have accounted for expenses and debt within these utilities.

All this said, Speaker, what I’ve tried to do here is demonstrate that the Leader of the Opposition tried to impugn the credibility of the members of this government. He made a number of statements that were just not accurate about foreign direct investment, about raising taxes, about our debt-to-GDP, about the Auditor General, about public servants, about civil servants—impugned their credibility. I just think it’s important to get that on the record.

What I wanted to do with the remaining time is just share with you some of the thoughts that I had prepared for this particular debate. What I wanted to say is that when Minister Sousa first presented the 2018 budget, he outlined the government’s priorities—priorities that reflect the fundamental values and aspirations of the people of Ontario, building on past achievements and forging a future that boosts care and expands opportunity for all. These two concepts—care and opportunity—are closely linked, Mr. Speaker. This connection is particularly important during this time of economic uncertainty.

Many of us in this House have faced situations where our concern for the well-being of a loved one or the

burdens of caring for a family member who is very young or very frail have impacted our jobs, our studies and our plans for the future. This is the situation that many people in Ontario face today. They feel they must sacrifice opportunity to be able to care for those closest to them. This undermines the potential of each person, and it undermines the potential of our province. Even as Ontarians want to fulfill their own hopes and dreams, they also want to care for their loved ones. The people of Ontario are caring and they are big-hearted people. Whether it’s in our dealings with our loved ones, with our neighbours, with our co-workers or our community, when times get tough, Ontarians come together to create solutions. We saw this, for example, when the blackout hit North America. We saw it when our neighbours, our jobs and our province were hit by the great recession. We saw it with the outpouring of support and compassion for the victims and families impacted by the recent tragedy in Toronto.

Speaker, in the government of Ontario, we value equally the principles of care and opportunity and we want to help everyone reach their full potential and, at the same time, help them care for their loved ones. That spirit and those values of care and opportunity are at the heart of this budget.

Today, what I want to do is just spend the rest of my time talking about how the objectives of this budget and this bill support those values of care and opportunity for all the people of Ontario at every stage of their lives. Whether it’s improving child care so children can have a good start in life or supporting economic growth so that job seekers have good employment opportunities or providing quality health care so seniors receive the treatment they need to live healthy and comfortable lives, at each and every stage in our lives quality care is a necessity to reaching our full potential.

I believe that this budget and this bill reflect those values and our collective aspirations to create more caring communities, a more caring society and more opportunities for us all. Because opportunity, at the end of the day, underlies our quality of life and underlies our ability to provide the services that we are proposing in this budget.

Let me speak a little bit about child care, Speaker. We all know that getting the best start in life is key to future success. Countless studies show that early learning improves children’s academic performance throughout their lives, making them happier, more confident in the short run and providing more and better opportunities in the long run. I’m standing next to the member for Barrie, and she constantly tells me about this and how important it is that children get the right start in life. As a former teacher, she knows a lot about this.

Quality child care is so critical for our children. That is why our government is supporting the dedicated child care professionals who look after our children. We’re increasing their wages and investing in their hiring, retention and professional development to make sure that high-quality child care continues to be delivered by

engaged and knowledgeable educators. But access to quality child care should not be based on a family's ability to pay and that is why, beginning in 2020, we'll implement free preschool for children aged two and a half until they're eligible for kindergarten, saving Ontario families on average \$17,000.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Per child.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Yes, per child; \$17,000 per child.

The investments in preschool build on the savings families already get from full-day kindergarten. For parents, it makes child care more affordable and gives them the opportunity and choice to return to work earlier if they so choose.

I know that in my community of Etobicoke Centre, when I knock on doors and I speak to my constituents over the phone, what I hear from them a lot is about how they're struggling to find care, access care or afford care. This is meant to help address some of those challenges, Speaker.

We're also giving families with children up to age 12 better access to before- and after-school care programs by requiring that school boards provide those programs in most elementary schools. In addition, the province is moving forward with a new investment of \$30 million over two years to create an Early Years and Child Care Innovation Fund. The fund will support the development of flexible and unique solutions in the not-for-profit child care sector, which could include addressing the need for irregular care hours and transportation in rural and remote communities.

To support our commitment to quality and accessible child care for all, we need to invest in the necessary infrastructure, and so our government will invest \$534 million over the next six years to build 10,000 more preschool child care spaces in schools and 4,000 in other public spaces. For First Nations communities, we will double the current on-reserve child care capacity, creating 4,500 new spaces starting in 2019. Our plan to improve child care and early learning benefits the whole community, boosting quality care for children so that they get a good start in life and expanding opportunities for parents so they have more choice in where and how they work.

Speaker, I talked about getting an early start, how important it is that we give children an early start, the right start at an early stage in life. What I want to talk about now is education.

1610

A great education broadens horizons. It expands possibilities and it unleashes ingenuity that strengthens our businesses and shapes the leaders of tomorrow. That is why we're investing almost \$16 billion over 10 years for new and improved schools across the province. From Sarnia in the southwest to Cornwall in the east, from small towns in Ontario to big cities in the Golden Horseshoe, we are building and upgrading schools across the province so that all students have access to quality education and learning spaces.

That includes \$510 million, since 2013, in new construction, additions and retrofits at 62 French-language

schools across Ontario. More than 600,000 francophones call Ontario home, and a strong Franco-Ontarian community means a strong Ontario.

But a great education is about more than just buildings and classrooms. It's about providing the best learning experiences so that all students are empowered to achieve their potential while they're in the classroom and beyond; it's about providing the right tools and the right curriculum so that all students have every opportunity to succeed in today's economy; and it's about preparing students for the jobs of today and the opportunities of tomorrow.

One example of our efforts is the enhancement of the grade 10 career studies course. This is something that I'm particularly passionate about because it will provide students with the financial literacy to help them with budgeting and financial management. In fact, I think the folks across the aisle could use a lesson or two. It will provide students with digital literacy and engagement, essential skills in today's digital world, and it will provide students with hands-on learning opportunities in partnership with local entrepreneurs so that students will be better prepared to respond to a rapidly changing economy. The course will enable Ontario's youth to develop basic skills and resources to help them transition into the workforce.

As somebody who spent a large amount of their time over the last four years since being elected here advocating for and working on issues of financial literacy, I'm incredibly proud that we've taken this step. Financial literacy and the other skills that I mentioned are fundamental life skills that are important for young people to have. They help to position them to achieve their potential in whatever it is that they want to pursue in the years that follow their time in school.

You'll hear from the members of the opposition a lot of talk—in fact, the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, was doing this just a few moments ago. He was talking about how Ontario is no longer a desirable destination to do business in. They really like to talk Ontario down over there. As I said earlier, in correcting the member, I spoke about the fact that we're number one in foreign direct investment in Canada and number three in North America. On a per capita basis, that puts us ahead of New York and California, so we're doing quite well.

One of the reasons that Ontario is a destination for foreign direct investment and talent is because we offer something that very few jurisdictions offer—at least to the same degree that we do—and that's a skilled and diverse workforce. As someone who comes from business, as someone who advised businesses on where to make investments and how to make investments, I can tell you, Speaker, that the one way for an economy, for a jurisdiction, be it a province or a country, to develop what's called a sustainable competitive advantage—a competitive advantage that you can sustain, defend and protect for a generation, for decades or for a sustainable period of time—is a talented workforce. That is key to our prosperity in the future.

That is why child care is so important. That is why education at the elementary and high school levels is so important. That's why post-secondary education, apprenticeships and other forms of post-secondary education are so important. In making sure that people have the training and education that they need, we are preparing them for the jobs of tomorrow. And by doing that, we have been and will continue to set Ontario up to be a jurisdiction that continues to be number one in Canada for foreign direct investment, and one of the top jurisdictions around the world.

In this budget, we are preparing students for good jobs by providing \$132 million over three years to develop post-secondary education programs that respond to the changing needs of students and employers. But access to quality education should not be based on a student's or a family's ability to pay. That's why, beginning in the fall of 2017, we are providing more timely and targeted financial assistance to students with the greatest need, assistance benefiting students from low-income families and benefiting students with dependents, benefiting mature students and many others—assistance that is making college and university tuition free for about 235,000 students of all ages, because income should not be a barrier to learning.

We have to remember the fact, Speaker, that in today's world, in today's labour market, the young people who are sitting as pages in front of you as we speak—that generation of young people especially, more than any other—will need to continue to pursue education after high school. That is, 70% of jobs in Ontario today require some sort of post-secondary education, so we can only imagine how high that number will be when those young people graduate. Making sure that they are able to achieve their potential is by investing in education, making it stronger and making sure that they can access it. That's what this is all about.

In addition to what I said before, the province will provide more than \$3 billion in capital grants to post-secondary institutions over the next 10 years so that they are equipped with the right space but also the right technology to deliver quality education.

As someone who taught at York University, at the Schulich school, for four years, I know how important not just the right facilities are but the right technology is, to make sure that you can facilitate a learning environment that allows young people to go to the workforce and succeed.

This act includes \$500 million, starting in 2021, to help renew and modernize Ontario's university and college campuses, to update classrooms and labs, and to undertake facility retrofits to enhance the student learning experience. We are moving forward with the commitment to create a new French-language university in the province.

For some, higher learning may mean pursuing a skilled trade, which offers a pathway to a good job and a secure career. Ontario's apprenticeship system has already trained over 68,000 people and has certified 9,800

trade professionals annually over the past three years—9,800 every single year, Speaker. We're investing another \$170 million over three years to provide opportunities for on-the-job training in skilled trades. This investment will help them earn while they learn, supporting our young people to make the leap from high school to the workforce, and helping them to find high-quality jobs upon completing their apprenticeship journey.

Ontario has one of the most highly skilled workforces in North America. To maintain the strength of our workforce, it is critical that employers have access to the talent they need, to grow and compete in today's global economy. It's critical that workers and job seekers have the opportunity to upgrade their skills, to start a new career or to advance to a new or better job in their chosen field.

That is why we are also making the commitment in the 2018 budget to establish the first Ontario Training Bank. This \$63-million additional investment will bring employers, employees and training institutions together to develop skills and programs that are tailored to the needs of the local economy.

Speaker, you can see, in what I've spoken about, that we're talking about giving young people the right start in life, and that we're providing them with the right skills and allowing them to adapt their skills when they're further along in their careers. That's what this collective set of investments and initiatives attempts to do. It's ultimately to ensure that every single person can pursue their dream, and ultimately allowing Ontario to continue to be one of the number one destinations in the world for foreign direct investment and one of the best places in the world to do business.

Investing in a world-class post-secondary education and a modern and robust apprenticeship system, and a system that works with employers to train workers and job seekers with skills—that's how we're taking care of students, and that's how we're creating opportunities, or supporting the creation of opportunities, so that young people—people of all ages—can be successful in their studies, in their careers and in life. These steps will also help parents by reducing the costs of financing their children's education, and instilling confidence in a brighter future for their children.

These are some of the steps that we're taking in this budget to support a strong education system, and position Ontarians and our province for success, not just today but in the years to come.

Speaker, just as we are helping people shoulder the costs of caring for their loved ones, we're also helping create opportunity for them. Thanks to the talent and hard work of our people, our economy is growing. Our economy has outperformed those of all G7 nations since 2014.

It's interesting, Speaker, that somehow the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, forgot to mention that when he was talking Ontario down and talking down our economy. I'll repeat that: Our economy has outperformed those of all G7 nations since 2014.

We've created over 800,000 jobs since the recession, most of them full-time and most in the private sector, and most in industries paying above-average wages. Our unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in 17 years.

I don't know what the member opposite is talking about, but these are facts, Speaker. These are facts. Facts actually matter. I would urge the member opposite to learn about what's happening in Ontario's economy before he talks it down. I think that if he read about this, then he'd realize that Ontario's economy is performing quite strongly and quite well, and that there's a lot that we have to be proud of. When he speaks the way he speaks, then he just diminishes his own credibility, because he really isn't providing a fair, accurate characterization of what's happening out there, of the reality around us.

Interjection.

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Mr. Yvan Baker: Yes. Last year alone, 500 net new jobs were created, on average, every single day in Ontario. The government has done a number of things to support that economic growth. We're directly helping young people find jobs and supporting employers by providing businesses with financial incentives to hire young workers aged 15 to 29. The Employing Young Talent Incentive offers small businesses with less than a hundred employees a \$1,000 incentive upon hiring a young worker and another \$1,000 retention incentive after six months.

The member opposite spent time talking about how we're not doing anything to support small business. Well, what is this that I just spoke about? This is helping small business and it's helping young people at the same time. Business owners of any size will receive additional incentives for hiring and retaining youth who face barriers to employment.

We're supporting small businesses by creating a competitive tax environment, cutting the corporate income tax rate from 4.5% to 3.5%. We're reducing red tape to develop a more effective and efficient regulatory system, so that companies can focus more on their business and less on the regulatory hurdles. Thanks to these efforts and the efforts of people across Ontario, the plan to create good jobs and foster economic growth is delivering results, and we want to continue to build on these successes and gains.

The 2018 budget features a new investment of \$935 million over three years in the Good Jobs and Growth Plan. Through the Good Jobs and Growth Plan, Ontario will build on and strengthen its economic foundations by investing in local talent and entrepreneurs, by encouraging the growth of businesses with the goal of creating and retaining over 70,000 jobs—through the Jobs and Prosperity Fund—by attracting and retaining foreign investments and by supporting innovative start-ups and scale-ups.

Even as the economy is growing and Ontario's strategic investments in jobs is working, we also know that the benefits of the economy are not being shared by all.

Notwithstanding the fact that our economy is performing well—notwithstanding that fact—there is much more work to be done. There is much more work to be done, and it is clear that part of the challenge we need to address is that the benefits of that economic growth are not being shared by all.

We see people in Ontario struggling to get ahead, even though the economy continues to grow. We see the struggle in the rise of precarious work, even as good, well-paying jobs are also increasing in Ontario. We have to find ways for more people to participate in and benefit from our growing economy. Whether it's people in the gig economy, or people who sacrifice to look after their loved ones, often while balancing their own jobs and family responsibilities, or working parents trying to carve out extra room in their budgets for their kids to join a Little League team or for other costs, barriers in participation in economies are barriers to economic success for our province as a whole.

I think it's very important to note we're trying to address that. I've spoken extensively about how we're trying to do that in a number of ways. Whether it be through investments in our education system, strengthening the curriculum, investments in our post-secondary system, the continuous involvement of our post-secondary education system to respond to the needs of the labour market, helping provide incentives to small businesses to hire young people, reducing the small business corporate tax rate—these are all initiatives that I've spoken about that help to ensure that not only businesses are successful, but that people are successful and can prosper and participate in a growing economy.

I have a number of members who surround me who are here from northern Ontario. We're stimulating economic development and diversification across northern Ontario by making key strategic investments: \$85 million, for example, over the next three years through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. programs.

Hon. Bill Mauro: It's an increase.

Mr. Yvan Baker: That's the increase—that's right—I'm reminded by Minister Mauro.

I had the opportunity to travel with the Premier to northern Ontario and to meet some of the beneficiaries of this fund, people in organizations who receive grants from this fund. I was truly impressed by what it's doing and I'm proud that we're—

Hon. Bill Mauro: It's \$150 million a year.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Yes, \$150 million. I'm glad that we're investing this additional \$85 million over the next three years. I think that's money well spent and it will deliver results for people and for our economy.

There's a lot to be proud of in terms of what we're doing to make sure that we position Ontario to have a successful economy, but also to ensure that people can participate in that economy.

Many people are worried not only about income and income security while they work, but they're also worried about income security when they retire from work. We know that some companies, like Sears Canada,

have entered an insolvency process with underfunded pension plans. What that means is, it's resulting in people receiving reduced pension plans—less than what they were told they would get, less than what they were eligible for. Many people today are understandably concerned about whether they will have enough savings to maintain their standard of living in retirement.

That's why we're increasing the maximum monthly guarantee from the Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund—the only fund of its kind in Canada—by 50%, to \$1,500 per month. This increase would help many employees affected by employer insolvency, with the legislation before us today proposing to make this amendment retroactive to May 19, 2017, to ensure that former Sears Canada employees in Ontario could benefit from receiving this additional support.

Providing income security for workers and retirees is yet another way we are trying to make sure that the people of Ontario can prosper, share in the growth of that economy, but also, in this particular case, get the pension benefits that they deserve, that they were promised.

As I get lower on time, I want to talk about a few brief items. One is health care. My community in Etobicoke Centre has one of the highest percentages of seniors of any riding in the country, so health care is something that I spend a lot of time on, and advocating on, to make sure that people in my community, and communities across Ontario, frankly, get the care they deserve. It's fine to build a strong economy, but that means little. A good economy and strong incomes mean little when you don't have your basic health. Being healthy allows living a full life. That's why this budget reflects such extensive commitments to our health care system. We know that having access to needed medication, services and facilities is so important. This access provides peace of mind to people as they build their future.

Universal health care is a reflection of our society's values—how we care for each other collectively. For families that are concerned about a loved one who is sick, nothing is more important than getting their family member the care that they need. That is why we have committed to not only maintaining but to expanding our investments in health care.

In the fall of 2017, we announced an additional \$618 million for health care to improve access to key hospital services and reduce wait times. That was last year. In this budget, we're investing an additional \$822 million in 2018-19.

Long-term care is one of our foundational values as well, and that is why our government is also creating 30,000 new long-term-care beds over the next 10 years, adding 5,000 beds by 2022 to help people who can no longer live independently and to provide peace of mind for the people who care for them. These new beds are in addition to the 30,000 existing beds that we are redeveloping.

It's important to note that the best care is often provided in comfortable and familiar surroundings. For most people, that means being able to be cared for in their

home. That is why we have increased the investment in home and community care by about \$250 million per year since 2013. These increases address rising demographic pressures from a growing and aging population and help more people get the care they need close to home.

In this budget, we are providing more access to home and community health care services, including 2.8 million more hours of personal support, 284,000 more visits by nurses and 58,000 more therapy visits. With these supports, seniors and people of all ages with complex medical conditions can often stay in their own homes or be cared for in the community longer.

We all know that an illness or medical condition impacts not only the person with the ailment, but also the caregivers—caregivers who are often unpaid family members, friends or neighbours. The burden of caring for an unwell family member impacts people's jobs, their family life, their studies, their plans for the future, adding to the physical, emotional and financial distress that caregivers experience. That is why, in 2017, we introduced the Ontario Caregiver Tax Credit, to provide tax relief for people caring for infirm relatives, therefore easing the financial burden often felt by those who take care of loved ones.

Ontario is taking further steps to make it easier for people to care for unwell loved ones by launching a new organization this spring, a single access point for information and resources to help and support caregivers across the province.

We're also improving the coordination of care between primary specialists and community care providers to make it easier for caregivers to navigate multiple services in multiple settings.

If an unwell person is receiving care at home, in a long-term-care home or in a hospital, they have likely received care involving a personal support worker. PSWs are critical to the health and well-being of Ontarians. That is why it is so vital that we support them. Over the next three years, our government will invest an additional \$23 million to add an estimated 5,500 PSWs to the workforce to ensure that home care clients get the care they need, including in underserved areas such as rural, northern and remote communities. As part of this plan, we'll invest an additional \$38 million in education and training for new or experienced PSWs so that they have the tools they need to provide quality care to our most vulnerable Ontarians, wherever they may live.

We are continuing to improve and transform health care, from hospital care to home care, from shorter wait times for procedures to more long-term beds, so that people have access to high-quality care when they need it and where they need it, and so that their caregivers have the support and resources that they need to reduce the time and stress in caring for their loved ones.

As you know, Speaker, we made prescription drugs free for young people through OHIP+, making Ontario the first province to provide drug coverage at no cost to children and youth under the age of 25, regardless of

family income. With this budget, we're proposing to expand that coverage to everyone 65 and over. Starting in August 2019, seniors will be covered as well. With this expansion, prescription medications now will be free for about 6.4 million people—6.4 million people, Speaker.

With this budget, we're also introducing a new Ontario drug and dental program for individuals and their families who do not have coverage from an extended health plan, starting this summer. This program would reimburse participants for up to 80% of eligible prescription drugs and dental expenses. It would reimburse up to an annual maximum of \$400 for a single person, \$600 for couples and \$700 for a family of four with two children.

From increased investments in hospitals, helping to reduce wait times and helping to expand access to life-changing procedures, to expanding prescription drug coverage to almost 50% of Ontario's population, to increasing the number and improving the quality of long-term-care beds for people unable to live independently, this government is investing in and boosting health care in Ontario.

As a society, though, we've come to understand that there is no health without mental health. We know that mental health challenges affect one in three people in this province at some point in their lives. In this budget, the government is making an unprecedented investment in a more integrated, high-quality mental health and addictions system for people of all ages. In addition to the \$3.8 billion per year we provide in ongoing support, we're investing an additional \$2.1 billion over the next four years to treat mental health and addictions and to help people recover and live more healthy and meaningful lives. This brings our total investment in mental health and addictions services to more than \$17 billion over four years.

We're providing more community-based services to more young people, such as counselling, therapy and walk-in clinics, making sure kids get off to a good start in life. We're strengthening mental health for all students by investing \$175 million over four years to expand school-based supports for mental health and addictions services, supporting a healthy transition into adulthood. And we are helping up to 350,000 more people with anxiety and depression by increasing access to publicly funded psychotherapy, helping to build happy and healthy lives at every stage.

Speaker, I've spoken about the things we're doing to provide, to support the growth of opportunity in this province, and what we've done to make sure that our economy is growing and prospering. I've provided facts that demonstrate that our economy is performing well, but I've also said that there is more for us to do so that everyone can participate in that growing economy. We're taking steps to do all of that.

I've spoken about health care. I've spoken about the different investments that we have made and continue to make—and propose in this budget—to make sure that we improve the quality of care and access to care in our communities across Ontario.

We're tabling this bill, the Plan for Care and Opportunity Act (Budget Measures), because we believe that our plan reflects the fundamental values and aspirations of the people of Ontario. These values and aspirations, I believe, are reflected in this budget. They're reflected in our education policies. They're reflected in policies that provide more access to high-quality education, which ultimately leads to access to more high-quality jobs. And they're reflected in our economic initiatives.

I'll just end by saying that as we enter the ending of this phase of the debate around the budget, and as we enter in the debate that the people of Ontario will have to engage in in the next election, I hope that we can celebrate what we've accomplished together, but also look ahead with determination to resolve those challenges that remain, whether that be in our economy, in creating jobs, whether that be in health care or whether that be in education. I think there's a lot of work that's been done that we can be proud of, and yet there is a lot more to do. I think that all those members who are running for re-election, at least on this side of the House, are proud of so much of what's been accomplished, but are also running again because they believe that there is more to be done and that they can make a difference in doing that.

I think we can say that Ontario's economy is strong, that we continue to be one of the leading jurisdictions for foreign direct investment, that we continue to create an attractive business climate, and that we have a province that we can all be very, very proud of.

I want to just end by saying that it has been a privilege, over the past four years, to be the MPP for Etobicoke Centre, to work with all my caucus colleagues, and to be the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance. I look forward to spending the next four years doing the same thing with my caucus colleagues and those on the other side of the House.

With that said, I hope that everyone can support this budget. It's making a difference and it will continue to make a difference for the people of Ontario.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: Before I start my official remarks, I want to acknowledge, like my colleague from Scarborough Centre, and say a thank you to all the people who have served in this House from all three parties—those that aren't going to run again—for stepping up. It's very humbling to be one of 107 people chosen by the people of Ontario to serve, and at the end of the day I just want to thank them and their families for their dedication and efforts. I respect all of you, and it has been a pleasure to work with all of those in the House and those who aren't here today.

I also want to acknowledge the pages for their efforts over the last number of weeks. It's always a pleasure to have them here, and I say almost in every speech that part of the reason I'm here is because of that generation and the next generation to follow them, that we need to leave a better province than what we have.

With that, I'm going to turn to Bill 31, the Plan for Care and Opportunity Act (Budget Measures). I have some general notes, but I'm going to start off by suggesting that the member from Etobicoke Centre challenged our leader and challenged some of his thoughts, and I'm going to actually challenge some of the thoughts that the member from Etobicoke Centre put out there.

One word that he used a lot throughout his speech was "aspirations." Aspirations sometimes, on that side of the House, turn into stretch goals. I just want to remind the people, when we're talking about this budget and past budgets and my six and a half years here, that they made an aspirational goal of insurance rate reductions of 15%. I don't think they've achieved that, Mr. Speaker. So I wouldn't say it was an aspiration; I would say it was a broken promise.

They suggested, aspirationally, that the gas plants that they cancelled in Oakville were going to cost the taxpayer of Ontario \$40 million. I would suggest it was \$1.1 billion: another broken promise.

The Minister of Finance suggested in his presentation that he was going to have balanced budgets for years coming forward in the future, and he said the actual deficit was only going to be \$6.7 billion. We now know through the Auditor General and the Financial Accountability Officer that those are closer to \$12 billion, so perhaps aspirational; I would suggest a broken promise and something that is not the reality for what Ontarians are going to face.

The Minister of Finance, again, in some of his remarks—my colleague the member from Nipissing quoted that the Minister of Finance had said he was a slayer of the deficit. Yet we know that unless you move numbers into someone else's budget, like OPG, it truly isn't a balanced budget, because at the end of the day the taxpayer of Ontario still owes all of that money. In my definition, that is not a balanced budget. That is moving money off so it doesn't show up on your books. But at the end of the day, we have to pay for it.

As I said earlier, he promised balanced budgets for a number of years, yet we know through these two independent officers of the Legislature that we're going to actually have a number of years of sustained deficits—some would suggest a structural deficit.

He promised 140,000 new jobs every year, and I believe that number, from the documents that we've been provided by our two legislative officers, is going to be closer to 60,000 to 80,000 at best: again, aspirational perhaps; I would suggest a broken promise.

The net debt-to-GDP maintenance is going to, at some point, from these documents—and I'm using most of my stats from the economic and budget outlook from the Financial Accountability Officer—is going to potentially hit 42% of our gross domestic product. Again, aspirational—not. Those are numbers that are getting close to things like what happened to Greece many years ago.

The member from Etobicoke Centre made a comment that long-term care was a foundational priority. I find that very interesting, as the critic for the last two and a half

years. They actually spent more money on food for people in prisons than they did our long-term-care people and our seniors.

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He didn't acknowledge that the wait-list is actually going to double to 50,000 people. They made a promise and a commitment a number of years ago that they were going to redevelop 30,000 beds. If I'm generous to them, they've actually accomplished 30,000, so perhaps aspirational was the number they used. I think the people of Ontario want practical, pragmatic numbers that they're actually going to deliver. They don't want more broken promises. I'm not certain, because I've asked for two and a half years, where that list is of where they were going to redevelop the 30,000 beds and where they are at. I still haven't got the list and they are about a third of the way through after 15 years.

Interestingly, again, there were no new beds even thought of in the last number of budgets that I've been here for. This year, in an election year, they actually decided to come up with money for new beds. Mr. Speaker, I don't mean to sound negative or pessimistic, but at the end of the day those are the facts I'm putting on the table, and I challenge any of them, if they want to dispute those as facts, that I'm happy to do that.

Bill 31, the budget measures, promised balanced budgets for years to come; actually, six more years of deficits, while tripling the debt. We know through the Auditor General and the Financial Accountability Officer—they both sounded concerns that the deficit was projected to be \$6.7 billion, and it's actually going to be in the neighbourhood of \$11.2 billion. The debt is going to reach \$400 billion.

Again, I'm going to go back to the Etobicoke Centre member, because he said that young people have to have "the right start in life." Mr. Speaker, this government has burdened our next generation with \$26,000 per person the day they start their life. I'm not certain that that's the definition, for me, of the right start in life. Why wouldn't we bring that down to no debt? Why wouldn't we bring that down to a number that's actually manageable?

They also are adding to record levels of debt. We are projecting between \$374 billion and \$400 billion in debt, and every cent that has to be paid back of that is not going to our youth, to those pages that I'm looking at, to my nephews and nieces, to my—hopefully, someday—children's children. We cannot accept that they are actually doing that and in good conscience saying comments like, "We want to make sure we start young people off and give them the right start in life."

Mr. Speaker, the budget numbers are creating uncertainty. They're actually forcing Ontario's credit outlook to be downgraded to negative, and we all know that when a credit rating does get downgraded, it leads to more interest on that debt, more money going out every day, paying more money on debt and not to front-line services: not to people with mental health issues, not to seniors on fixed incomes, not to people in long-term care or those with special needs out there across our province,

just to name a few. We know that that is unequivocal. Nobody can argue that point, that if you take on more debt, the credit rating goes down, you're going to pay more in interest payments, and that's less money helping the people that we're given the privilege to serve here in Queen's Park.

Mr. Speaker, their budget numbers have been challenged by both the Auditor General and the Financial Accountability Officer. This is about trust. These are independent officers. There's no partisan anything involved with these people that have stepped up and given their qualified—

Interjections.

Mr. Bill Walker: Some of the members are starting to heckle that, no, that's not right. Well, I think the people of Ontario are probably more willing to trust the Auditor General or the Financial Accountability Officer to give them facts than they are a Liberal government who, after 15 years, again continue to go down a path leading us into more debt and more troubled times.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to talk a little bit, again, using this document, the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario Economic and Budget Outlook. On page 24, and I'm going to just read: "This baseline deficit averages \$6.0 billion from 2021-22 to 2025-26, despite steady ongoing economic growth. This permanent imbalance between Ontario's revenues and expenditures suggests a structural deficit existed prior to the introduction of the 2018 budget." It leads you to wonder how the Minister of Finance and all of his colleagues can stand here and say, "We're in good shape; everything's wonderful." When you have a structural deficit, that means you know that you're adding more and more and more debt, and the more money you borrow, the worse that economic outlook is going to get.

We know that my colleague suggested—he used words that were actually shared by the Auditor General, like "scheme." When they're talking about Enron and accounting schemes, and when we know that they are moving money around just to be able to make balance sheets look the way they want when they come out and present a document, that is unacceptable.

I'm going to give you two examples, Mr. Speaker. They did move money from their budget onto OPG's books. That's a shell game. We as Ontario taxpayers all own that debt. It doesn't matter whether you want to call it ratepayer or whether you want to call it tax base or whether you want to call it government or OPG. There is only one taxpayer, and we all know that, Mr. Speaker, and that's every single individual here in Ontario.

By moving that money onto OPG's books—they knew this consciously and still made the decision—it's going to cost the people of Ontario \$4 billion. The reason for that is because they cannot, through OPG, borrow money at the same level as the province of Ontario does. With the stroke of a pen, and an ideological thought process by a government trying to cling to power, they moved money over to another set of books, and it's going to cost every single one of us \$4 billion. It's simply unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, that is that structural deficit. They're adding to it, and the hole just keeps getting deeper.

Sadly, I don't believe that the Liberals have any strategy other than to continue to grow the debt so big that no one will lend us money anymore. I believe, although I was quite young, that that happened back in the days of the NDP government and Bob Rae, when it finally came to a line that said, "You cannot borrow anymore." Look at the actions that happened there. There are people who still talk about that and are still suffering as a result.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, we still talk about Mike Harris. Don't worry.

Mr. Bill Walker: I might have heard that once or twice in here.

We pay \$1 billion every single month in interest payments, which crowds out services that families depend on, like health care, education, long-term care, special needs and medicines. Almost on a weekly basis, we have people come here pleading for more—things like take-home drugs that we can't give people—people with special education needs; people who are definitely in the accessibility side of the world, who want and need more opportunity and access to programs and services. We can't do that, because we are spending \$1 billion.

Let's not forget, for the people listening at home or who may read Hansard later, that we all know that we're at historically low interest rates. We know those interest rates are going to start going back up.

Again, I'm going to quote from the Financial Accountability Officer, on page 9: "As a result, the bank increased its policy interest rate twice in 2017 and once so far in 2018. Going forward, the bank has indicated that it will continue to gradually and cautiously increase interest rates, depending on the strength of new economic data...."

The FAO continues to expect a gradual but steady rise in interest rates over the outlook."

Mr. Speaker, as I've said a number of times, when that interest rate goes up, there's less money going to front-line care. It's paying more and more debt, and that is not helping one single person who is in need in our province.

Again, I'm not certain how a government, in good conscience, could come out with a budget and say, "We're going to add \$6.7 billion in deficit." First of all, they knew it was going to be at least \$12 billion and they said that. But how, in good conscience, they could continue to do that and expect the people of Ontario to just sit back and say, "Yes, yes, you're right; we'll do that"—because the people of Ontario are too smart for that. Sadly, they're going to be saddled with that debt.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting, as we've watched this budget process unfold. Many economists have publicly come out in their comments and suggested—and I think most people here, and certainly our parents, have all said this to us—that it's always a premise to save for a rainy day. We know that rainy days, at some point, will always come. It's inevitable.

South of the border, in the US economy, they've actually lowered business taxes and they have started to

move their economy forward. What did our government here do? They raised business taxes in this last budget. At the end of the day, that will make our companies less competitive yet again.

This is on top of the highest energy rates in the country, possibly in the continent, depending on whose projections you use. This government pays \$6 billion out to the United States and Quebec, making them doubly competitive. They've added more and more red tape to our already struggling businesses that are out there.

I'm not certain, particularly when I talk to small businesses in my area—

Mr. James J. Bradley: So negative.

Mr. Bill Walker: Sadly, Mr. Bradley, the member from St. Catharines, it does sound negative. You, sadly, have to wear most of that negativity over your last 15 years, because you created all of the factual information that I'm giving.

I'm not happy to stand here and keep bringing this up. I wish I could say we had a balanced budget. I wish we could say we had billions more to give to all of the programs and services. But you know that's not the case unless you borrow it. At some point, all of you have to look at those people sitting in front of us, those pages, and say with good conscience, "I'm doing this for your benefit, and you will not suffer, down the road, when you have to pay all this money back."

Mr. Speaker, we also know that in good times, you should be putting a little off to the side. All of us were taught to put a little off, as I was saying about those rainy days. At the end of the day, they know that there's going to be a storm coming, and you're going to need some more of that money. Right now, we're leveraging the bank. We're going and borrowing more and more, almost, again, because we've had a downgrade warning. Obviously, that should have signalled to somebody that, "Oh, maybe we should be taking a different tack here. But no, we're just going to double-down and try to get through this next election."

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What I'm hearing from people across Ontario is, what would they do if they got another mandate? For 15 years, they've run our province into the ground. They've actually tripled the debt, almost. They continue to add debt every single day. Not many people are saying that they're getting better services, in most cases. So what would they do? And what would they sell? They went to the polls the last time, and not a word was uttered about selling Hydro One, and yet they did that. They sold Hydro One—owned by the people, designed for the people, and at the end of the day they got rid of that. But, Mr. Speaker, we don't have any more Hydro Ones of that magnitude, so what are they going to sell next when they continue to go down that same path?

The Auditor General used the term—the Liberals actually made this term up to try to rationalize how they're going to play these financial games. They called it a "legislated deficit." It's a made-up term. They're going to take money that they've borrowed and count

that as an asset. They've even used pension assets. That would make me a little leery, if I was a pension asset owner, knowing what this government has done in the past, selling Hydro One and doubling and tripling the debt. Will they ever start thinking about, "Oh, there is a bunch of money over there." Will they start looking at that as a way to get their hands on even more money? That would make me extremely, extremely nervous.

I'm going to go back to this document, because this isn't Bill Walker the Conservative saying it; this is actually the Financial Accountability Officer saying it.

Mr. James J. Bradley: Speaking of Bills, how's Bill Murdoch?

Mr. Bill Walker: He's very concerned. He's as concerned as I am, the member from St. Catharines. He's extremely concerned. I saw him on the weekend. He can't believe that since he left here, your government, over 15 years, has doubled the debt. Bill Murdoch has grandchildren now, and he's extremely concerned.

Mr. James J. Bradley: Have you been on his radio program?

Mr. Bill Walker: I have been on his radio program. He'd love to have your Premier on his program to explain all this debt at some point, or perhaps yourself, sir.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm enjoying this dialogue across the aisle, but I need the member to address his comments directly through the Chair.

Mr. Bill Walker: My apologies. Through you, Speaker, to all of the members in the House, I do appreciate the help from the other side to make sure I can accentuate my points at times.

At this point, I'm going to accentuate that in this document it says, "However, the government's 2018 budget will significantly increase Ontario's debt burden into the 2020s.

"High and rising public debt could have significant adverse consequences for Ontario."

I think the Liberals often call that an unintended consequence. They think that's a more fluffy spin, Mr. Speaker.

Let me reread that: "High and rising public debt could have significant adverse consequences for Ontario. Growing levels of debt lead to larger debt interest payments, leaving the province less fiscal flexibility to fund future public services or respond to unforeseen events, including recessions, through deficit spending."

It's exactly what I've been talking about the whole time here: less money to our vulnerable seniors. Let's not forget that this government has been responsible for 300% to 400% increases in their hydro bills alone. When people are coming and talking to each of us individually, saying, "I'm making the choice of whether to heat or eat," that is just simply not acceptable.

Speaking of hydro, ratepayers are on the hook for power we don't need because the Liberals have signed 390 more FIT contracts. In fact, on the day they came out after borrowing \$25 billion—we already know, again through the Auditor General, that to pay that back will

cost the taxpayers of Ontario, and particularly our next generation, the generation after that and possibly another, between \$43 billion and \$93 billion. And they're trying to claim that as an asset. I'm not certain how this works, but at the end of the day, what I can tell you is, we did not need to borrow \$25 billion. If they could have borrowed \$25 billion—I want all the people who have come through my office and, I trust, through every office of my colleagues in this room, saying, “Why isn't there more money for special education assistants? Why isn't there more money for health care? Why is there not more money for me to get my services today?”—many of the things in their budget they're kicking down the road to 2019 or 2020, which people won't even receive, despite all of the borrowing they've done.

Since 2009, Ontario has actually paid \$6 billion in surplus electricity to neighbouring jurisdictions while Ontario ratepayers overpaid \$9.2 billion for green energy. Over the lifetime of the Green Energy Act—let's not forget that the Green Energy Act actually usurped all powers from local municipal governments. They cannot have a say. My colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London has a community called Dutton Dunwich. They actually voted 85% for not wanting—they were an non-willing host for wind turbines. This government, the Liberal government, said, “No, no, no. I don't really care what you think. You're getting them.” The community next door—and I apologize; I can't remember the name of it—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Malahide.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, my colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London, who does a wonderful job in here.

Malahide actually wanted it, but the government didn't listen to them, Mr. Speaker. They know better.

Again, let's just not forget: \$133 billion over 20 years, for an intermittent power source. They actually had to fire up gas plants, because when the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine—they can't control it, although they might suggest they could. That is where we get into both environment challenges and we get into class challenges.

The people at home should know the other thing that happens, from the environmental perspective: The government instructs them to not capture all the water at Niagara Falls, our cleanest, greenest, freest form of power. So we can actually go here and use the headline of the Green Energy Act and think that the public is just going to miss out on all of this.

What could \$133 billion do for our most vulnerable; for our people that have special needs; for our people that are on fixed incomes, particularly that great seniors group that is out there, the baby boom demographic?

Again, let's not forget: This isn't a surprise, that we have the baby boom coming through. The government has known that, the same as we have known that, and they have actually done very poor planning and even worse execution in regard to preparing for that.

It's worth repeating: Ratepayers, taxpayers, the great people of Ontario, whatever term you want to call

them—I don't want to get into moving shells over whether we call them a ratepayer or a taxpayer. There's only one person paying the freight, and that's the great people of Ontario.

They borrowed \$25 billion. I had people through my office, every single year I've been here, asking for more health care, more education. Let's not forget that this is the government that has closed 600 schools during their tenure, but they can find \$25 billion overnight, knowing full well that it's going to cost \$43 billion at the lowest end and, potentially, \$93 billion at the high end—the highest debt—to finance this hydro mess that only they can take responsibility for creating.

As a result of all of this bungling, particularly in the hydro and energy file, the average Ontario family now pays more than \$1,000 more on their hydro bills than in 2003—

Interjection.

Mr. James J. Bradley: Norm wants some time. It's Norm's turn.

Mr. Bill Walker: Oh, sorry. Mr. Speaker, I've got probably an hour's worth of more notes here. I got rolling there.

I will just say that this government has to accept the responsibility for the challenges that we have in our whole sector. The debt can't continue, or our young people are never, ever going to have the quality of life that we do.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I will beg your indulgence to say a few thank yous to a few people.

I will start by thanking my colleague Sarah Campbell, a new mom, who was responsible for the riding of Kenora–Rainy River, a huge riding with dozens of fly-in-only communities, and thank her for the work that she has done in that riding, as she will not be running again.

Applause.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes, for sure.

The other person that I want to thank is my colleague Cindy Forster. Cindy is a lifelong Welland resident. She is a former mayor. She is a registered nurse, so we will say happy Nursing Week to Cindy. I would say that she has been an activist in her community for decades.

A little bit of background on my colleague: Cindy graduated from the Mack School of Nursing in 1973.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Now you're telling them how old I am.

M^{me} France Gélinas: While working as a staff nurse in the hospital sector in various programs at the Welland General Hospital, Cindy was a dedicated union activist and joined the Ontario Nurses' Association. She worked as a labour relations officer, representing registered nurses in all sectors of health care.

In 1994—fast-forward—Cindy became active in municipal politics. She served two terms as a municipal councillor on the Welland city council. Then, in the year 2000, she was elected as mayor for the city of Welland

and, in 2006, was elected Welland representative to Niagara regional council.

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Cindy has sat on many boards and committees, including the board of the local library, the hydro commission, the economic development corporation, as well as the community and social services and accessibility advisory committee; and she was appointed as a member of the ALPHA board.

She has fought for worthy causes, such as pay equity for women in the library and health sectors. As vice chair of Niagara Regional Housing for four years, she was involved in many new affordable housing initiatives for Niagara residents. As a volunteer, she has been involved in many agencies, including Help a Child Smile, the Hope Centre and Hope House, and AIDS Niagara.

As you all know, she is my colleague from Welland, which includes Welland, Thorold, Port Colborne, Wainfleet and the west part of St. Catharines. She was our municipal affairs and housing critic, but she has also been and still is our labour critic.

I can tell you that her leadership has been greatly appreciated by all members of our caucus. We got to elect who would be our caucus chair, and Cindy was elected as our caucus chair—I would say, if not unanimously, it certainly was by a groundswell. She is a very good leader. She is a very good chair.

As I said, she has been a nurse for a huge part of her life, and I want to thank her specifically. Some of you will remember that in the fall of 2014, I broke my leg. I had the pleasure of being in a cast and all this for three months. Coming to Queen's Park was really hard. Doing my duties and travelling back and forth from Nickel Belt to Queen's Park was difficult. I was not always able to attend to everything that I was supposed to. Cindy helped me. She stepped up, and whatever I needed, she was always there and always helpful. When I was stuck at home—because at the beginning, I had to have surgery and all that jazz—she was the one who would call me and ask how I was doing and what she could do to help me. That was greatly appreciated.

It also shows that she is a nurse. It doesn't matter if she is the mayor, she is the chair of council or she is an MPP; she will always be a helpful person. It is in her to care; it is in her to help. We were really fortunate to have her with us.

As an MPP, you can see those characteristics through what she has done. As I said when I opened, she was a nurse for close to 20 years at the Welland General Hospital. When she became an MPP, she was part of this group that made sure that the hospital in Welland would stay open. I can tell you, as the health critic, it was one of the ones where I had serious doubts that we would ever be able to keep it open, but Cindy would have no part of this. She could not fathom that a community of 100,000 people could not have a hospital. How could that be?

She brought more and more people in to the tent. I don't know how many demonstrations we had on the front lawn of Queen's Park or how many petitions she

read or how many times she brought this issue forward, until finally Dr. Hoskins, when he was the Minister of Health, saw it her way and saw that a community of 100,000 people cannot be without a hospital. Welland, thanks to her effort, the effort of the city council and many, many more who put their shoulder to the wheel, made it happen. Now, Welland hospital will be a full-fledged hospital with emergency and all of the services that the people of Welland were expecting out of a hospital.

Another, I would say, characteristic of hers is that when she sees that something is wrong, she speaks up.

Mr. James J. Bradley: Conservation authority.

M^{me} France Gélinas: The member is going to my next point. When she saw what was happening in the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, she spoke up and, basically, she acted. She introduced a motion before the provincial Standing Committee on Public Accounts for the Auditor General to conduct a full audit of the authority. She stood up for people who should never have been bullied. Citizens should never be bullied when all they want is access to information.

I will quote her: "We can't stand for that.... Everybody has the right to ask questions around public agencies. The people who pay the freight have the right and deserve answers to the questions they ask."

I would say that this is the kind of politician she is and the kind of person she is. When she says that she's there to step up "for the little guy," I can't help but think of the people she was there to replace. Many of us will remember the previous member for Welland, Mr. Peter Kormos, who stood in this House many times, standing up for the little guy. I don't know if there's something in the water in Welland that makes that happen—

Mr. James J. Bradley: Fluoride.

Ms. Cindy Forster: We used to have fluoride. We don't have it anymore, thanks to the region.

M^{me} France Gélinas: You don't?

But we will also remember Mr. Swart, who was from her riding. I understand that he helped her to go into politics.

I realize that this is my last opportunity to be on the record, more than likely. I did not want to let that opportunity go by without saying a huge thank you to the member from Welland, my colleague Cindy Forster. You were very helpful to me, and I thank you for everything that you've done.

Applause.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I will miss her dearly, but I know that she's making the right decision. I had the pleasure to have supper with her husband, Brian. Her husband has faced some pretty severe health issues, but he came through it with a smile. I think that she's making the right decision for herself and for her family.

But that doesn't mean that I'm not allowed to keep your cellphone number and that I'm not allowed to text you in areas of need.

Her knowledge of the health care system, the ONA and the hospitals has been a tremendous asset to the

NDP, as well as to myself as the health critic—so a huge thank you. Merci beaucoup.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you, France.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Now I'm going to speak to—

Mr. James J. Bradley: So far, I agree with your speech.

Laughter.

M^{me} France Gélinas: So far, so good.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Keep talking about Cindy.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Now I'll use the few minutes left on the clock for me—before I let another member of my caucus talk about the budget—to talk a bit about where we are at.

I'm sure we all know that the election is coming. I, like most of the people who are seeking re-election, have started knocking on doors. From people in Sudbury, we hear over and over about the overcrowding in our hospitals. More and more people have experienced it. When you knock on the door, they just have to share that with us: "I couldn't believe it, France, when you brought it forward that your friend Leo was in the bathroom for 13 days." Well, this bathroom is still being used as a room as we speak. Compared to some of the other accommodations—in the TV room, and in the patient lounge—it's a more desirable room than the other rooms or if you're stuck in the hallways.

But at the end of the day, it does not meet their expectations. They are very surprised and disappointed, and some of them are angry, that our health care system has gotten to that point. It is clear that six years ago, when the Liberal government made the decision to flat-line the operating budgets of our hospitals, that had a direct impact as to what we see now, the overcrowding that we see.

As I've mentioned, today is the beginning of Nursing Week. Happy Nursing Week to all of the tens of thousands—I think we have close to 100,000 nurses in Ontario. Happy Nursing Week to them all. We also found at a press conference this morning organized by the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario as well as the Ontario Nurses' Association that what has been happening in the course of the last four or five years is that hospitals have a harder and harder time balancing their budgets. What they do is that whenever a nurse leaves, they keep the position vacant. So although our hospitals have not been handing out pink slips and going through the process of laying nurses off, what they have done is that they have not replaced nurses. It was revealed this morning that a total of 10,000 registered nurse positions that have become vacant were never replaced, which means that in an ordinary hospital ward, they're working, in general, 17% short.

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But it gets even worse, because in that ward, you will have a whole lot of extra patients in the hallways, in the bathrooms, in the lounges, in the TV rooms, and everywhere else. Just think of what it looks like. So not only do you not have a full staff—in general, every unit is about 17% understaffed; you have more patients. This is a recipe for not good care, no matter how you slice it.

Ms. Cindy Forster: And no equipment if you have an emergency.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And no equipment if you have an emergency, because in a patient's room, you have access to oxygen right in the wall. That's why hospital rooms are built to be rooms. You have access to all sorts of equipment that will not be available in a hallway or in a bathroom or in a TV room. It becomes really dangerous. This is not going to change with the budget that the Liberals have brought forward.

I can tell you that in the NDP platform, we have committed to a 5.3% increase in the hospital base budget. Why? To undo the damage that has been done so that we never have to live through that again.

I could go on about other aspects, but I see that my time is—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You can go some more.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I can go some more?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Take some of mine, if you want.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Okay.

Another area that we have heard lots about is long-term care. In our area, we have seven long-term-care homes. Going by memory now, I think we have 1,200 beds and about 900 people on the wait-list, which is a little bit worse than province-wide, where we have 78,000 beds and 34,000 people waiting. The wait times are really hard on families—families who reach out to all of us, I'm sure. We've all had some family who just can't cope anymore, whose family member is on the wait-list for a long-term-care home and they can't get in.

In this budget, we see a little bit of money for new long-term-care beds, but I can't help but think that when the baby boomers were born, we knew that 70 years later, they would be 70 years old. How come we did not plan for this any better? How come we find ourselves in a position where there are 34,000 people waiting for a long-term-care bed? How come we did not bring forward other models of care that allow people to stay in the community?

I had the pleasure of going to Luxembourg, where I visited a dementia village, and other Western European communities where they have different models of care. They have the same issues as we do with cognitive impairment, bladder and bowel control, and everything else that comes with needing 24/7 care, but they provide care in a much different way than we do. They don't have the problems that we have.

The people who come and see us who cannot cope: Most of the time they are receiving home care. Our home care system is broken. It fails more people than it helps. It's funny, because if you look to the east or the west of us, Quebec has a home care system and Manitoba has a home care system, and both of theirs work pretty good. Why is it that I have more complaints against home care than every other part of the health care system put together? Because, every day, there are missed visits. Every day there is, basically, a hard time finding PSWs.

Why is it that we have a system that has not figured out that if you want to recruit and retain a stable

workforce, you need to make home care jobs good jobs? As long as those jobs don't pay the bills, don't offer you full-time hours, full-time work, a little bit of benefits and a pension, we will continue to have recruitment and retention problems. What does it mean that you cannot recruit and retain? That means missed visits. That means that you have different home care workers coming into your home all the time.

People don't like this. They want to be able to trust that they will have home care. They are discharged from hospitals and are supposed to be picked up by the home care system, who phones them and tells them that they have no workers; therefore, they expect an eight-to-nine-week wait. What is this? You've been discharged from hospital. You need your bandages changed and the care that you were promised, but you are put on a wait-list that is weeks long.

None of that is addressed in this budget. All of those issues that I've talked about—whether overcrowding in our hospitals, the poor levels of care in our long-term-care homes, or the problem recruiting and retaining a stable workforce in the home care system—all of this stays in place with the budget that they have put forward.

I think we can do better. I think we should do better. I don't have much hope that we will be voting for a budget like that.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 31, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes. I have a few minutes—not quite as much as I was hoping for—to speak to this bill, entitled the Plan for Care and Opportunity Act, and the budget it is associated with. They do nothing to plan for care at medium-sized hospitals like those in my riding.

Prior to the introduction of this budget, municipal leaders from my riding had been speaking to the government—specifically, the past Minister of Health—about the need to update the way in which small and medium-sized hospitals are funded. Bracebridge mayor Graydon Smith appeared at the pre-budget consultations to speak about this issue. So when the government announced increased funding for hospitals, I was hopeful. I was hopeful that medium-sized hospitals like West Parry Sound Health Centre and Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare would receive significant increases, and that this government would change the way in which hospital funding is allocated.

That did not happen. When the funding was announced, West Parry Sound Health Centre got a 1% increase and Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, which manages the Huntsville District Memorial Hospital and South Muskoka Memorial Hospital, got a 1.4% increase—1% and 1.4%, when the hospital sector as a whole is getting 4.6%. Those meagre increases don't even cover the increased costs of hydro and provincially negotiated collective agreements.

After years of frozen base funding, the hospitals in my riding are still struggling to make ends meet. Muskoka

Algonquin Healthcare is considering the future of the two hospitals, the one in Huntsville and the one in Bracebridge. Both communities are very clear: They want to maintain two fully functioning hospitals. This impacts people from as far north as Sundridge, South River, Magnetawan, Burk's Falls, Kearney, and down south to south of Gravenhurst to Severn Bridge. Over the past month, I've introduced hundreds of petitions asking this government to save these two hospitals. These petitions have been signed by about 6,000 people, and there are more coming in every day. I do want to thank our leader, Doug Ford, for clearly stating that he supports the two hospitals.

To get back to the budget, I was hoping to hear that the government was going to change or at least review the funding formula for medium-sized hospitals. They didn't do that.

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This budget continued the government's attack on small business—in this case, by stealth—by following on the coattails of the federal Liberals' tax changes that will hurt so many small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, there is one sector the government has helped with this budget, and I do want to recognize that. They changed the cap on the Small Beer Manufacturers' Tax Credit, and I know that the breweries in my riding appreciate that change, so I wanted to thank the government for doing that. Unfortunately, that is one of the few positive changes I can point to in this budget.

Mr. James J. Bradley: Keep going, Norm.

Mr. Norm Miller: While I support that change, it's not enough to support the budget.

I know my colleague wants to talk, so I will cut short the last part of my speech just to say that I heard the Minister of Finance before I got here talking about—and I think he was in some sort of dreamland because I heard him say that the debt-to-gross-domestic-product has fallen steadily. That's a measure of whether you can afford how much debt you're carrying. When the government was first elected, I remember the debt-to-GDP was 27%. Now, if you use the numbers—the real numbers that the Financial Accountability Officer and the Auditor General put forward—that figure is 40% and increasing, because they're planning on six more years of deficits of about \$12 billion a year.

I know our finance critic did a great job of going through a number of the things that the Minister of Finance was saying, talking about slaying the deficit and the books are balanced and the number of jobs have increased. He went through item by item and pointed out that maybe what the finance minister is saying needs some fact-checking, Mr. Speaker.

I'm short of time, so I will wrap up now and just say that, unfortunately, I won't be able to support this budget.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: First, allow me to congratulate the Liberals. They found a number of ways to hold onto the reins of power for 15 years. It's not an easy thing to do. It's not a record, by any means. The Conservatives

had been there for something like 40 or 42 years before Bob Rae signed an accord with David Peterson and toppled Frank Miller back in 1985. But 15 years is nothing to sneeze at.

In their quest for another term, they prorogued the Legislature for one day, delivered a throne speech and then brought down the budget we are discussing today. Now, not all of the reviews for the budget were positive. Some saw it as a Hail Mary pass to try and rescue a victory out of the jaws of certain defeat. As you know, Speaker, in football terms, a Hail Mary pass is made in desperation with only a small chance of success and time running out on the clock.

Others said it was a last-ditch attempt to hold onto power. The descriptive phrase “last ditch” is said to have originated with England’s King William III. He used it in a speech in the late 17th century, calling on his subjects to fight and die in the last ditch to defend England. I’m not sure how appropriate it is in the context of this budget. I certainly hope none of my Liberal friends actually die while on the hustings defending this budget, their platform and the decisions taken over the past 15 years.

However, it is not unfair to say, from what I’ve gathered from what has been said about the budget in most political circles, that there was a certain amount of desperation that led to some of the goodies contained in the budget. The electorate was fed a lot of promises—too many to swallow all at once, it seems. Even the editorial writers at the Toronto Star—and, dare I say, the normally Liberal-friendly and supportive Toronto Star?—had their doubts. They wrote, “These aren’t announcements from a government with a clear path to turning them into reality.”

So many promises, Speaker, and so many flashy ideas—stolen from the New Democrats. Not that there’s anything terribly wrong with that; voters know who came up with the ideas first. But when you promise everything, it turns into too much of a good thing, or, as the Toronto Star editorial writers saw it, “offering too much of a good thing at a moment when their credibility is stretched very thin.” Where were these progressive measures for the past 15 years?

Time and time again, we’ve heard from people and pundits claiming it was nothing but a glittering clump of baubles aimed at attracting the attention of the electorate on the eve of an election. Speaker, as you know, a bauble is but a small, showy trinket or decoration.

Many of the attention-grabbing aspects of this budget didn’t quite attain the credibility for the Liberals that they were hoping for when the brewmasters of this budget concoction slapped it together. “Concoction” is an interesting word. One of its meanings is an elaborate story, an improbable fabrication. In other words—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I think that’s unparliamentary. I’ll ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I’ll withdraw, Speaker.

In other words, we have a financial facade, one with an outward appearance maintained to conceal a less pleasant or credible reality.

It’s no secret that Ontario’s Auditor General had her doubts about the numbers used to concoct the promises contained within the pages of the budget we’re holding up to the opposition microscope today. She made a big deal out of the fact that in her opinion, changes were made to the way the financial reporting was done in order to obfuscate the true picture—you don’t like “obfuscate”?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I think it’s unparliamentary. I’ll ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I withdraw the word, Speaker. I won’t use the word, but it’s the word that’s used to blur, to confuse, to baffle, to confound, to muddy or bewilder—without using the word.

The Auditor General warned there won’t be enough money next year to pay for all the promises made in this budget.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And he won’t use the word.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I didn’t, Speaker. I’m not challenging you. I did not use that word.

Her opinion was reinforced by the—

Mr. Jim McDonell: What was the word?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: They’re giving me a hard time, Speaker—by the Financial Accountability Officer.

Sure, there are elements of the budget that ring loud with the electorate: more money for mental health, more money for children with health challenges. After 15 years in office, these files suddenly got dusted off and highlighted. I met last Friday with representatives from the John McGivney centre in Windsor, one of the 21 CTCs, or children’s treatment centres, in the province. They do it all at John McGivney: physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language services, social work, behaviour consultation and recreation therapy. They also have a cleft lip, palate and cranial-facial program. They host a seating and mobility clinic and offer autism services. They are committed to enriching the lives of children and youth with special needs by helping them reach their full potential.

The John McGivney centre services 3,000 clients annually. They’ll be celebrating their 40th anniversary just days after the election. When they started, they had 150 clients. Now it’s 3,000. They’re extremely efficient, and the wait-list for their services can run as little as just a few days all the way up to 18 months for certain specialty services. Other CTCs don’t do as well. Across the province at these 21 CTCs, there’s a waiting list that stretches to more than 27,000 families. When the 21 CTCs look at this budget, they’d like to see \$40 million a year for the next three years in order to reduce the intolerable wait times and increase the quality and frequency of rehab therapy.

Struggling families need the proper supports to manage their children with special needs on a day-to-day basis. It’s tougher still in our rural areas, where these specialized services are not as available.

More than 80,000 children and youth with special needs and their families are served by these 21 children’s treatment centres. The people who work there are the

good angels, the dedicated ones assisting very vulnerable children. These kids deserve a good start. Unfortunately, provincial funding for the John McGivney centre hasn't been increased in nearly five years—four years ago, they got a very tiny increase. You can see why critics have labelled this budget a Hail Mary budget and a last-ditch attempt at currying favour with the voters.

Despite the need, despite the lengthy waiting list, no increase for four years and then just a little tiny one—actually, if you think about it, as incredible as it may sound, four or five years without an increase isn't all that bad when you look at other facilities, such as Maryvale in Windsor. They handle children and teenagers with issues of mental health, thousands of them, some suicidal, and they have very long waiting lists. They do an extremely good job, but when it comes to their base funding from this Liberal government, Maryvale has not had an increase—not a penny, not a nickel, not a dime—in 15 years.

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Across this great province today, we have 12,000 children and youth standing in line, children and youth with mental health issues waiting for professional help, waiting for someone to give them a hand in dealing with the demons upsetting their mental stability—12,000 young people. If we don't give them the help they need in the early stages, we know these issues will get worse.

Speaker, if a kid breaks an arm or a leg, we take her to the emergency ward and she gets it fixed right away. If that same child attempts suicide, we take them to the emergency ward and they're turned away and have to wait six months or longer to get counselling. There is something very, very wrong with this picture, and it's the same story playing out across the province. The only difference is the wait times: six months here, 12 months over there and 18 months someplace else.

Speaker, I'm wearing a pin—it's not a prop; we were given these today. This is Children's Mental Health Week in Ontario. Child and youth mental health matters, is what the pin signifies.

Just before he left Ontario politics to go to Ottawa and tackle the pharmacare program, the former Minister of Health, Mr. Hoskins, was saying, "There's no health without mental health." Speaker, I don't know if you're aware, but children's mental health in Ontario is not a mandated service. It's discretionary. The Liberals should be ashamed of that. It's a discretionary program, not a mandated program. The Liberals are failing our children and youth.

If, indeed, there is no health without mental health, then where have they been for the past 15 years? Why are young people in Thunder Bay waiting 208 days—more than half a year—for life-saving mental health treatment? Why are they waiting a year in the Barrie area and, for goodness' sake, why in the affluent area of Ottawa do young people with mental health problems have to wait 575 days—a year and a half—for counselling and treatment?

What is wrong with that picture, Speaker? What is wrong with the Liberal agenda on mental health? Why

does it take six months or more after someone attempts suicide to get to the hospital for them to get their first appointment with a psychiatrist?

There is extra money in this proposed budget for mental health, but it can't make up for the lack of enough money to meet the need over the past many years. That's why we have a mental health crisis. That's why the wait times are so long. Yet, the Liberals wonder why people are cynical about the promises tossed into this budget concoction.

I just gave you two local Windsor examples. I could spend much more time listing other funding deficiencies over the past 15 years.

No matter which party wins this election on the 7th of June, all politics aside, you are all invited: The John McGivney centre is inviting all of you to spend time with their young people two days later on June 9. Come out and see their wonderful facility, meet their dedicated staff and volunteers, and spend time with some of the warmest, most wonderful children you will ever meet, with smiles a mile wide. They're holding a superhero day on June 9—you all would be welcome guests—at 3945 Matchette Road in Windsor.

For some of us, this budget measures act and indeed this election will all come down to trust and credibility. It has been said that the most expensive thing in the world is trust. It takes years to earn, and it can be lost in a matter of seconds. Credibility is lost when there are big discrepancies between what our political leaders and parties say and what they do. Trust is built on credibility, and credibility comes from acting in the interest of others before your own. I don't mean acting on behalf of the biggest developers in Canada, as opposed to the people you should be representing. A hidden agenda destroys trust in a heartbeat.

Credibility matters to some of us, Mr. Speaker. Without character, there is no credibility. Without credibility, there is no trust.

This budget is the epitome of a stretch goal, as the Premier likes to speak about when certain promises remain unfulfilled. Another stretch goal, the so-called fair hydro plan, will, according to the Auditor General, cost us an extra \$28 billion.

Speaker, there is new money in the budget for the health care system, but some of us say that system is not healthy; it's not caring; it's not a system that functions well. It is now and has been for a long time a system in crisis. For years, hospital budgets were frozen or just given enough to keep up with inflation. Mental health was given short shrift.

Just recently, the two NDP members from London told us about Dawn Warren. She was in crisis. Her husband, David, tried to have her admitted. She was kept on a stretcher in a hallway, in mental distress, for five days and nights before a bed opened up for her on the mental health ward. No one with any credibility can justify that; that's for certain.

Time and time again in this House, we have heard, from all corners of the province, horrifying stories of

hallway medicine: people on stretchers for days, and not just in the hallways, but in closets, TV rooms, washrooms, linen closets, broom closets. Why? Because there aren't enough beds. Some of the people in hospital beds should be in beds in long-term-care homes, but we don't have enough of them.

The Liberals have been in power for 15 years in Ontario. They have bungled some very important files during their time in office. They've created crisis after crisis, and all the promises in this budget, all the King's horses, all the King's men won't be able to put their credibility back together again, Speaker. They've lost the trust of most of the people in Ontario. Trust and credibility—that's what this election will come down to. And the chickens have come home to roost.

I look forward to hearing other people say more about this budget this afternoon—a budget that certainly cannot be supported.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's a privilege to rise in this House.

I, too, want to thank the members who are choosing not to run in the next election for all the work they do.

Our member from Welland is an example of somebody who has put many years into public service. She will be missed around here. I'm happy to see that she actually graduated years before me, so now I get an idea of just where she is on that time totem pole.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Easy.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'll tell you all about it, Jim.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Yes.

It's interesting to hear the member from Windsor-Tecumseh talk about credibility and the trust of the public. I think that is something that this government has lost.

We hear the minister talking about how good things are and how things are trending down—as the member from Parry Sound talked about. He talked how when they came, the debt-to-GDP was 27%; now it's 40%. I don't know in whose world that's trending down. But when you say something enough, I guess the thought is, people will believe you.

The highest subnational debt in the world—when they came into power, we were the number one mining industry in the world; now we're number—is it 23? That's not any improvement in our economic well-being. Automotive—they're number one now; a few years ago we were down to number three, and now below that.

People want to have some trust in the government.

I got a letter from our Community Living group—three of them—two weeks ago, talking about the minimum wage issue. Their costs have gone up significantly. A lot of their money comes from local fundraising, because they're not fully funded. Where do they get the difference? They're short of money. They're laying people off. These are services where they're helping the mentally challenged people of our region and the families that—we already heard before this latest round how they're waiting. They get one day of respite over a month

and a half. As one lady said, how do you do basic tasks like get your groceries? It just can't be done. And there's no help.

You look at it over and over again. I wonder about my grandchildren. I'm quite proud of the two grandchildren I have, but what life are they going to have going forward, when you look at the debt they're carrying? The numbers are so big that people don't equate what they are. A billion dollars: Some of the things it will purchase—in South Glengarry, that would cover over 4,000 kilometres of road construction. You're talking about 21,000 seniors in long-term care per year. Those are big numbers. Those are resources that have been wasted, money that's gone.

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What happened to the days when Ontario used to build practical infrastructure, and lots of it? We're not seeing that anymore. We're seeing wasted, grandiose infrastructure that's just not the Ontario that I think we should be part of.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: In the some 10-odd minutes that I've got left in this debate, I want to talk about some of the stuff that's not in the budget that I think should have been there and, certainly, something that the New Democrats and Andrea Horwath have turned their attention to when it comes to the things that we would do if we're government. I just want to raise a couple of them that I think most members in this House would at least be aware of.

Has anybody gone to gas up their car or truck lately? Oh, my God. We're paying \$1.40 a litre. It's about \$1.35 here in Toronto. It's not often that the Timmins gas prices are close to Toronto's. We're at \$1.40. It is absolutely ridiculous. If you take a look at the price of a barrel today—I just looked online; it's about \$70 a barrel. Do you remember, Speaker, not that long ago when the price of oil was hovering around \$120 to \$130 a barrel, maybe five or six years ago? We were paying these prices. We were paying \$1.40 a litre when the price of a barrel was up that high. The price of a barrel is half of what it used to be back then, and we're paying the same price for gas at the pump that we used to pay when the price of a barrel was twice the price it is today. It makes no sense. Clearly, there's some profit-taking going on in the industry. And in the end, who is getting it stuck to them? The people of this province and the people of this country are being stuck with gas prices that are way out of whack.

What makes everybody even more upset—you drive and you say, "Do you know what? I'm looking at the price of gas. It's \$1.40 today." Let's say it's on a Wednesday. You say, "Well, I might wait to gas up my car until the gas gauge goes a little bit lower." You wait until the weekend, and the darn thing jumps up 10 cents, and you say, "My God, I should have bought it at \$1.40. That was a deal."

It is really getting to be crazy. The price of gas is fluctuating everywhere, and it's not even relating in the remotest way to what the price of a barrel is at.

I would have hoped that the government, seeing these particular sky-high gas prices that we pay at the pump, would have said, "We're going to do something in order to offset the price of gas."

The Conservatives talk about, "Well, we'll give you back the gas tax once we scrap cap-and-trade—four and a half cents a litre." Most people will say, "Hurrah." But you know what the gas companies are going to do? They're going to jump it up four and a half cents. Do you think for one second that if the Conservatives, Liberals or New Democrats were to lower the gas price tax those oil companies wouldn't take the difference and put it back up on the price that we pay at the pump? We'd get gouged.

The only way to fix this, quite frankly—and this is where we separate the New Democrats from the other two parties—is to come in with a form of gas price regulation and say, "Listen: In the end, if these large companies, a couple of big refineries that control most of the market in Canada, can't get their act under control, and if they're gouging the market, then we need to regulate it."

As I was telling a good friend of mine the other day—I was talking to a friend of mine, John, and his dad. They're very strong Conservatives. In fact, I know my friend over here, Mr. Miller, would know who I'm talking about if I was to use the name. We had this very conversation. I said, "John, if you had competition, you probably would have a lower price." If you think back to the day when we had a lot of independents that were operating in the system, those independents were dropping the price at the pump, and it was forcing the large Petrocans and Essos to drop their price to compete with the small independents. But what has happened? The large companies—the Petrocans and Essos of this world and others—have bought out the independents and driven them out of business. So now we've got the worst of both worlds: We've got a free market system with no competition. That's what used to happen at the turn of the last century with railroads and a whole bunch of other things. Governments of the day—right-wing governments, people like Roosevelt; and I'm not talking about Franklin, I'm talking about his uncle Theodore—those guys started understanding that if there was no competition in a private market, you needed to find a way to set the playing field so that the public didn't get gouged. They started to regulate certain industries in order to make sure that the right thing was done when it came to the consumer. There's nothing about this in the budget.

I just say I'm glad and I'm proud to be a New Democrat who is at least willing to take this issue on. I'm not promising for a second that the price of gas is going to drop down to 70 cents a litre; not at all. What will happen is the price will come down and become stable, and you will not see the types of swings we have today.

The other thing that's not in the budget, especially for us guys in the northern part of Ontario—that's like north of Finch—

Laughter.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I thought you'd get a kick out of that—where we get more snow, is this winter road maintenance problem that we have. Now, it used to be—

M^{me} France Gélinas: Privatization.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm getting there. It used to be at one time we had a hybrid system. We had MTO that owned plows, did the dispatching, decided what the circuit times were. What they would do is they would augment the service by hiring local contractors to come in to do some of the extra work that needed to be done if there were snowstorms etc. So you had kind of a competition, a system where you had private plow operators that would bid for work within MTO, and it kept the prices pretty reasonable.

The Tories came in. They decided to start the privatization by increasing the amount of private plows, although they did keep the management of the system in place. But what you did is you outsourced and privatized the MTO plows. And here's the irony: The Liberals, who were in opposition at the time, railed against the government of the day and said, "Oh, my God, you can't have that happen. If you privatize the system, the price will go up and the quality will go down." They got the power and what did they do? They completed the privatization by privatizing all of the plows, the management, the dispatching, the circuit times and everything. Now, we've got this crazy system that is privatized, where contractors sign contracts with the government and they're supposedly penalized if they don't follow what the contract says when it comes to winter road maintenance, but there are about 60% to 70% of the fines that aren't even collected. So the government itself is admitting that the system they designed doesn't work.

Again, I'm proud of Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats, who are saying, in this upcoming election, that we can take that back. We first of all take back the management of the system, the patrolling of the system, deciding what the circuit times are, and as contracts with contractors come due, we decide which ones we don't renew and how we deal with the plows by way of maybe a mix of MTO and private contractors. That's yet to be seen, but that will be a system that will unfold with time.

What that will do is bring us back to the day where we used to get on the highway when it would snow and not have to worry. I look at my good friend the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North. He drives highways the same way that I do and my other colleagues do. You never used to worry about driving on a northern highway unless there was a snow storm. If you had a bad snow storm and it was one of those really, really bad days, you didn't take the road. You understood. But you know what? The highway was open. You didn't hear of highway closures the way that you do now.

Now you take a highway with a little bit of dusting and you're lucky if you see a sand truck come by the next day, or a salt truck the day after. How many times has Highway 144 between Timmins and Sudbury been closed down as the result of winter road maintenance? How many times have we seen Highway 11 and Highway 655

closed down as a result of the privatization of highway maintenance?

I'm just saying the government didn't have to do this. It had a choice. Instead, what it did, unfortunately, was try to sort of say, "Hey, my friends in the private sector, how can I give you more access to public funds, and maybe we get something in return?" Who knows? I don't know. I've got to believe something happened.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Election financing.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, they got caught, and that's why we have election financing.

But my point is, Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats have solutions to these problems that are practical, that save us money and provide a better standard of service to the public out there. As my leader has said, elections are not having to choose between bad and worse. You don't have to choose between the bad Liberals who privatized our winter road maintenance, privatized our electricity system and have increasing privatization in our health care system, all of which cost us more money and we get less service and have a lesser control on the system—or have to choose between bad and worse, worse being our friends in the Conservatives under Doug Ford, who says all kinds of things that, at the end of the day, most people read into. It ain't going to be good for the average citizen and the services that we rely on.

You can choose change. You can choose change for the better. You can vote for Andrea Horwath and know that at the end, you're going to have somebody standing in your corner whom you can trust, somebody who is competent, who is able to do what needs to be done for the people of Ontario, and in a way that, over a period of five years, we're able to come close to balance on the budget—something that neither the Liberals nor the Tories are going to be able to do with the fiscal plans that they've put in place.

I've got to tell you, I stand proud as a New Democrat going into this election, and know darn well that people in this province will respond—and respond in a positive way.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 23, 2018, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Sousa has moved third reading of Bill 31, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Mr. James J. Bradley: I have good news.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I wish to inform the House that I have received a request for a deferral of this vote from the chief government whip,

pursuant to standing order 28(h), asking that third reading of Bill 31, the Plan for Care and Opportunity Act (Budget Measures), 2018, be deferred until deferred votes tomorrow, Tuesday, May 8.

Third reading vote deferred.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

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

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act respecting transparency of pay in employment / Loi portant sur la transparence salariale.

An Act to enact the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Act, 2018 and the Correctional Services and Reintegration Act, 2018, to make related amendments to other Acts, to repeal an Act and to revoke a regulation / Loi édictant la Loi de 2018 sur le ministère de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels et la Loi de 2018 sur les services correctionnels et la réinsertion sociale, apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois et abrogeant une loi et un règlement.

An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act and the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000 / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les renseignements concernant le consommateur et la Loi de 2000 sur les normes techniques et la sécurité.

An Act respecting the Kingston Health Sciences Centre.

An Act respecting Emmanuel Bible College.

An Act to revive Home Air Support Inc.

An Act to revive 504260 Ontario Ltd.

An Act to revive Esquire Ventures Inc.

An Act to revive 2297970 Ontario Inc.

An Act to revive Tencrest Realty Ltd.

An Act respecting the Luso Canadian Charitable Society.

An Act to revive 2258733 Ontario Inc.

An Act to revive James Wilson Holdings Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day? I recognize the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Hon. Laura Albanese: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Ms. Albanese has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1754.

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (IND)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Hon. / L'hon. Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (IND)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
MacLaren, Jack (IND)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Milczyn, Hon. / L'hon. Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite Enfance et de la Garde d'enfants
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Hon. / L'hon. Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation
Vacant	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Vacant	Parkdale–High Park	
Vacant	St. Paul's	
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Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Lisa MacLeod
Liz Sandals
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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Deborah Matthews, Ted McMeekin
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Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Ann Hoggarth, Gila Martow
Ted McMeekin, Peter Tabuns
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley