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Mardi
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 17 July 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 17 juillet 2018

*The House met at 0900.
Prayers.*

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(b), both the member for Scarborough–Guildwood and the member for Toronto–Danforth have notified the Clerk of their intention to file a notice of reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 2, An Act respecting Hydro One Limited, the termination of the White Pines Wind Project and the labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903. The order for second reading of Bill 2 may therefore not be called today.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 16, 2018, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm advised that the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane last gave a presentation on the throne speech, and so now we're going to ask for questions and comments related to his remarks.

The member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I wasn't expecting to go first, but I'll take it.

Listen, Mr. Speaker, I was actually here for all of the presentation made by the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane. He touched, I think, on one of the issues that I find quite interesting and bizarre as far as the government's actions.

Ontario has always been known as a stable place to come and do business. It has always been known as the jurisdiction that's stable. When you come to Ontario as a local Ontarian investor or you come from the States or anywhere else in the world, you know you've got a stable regime and that, in the end, if you invest money here, the rules of the land will prevail and your investment is safe.

Well, the decision made by the government in that particular bill they introduced yesterday in regard to the windmills is really making a mockery of all of that. What is really interesting is that it's being done by a Conservative government. You would think that a Conservative government would understand you don't do things in the

marketplace in order to—how would you say?—confuse the investor as to the security of their investment in your jurisdiction.

What the government is doing in this particular bill on the wind farms is saying somebody can come to Ontario, negotiate a contract—in this case, with essentially the government, because it's done with the IESO through the hydro system—and that contract doesn't mean anything because a future government can come in and cancel it on you and put you out of pocket for millions and millions of dollars. We're talking in the tens of millions, if not the hundreds of millions, of dollars. This is all being done by this government, which raises the question that they're sending out a message that Ontario is not that stable place that it used to be.

What is even more interesting is that, by fiat, by use of their power of a majority, they're actually going to prevent any lawsuits from coming forward on this. So I don't think this is such a good idea from a business perspective. It being done by Conservatives is even more bizarre.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: Thank you, Speaker, and good morning to you.

It's a pleasure to stand in the Legislature this morning and bring some remarks on behalf of the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, who always does a great job speaking in this House and bringing local issues to light here in the Legislature. I enjoy working with him. We'll be working especially closely over the next four years in our roles as officers of the Legislature for our respective parties here, and ensuring that the government's agenda gets through the Legislature as quickly as we possibly can.

I know yesterday the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane was talking about wildfires that are currently burning in northern Ontario near his community as well, and right across the north. It's a very concerning issue that's happening in northern Ontario right now with the tinder-dry conditions that we've been experiencing. We did get a little bit of rain yesterday here in Toronto. I'm not sure, maybe we'll get a weather forecast from the member opposite to find out if they've had any rain. I know the water bombers have been busy up there doing the best that they can to try to get this situation under control.

Yesterday we heard from our Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry on what's happening within that ministry to ensure that we have a coordinated effort. Our

employees, our public service Ministry of Natural Resources employees, are working in harmony with other jurisdictions as well to ensure that we can keep a handle on this very, very dangerous situation that's occurring in the north. I commend the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for always bringing those local issues to light.

On the issue of the wind turbines: We have made no mistake about where we stand on these issues, particularly on the White Pines issue, which is in my riding. We have an unwilling host community. They have been an unwilling host community in Prince Edward county for years and years. The previous government forced this wind project down their throats, against the wishes of the vast majority of people in Prince Edward county.

We're listening to the people of Ontario on this side of the House, and we will continue to act in the best interests of the people of Ontario, because we are a government for the people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I wasn't here in the House and didn't have the pleasure of hearing the debate that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane brought forward, but I know that he did a great job and—

Interruption.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: You have to take that away, I think. It's on a video that just came on automatically.

The point is, the House leader talked about how this is a government for the people. I think we need to re-evaluate that title. When you're cancelling the cap-and-trade program, you're affecting communities throughout.

In London, just this morning, we have had a project be cancelled with regard to biogas. They were going to actually use those gases to provide energy to homes. That project has been cancelled in London, with several other southwestern Ontario projects. In London, that was going to be a very environmentally friendly type of initiative. It was going to generate some income for the city, and it's been cancelled. Quite honestly, if it's for the people, you should have really given people some notice and some time.

Premier Ford, at the time a candidate, just really made announcements off the cuff and didn't back them up as to how he was going to do it. Now we're being called back to the Legislature, and everything has just really stopped without any explanation, without any consultation of which programs are working for municipalities. I'm sure there are municipalities like London that were willing to continue that program, but yet you've cancelled the cap-and-trade arbitrarily and you've left people out in the cold without asking what the people wanted and which programs were actually working and helping the environment.

So your title, "For the People"—I think you need to ask the people what they're looking for before you tell them what they need.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments. I recognize the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's lovely to see you in the chair, and congratulations on your re-election. It's wonderful to be back here, and this time in government.

Let me be perfectly clear to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, whom I'm also proud to see back in this assembly: There are many people on this side of the House—myself, the Minister of Economic Development, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Agriculture and the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka included—who were here when the Liberals decided, with the help of the New Democrats, to usher in the Green Energy Act that destroyed local communities across rural Ontario. Because of those industrial wind turbines, we fought tooth and nail. And during the minority Parliament, not too long ago, they stood hand in hand with the Liberals in order to make those decisions that drove up energy prices across this great province and cost us jobs and made it very difficult for seniors in many communities across our province to heat their homes or eat.

0910

I'm simply saying here today that if they want to talk about the people, the strongest mandate in a generation is here on this side of the assembly with Premier Ford. That's why we have 76 members—because people have been fed up with the energy policies of the New Democrats and the Liberals. That's why we're here today. We're going to continue to stand up for the people who sent us here. One thing we heard loud and clear since 2009 when the Green Energy Act made its way to the floor of this assembly by then-Minister of Energy and Infrastructure George Smitherman was that people didn't want it. Finally, the people have not only spoken but have been listened to. That's why we are on this side of the House. This is why we're going to continue to make sure that energy policy in the province of Ontario is reflective of the needs of the people of this province.

I'm very proud to be here once again, not only as the minister, but for the fifth time, as the MPP for Nepean.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I return to the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane for final comments.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to thank my colleagues from Timmins, London–Fanshawe, the government House leader and the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services for their comments.

We've had a bit of rain, but the forest fire season is still very critical. I'd like to again thank the MNR.

On the issue of cancelling green energy contracts: The issue isn't the cost of the power; the issue is that you're cancelling contracts that have been entered into with the previous government and you're trying to indemnify yourselves from the cost of cancelling those contracts. Actually, what we're asking for is: Show us the cost. The projects have been built, and now to say that we're going to cancel them, tear them out of the ground—the people

of Ontario are going to end up paying huge costs for that. You're trying to avoid that by saying, "Oh, no, you can't sue the government," and that's what you're putting into this legislation. Quite frankly, that doesn't make sense.

You've won a majority. No one is disputing that. What we're disputing is—you didn't win authority of cancelling previous laws and, specifically, contracts. When someone enters into a contract, now that you're the government, you wouldn't expect if it's a 20-year contract that when your regime ends, all those people would lose their contracts. Government doesn't work that way, and you're going to find that out the hard way.

It was the same when the gas plant contracts were cancelled. It cost Ontario taxpayers a billion dollars. What you're doing now is gas plants scandal Ford-style, and Ontario taxpayers are going to pay for it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate. I recognize the member from Markham–Stouffville.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise today on behalf of the people of Markham–Stouffville. Let me just take the opportunity to congratulate you and, through you, the other Speakers who were elected. I look forward to working with you, and I know that you will do a great job of controlling and making sure that this is one of the most effective Parliaments Ontario has ever had.

I want to start by thanking my family for this because, above all, they are the ones who have made the biggest sacrifice in order to allow me to be here, and previously in my time in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, before I go any further, I will be splitting my time with the honourable member for Cambridge. Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

I want to go back. My family, of course, has sacrificed so much to give me the opportunity to be here and to be in Ottawa. It is a very difficult thing for family. They often take the brunt of the bad things or the bad decisions that you make or the decisions that you have to fight for that aren't necessarily popular, but they rarely celebrate with you when things go right. So I want to thank my wife, Melanie, and my daughters, Natalie and Olivia. They are 12 and almost 10 and have really been my rocks in my time in office, both here and in Ottawa. I couldn't do this without them, and I thank them.

I also want to take a moment to thank the previous member of provincial Parliament, the honourable Dr. Helena Jaczek. In my time in office, when I was a member of Parliament, we worked together very, very closely on many, many issues. I considered her a friend before the election, during the election, and I still consider her a friend. I know that she's somebody who gave so much to our community, both as a member of provincial Parliament and as the medical officer of health for York region. I wish her, her husband, Hersh, and her staff who supported her for many years all the best in the challenges that they face going forward.

I also want to thank my campaign team. I was nominated back in November 2016, and to say that the last

number of months have been a challenging and unique few months in my time as a candidate would be a bit of an understatement. They were with me—not only with me, but with the broader Progressive Conservative family—through all of the difficult times, through the challenges that led up to the election and through what was a very difficult election. Through some cold days and very, very hot days, my campaign team stuck with me. In particular, I want to thank my campaign manager, Owen Macri. He has been with me since 2008, and I'm glad to say that he has helped me win more elections than I've lost. I'm glad that he's joining us here at Queen's Park so that we can continue what we started and really face the challenges that this province has.

I want to also thank, of course, the people of Markham–Stouffville. This is a great riding. It is a riding that I grew up in. I went to school in Markham at St. Patrick's Catholic school. It was a little elementary school in the small town of Markham at the time. Markham has exploded to become one of our most important centres of commerce. I know the members for Kitchener might dispute it, but it's still one of the centres of excellence when it comes to technology and innovation. The town of Stouffville, my hometown, is a community that has really stood by me throughout very good days and very bad days, so I truly thank the people of my hometown.

I am very excited to be here, Mr. Speaker. There is a lot of work that has to be done and there are a number of challenges that we face. Look, I'm very excited. Some of the things that we highlighted in the throne speech—of course, we're going to start tackling the issue with hydro. I was very happy to see that we've started to make progress on White Pines and scaling back and eliminating some of the high-priced green energy contracts. Over the last 18 months, I have heard time and time again from small, medium and large job creators about how difficult it has been for them to prosper in the province of Ontario. One of the things that they have continuously highlighted for me is the cost of energy on top of cap-and-trade carbon tax issues and on top of overregulation and red tape. There is an excitement that we're seeing with the small, medium and large job creators that we haven't seen in this province in over 10 years.

I'm also very excited by some of the other things that we've talked about. I'm excited that we're putting our students at York University first and finally getting them back into the classroom. This should have been done a long time ago; it wasn't. The previous government has kept students out of the classroom since March. That is completely unacceptable. I'm glad that the Premier brought this Legislature back so that we could, in part, deal with that issue.

But I'm also very excited about some of the other things that we talked about in the campaign. We talked about reducing taxes for our middle-income earners. We're hearing today in some reports, as I was coming down, of how stretched people are feeling in Toronto and how difficult it is for them to make ends meet. This is a

government that has decided that we're going to start to reverse that trend. We're going to put more money back into their pockets so that they can invest in themselves, they can invest in their future, they can invest in their small businesses and they can invest in their families. I'm very, very excited to be able to do that, Mr. Speaker, but I'm also excited that this is a government—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Stop the clock.

I realize that it's summer and I realize that we're excited to be here, but I'm having a difficult time hearing our speaker. I think we deserve to respect what he has to say, so I would ask that the conversation cease, or be at a very, very, very low roar. Okay? So, having said that: Message sent; message delivered.

Back to the speaker from Markham–Stouffville.

0920

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very excited by the fact that, during the campaign, we committed to taking the lowest-income earners off of the tax rolls altogether, because when you talk about supporting Ontarians and supporting the most vulnerable Ontarians, you can't even talk about that when people are getting up and working hard every single day and a portion of their earnings comes to the government. It's one of the promises that I'm very, very excited about.

Yes, there's a lot that we have on the table. We're going to balance the budget. We're going to do it in an appropriate fashion. We're going to do it in a responsible way. We're going to make changes to the education system, including changing a math curriculum that has been failing our students. There's a lot that we have to do, and I can't tell you how honoured I am to have this opportunity to be here, to be a part of the debate, to be a part of this Parliament.

I will close by saying this: This is a chamber where there will be lots of debate. There will be lots of discussion. We aren't always going to agree with each other, but Ontarians didn't send us here to be bumps on a log. We should always respect the fact that we may have disagreements, that we may fight very hard in this place, but that's what Ontarians want. They want their members of provincial Parliament to fight over the issues, to debate the issues and for it to be a vigorous debate. But what we can't do as members of Parliament, and what we've seen sometimes in previous Legislatures—we have to remember that what we do is important and that it is never acceptable for us to talk down the job that we do as members of provincial Parliament, as representatives of the people. We should never do that, because Ontarians are relying upon us to get the job done.

Although we may disagree on how we balance the budget, although we may disagree on how we put more money back in people's pockets, where tax cuts should come and on what curriculum is best for our students, we can all agree that we're here for the same reason, and that's to provide a better Ontario for the next generations of Ontarians. I'm here fighting for my kids, but I'm also

here fighting for the present. I'm here fighting for the people who are having trouble making ends meet. I hope that as we do this, we can always remember that.

I take a little bit of inspiration from the member from Kitchener. When we were here in our earliest discussions about how this place works, he said that it's not The West Wing. As a former member of Parliament, I was always asked to speak to new candidates, and I always told them that elections aren't The West Wing. They're boring, but they're tough, and you've got to get it done. But I also tell newly elected members, and I did it myself, to watch the last episode of The West Wing, because having gone through defeat, I can tell you there is nothing more difficult than leaving what you love to do. There is nothing more difficult than having to walk away from representing your community.

But in the fullness of time, you can look back at what you've accomplished. Although people in your community might not necessarily know that you helped with that bridge or helped with that road or helped bring a park to a community, or that the person sitting at the Tim Hortons is somebody that you helped put back on their feet—they might never know that, but in the fullness of time, you will know that that is what you accomplished.

Again, I congratulate all honourable members for being here today, and again I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to working with all of you in the months and years ahead.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Continuing along, I now recognize the member from Cambridge.

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: I rise today to give my remarks to the speech from the throne in my maiden speech to this House. I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election, and I would also like to thank the former member representing my riding of Cambridge, Kathryn McGarry, for her service over the last four years. She conducted herself with grace and with enthusiasm for her work. I would like to thank a dear friend, Ron Dancey of Glen Morris, who served as my campaign chair.

It is an honour to be here and to represent the people of the riding of Cambridge. As many of you know, my riding consists of a mix of young families, long-time residents and new Canadians, those who were born in the riding and those who moved there seeking a better tomorrow.

We are home to many small businesses, advocated for on their behalf by the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce.

The landscape of the riding is picturesque, with many historic buildings, some from as early as the 1820s. Downtown Galt is defined by the Grand River that runs through it, and is so beautiful that the television series *The Handmaid's Tale* is filmed there.

In Preston, home to Riverside Park, we host a fantastic Canada Day parade. In July, the riding hosts the Scottish festival, with musical entertainment and Highland games. Our riding is home to the third-oldest farmers' market in the country, operating in the same building since 1830. And I cannot forget the beautiful Remembrance Day ceremonies that are held in Galt, Preston and Ayr.

While I was not born in Cambridge, these are some of the reasons that my husband and I chose Cambridge as the place we wanted to raise our family. In fact, my mother, Maria, and my late grandparents lived in Cambridge for a short period of time upon moving to Ontario from Portugal. My father, Antonio, was born in Trinidad, a place that I lived in for a short time in my teenage years with my parents and my brothers, Nathan and Patrick. And while I am thankful for my time there, I will always be grateful that my parents decided to move back home, back to Ontario.

As some of you may know, my husband, Jim Karahalios, who is my strongest advocate and biggest supporter, is of Hellenic descent. His mother, Maria, and his late father, Konstantine—better known as Gus—were both born in Greece. Both of them chose to come to Ontario for a better life, and they were each successful entrepreneurs. Maria started Maria's Hair Salon, located in Toronto at Bathurst and St. Clair. She later joined my late father-in-law in running their family business, Black Cat Fish and Chips, that was located in north Toronto for over 60 years until his passing. Every Good Friday during Easter for the last few years of my father-in-law's life, you would find me, along with my husband, working at the restaurant trying to keep up with the crowds.

While our son's ancestral background is diverse, his grandparents chose to come to Ontario for the same reasons, because of the promise this province offered: the opportunity to live in a free society, a society with sound laws, a society that promotes caring for its most vulnerable and never gives up on its people, a society that provides equality of opportunity, a society that provides its people with the freedom to worship, a society that thrives on the competition of ideas, a society whose governance respects tradition while reflecting the will of its people through a Parliament that is supreme, and a free society that not only allows but promotes the freedom of its people to participate in the political process without fear of retribution. This common cause, these common sets of values, motivated my son's grandparents to pick Ontario to call home and to start a new life, and they motivate me today.

I am a graduate of the University of Toronto. My career was spent in the health care sector in a variety of roles, including advocating on behalf of patients and those in need.

But in my new role, Mr. Speaker, as a member of this provincial Parliament, I know that the seat I occupy belongs to the people of the riding of Cambridge, who have entrusted me with this responsibility. I will strive to do my best not to let them down.

My involvement in political life is not new. Since the second day after I married my husband, we've been on one campaign followed by another. But my motivations for seeking public office came about more recently.

Remarkably, it was only a short eight months ago, when our party was under different leadership, that my husband and my family faced a lawsuit launched against Jim because of his campaigns called Axe the Carbon Tax

and Take Back Our PC Party. The legal case that was filed against him was an egregious attempt to stifle dissent. At the time, my husband was deemed an outcast in the political process. In the same week the lawsuit was launched, he was escorted out of a political convention and banished from our party. Within weeks of the lawsuit commencing, however, Justice Paul Perell of the Superior Court dismissed the case as a SLAPP, short for "strategic litigation against public participation."

As an aside, Mr. Speaker, some new members to this House may not be aware that it was only as recently as 2015 that Bill 52, entitled the Protection of Public Participation Act, was enacted. Anti-SLAPP legislation, as it is commonly referred to, provides defendants a better way to defend themselves in court against these types of SLAPPs, which are typically filed by individuals or entities that are better resourced and meant to intimidate or punish people for speaking out on matters of public interest. As such, anti-SLAPP legislation allows for people to participate more freely in public discussions without fear of retribution by being able to ask the court to dismiss these suits early on in a court proceeding.

Under a different set of circumstances, and if Bill 52 did not exist, it is possible that today, instead of me being in this House and giving my maiden speech, my family could have still been in the middle of a long, expensive and frivolous lawsuit, defending the right of all people in Ontario to participate freely in the political process.

0930

It goes without saying that Bill 52 is very near to me. As such, I would like to take this opportunity to offer my sincere thanks and gratitude to the prior government, to this House and its members for enacting this important piece of legislation. I guess, after all, it is true what they say, Mr. Speaker: There is no monopoly on a good idea.

These are the events that inspired and showed me first-hand the importance of what happens here and how it directly affects the lives of the people of Ontario. Throughout our ordeal, my family was encouraged to fight, because we knew that one day a new day would dawn in Ontario—a day where Ontario would be governed by a Premier and a government that would be for the people and that would axe the carbon tax.

Today we see that a new day has in fact dawned in Ontario. Today, after years of many in Ontario being driven to the brink of energy poverty as a result of failed experiments with Ontario's electricity system, I am proud to be a part of a government that will bring common sense back to Ontario's energy policy by taking immediate steps to reduce hydro rates using the supremacy of this Parliament, an idea that was first advocated for politically in 2015 by my husband and his support of the campaign of the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and alongside the late, great mayor of the city of Toronto, Rob Ford. I am proud to be a part of a government that will scrap the carbon tax, or as some prefer to say, "axe the carbon tax," by eliminating cap-and-trade and fighting against the imposition of all carbon taxes in any form and by any disguise.

I am proud to be part of a government that trusts taxpayers and a government that knows that no dollar is better spent than the dollar that is spent by the people and for the people, a government that recognizes the right of people to stand for what is right even when it isn't easy. I am proud to be a part of that government—a government that is for the people.

I look forward to serving as a member of this House and as a parliamentary assistant. I look forward to ensuring that community and social services are there for those in need and that we never give up on them. But, Mr. Speaker, I need to warn you: Being an MPP and a parliamentary assistant are actually not the most important jobs that I have. My most important job and the one that I will always cherish and put first is being the mother to my two-year-old son, Victor.

I know our work won't be easy, but through hard work and determination, I know the best is yet to come for the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to offer a brief commentary on the member from Markham–Stouffville and the member from Cambridge.

The member from Markham–Stouffville actually did reference the orientation process that we were part of. I sat on that panel and I did comment that this is not The West Wing; the stakes are real here, the issues are real. Sometimes there's a romantic vision of what we do here, and that will be quickly dispelled, as you know from your former work. Really, we're hoping that we're not in The West Wing, but we're also not going to live a House of Cards episode here at Queen's Park.

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Some humour, that's right.

The member from Cambridge, on her inaugural comments here in the House: Congratulations on your win, as well. I have to say, I did work very well with the former member Kathryn McGarry. That can't be said for all the Liberal members during that time period. However, your community is very engaged just like Waterloo is very engaged, and they will hold you to a very high level of accountability.

I do agree with you that the community and social services file is probably one of the most emotional files here at Queen's Park, because this is where you actually get to see how policy directly impacts the quality of life of children, of families and how it either provides a barrier for their success or lifts them up out of some of the pain that they experience. Having that empathy is really important, but having policies that translate into real solutions—because I will tell you that with 15,000 special-needs adults on wait-lists for supportive housing, for instance, in Waterloo region alone, that problem is big. It will take all of our collective interest to solve that issue, and I urge you to work with us on that file.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? I recognize the member from Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte.

Mr. Doug Downey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It sounds a bit like a game show when you roll it out like that. I'm pleased to rise.

It really resonated with me when the member from Markham–Stouffville talked about having something and then losing it and getting it back, and the value that you place on it. I think that's a great perspective for all of us in this House, to reinforce the value of what we're doing here and how important it is to our constituents and how anything is possible if you don't care who gets the credit. That's the kind of tone that you were speaking of.

To my fellow member from Cambridge: What a beautiful part of the world you come from, or that you're living in and that you represent. The portfolio that you represent is a lot of the vulnerable in Ontario, and it's very, very important.

I want to touch on the concept of shutting down debate and the SLAPP legislation and that type of thing. This is exactly what has happened in the energy file in this province, and that's why we're in the mess that we're in. When the previous government were going to install wind farms and they were going to install solar, they completely ignored the municipalities. They said, "You don't even get a say." Then they relented a bit and said, "Well, you'll get a say, but it doesn't mean anything." That's offensive. It's this kind of thing that makes people become disenfranchised from politics, when they're shut out from what happens in their local areas.

I'm thrilled that White Pines is being cancelled in Prince Edward county. My mother hails from Ameliasburg in the county. She was a county girl. It's a beautiful place. The local people really have a pride of place, and they should be respected. This government is respecting the people.

The people have sent us here to do a job. We're doing the job. And I look forward to many more of these types of actions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments. I recognize the new member from Guelph—no, wrong.

Mr. Jamie West: Other end.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Sudbury. Sorry.

Mr. Jamie West: It's my first time speaking in the House, so no apologies for not getting my riding correct.

I'd like to begin by thanking the riding of Sudbury for electing me. It was very good to see their support.

As well, I'd like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your election, and all the MPPs for their elections.

I'd like to thank my family, of course. They came to visit me today at Queen's Park for the swearing-in ceremony later on today. The support they've given me over the years is just fantastic, and it has allowed me to have the success I've had and to be away for so long.

As well, the volunteers who helped me to get elected—it was overwhelming—especially the students and the youth who believe in this change for the better made me very proud.

I'd also like to thank the former MPP. We had a very clean campaign, very friendly. I've known the former MPP for nearly 10 years. Although we differ on political opinion, just like we might differ across the floor, we've always had a respectful relationship and worked together.

The member from Markham–Stouffville made a comment that it's difficult for job creators, and I would agree with that. We have job creators in Sudbury who have set up their business to install the new high-efficiency windows. They've ordered them already. They trained their workers and paid in advance for the training. They're concerned about the rug being pulled out from under them. They're concerned about how it's going to affect their bottom line and how they'll make ends meet. As we all know, for small businesses the economy is very, very difficult and the margins are very thin.

As well, there was a comment about the lowest income earners not paying tax. What concerns me about that is that many of the lowest income earners don't actually have to pay any tax because they earn so little. Not filing your taxes means that you're not eligible for credits and incentives provided by the government to help you be more successful. As someone who grew up in a low-income family, that's something that speaks to my heart and is very important to me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments. The member from Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your re-election.

Paul Calandra, the member from Markham–Stouffville, spoke about his two children aged 10 and 12 and how his family is his foundation and his rock. I know he'll do all that he can to make life better not only for his children, but all of the children in Ontario. Our plan to put more money back into the pockets of people in Ontario will do just that.

Too often, we have focused on what someone's gross income is and not what the buying power of the money they have is and what their actual net income is. One of the things that we'll be doing as a government is making sure that people have more money in their pocket to choose how they want to spend that money.

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He spoke about the strike at York University and how we need to help these students as well, those who are trying to make a better life for themselves, examples of what people in Ontario need to do or want to do to make sure that they can have a better life. For far too long now, these young people have had an uncertainty about what their immediate future is going to be. We're going to put an end to that. We're going to allow those students to go back to school by putting that legislation in place to end that strike, so that they have certainty for what their immediate future is going to be. We're going to address that so that thousands of students have that ability to go back to school.

Looking at my colleague Belinda, from Cambridge, she spoke about our society and how not only her seat,

but all of our government is here to support the people of Ontario. I know the struggles that she has recently gone through demonstrate that she'll be a great representative for her riding. I appreciate everything that she has done. I myself look forward to being able to work more closely with her.

There was a commonality between both of the speeches of my colleagues. They referred to making life better for people in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now I return to the member from Markham–Stouffville for final comments.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you to all of the colleagues who had some questions and comments.

To the member for Sudbury, I say congratulations to you. I know in the time that I was watching the Legislature in advance of the election, the member that you defeated is somebody else I worked with in Ottawa. I had a great deal of respect for him, I understood the challenges that he faced, but I have to say that I'm not sorry to see that you're in this chamber instead of him at this point.

I think the member for Cambridge highlights the spirit that we come from on this side of the House, and I'm sure all members on all sides of the House come from. We understand how hard it is to get elected. We understand that often it's an issue that brings us here, and that we're going to fight very hard for that issue.

When I talked about the challenges that I faced in the lead-up to the election, they were nothing compared to the challenges that the member of Cambridge faced in the lead-up to the election. When you see the things that we are fighting for, the things that came forward in our throne speech, you can thank, often, a member like the member for Cambridge for having done that.

The member of Kitchener–Waterloo—or is it Waterloo; I'm not sure it's Kitchener—also highlights the spirit that I hope that this place will be. We will have very vigorous debate. We are going to fight, because we all believe in things. We believe differently in the things we came here to do, but ultimately, we want to accomplish the same thing.

I believe that Ontario works better, our small businesses work better and we can create jobs when we don't advantage small groups of small business over others. When we cut red tape, eliminate useless regulation, put more money in the pockets of small, large and medium job creators, they will go out there and hire more people. I believe that the future of Ontario will work best if we balance our budget.

Those are the things that we are going to do on this side of the House. I very much look forward to the vigorous debate that will come over the next four years, Mr. Speaker. Thank you again for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: You knew I wasn't from Welland, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud of you.

First of all, I'm going to talk on the throne speech for the next 20 minutes, so sit back, relax and enjoy yourself. But I'm going to talk a little different before I get into my formal speech. The throne speech was 27 minutes, so I'm going to talk about what wasn't in the throne speech—obviously, quite a bit.

I'm going to start by saying thank you for allowing me to rise and speak today. I want to say congratulations on your election, Mr. Speaker, and also to the Speaker of the House. Over the next four years, I'm going to personally thank you every time I get a chance to rise in this House. So, thank you. I do that because no matter how intense the political debate in this chamber, I never lose sight of the importance of what we're doing and the privilege we have to serve here.

I'm going to start by saying I'd like to thank my wife, my three daughters—Tara, Jacqueline and Chantel—and my five grandkids for understanding, something that we all will learn, particularly the new people that may or may not be listening. The hardest part of this job, by the way, isn't debating with the Conservatives or—I don't know if there are any Liberals left—with the Liberals. At the end of the day, the hardest part of this job is when you come up here on Sunday and you go home on Thursday. In that period of time, you're away from your family, you're away from your kids and your grandkids, and you're away from your community. That's the hardest part of the job. So your family has to support you. Your family has to understand why you're here.

We're all here, whether we agree or disagree—in the last week, we've talked about what they think is the best way to enhance the province and make it better for our kids and our grandkids. We, obviously, on this side, don't agree with them. But we're all here for the same reason: to make Ontario better.

To the new people, I just wanted to say, make sure you're talking to your family and make sure they support you and understand what's going happen, because it's going to be four years of being away.

I'd also like to thank the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Fort Erie and Niagara Falls for giving me and my team the privilege of representing you. When I say “my team,” I'm not just saying the NDP team; I'm talking about our support staff, our staff that's there for us. They are there on the front lines. They come in and see if there are questions and no matter what it is—they're the face of all of us. I think we should all—I just want to see how many are listening: Let's give our staff a round of applause for what they do every day.

Applause.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'll make one promise today, and that's the promise that I'll give every ounce of passion and energy I have to do this job. I hope I don't let anybody down. We've managed to do so much together working as a community, and I'm honoured to be able to continue that work.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy today to respond to the throne speech given last week. I know a lot of the members have raised not only what was in the speech but also what

wasn't in the speech, and that's what I'm going to concentrate on. I'd like to talk about the part that was missing that I think was the worst.

We've had a lot of discussion already over the last couple of days on the throne speech, and this is my opinion, but I believe it's the opinion of all Ontarians. Perhaps the biggest thing missing was talking about our environment: keeping our air that we breathe clean, keeping the water that we drink safe and combatting climate change. If we don't have clean water that we can drink, and we don't have any clean air, do you know what happens, Mr. Speaker? Do you know what happens?

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: You don't know? I'm going to tell everybody: You die. So I would think that the environment is important.

Do you know who knows how important the environment is? Obviously my good friend the Speaker wasn't sure, but I'll tell you who knows. Your kids and the young people in this province, in this country and around the world, they know. I'm serious about this issue. I go to speak at a lot of schools, and do you know what I see every single time? Students—and I go to grade 3, I go to grade 4. I don't just go to people who are going to vote; I go and talk to the young people and the young adults who care about our future and care about our environment. They get it. They get how important this is for their future and the future of their children.

And yet a plan to fight climate change was missing from the throne speech. I'm going to read that again, and it's to you, to the Conservatives on the other side: And yet a plan to fight climate change was missing from the throne speech.

In this day and age, with weather patterns breaking records across the world, with flooding, heat waves and fires, how is it possible? How is it possible to ignore the environment? How can the biggest challenge we face as a society be absent from the government's opening speech? How does that happen? You have to ask yourselves that—you have your caucus meeting tomorrow: “How did we miss the importance of the environment to the world?”

We should be leaders on the environment. The province should be a leader on the environment. The country should be a leader on the environment.

Now, listen to this—and I don't believe it has happened in Ontario yet. When we hear that dozens of people died in Quebec just in the last few weeks because of the intensity of the record-breaking heat waves, how can this be ignored?

We realize that a lot of the people who died had health issues; a lot of them were seniors. But if we're going to stand up here and say we support seniors—and the Conservatives probably should support seniors more than any other party seeing as seniors vote for Conservatives. That's who was dying during our heat wave. That's who died. You go and check the record. Most of them were seniors; some of them had health issues.

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This is a concern that must be addressed—and there's another part of it that really makes me scared. All this discussion—and the member talked about this just a few minutes ago. What he said is, cutting red tape. So far, we've seen them do nothing but reward their insiders. Take a look at the past president of the PC Party, who just got a six-figure-a-year job. Does that sound like it's for the people? By the way, he already has a big pension. He's retired. It might be good for him, but it certainly isn't good for the people.

When you talk about cutting red tape, I think what you're actually going to see is regulations being removed that benefit their friends. I'll have to say, "Just watch." We've seen this show before in the previous PC government, where cutting red tape meant people in Walkerton couldn't drink their water, where seven people died in Walkerton—we try to forget that—where countless other people today—today—are still sick from drinking that water. It's one of the greatest black marks on the Harris legacy, and if you're not careful, you're going to put people in danger here, too. I'm speaking to the Conservatives, so I hope they're listening, Mr. Speaker.

When I see this, all I can think it means is that red tape is going to mean regulations that protect our environment. You know, we have a situation in Niagara Falls, my home riding. It's called the Niagara Falls riding, but I represent, obviously, all along there, from Fort Erie to Niagara-on-the-Lake. When there was raw sewage being dumped into our Niagara River, the previous government, the Liberal government—when I raised it and when I put it in the press, and when the TVs came down, they did nothing about it. As a matter of fact, the minister didn't even return my call for three weeks—a huge issue.

Imagine that. You're saving up for years to take your family to Niagara Falls. A lot of people do that; we had 15 million visitors to Niagara last year—15 million. You get there and you go on a boat called the Hornblower or the Maid of the Mist, and it's early on a— I think it's a Saturday morning. All around the boat is raw sewage—raw sewage all around the boat. These are the sorts of things that happen when you don't have strict regulations and when people want to skirt the rules.

Here's the issue. You can say whatever you want; we can debate this over the next four years. When it comes to the environment, you're putting profit over the environment. That's the issue. You want to make sure companies are making money at the expense of our environment. I think it's wrong. I also think it was wrong that it wasn't in your throne speech. It's why we need to care about this and it's why we need to work together in this place to protect, for our future generations, the environment. Our children, our grandchildren are counting on us to do the right thing—all of us.

The Liberal member—although I don't know if they're here—rose yesterday and said they were angry about this as well, which I thought was interesting. I'll tell you something: They have no right to act surprised, because they were the ones who are responsible for this.

I'm going to say this clearly, and I wish all the Liberals were here to listen to it: In the dying weeks of the campaign, when it was clear—and it was clear—that the Liberals were not going to win the election, what did they decide to do? They spent the last four or five days of that campaign attacking the NDP. Wynne quit a week before the race was even over. She quit and then attacked the NDP. We really saw the true Liberal character in those weeks of the campaign. They turned on working people because all they wanted to do was save the Liberal Party.

Equally surprising, as they turned their guns on the NDP and basically helped elect a PC government, they attacked the unions. I didn't hear a lot of talk about unions in your throne speech, either. Wynne's legacy is going to be that she put the PC Party in power.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Good legacy.

Mr. Wayne Gates: We're all entitled to our opinion.

But what I want to say: Wynne never figured out why she was so unpopular, yet everybody else knew. As a matter of fact, her caucus members knew. When she decided to sell off Hydro One, it was the biggest mistake that was ever made in the province of Ontario. It was the biggest mistake ever in the province of Ontario, and we all know who started it. Put your hands up, Conservatives; it was you guys. Put your hand up. You guys started it; no doubt about it. And we're suffering today.

Make no mistake about it; the legacy of Wynne is going to be the sell-off of Hydro and the fact that they put these guys in power. My understanding is she won a seat. I'm not sure if that's true or not because I haven't seen her yet, and I've been here every day. My understanding is she won a seat here; hopefully she shows up, because it was wrong what she did.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me.

Mr. Wayne Gates: So the question is clear—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Oh, I'm sorry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): You're walking a very fine line in making reference to a member who is not here. That's unparliamentary, so I would ask that you would refrain.

Please continue.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and you're absolutely right. I got a little carried away, but you're right. Thank you for standing up and correcting that.

Let's talk about another issue that was touched on in the throne speech: hydro rates. We saw it during the campaign; it was the number one issue we were hearing from people at the doors. So what action has the government taken when it comes to the management of hydro in the province of Ontario? Well, congratulations. You've turned the six-million-dollar man into a 10.7-million-dollar man.

Hon. Todd Smith: Not true; Kathleen Wynne did that.

Mr. Wayne Gates: At least we think—and I appreciate the heckling—that it's the 10.7-million-dollar man, but no one else in the province of Ontario really knows

because you won't release the backroom deal of what they're actually paying him. How many more millions will the residents of this province pay for the Ford-Mayo Schmidt deal?

But I want to be clear: I'm not sticking up for Mayo Smith at all. Mayo Smith—

Interjection: Schmidt.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Sorry, Schmidt. Thank you.

The reality is, he said he felt our pain. Do you remember this, Mr. Speaker, when he went on TV and said he felt our pain? He felt the pain of seniors. He felt the pain of single moms and single dads. He felt the pain of small businesses that had to go out of business. He felt the pain of the hospitals that, by the way, had to pay so much in hydro, they had to cut front-line staff. He felt our pain. So, to see him going out the door, I don't think anybody is upset.

Maybe while you're at it you could tell us how much the interim CEO will be getting paid. Can you guarantee that the next CEO won't be a connected insider? These would be good questions for people to hear answers to, but unfortunately, they won't find that in the throne speech.

Mr. Speaker, let's talk about another issue that was missing from the throne speech: the decision by the government to sideline the issues of First Nations peoples across the province. When we look at First Nations communities, we see them doing the work that this government should be doing, things like defending our environment, addressing the suicide crisis among young people, working on true reconciliation and ensuring that our schools properly teach children about the incredible culture of our great province. There is no more culture than down in Niagara with Niagara-on-the-Lake and the War of 1812.

Yet, instead of work alongside First Nations to make these projects happen, we see this government running in the opposite direction. Here's what I say to the Premier: You have a lot to learn from the first people of this land. Sideline their issues is unacceptable in an era of reconciliation.

I think the people deserve to know why this government has tucked this issue into another ministry. How can we have true reconciliation if we don't have respect? That's a great question that I think was missing from the throne speech. We can never begin with the necessary healing process until these issues are given the respect they deserve.

For people who are from Ontario who might not think of up north, you don't have to go far; go down to Brantford. Right on the reserve in Brantford, they've been boiling water for 15 years—15 years. In a province as rich as the province of Ontario, that shouldn't be happening. We should be doing something about it.

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Young people on First Nations reserves are committing suicide. Their schools are full of mould. I'm not making this stuff up; this is what's happening in the

province of Ontario. We need to take more time, dealing with First Nations issues.

Mr. Speaker, there's another issue that I'd like to touch on before I'm done speaking. It's amazing how quickly 20 minutes goes. It's an issue that's pretty close to my heart: changes made with the ticket resale market. I know some of you are asking why this is so important to me. It's because of all the time we put into making this bill a reality. We met with stakeholders. We met with those passionate about the issue. We sat through committee hearings and we provided a number of amendments to get where we are today.

At every single stage in that committee when we were trying to make tickets more affordable for people in the province, the PC Party was on the side of the corporations that wanted to make as much profit as they could squeeze out of hard-working families. Can someone tell me how ensuring that hard-working parents can't afford to go to a Leafs game, a concert—is that “for the people”? Families like to go to Leafs games and they like to go to concerts.

One of the pieces that we worked on was capping the price of ticket resale at a certain percentage. This meant companies can make a profit, but they couldn't gouge those who wanted to see a concert or go to a Leafs game or a sporting event. This was interesting to me when I put this together: Just look at the Foo Fighters concert that happened last week in Toronto—

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Foo Fighters. Is that better? Foo Fighters. Did I get that right? They're heckling me over what I said. The moustache is getting in the way of that, okay? Just for the record. Don't put that in Hansard, though. I don't know if that would flow well. But the moustache is getting in my way on at that one.

Anyway, some of the tickets were going for as much as—listen to this—\$9,000. I challenge anybody—certainly on our side of the House, we can't afford the \$9,000. I can't speak for the other side of the House. I know I can't afford \$9,000 to see—I'm just going to say the “fighters” concert.

We came together and we worked on legislation to cap that—legislation that the Premier struck out in one blow. Can any single member of the PC Party tell me how that plan is “for the people”? We have to rethink that.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what was left out of that bill once they were done with it? One single amendment requiring the face value of the ticket to be printed on the ticket. So now they've got to put the price of the ticket on the ticket. That was the only amendment we got during all of that that's still there. But you're still going to pay \$9,000. Does that make any sense to anybody? It just shows you how much people are being gouged. I suppose we can take a victory from that, but honestly, is it really a victory? Now families can expect to be gouged and never to be able to afford going to see a concert or a sporting event. That's the legacy of this first week.

Mr. Speaker, I'm running out of time. I didn't get into the drug coverage and the privatization of that. Unfortu-

nately, I've only got 12 seconds left. Thank you for allowing me to speak this morning. Thank you for correcting me when I was wrong. I'll trim up the moustache so I can get all my words out. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Calandra: I congratulate the member on his re-election and his comments. He has it wrong a little bit; in fact, he's got it wrong a lot. It wasn't Kathleen Wynne that put us in office; it was the people of Ontario who put us in office, over 2.5 million of them who voted for this government and who voted for the policies that we brought forward during the election.

Time and time again during the election, whether it was at debates with my fellow candidates, I heard the NDP candidate in my riding complaining that what the Liberals had done was steal their policies. He said constantly that the Liberals were running on an NDP platform. They had been running a government as though they were an NDP government. He was upset by this.

The member opposite also touched on a litany of disappointments, whether it was the previous government's 15 years of mismanagement with respect to our schools and rehabilitation of our schools, our relationships with our First Nations. He touched on that, and a month in we understand these issues. That's why we have Minister MacLeod and Minister Rickford who will be focusing on these and who are seized by our relationship with our First Nations.

I also want to touch a little bit on the environment. It amazes me that the opposite side thinks that somehow taxing small, medium and large job creators and allowing them to pollute—as long as they offset that pollution by paying a tax—is somehow good for the environment. It doesn't work. It hasn't worked. It's a failed policy.

Instead, what we want to do is make sure that regulation is tough and those who actually break laws and who pollute are punished for those. We heard the Minister of the Environment talk about the fact that we will be bringing some legislation forward in order to protect our environment better.

I want to again highlight the fact that the member really said it himself: Liberal and NDP, there is literally no difference between the two. That's why the people of Ontario elected a strong Progressive Conservative government to fix the mess that they, in co-operation with the Liberals, created over the last 15 years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's always a pleasure to stand in the House and listen to the member from Niagara Falls. He really does bring passion to the debates here, and it was very evident when he was talking about what's missing in the throne speech. He was correct. He didn't get to the pharmacare and the dental care, which is a huge piece in my riding of London-Fanshawe when you're talking to seniors.

I currently am the seniors critic for long-term care and home care. I remember when I got elected in 2011, seniors would say, "I cannot afford to go to the dentist. I retired, and my benefits"—if they had them at the time—"were cut off." They were suffering. They had sometimes not all their teeth, sometimes no teeth. Their diet and their health were exacerbated because of that issue. Not having a dental plan for everyone in Ontario is really disadvantaging seniors.

I know that the member was going to talk about examples in his riding of constituents who really could have used dental care. If I recall, I think the Conservatives did say they're going to give dental care for 65 and over, if that's what I heard. I'll be looking forward to seeing what that will look like.

In the meantime, I do want to say that we are still going to be debating the throne speech and making—I know I'm looking forward to my part and bringing my constituents' perspective as to what they wanted to see in the throne speech. It was a very short throne speech. It was 10 pages. There wasn't a lot of meat to that throne speech. I understand that the government is in a hurry to get those things done, but pushing legislation through this House very quickly sometimes is not the best policy and not the best way to be effective. So I hope this is not setting the theme for future legislation that we're going to be debating in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Lindsey Park: First off, I want to congratulate the member from Niagara Falls on his re-election. It's great to see you in the chamber and hear your input this morning. Thank you for your perspective, and perhaps I'll add a different perspective.

Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality. We can talk all day long about what's not in the speech from the throne, but I'm really proud of what's in the speech from the throne. I'm really glad that our leader and our new Premier has set out a clear vision.

We have a plan that includes cleaning up the hydro mess, restoring accountability and trust in government, ending hallway health care, bringing jobs back to Ontario and putting more money in Ontarians' pockets. I'm proud that we've set out that clear plan. We are already, with that clear vision, moving swiftly with our first three legislative priorities: We're bringing an end to the York University strike; we're repealing cap-and-trade, which is long overdue; and we're cancelling wind and solar projects.

1010

Let me just speak about Hydro One for a moment. The days of choosing between heating and eating will soon be over as we move to save the average Ontario family 12% on their hydro bills. An honest and responsible plan this is, that will save families \$170 on their hydro bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I also wanted to thank my colleague from Niagara Falls, and I wanted to try to

connect what was just said with what the member from Niagara Falls had brought up.

I'm actually kind of worried about the silences. I'm nervous about the idea that leadership from the government is taking pride in the things that Ontarians are asking for—the things that are missing from the throne speech. That would mean, if I am understanding that correctly, that the government is taking pride in ignoring the issues that are harming our First Nations people and Indigenous people across Ontario. That would mean that the government is taking pride in not addressing climate change. That would mean that the government is taking pride in making sure that we don't pay attention to those who are most marginalized.

From my experiences, what I've learned is that if I focus my leadership and my work and my dedication to those who are most marginalized, every single person wins.

So, if the government does not want to recognize the important place that First Nations people have made in keeping our water, our land and our people safe and secure, at the very minimum, can we recognize that they live in Ontario and they deserve to turn on their water taps and have clean drinking water? Can we, at the very minimum, recognize that they deserve to walk into schools and not have to worry about the quality of that education? Can we recognize that they don't have to suffer?

I think that leadership—true leadership—means paying attention to those who are being harmed, and if we can't do that, this will not be the Ontario that people are voting for.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now return to the member from Niagara Falls for final comment.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Again, I enjoyed being able to speak this morning.

I'm not sure to which member there, but I will talk about hydro rates. I thank you very much for congratulating me on my re-election; I appreciate that as well. But on the hydro rates that you're talking about going to go down 12%—it has been the number one issue in the province of Ontario since the day I got here. But what you're going to do is, you're still going to borrow, over 30 years, \$40 billion. And what's going to happen there is that those rates are going to continue to climb. That's what's going to happen; we all know that. We've all agreed to it. That's your policy. I'm going to tell you that where you're going with hydro is not going to work.

The second thing is, you fired the CEO—and I'm glad of that, by the way. I said that from day one. We should have done that a long time ago.

Hon. Todd Smith: He retired.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Yes, whatever. I retired, too, before the company fired me. I get how that works. I was in the union once. I get all that.

But you know what? You know how much our rates are going to do down from that particular decision? Does anybody on that side know? How much are the rates going to go down? Help me out; I'm giving you the

opportunity. You've been heckling me for the last 20 minutes. Go ahead and say something this time. Speaker, it's okay that I do that, right? You can heckle me. Tell me, how much are our rates going to go down by making this decision on getting rid of him and getting rid of his board? Do you want me to tell you? Nothing.

Do you know how I knew that? I was coming down the elevator today, where I live in my little condo, and I was talking to a lady who said she used to work here. She's the one who said to me about it, "Do you know, getting rid of him, how much my rates are going to go down?" I said, "No, how much?" Do you know what she said? "Zero." So I asked the question to the PC Party—and to the Speaker because I've got to speak to the Speaker; I'm trying to learn that this term. That's kind of my goal this year, to look directly at my good friend the Speaker. Not one person on that side answered the question. Meanwhile, you guys have heckled me for 15 or 20 minutes. Zero, to the young lady—zero.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It is now 10:15 and this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's my pleasure today to introduce in the gallery friends of mine from my riding of Sarnia—Lambton and the parents of Annabelle Rayson, one of our returning pages: the Lobsinger family from Sarnia.

Mr. Doug Downey: My executive assistant, Kathryn Abel, has come to see how we operate here and help us out. Welcome.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Today I'd like to welcome to the House some guests who have never been here before. My grandsons Harlan and Flynn have joined us in the House today. I have to say as well that they are avid watchers of the House on YouTube. Also, my beautiful daughter, Chelsea, and my darling wife, Jane, are joining me here today.

Ms. Marit Stiles: It's my pleasure to introduce and welcome my mother, Katherine Greaves Stiles, who is here in the members' gallery today, watching, I guess, that I live up to all the expectations that they've put on me. I want to welcome her.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you, Speaker. I just wanted to correct my record from yesterday. When I was listing the diversity of the PC caucus, I was remiss not to mention the first Armenian Canadian MPP: Aris Babikian. We have the three Chinese Canadian MPPs: Vincent Ke, Billy—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. It's not technically a point of order.

ORAL QUESTIONS

CURRICULUM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my first question is to the Premier. The Premier's decision to scrap the updated sexual health curriculum and drag Ontario back to 1998 is not about doing what's right for students or about listening to parents. It's about doing favours for social conservatives like Charles McVety and Tanya Granic Allen. Why is the Premier more focused on keeping social conservatives happy instead of keeping students, young people and queer youth safe?

Hon. Doug Ford: Thank you for the question, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, we travelled around Ontario. We consulted with thousands and tens of thousands of parents. We consulted with hundreds of teachers. And not one single person came up to me and said they were consulted. We heard that they want a change when it comes to the sex ed curriculum. And I know the Leader of the Opposition would have heard the exact same thing on the campaign trail that I heard. Matter of fact, we're going to do the largest consultation in Ontario's history when it comes to sex education.

Mr. Speaker, we know there was close to zero consultation. Matter of fact, out of the 14 million people there were 1,638 people who were consulted—point zero zero—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Supplementary question.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier is being driven by whatever far-right social conservatives want him to do and ignoring his responsibility to all Ontario students, all of our young people and all of our queer youth and LGBTQ families. After spending all of yesterday trying to figure out what they were really doing, last night the Conservatives confirmed they are dragging students back to the 1998 health curriculum this September.

I have a simple question for the Premier: Will same-sex relationships and LGBTQ families be fully included and reflected in the curriculum this fall, or does he have to ask permission of radical extremists like Charles McVety and Tanya Granic Allen?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, we know that the Leader of the Opposition doesn't want to consult with parents. The Leader of the Opposition actually believes in the nanny state. They believe that the government knows best when it comes to our students, they know best when it comes to our children and they know best when it comes to our parents. We take a different approach, Mr. Speaker. We take the approach that the best teachers are the parents, not a special interest group.

I will once again remind the Leader of the Opposition: There was next to zero consultation. Out of 14 million people, 0.001% were consulted. That is disgusting

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Final supplementary?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members, please take your seats.

Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What I know best, Speaker, is that it is 2018, not 1998, and the world has changed.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members, please take your seats.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The 1998 curriculum ignores consent, online safety, gender identity and LGBTQ families. That's the curriculum that this Premier and his radical extremist friends are dragging our kids back to.

The Deputy Premier, the Attorney General—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The House will come to order.

Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Deputy Premier, Attorney General and minister of children and youth have all, in the past, expressed their support for keeping kids safe. Why is this Premier listening to radical extremists like Charles McVety and Tanya Granic Allen instead of his own cabinet and putting the safety of our young people at risk?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The members will please take their seats.

Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, I find it pretty rich that the Leader of the Opposition would call us radical—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The House will please come to order.

Hon. Doug Ford: If you want to see radical, look at the history of the party right across from us. You want to talk extremist? You want to talk radical?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The members will please take their seats.

Interjections.

Hon. Doug Ford: —worked so good in the campaign, the Leader of the Opposition had to steal a couple of our lines.

My friends, we are going to make sure we have the largest consultation in Ontario's history. We're going to go to every single riding and consult with the parents. I know the Leader of the Opposition doesn't believe in consulting with parents. She believes the government should make the decision for each and every one of us. She doesn't believe in consultation—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The members will please take their seats.

Next question.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. The job of the Premier is not making backroom deals with insiders, but that's what this Premier is already up to on sex ed and on hydro. He said the CEO of Hydro One was going to get "zero, absolutely zero," but Mayo Schmidt will actually walk away with at least \$9 million, maybe more. Only the Premier knows the real answer, Speaker.

So will the Premier make the deal public today so that everyone, all Ontarians, all the people, can see what he actually agreed to?

1040

Hon. Doug Ford: The Leader of the Opposition knew exactly what the deal was, and I'll tell you the reason why the Leader of the Opposition knew exactly what the deal was: because the Leader of the Opposition was down here for years propping up Hydro One, propping up the six-million-dollar man, propping up the board.

The Leader of the Opposition is in favour of high hydro rates. She's in favour of the highest hydro rates in North America. She's in favour of putting the burden of carbon tax and cap-and-trade on the backs of the taxpayers and small businesses in this province.

My friend—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Premier, take your seat for a second.

The House has to come to order. I can't hear the Premier. The Speaker has to be able to hear what's being said by the member who has the floor. The volume has to go down.

I apologize to the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the Leader of the Opposition knew exactly the compensation package. The Leader of the Opposition kept it under wraps, not saying a word, knowing that he had stock options.

I'll tell you, there's only one thing that the Hydro One CEO walked away with: the same package as anyone else would walk away with, with their benefits and their pension plan. He had zero—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Will the members please take their seats.

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I can tell you what the biggest zero in this House is, and that's the knowledge that this Premier has on what has happened in this Legislature for the last 10 years.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The bottom line is this: This Premier said that the CEO would get zero, absolutely zero. But it turns out that whatever backroom deal he cooked up with Mayo Schmidt will end up costing at least \$9 million. Now, that's what privatized electricity does. That's what it does, and that's what this party supports.

When will the Premier actually come clean and fully disclose and release the deal that he cut with Mayo Schmidt?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I can see the Leader of the Opposition. I understand she doesn't like losing. She wants to get personal, but I'm not going to get personal with the Leader of the Opposition. I can tell you one thing: The CEO of Hydro One had zero—zero—severance.

I understand that the Leader of the Opposition worked hand in hand with the previous government propping up the highest hydro rates in North America, propping up the highest gas prices in North America, wanting to have the highest carbon tax anywhere in the world. As a matter of fact, one of her members said they want the highest carbon tax in the entire world. That is shameful.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, no matter how much he wants to pretend he didn't say it, the Premier said the CEO's payout was zero, absolutely zero. But he knew that the CEO would leave with more money than most families in this province earn in a lifetime. The Premier turned the six-million-dollar man into a nine-million-dollar man. It could be more; only the Premier knows exactly how much that secret deal really cost. And if the Premier refuses to come clean and refuses to make his backroom deal public, then any new bill on executive compensation and transparency is just a joke.

Will this Premier agree to amend the bill that he tabled yesterday to include full disclosure of all payments to outgoing executives and board members of Hydro One?

Hon. Doug Ford: Again, the CEO had a 0% severance. The Leader of the Opposition—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Withdraw.

Hon. Doug Ford: The Leader of the Opposition stood side by side beside the previous Premier. As they were getting outrageous, absolutely outrageous wages of \$6 million, the Leader of the Opposition stood by. As board members worked seven days a year and were compensated \$180,000 a year, the Leader of the Opposition stood by and did not say a word. When the previous administration raised the hydro rates to the highest in North America, the Leader of the Opposition did absolutely nothing to protect the taxpayers of this province.

We were given a clear mandate from the people of Ontario, a clear mandate to reduce their hydro rates by 12%, and that's exactly what we're going to do.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members take their seats. Please take your seats.
Next question.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier, but I would ask him to look at the Hansard to get a real understanding of what we did as opposition here in the House. He needs to get a little bit of education.

In his first week in office—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the government members to please come to order. I can't hear the Leader of the Opposition. Please come to order.

Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. In his first week in office, the Premier quietly stopped the implementation of the Ontario Special Investigations Unit Act, but he hasn't told us why. That has people across Ontario very worried, Speaker. Is this Premier getting ready to open the door wide open to carding and discriminatory police checks in our province again?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, our party is going to give the tools to our police—all the tools they need—to stop the gun violence that we've seen in these cities.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members, please take your seats. Please take your seats.

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, we support our police. We support our police, unlike the Leader of the Opposition and unlike their party, who are police-haters, military-haters, veteran-haters, poppy-haters and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Please take your seats. Be seated. The government—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): No. Take a seat.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I say to the government members that, first of all, you're cutting into the Premier's time when you do these standing ovations. Secondly, I'm asking the Premier to withdraw.

Hon. Doug Ford: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There is something called the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in our country, and this Premier needs to look it up and talk about what people deserve in terms of their rights—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members, please take your seats. I say to the official opposition members who are standing and applauding that you're cutting into your leader's time too.

Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Sorry, Speaker.

When the Premier slammed the brakes on the new police oversight rule, he ignored more than two years of

consultations, he ignored the voices of Ontarians and he refuses to tell us why. And yesterday, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services couldn't tell us either, so I'm going to ask again: Is this Premier going to drag Ontario backwards and start opening the door to carding once again in our province?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying earlier, our party supports the police. We don't have any members—

Interjections.

Hon. Doug Ford: Again, I'll reinforce that we will give the police all the tools they need to get their job done.

But I'll tell you one thing, because I wouldn't allow this: We didn't have any MPP like the member from Brampton East who walked around, running up and down the streets, with a sign that says "eff the police." That is disgusting, absolutely disgusting.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Please take your seats.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Please take your seats.

Next question. The member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

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COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mrs. Robin Martin: Mr. Speaker, as it is my first time rising in the House, I want to congratulate you on your election as Speaker and also thank the residents of my riding for electing me.

My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Over the past number of months, Toronto has seen a sharp rise in guns and gang violence, and that violence has been shocking to residents in my community and across the greater Toronto area. Our police officers and emergency responders are on the front lines in our community helping to assuage the fears of residents, but they need more help.

Can the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services please update the House on this important file?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you to the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, who has been an important advocate on this file, and others in her community. I'd also like to add that I grew up in Eglinton–Lawrence and my mom still lives in that riding.

Gun violence has no place in Toronto, nor in any part of this province. The brazen, indiscriminate attacks have to stop. With the rise in gun violence on our streets, it's clear that current strategies and anti-gun units in the city of Toronto are required and that we are dedicated to providing services and oversight. We're committed to police services across the province and to providing our officers with the tools and resources they need to keep communities safe. This isn't a partisan issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Back to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services: Minister, during the campaign, we made a number of commitments to our police and other first responders. This included making sure that we respect our front-line officers and the work that they do in our communities every day.

Can you please update the House on what you've been working on?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you again to the member for this important question.

Safety of the public is our paramount concern. We've been clear from day one that we are going to make sure we are giving our front-line officers the tools they need to do their job. We're committed to fixing Bill 175 and treating our front-line officers with respect. This includes a full and thorough review of the legislation governing police services and police oversight. By consulting experts, police services and the public, we will accomplish this goal.

Our police officers put themselves in harm's way every day and work to keep our communities safe. We're committed to listening and consulting with our front line and ensuring they have the tools they work with.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Earlier this week, the Premier's close friend and avid supporter Charles McVety made his opinion about the repeal of the sexual health curriculum crystal clear. He said: "The fruit of the poisonous tree has been cut down." McVety is a social conservative who lobbied hard for the modernized curriculum to be pulled out of schools, and this government was more than happy to make a deal with him.

Does the minister think it is appropriate to allow social conservative activists like Charles McVety to drive Ontario's health and physical education program from the backroom?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you to the member from London West. Congratulations on your re-election to this place. It's a pleasure to be back with you.

On behalf of my ministry, we're going to continue to stand up and protect children and youth. As the minister responsible for children and youth, I couldn't be more delighted to be in this ministry given my roots started as the children and youth critic 12 years ago with your now-leader of the official opposition. I congratulate her as well.

Let me be perfectly clear. You would like to present one narrative. Let me speak as a mother who has a child who is 13 years old. Let me speak as a person who has watched as my daughter was confused with half of the things because it was not age-appropriate. I don't know Charles McVety. He is not going to lead this process. The Minister of Education is going to lead this process, and the Minister of Education with parents will lead the process, because the difference between us and you is you don't respect parents. You don't tolerate—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members, please take your seats.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The minister will come to order.

Back to the member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, yesterday this government confirmed that the new sexual health curriculum would be rolled back, while claiming that there is ample room to discuss consent, cyber safety and gender identity, even though the old curriculum is completely silent on these critical issues. Instead of catering to pressure from inflammatory far-right activists like Charles McVety, this government should be ensuring that young people have the accurate, up-to-date sexual health information and resources they need to protect themselves.

Will this minister confirm that her government rejects Charles McVety's comments about the current up-to-date curriculum, and commit to having an inclusive, modern sexual health curriculum in place for this September?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Please take your seats.

Minister?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I guess she didn't listen. Charles McVety is not running the process. The Minister of Education is going to lead the process, and we're going to include parents, because when parents were standing on that side of the aisle and when they were coming in to talk at committee, everybody in the former Liberal administration was ignoring them. You were ignoring them in your party. We're simply saying that we're going to talk about—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to remind the entire House: You have to make your comments through the Chair and speak about other members, if you speak about them, in the third person.

Minister.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: My apologies, Speaker.

Let me just be perfectly clear. We are talking about being age-appropriate. I have personally, in this House, talked about suicide prevention and children's mental health. We have talked about concussions. We have talked about all sorts of other issues, including anti-bullying, which I have legislation in my own name on. That will not change.

What will change is the respect that we will have for the parents of this province through the Minister of Education and through the parental process that will take place as we consult with people.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats. Please take your seats.

Next question.

**BRUCE NUCLEAR
GENERATING STATION**

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and Indigenous Affairs.

Minister, as you know, Bruce Power provides 30% of Ontario's electricity as a low-cost producer of power for families and businesses. Over the next four years, they will invest private dollars into the long-term future of their facility to secure low-cost power through 2064 and an estimated 22,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Minister, are you supportive of Bruce Power's role in Ontario continuing?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Funny you asked. I certainly am, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for his strong representation of his constituents over the years and for standing up for Bruce Power. It's an important employer and producer of energy for our sector here in Ontario.

Our government will always support the work of private organizations here in Ontario that are working to create good jobs, high-tech jobs, good union jobs in our province while providing safe and secure access to energy. We are especially supportive, Mr. Speaker, of companies that achieve these goals without the need for public funding.

I'm proud to be part of a government that believes in these important principles, as I know the member is.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the Minister of Energy: Minister, that's great news for families and businesses that rely on this low-cost power and some 22,000 jobs in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and across the province—

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: And Huron-Bruce.

Mr. Bill Walker: —and Huron-Bruce.

One of the key items that often doesn't get attention is the role Bruce Power plays in supplying the world with life-saving isotopes. This is an area you played a leadership role in during your tenure as federal natural resources and energy minister. Minister, what does this mean to Ontario's leadership role as an isotope supplier?

Hon. Greg Rickford: We did face a pressing challenge to make sure that medical isotopes were available to people across Canada and especially here in Ontario. The private sector in Ontario in particular was challenged to step up to the plate and meet global isotope shortages, and I'm pleased that Bruce Power had demonstrated leadership in this area.

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By extending the life of the assets, they will not only generate low-cost, reliable power through 2064, but will continue to supply 40% of the world's cobalt-60, used to keep hospitals and health care clean, and be the largest producer of medical-grade cobalt used to treat brain tumours. We think that's important, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to stand up for Bruce.

ENERGY CONTRACTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the government tabled Bill 2. It should have been called the Bad Faith Act, because this bill gives the government the power to break its own contracts, which will have a chilling effect. From now on, businesses will either have to add a bad-faith risk premium on to the price of government contracts, driving up the price, or they'll have to make sure that they have a special relationship with the Premier and his inner circle that protects them from these sorts of arbitrary actions.

Why would any company do business with the Ontario government when the Premier is willing to suspend the rule of law when it comes to contracts he personally doesn't like?

Hon. Doug Ford: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Mr. Speaker, we're in rarified air when the NDP start talking about cost savings, but since they are, let's talk about their election platform. It sounded like a Liberal version of the tax-and-spend buffet. Had they been listening to Ontarians, they would have heard that they wanted to cut back on spending, lower hydro rates and look for cost savings to the tune of \$790 million.

Now, 76 Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario members are sitting in this place today because we were listening to what the people of Ontario were doing, Mr. Speaker. The difference: We were for the people; they were for the prop.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I gather the Premier doesn't want to answer the question. I'll try another tack.

Bill 2 includes a bizarre clause that protects the government from lawsuits that allege "misrepresentation within the meaning of applicable securities laws." Exactly what misrepresentations has the Premier been making recently that he needs a law to protect himself from lawsuits?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The members will take their seats.

I'm going to ask the member from Toronto-Danforth to withdraw.

Interjection: Why is he withdrawing? It's in the bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): He suggested the Premier was misrepresenting.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm quoting the bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm asking the member to withdraw.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Back to the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Listen, it has been a great couple of weeks for ratepayers and taxpayers. We've started down the road to reducing hydro rates, and we've taken a couple of important steps. We're committed to reducing electricity bills by 12%—

cutting them, not subsidizing them, not punting them down the road for future generations to bear those costs.

Winding down 758 contracts is expected to avoid long-term costs of \$790 million. This approach importantly maximizes the benefits for ratepayers. We're ending the contracts where the benefits outweigh the costs, and we're safeguarding that with legislation to ensure that taxpayers realize even greater savings.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next question. I recognize the member for Guelph.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to rise for my first question. First, I'd like to congratulate you on your election as Speaker and to congratulate all members of the 42nd Parliament. I'm looking forward to serving with each of you.

My question is for the Premier.

The climate crisis is the biggest threat facing humanity, and there is urgency for all of us to act. Fortunately, what is good for our planet is also good for our economy. The \$7-trillion global clean economy is generating jobs and prosperity around the world.

But cancelling Ontario's plan to price pollution without an alternative plan sends the wrong signal to clean-economy investors and companies. So my question to the Premier is this: Does the government have an economic analysis on the effects of your decision to dismantle our climate change programs on clean-tech investments and job creation? And if you have such an economic analysis, will you make it public?

Hon. Doug Ford: To the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Congratulations as well to the member on his election.

As the member knows, the Doug Ford PC government was elected with a plan. The plan was to get rid of the regressive cap-and-trade carbon tax program of the previous government. This was a program that the opposition thought didn't go far enough. It was a program that was killing jobs and making life difficult for average Ontarians.

We understand the importance of climate change. We agree that steps need to be taken, and those steps will be forthcoming. But they won't be steps that put the burden on individual Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It is so important to have an economic analysis because the decision to dismantle programs like GreenON, electric vehicle rebates and energy-saving school repairs is hurting businesses, consumers and public facilities. It's a decision that takes money out of the pockets of people who want to lower their energy bills. It makes it harder for people to afford a car that will save them money at the pumps. It makes it harder for schools to reduce their energy bills. It's a decision that hurts local businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to redirect my question to the Premier.

Premier, will you bring forward a climate plan with financial supports for people, businesses and schools to make investments to save money by saving energy while lowering their carbon footprint?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you to the member for the question. Again, we recognize the importance of dealing with emissions, but we disagree with the idea that it is about government's choices around how people spend their money. We disagree that it is up to government to make those choices for individual Ontarians. We will come forward with a responsible plan, a plan that tackles the issue of emissions, but a plan that does not punish ordinary Ontarians. We'd like the taxpayers to have the dollars in their pockets.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr. Dave Smith: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. In my riding of Peterborough-Kawartha, organizers of the Peterborough Musicfest are anxiously waiting on grant money from the Celebrate Ontario fund that was promised by the former government. They were approved for grant money before the election, but payments were frozen to a number of festivals and events across Ontario. Without funding, the organizers will have to cancel a number of the scheduled events and the city of Peterborough will lose an enormous amount of tourism revenue.

Can the minister update us as to when this approved money will flow to the Peterborough Musicfest and other festival events across the province?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker. May I say you look excellent in the chair? I know you will serve our Legislature well. So congratulations.

To the member for Peterborough-Kawartha, thank you for your question. It is an honour to be able to serve with you, and I know you will be an excellent constituency representative for your riding because you are already advocating for your community.

The member is absolutely right. The Celebrate Ontario program was put on hold during the transition. We had to make sure that due diligence was done, that we ensured that the funds that were promised were accurate and needed and necessary. I can assure the member from Peterborough-Kawartha that you will get your money, and I hope you enjoy the festival.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Dave Smith: Back to the minister: I'd like to thank the minister for the answer. I'd also like to congratulate the minister on her re-election by the constituents of Dufferin-Caledon.

It's clear that this government's mandate is for the people.

I'd also like to know if there are any other initiatives that the minister and the government are putting forward.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: There is no doubt that festivals like Peterborough Musicfest or Timmins' Rock on the River or the Beaches jazz festival in Toronto are critically important to our communities. We all understand they bring in tourism dollars. It's what makes Ontario special.

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I encourage all members to participate and enjoy those festivals that are across Ontario. As I said, there are over 100 festivals that were lined up for the funding dollars and those have flowed, so enjoy your festivals.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

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

The last Liberal government pushed Ontario hospitals to the brink. Hallway medicine and painfully long wait times have become the norm in our hospitals. But instead of taking urgent steps to fix it, the Premier handed out a contract worth over \$1 million to one of his friends, the former president of the Conservative Party.

Why was the Premier's first act in health care an act of blatant political patronage?

Hon. Doug Ford: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much for the question.

The fact of the matter is that the state of hallway medicine in Ontario was so bad that we needed advice, and the person who is providing that advice and leading an advisory council is going to be providing information on ending hallway medicine, on innovation and bringing more efficiencies into the system so that we can expand health care. That council is going to be providing advice both to myself and to the Premier so that we can end this situation and improve health care so that we don't have hospitals operating at over 100% capacity virtually every day.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Back to the Premier, Speaker: In 2006, the hospitals run by Dr. Devlin had the second-worst death rates in all of Canada. Nurses warned of chronic understaffing in all of his hospitals. Then he shut down three Toronto hospitals and replaced them with a P3 hospital. Now, apparently, he's contracted to fix the entire health care system.

Why did the Premier hand out a million-dollar contract to his friend, the former president of the Conservative Party?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I could tell the member that it was done because the state of affairs is so bad right now, and what happened before was not that person's responsibility but the government's responsibility. So what we need to do is to create this council, get them moving as soon as possible so that we can end the situation with hallway medicine, because as bad as it is right now, once we have flu season hit in a couple of months, it's going to become worse if we don't take action right away. That's what the council is looking at. Both the Premier and I are looking forward to their recommendations.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Jill Dunlop: My question is to the Minister of Energy.

Yesterday the Minister of Energy tabled a bill that included the Hydro One Accountability Act, 2018. The Hydro One Accountability Act, 2018 would require the board of Hydro One to establish a new compensation framework for the board of directors, CEO and other executives in consultation with the province and the other five largest shareholders. The act would also give the Management Board of Cabinet authority to approve the compensation framework and any amendments to it, as well as to issue directives governing the compensation of the directors, CEO and other executives.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why this is an important step in cleaning up the hydro mess left behind by the previous government?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I want to congratulate the member for Simcoe North on her election and welcome her to this magnificent place.

Under the strong leadership of Premier Ford, we have moved quickly over the past couple of weeks to set in place a process to renew the leadership of Hydro One. This is of critical importance to our province's electricity system. Our government will be closely engaging in the leadership transition at Hydro One to ensure the stability of the system is preserved and customers are protected. That's why we've prepared legislation that, if passed, will improve transparency and accountability at Hydro One.

The Hydro One Accountability Act, 2018 will require the board to establish a new compensation framework for the board, CEO and other executives in consultation with the province and the other five largest shareholders, Mr. Speaker. This represents a renewal for—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Supplementary question?

Ms. Jill Dunlop: Back to the minister: Further, yesterday's act would amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 to require the Ontario Energy Board to exclude any amount in respect of compensation paid to the chief executive officer and executives from consumer rates for Hydro One Ltd. or its subsidiaries. In addition, the act would require Hydro One to annually publish on its website a record of the total compensation of executives as prescribed by regulation. The act would also require Hydro One to publish on its website any proposed changes to its compensation frameworks for its board, CEO or other executives at least 30 days prior to the date on which it seeks approval.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why these are important steps to restore trust and accountability at Hydro One and in the energy sector?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I appreciate the careful attention that this member has put to this piece of legislation.

Public accountability is an important element of this legislation. The process that we're undertaking will enhance trust and accountability not only at Hydro One

but across the energy sector, Mr. Speaker. As the member rightly points out, this legislation requires Hydro One to publish any proposed changes to its compensation policies for the board, CEO and executives 30 days prior to seeking Management Board of Cabinet approval.

We will also require Hydro One to annually publish a record of the total annual compensation of the executives on their websites.

Mr. Speaker, this demonstrates a clear and decisive set of actions that we're taking to ensure Hydro One has renewed leadership on the right path of reducing hydro rates for ratepayers across this great province.

REFUGEES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, I asked the Premier about our refugee crisis and federal funding. The Premier passed me off to the member from Nepean, who did a lot of yelling and posturing about who's more Canadian and gave me a list of racialized MPPs in the PC caucus.

But yesterday's hooting and hollering does nothing to solve this crisis, and this government's lack of clarity is making things worse. Because of the lack of clarity, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration had to hold an emergency meeting on Parliament Hill yesterday.

Conflating issues and collapsing ministries has been a running theme of this government, and we're only in week one.

I would like to ask the Premier again: Why on earth would this government walk away from \$11 million to help our cities? Is it because you haven't yet figured out how to redirect it into the pockets of your corporate friends?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much for the question, to my colleague from Oshawa. She asked me why I would walk away from \$11 million. Clearly, math is not their strong suit in the official opposition. The price tag is \$175 million, and growing.

I'm going to tell you something. My ministry is quite large. We look after children in care. We look after children who have autism. We look after children with developmental disabilities. We look after the welfare system. We look after ODSP. We look after women who are escaping domestic violence, and we look after women who are being trafficked.

So I ask you this, and I hope you have a response for me: Where do you want to take the money from? Those vulnerable people, or from the federal government who created a mess at the border and owes this province \$175 million?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats. Members, take your seats.

Supplementary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Again to the Acting Premier: Yesterday during question period, the member from Nepean hollered, "We're going to continue to welcome people to Ontario, and we're going to continue to support them." But at the same time, this government is neither welcoming nor supportive of asylum seekers in Ontario.

During the PC electoral campaign, a statement was issued that read, "While funding for refugees is primarily a federal issue, Doug Ford will sit down with Mayor Tory to ensure the city has the funding it needs." "Primarily" a federal issue means "mostly," but—and I'll explain to the team—it is also a provincial responsibility, both morally and legally.

The people of Ontario and our municipalities are looking to the provincial government to do the right thing and help people who are seeking refuge. While you waste precious time going back and forth about which level of government should shoulder the expense, refugees and asylum seekers are suffering.

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I hope that the Premier will do the right thing. Will they provide the much-needed housing to these families before the August 9 eviction date?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Immigration and refugee policy is under the purview of the federal government. No one disputes that. The issue that we have today is that we have \$75 million in housing costs for the city of Toronto. We have an additional \$11-million cost for the city of Ottawa, where I live. We have a \$90-million-and-growing social assistance cost as a result of this. You're telling me to take six cents on the dollar when I should be fighting for the people of this province—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to once again remind the members that you have to speak through the Chair and talk of other members in the third person.

To the minister.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: My apologies, Speaker.

The member opposite is telling me that I should accept six cents on the dollar. I can't afford that, this province can't afford that and the people I'm responsible for, whom I stay awake at night worrying about, can't afford it. So she can either stand with me or against me in my fight with Ottawa to get fair compensation for this province—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members please take their seats.

Next question.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour.

Minister, tens of thousands of students at York University from across the GTA have been adversely affected by months of inaction. The York University

strike has gone on for too long. I have received numerous calls from my constituents, from students at York U and members of their families who are very concerned about this ongoing strike which has kept them from the classroom. Our constituents want action. They want government to put students first.

Minister, I was very pleased to learn—through you, Mr. Speaker—that our new government is moving forward with one of our promises to the people of Ontario with the introduction of legislation that will finally end the strike at York University. Unfortunately, the opposition has indicated that they intend to stall this important legislation and keep students out of the classroom.

Minister, can you commit today to move forward this legislation and get our students back in the classroom?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats. Please take your seats.

Hon. Laurie Scott: I'd like to congratulate the member from King–Vaughan on his election to the Legislature; I know he will represent his constituents well. And I want to congratulate the Speaker on his election as Speaker of this Legislature.

The member from King–Vaughan is exactly right: This is about getting students back to the classroom. Finding a resolution to this situation is one of our immediate priorities. There are more than 45,000 students affected by this strike. They're concerned about losing their school year, and they're uncertain for their future.

This strike has gone on for more than 100 days, Mr. Speaker—it started on March 5—so we have every indication that both sides are deadlocked. There is no resolution in sight. We need to get the two parties back to the table, and the priority is to get the students back to the classroom.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'd ask the members to please take their seats.

Supplementary question?

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Back to the minister: Minister, thank you for your leadership on this file and thank you for moving with a sense of urgency for the sake of our young people.

While we know the NDP is ill-prepared to put our students first, under this minister, under this Premier and under this government, we are governing for the people, for the next generation and for those who want to work hard and get ahead in this province.

We know these students have been out of the classroom for four months, for far too long, so, Minister—through you, Mr. Speaker—could you elaborate on why it is so important that we get this legislation passed without delay? Let's get these kids back in the classroom.

Hon. Laurie Scott: Again, the students have suffered long enough. Over 45,000 students are being affected, and they are frightened about the future of their education. They shouldn't have to face this uncertainty.

This is the longest strike in post-secondary education in Canada. It needs to be resolved. This is one of the immediate priorities that the Premier and his government want to have, to get the students back to the classroom. This is why we've introduced legislation. We need to get the two parties back to the negotiating table and we need to get the students back to the classroom. That's what we, as the government, intend to do.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Ms. Marit Stiles: Through you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education.

For years, the parent-led group Fix Our Schools has been calling on the government to make urgent repairs to Ontario's schools. Days before the election, they circulated a pledge asking candidates to make a public commitment to finally eliminate the astonishing \$16-billion repair backlog. I signed that pledge, and indeed many Conservative MPPs, including our own Minister of Education, signed their names to that pledge.

And yet, as soon as this government was sworn in, it turned around and quietly gutted \$100 million in funding for very urgent school repairs. Why is this government already breaking its promise to the students and families of Ontario?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: To the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you: The member is referring to the funding that was being provided by the cap-and-trade carbon tax program. This government was exceptionally clear—this party was exceptionally clear—that it would eliminate that regressive tax, and as a result, we are working with our transfer partners to go through the orderly wind-down of the funding that came from that program. That's what you can expect from this government: We'll make a promise and we'll keep a promise.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Through you, Mr. Speaker: My question again to the Minister of Education, who signed this pledge.

The state of our schools in Ontario is appalling. They are crumbling. Across this province, they are literally falling apart—

Interjection.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Oh, I know. I know, after 15 years of Liberal mismanagement. Don't get me wrong; I know that.

In my own riding, I have schools like Alexander Muir/Gladstone, where the roof was so bad last year, they had to use the kindergarten water tables to catch the leaks. They have an urgent repair list of 44 major repairs needed, in that one school alone.

I want to know—and I want to hear this from the Minister of Education, please. You made a pledge. I don't care where you get it. You cut \$100 million in repairs that we urgently need in our communities. Parents expect it. You talk about the importance of parents and how

you're listening to them. Listen to them now. Fix Our Schools is a parent-led organization, and you signed the pledge.

How many more students are going to have to sit through the next year in leaky classrooms wearing hats and mitts before you live up to your pledge?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Please take your seats.

Minister of the Environment?

Hon. Rod Phillips: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to rise on the occasion of our second day back in the 42nd Parliament to address this very serious issue that evolved under 15 years of mismanagement by the former Liberal government.

I might remind the speaker that during my seven years here, it was the party opposite, the opposition party, that propped this government up and allowed the continued disintegration of the schools.

With that said, I'm pleased to share with you that we're working with our ministry officials, because fixing our schools is very important. We're going to fix and address the issues that evolved under the former Liberal government, because our students deserve that.

ENERGY CONTRACTS

Mr. David Piccini: As this is the first time I rise, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family, my remarkable campaign team and the great people of my community who elected me as the first-ever MPP for the great riding of Northumberland–Peterborough South.
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My question is for the Minister of Energy. Yesterday, the Minister of Energy tabled legislation. It included a portion that would enact the White Pines Wind Project Termination Act, 2018. This, if passed, would terminate this contract and any related regulatory approvals and permits for the White Pines wind project, retroactive to July 10, 2018.

Can the Minister of Energy explain why cancelling this project required legislation?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I want to welcome the member for Northumberland–Peterborough South and his immediate work on this file—also to the MPP for the Bay of Quinte, who has also represented this project.

Our government has been clear that we would take action to reduce electricity bills immediately for Ontarians. This includes cancelling any energy project that does not provide rate reductions for Ontarians. Due to the fact that this project faced considerable local and public opposition, I'm pleased to announce that our government introduced legislation to terminate this contract and any regulatory approvals and permits for White Pines wind project retroactive to July 10. This legislation requires White Pines Wind Inc. to decommission their project in accordance with any regulations put forth.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. David Piccini: Back to the Minister of Energy.

Thank you for your swift action on this. Prince Edward county was an unwilling host. The support of this government is being celebrated across Prince Edward county and into my riding of Northumberland–Peterborough South. It was shocking to hear that this project would have been approved during the caretaker period. It was clear that the county didn't want the project, nor did the members that formed government.

I understand care has been taken to protect Ontarians' interests. Can the Minister of Energy explain how cancelling this project will benefit Ontarians?

Hon. Greg Rickford: A smart guy, Mr. Speaker, thinking about this project.

Our government is committed to cancelling contracts for Ontarians not simply that they don't need, but that they don't want—imagine that, Mr. Speaker—and that's exactly what we're doing.

The previous Liberal government made it their mission to expand renewable energy contracts that were unsustainable and unaffordable. They included solar and industrial wind turbines. We're cancelling this project because we're going to protect the interests of Ontario taxpayers. We're going to protect Ontario people.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats. Please take your seats.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Guratan Singh: My question is for the Acting Premier. Auto insurance premiums in Ontario are 55% higher than in the rest of Canada. That amounts to \$4 billion that could be in the pockets of everyday Ontarians if our rates were at the rate of the national average. This is gouging Ontario drivers and it needs to stop.

But last week, this Conservative government allowed premiums to increase by another 1.1%. This shows exactly whose interests the Conservative government have in mind, and it is not everyday working Ontario families.

Will this government commit, here and now, to lowering auto insurance rates by 15%?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. Todd Smith: Thank you to the member opposite for the question here this morning.

You know, it's interesting when you look back at what has happened over the last couple of years in this Legislature. I've been here for seven years now. The members opposite supported the previous Liberal government when they said that they were going to reduce auto insurance rates by 15%. Then the previous Liberal government said, "Well, that was just a stretch goal." You'll remember that, Mr. Speaker. But the members opposite supported the government anyway. They continued to prop up the government.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the people of Ontario said it loud and clear on June 7 that they've had enough of the empty promises; they've had enough of the stretch goals.

They want a government that's going to look after their interests, a government that's going to put more money back in their pockets, a government that is going to clean up accountability—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

That concludes the time we have for question period.

USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize that there's a great deal of enthusiasm in the House, this being the first week where we've had a regular question period, but I would like to point out that there were numerous standing ovations on both sides of the House, and I would point out that you're just cutting into your own time, which reduces the number of questions that might be asked in the House. I'd ask you to consider that.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain on a point of order.

Miss Monique Taylor: It gives me great pleasure to welcome some guests for my ceremonial swearing-in today. In the House, I have my father, Mike Taylor, and his wife, Pauline. I have one of my constituency assistants, Andrea Hogan, as well as one of my campaign volunteers, Aiden McIlven. Later this afternoon we'll be joined by my mother, Barbara Piper, and my sister Nicole Taylor. Welcome to Queen's Park.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), changes have been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Harris assumes ballot item number 94, Mrs. Fee assumes ballot item number 2, Mr. Oosterhoff assumes ballot item number 3 and Ms. Kusendova assumes ballot item number 22.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1136 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's my pleasure today to welcome my staff from the London constituency office. They support me there very well and I'm so happy to have them here for my ceremonial swearing-in. Welcome.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's a great joy for me to introduce my daughter Dana, my daughter Vicky and someone who Vicky studies with at university, Alwish—I'm going to butcher his last name—Rangith and he is from India. We're very proud to have them here today in our Legislature.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's an honour to be able to stand today and recognize the former member for the riding of Durham, John O'Toole, and his wife, Peggy. Thank you very much for being here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And, I will add, the member for Durham East in the 36th Parliament, the member for Durham in the 37th to 40th Parliaments, and his wife, Peggy, is with us as well. Welcome.

Ms. Doly Begum: I would like to introduce my fiancé, Rizuan Rahman, who is here for my oath as well.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm just trying to give them five seconds to find their seats while I drag this on to make sure that they see that I'm from the riding of Essex. My beautiful wife, Jennifer Natyshak, is here with two of my great friends. There they are. Hi, Jenny. Our great friends Tania and Jason Petro from Belle River, who have made the trip down here for my swearing-in ceremony today—I want to welcome them here to the House.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

RIDING OF TORONTO-ST. PAUL'S

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members' statements? The member for Toronto-St. Paul's.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you, Speaker, for this opportunity—my first—to formally address the Legislature. I acknowledge the stolen First Nations land on which I stand.

I rise in these chambers today because of the vibrant people of Toronto-St. Paul's: our resilient campaign team, selfless volunteers, my mother, partner, mentors and friends who wanted change for the better. I cannot thank them enough.

Toronto-St. Paul's is community strong. Toronto-St. Paul's is Sage Goldenberg, a mother and small business owner who organized a local donation drive for Hume-wood House, a resource centre that empowers young pregnant and parenting moms.

Toronto-St. Paul's is Julian Back and Kim Lesperance, local organizers behind the Feel Good Lane mural project, commemorating the life of beloved resident Barry "Feel Good" Luksenberg, an MC with the local 512 Hip Hop Crew.

And lastly, Toronto-St. Paul's is the late Charles Roach, human rights lawyer, activist and founding member of the Black Action Defence Committee and Caribana. Tomorrow our city will unveil Charley Roach Lane in our St. Clair West area in his honour.

As the first out, Black, queer woman to sit in the Legislature, I am deeply thankful to all people and families in Toronto, regardless of how they voted. I am proud to serve all residents. I will continue to stand firmly in the name of social justice, equity, access and inclusivity. My goal? To work hard, collaboratively, with empathy, kindness and sound judgment so no one in Toronto-St. Paul's feels left behind.

FERROCHROME PLANT

Mr. Ross Romano: Last June 2017, I was elected in the Sault Ste. Marie by-election. From my first day in office, I made it clear that I would do everything in my capacity as the MPP for Sault Ste. Marie to try to secure a ferrochrome processing facility, which stems from the Ring of Fire project that Noront Resources is working on.

Within a few days of my election, I had developed a team and started conducting meetings with Noront executives here in Toronto, the CEO of Algoma, the Port of Algoma, community leaders, the local economic development corporation and city staff to develop a team to work on the ferrochrome processing facility bid for Sault Ste. Marie. I even spent a day and night in each of the five fly-in Matawa First Nation communities and visited the Ring of Fire itself.

I did all this believe because I believe that Sault Ste. Marie is the best place to see this facility built. Our location at the centre of the Great Lakes, the synergies we hold with Algoma and our brownfield site I think make us an excellent location for this facility.

When I first started this process, the Noront executives told me that they were not even looking at Sault Ste. Marie because of a process we had with the CCAA process going on at Algoma Steel in Sault Ste. Marie.

I'm very pleased to say that the work that we did together in Sault Ste. Marie, from my election on June 1 to November 1, had great results. Sault Ste. Marie was given an opportunity to submit a bid for the ferrochrome processing facility. From not being considered at all, we were allowed to submit a bid.

But I'm ecstatic to report to you that, last Friday, Noront indicated to us that we are now in the final two, along with Timmins, in consideration for the ferrochrome processing facility. I hope to stand before this chamber and announce our successful bid in the future.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Today I address an important issue affecting my riding of London—Fanshawe as well as the province: affordable housing.

In my own city of London, we recently faced a major loss to our already stretched social service agencies with the closure of the London Housing Registry. The London Housing Registry was a resource centre that assisted individuals and families on low or limited income to find affordable private market housing. They were the only resource of their kind in London. After 34 years of service, they've just closed their doors. They feel that, given the low vacancy rates and the lack of affordable housing options, they are no longer able to provide the service their mandate entailed.

We know that one in three people in London rent—this is higher than the provincial and national average—and almost 30% of households are in core need of affordable housing, meaning they spend more than 30% of their household income on shelter.

Without affordable housing options, families must turn to subsidized housing. Recent numbers show that nearly 3,400 families are on a wait-list for subsidized housing in London and may remain on the wait-list for nearly eight years. Affordable housing is reaching a critical point in Ontario.

I would like to thank the London Housing Registry for their 34 years of service to our community and make a promise to do my part to continue the spirit of their work and advocate for more affordable housing initiatives and inclusionary zoning regulations and promote legislation that supports renters and buyers in the largest expense in a family's budget.

HANOVER AND DISTRICT HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm pleased to rise today in honour of the Hanover and District Hospital Auxiliary, who this year celebrate their 95th anniversary.

Auxiliary volunteers are an important partner and resource within our health care community. Their mission is to provide support and comfort to the patients of Hanover and District Hospital. Additionally, the local auxiliary raises money to purchase medical equipment, such as a new dialysis chair, and renovate restrooms on the cardiac rehab floor at the hospital to make them wheelchair accessible.

CEO Katrina Wilson says that the Hanover hospital would be lost without its auxiliary. She says that donations allow the hospital to take on projects that the hospital lacks funds for.

The health care community owes a great debt of gratitude to the auxiliary and their contribution to always support patient safety and care.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Hanover and District Hospital Auxiliary as well as president and CEO Katrina Wilson and board chair Dave Cardwell, and all of the auxiliary and board volunteers.

When I was executive director of the Bruce Peninsula Health Services Foundation, I worked very closely with the auxiliary and saw first-hand the dedication, commitment and compassion that they show in their job to make health care better.

1510

I would like to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating this exceptional group and the thousands of Hospital Auxiliaries Association of Ontario volunteers for their commitment and their continued service and dedication to their communities and to making health care the best it can be here in the province of Ontario.

RIDING OF KINGSTON AND THE ISLANDS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe it's the first time I have spoken with you in the chair, so congratulations on your victory.

It's a pleasure to rise in the House today to deliver my first member's statement, and it's fortunate that it falls on the day of my ceremonial swearing-in. I'd like to introduce my family: Brendan, Benoit, Melanie and my mother, Janette, who are in the members' gallery right now.

Running for office was certainly one of the most monumental tasks I have ever taken on, and I would like to use this member's statement to thank everyone who dedicated so many hours, so much time, to helping me win the election. I'd like to recognize my family. They have been so supportive, so understanding. They have always been there for me, and that has meant so much to me.

I'd also like to recognize my dedicated and talented campaign team. They helped me knock on thousands and thousands of doors and talk to tens of thousands of voters. Patrick, Leif, Yardy, Aimee, Alden and Jason: I could never have done this without you.

Mr. Speaker, our campaign was one that inspired. We had countless volunteers who poured hundreds and hundreds of hours of work into canvassing, phoning, putting up signs and attending events, like all the volunteers did for all the members who are here today.

Thank you to all of Kingston for believing in me and believing that I could bring change for the better to Kingston and the Islands. Most importantly, I would like to thank the constituents of Kingston and the Islands for putting their faith in me here in this Legislature.

DISCOURS DU TRÔNE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: C'est un grand honneur de me lever dans cette enceinte pour représenter Ottawa–Vanier. Je remercie tous les résidents d'Ottawa–Vanier pour ce grand privilège.

It's a pleasure to be part of the 42nd Parliament with all of you, and I look forward to representing my constituents of Ottawa–Vanier.

I want to use this statement to say a couple of things about the disappointment of some of my constituents about some of the issues that were missing from this speech from the throne. There was little mention about the power of reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples of this land, and many of my constituents noticed that. Governing is certainly about giving people what they want, but it's also about ensuring that we do right by history. It's also about inspiring us to lead by example and reflect the best instincts of human beings.

Mes commettants ont aussi reconnu qu'il n'y avait pas un seul mot en français dans le discours du trône, et ça les a un peu insultés. D'une certaine façon, je pense que c'est important que la communauté francophone ne soit pas oubliée.

Finally, I think many of my constituents raised the issue that very little has been said about housing. We

need affordable housing: affordable housing for seniors, affordable housing for newcomers, and affordable housing for disabled people. We need more affordable housing. There's an opportunity because the federal government has a national housing strategy, and I hope the government will take part in this housing strategy.

RIDING OF NIAGARA WEST

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: What an incredible privilege it is to be able to stand in this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, for the purpose of addressing issues of importance that arise in our beautiful province.

I cannot thank the constituents of Niagara West enough for the trust they have placed in me to represent them in this House. I wish to thank my strong and capable campaign team, volunteers and family for their trust and support and the encouragement they provide me.

On June 7, the voters of Niagara West and Ontario elected a strong government for the people—a government that will listen to the people, not the insiders; a government that will work for taxpayers, work for job creators and work for families across our great province.

For 15 years, the people of Ontario had a government that, unfortunately, refused to listen to everyday Ontarians. But today, help is here with a government for the people.

As I promised when first elected in 2016, my top priority will be the interests and concerns of the families and job creators in Niagara West, from fighting for a much-needed West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in Grimsby to scrapping the Kathleen Wynne sex ed curriculum and fighting for lower taxes, cheaper gas and better jobs in Niagara West and across our wonderful province.

I can't wait to get to work with my colleagues in the PC Party to get Ontario back on track so we can once again proudly say that we are the economic powerhouse of Canada.

RIDING OF SCARBOROUGH SOUTHWEST

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough Southwest.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your victory.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honour and privilege I rise today for the first time in this Legislature. I would like to take this moment to thank the hard-working people of Scarborough Southwest for placing their trust in me to be their voice in this Legislature. I thank my family, my friends and the wonderful community members who worked tirelessly for months making this campaign and making history. I am proud to be the first Bangladeshi Canadian to be elected in Canada to a House of Parliament.

We defeated politics of cynicism with hope and love.

My home riding of Scarborough Southwest, where we have treasures like the Scarborough Bluffs, is a diverse riding with people from all over the world, including residents who have had to leave homes in northern Ontario, the Canadian Atlantic provinces, the Philippines, the Caribbean, China, Africa and South Asia, moving here to access jobs, education and health care, and for a better life.

While the Premier's throne speech failed to address critical issues in our province such as reconciliation, the environment, equity and the immigrant dream, I'm confident that with the incredibly talented NDP caucus—one of the largest official oppositions in history—we will hold this government accountable and make sure that we protect Ontario citizens.

The immigrant dream brought many of us, our parents and our grandparents here to find shelter in this native land of our First Nations and Indigenous people. It is our duty to make sure that we help make that dream a reality while respecting the rights of the people of this land.

RIDING OF HASTINGS–LENNOX AND ADDINGTON

Mr. Daryl Kramp: It is with humility and a sense of appreciation that I stand here today to make my very first remarks in this chamber. I represent two old counties in Ontario, but in a new riding.

Hastings and Lennox and Addington played lead roles in the first decades of this province and of this country. Starting in 1784, my two counties produced leading figures both in Ontario and Canada. Sir John A. Macdonald is just one of the local legends whose steps I have to follow, sadly. But, like L&A's Sir John A., I am one of the few privileged to have served municipally, federally in the House of Commons, and now here so proudly in this Legislative Assembly of Ontario. So, folks, it's very, very good company.

Yesterday I watched with pride in our province as a number of new members from across the aisles here and in my own party made their first remarks. They distinguished themselves in their eloquence and their passion. I think it bodes well for our nation and for our province to have representatives like this.

I tip my hat to the MPPs who have risen to speak before me this week and, of course, to the entire class of 2018. Bully on you. The public spoke collectively in June, though, and the bell they rang has now been answered by this government.

On a more sombre note, though, I would like to pay tribute to George Beer, a loyal friend who passed away yesterday. George was a Hastings community powerhouse. He served Thurlow as a long-time reeve, and as a councillor for the city of Belleville. On Sunday he attended his last political event: a thank-you afternoon at my house. Thank you, George. A strong Conservative to the end, my thoughts are with you, Betty and your entire family. Rest in peace and God bless.

EVENTS IN CHATHAM-KENT– LEAMINGTON

Mr. Rick Nicholls: When the weather gets hot and sunny, many summer festivals kick off around the province. Chatham-Kent–Leamington is no stranger to fun and festivals that bring people and communities together. I call it “In the good ole summertime.”

Do you want to walk the streets of downtown Chatham and view vintage cars? You can do that during Chatham's RetroFest.

Since we're almost in cherry season, you can enjoy the festivities during Blenheim's Cherry Fest. You can even have some fun by participating in their pit-spitting contest. According to previous champions, there is a technique to get distance when pit-spitting. By the way, I haven't done very well, but I and many others have had a lot of good laughs along the way.

1520

One of my favourite festivals is the Ribfest. I think it's because most of the time, I get called upon to be one of the judges. Those ribs and their different sauces are so good.

But the highlight this summer will be the International Plowing Match, scheduled to run from September 18 to the 22, here in Chatham-Kent. I will be working closely with two of my colleagues, Bob Bailey from Sarnia–Lambton and Monte McNaughton from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

The IPM draws people from all over Ontario, and I suspect we will have visitors from the USA as well. It's a great opportunity for our area to showcase, from an agricultural perspective, the various fruits and vegetables grown locally, as well as vendors to show their wares. Even MPPs from all over Ontario will be visiting the Maple City for opening ceremonies—mark it on your calendar—on the 17th of September.

As you can see, there's a lot happening in Chatham–Kent–Leamington in “the good ole summertime.”

PETITIONS

PRÉVENTION DU TABAGISME CHEZ LES JEUNES

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

« Entendu que, au cours des 10 dernières années en Ontario, 86 % de tous les films montrant des fumeurs étaient accessibles aux jeunes et le fait que l'industrie du tabac se sert du grand écran pour promouvoir l'usage du tabac est bien documenté; et

« Entendu qu'un rapport scientifique rendu public par l'Unité de recherche sur le tabac de l'Ontario, environ 185 000 enfants de l'Ontario commenceront à fumer après avoir vu des personnages fumer dans des films, et que plus que 59 000 fumeurs ainsi recrutés finiront par

mourir de maladies liées à l'usage du tabac, lesquelles entraîneront des coûts de soins de santé de l'ordre d'au moins 1,1 milliard de dollars; et

« Entendu que le gouvernement de l'Ontario s'est fixé comme objectif d'atteindre le taux de tabagisme le plus faible au Canada, et que 79 % ... des Ontariens et Ontariennes appuient l'interdiction de l'usage du tabac dans les films classés dans les catégories G, PG, 14A; et

« Entendu que le ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs a le pouvoir de modifier, par l'entremise du Conseil des ministres, les règlements pris en application de la Loi sur le classement des films; »

Ils demandent à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario d'examiner « les façons dont on pourrait modifier la Loi sur le classement des films pour réduire l'usage du tabac dans les films classés dans les catégories qui conviennent aux enfants et aux adolescents, et diffusés en Ontario. »

Je vais la signer et la donner à Annabelle pour l'amener à la table des greffiers.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Norman Miller: I have a petition with regard to hospitals in Parry Sound–Muskoka. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care commits to maintaining core hospital services at both Huntsville District Memorial Hospital and South Muskoka Memorial Hospital and ensure small and medium-sized hospitals receive enough funding to maintain core services.”

Mr. Speaker, 791 people signed this petition, and I have as well signed it, and will give it to—

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

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Michael Mantha: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas hydro bills in Ontario have become unaffordable for too many people;

“Whereas reducing hydro bills by up to 30% for families and businesses is an ambitious but realistic target;

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

“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;

“Whereas changing the financing of private contracts and the global adjustment fails to reduce the long-term cost of hydro for families and businesses, does not fix the system and, in fact, will cost billions of dollars extra in borrowing costs;

“Whereas Hydro One can be returned to public ownership and management without increasing rates;

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

“Therefore we, the undersigned, express our support for reducing 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 wholeheartedly agree with this petition. I'll affix my signature and present it to page Adam to bring down to the Clerks' table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 17, 2018, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate? I recognize the member for Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker. I am pleased to congratulate you on your election as the Speaker.

We'll pause during the transition.

Deputy Speaker, I congratulate you too—both—for your steady hands on the tiller.

I'm honoured to join the debate on the throne speech. Speaker, for too long, people in my riding and other parts of Ontario have worked more and paid more but gotten less. Those days are over. The days ahead will build on the achievements the government for the people has already made, such as freeing taxpayers from the cap-

and-trade carbon tax scheme; fixing OHIP+; and reining in government spending, getting the province back on a healthy financial footing so it can invest in strengthening vital public services like hospitals and schools.

I'm pleased that the Minister of Energy introduced legislation yesterday to end the York University strike and get the 45,000 students impacted back into their classrooms. This strike lasted four months. The time has come to enable all students to continue their education and move to the next stage of their lives.

Speaker, as I canvassed through the great town of Whitby during the provincial election, residents there told me that they wanted their government to focus on putting everyday workers and families first. Consequently, taxes will be lowered on most individuals and businesses, while regulations will be slashed with the goal of spurring economic growth.

As you would expect, Speaker, like most MPPs, I meet regularly with my local chamber of commerce. It's comprised of a variety of business sectors. Whether it is in agriculture, food service, retail or construction, the message is regularly the same: It's time for a government that listens to local business owners. I'm sure you've have heard the same in your riding as well.

A Premier Ford government is doing exactly that. Together, we can create unprecedented jobs and prosperity, and leave that strong, strong message that Ontario is open for business.

1530

We can rebuild trust between the people and their government based on a shared and simple principle: Ontario residents should not be forced to pay more. Instead, the government should be working harder, smarter and more efficiently to make life better for hard-working Ontario families.

Speaker, at the beginning of my remarks, I should have indicated that I'm splitting my time with the Minister of Education.

The government for the people believes that no dollar is better spent than the dollar that is left in the pockets of the taxpayers. That's why our government will take action to reduce gas prices and lower hydro bills, scrapping the cap-and-trade carbon tax here and opposing other carbon tax schemes in all of their forms. These oppressive taxes make life unaffordable for families and put thousands of Ontario jobs at risk.

Now, the government has already taken action to protect jobs, including the thousands of jobs across Ontario that depend on the continued operation of the Pickering nuclear generating station. The government's commitment to keeping open the Pickering plant, which began operations of its A station in 1971, will save and protect 4,500 local jobs, in addition to 3,000 other jobs that are dependent on the nuclear industry in Durham.

The move to preserve the operations at OPG's Pickering facility makes sense from a power generation standpoint, too. The station adds to energy security within Ontario by providing power for 1.5 million homes every day and is responsible for 14% of electricity in the

province. Pickering represents a large block of energy production that would be hard to replace in the short term, and is certainly necessary with the ongoing refurbishment at the Darlington station.

The government's commitment has huge ramifications for the entire province. An Impact Analysis on Ontario's Economy, an independent economic analysis released in partnership with the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis and sponsored by OPG, found three major benefits to continued operations in Pickering until 2024:

- \$1.54 billion to Ontario's gross domestic product per year;

- 7,590 full-time equivalent jobs per year; and

- \$290 million in government taxation revenues, \$150 million to federal and \$135 million to provincial.

The Pickering nuclear plant is a win-win situation for the workers, for OPG and for Durham region. Speaker, I have always believed in made-in-Ontario electricity and made-in-Ontario jobs.

We've acted swiftly to restore public confidence in Ontario's electricity system. Ontario's ratepayers will benefit from \$790 million in savings thanks to the government's decision to cancel and wind down 758 renewable energy contracts. During the election, we clearly promised we would cancel these unnecessary and wasteful energy projects as part of our plan for the people to cut hydro rates by 12% for families, farmers and small businesses.

In the past few weeks, we've taken significant steps towards keeping that promise. All of the cancelled projects have not reached project development milestones. Terminating the projects at this early stage will maximize benefits for ratepayers. Furthermore, Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Energy introduced a legislative amendment that, if passed, will protect hydro consumers from any costs incurred from the cancellation. For 15 years, Ontario families and businesses have been forced to pay inflated hydro prices so the government could spend on unnecessary and expensive energy schemes.

Ontario residents can also count on the government to respect our doctors, nurses and other health care practitioners by working collaboratively with them to ensure we have a system that treats everyone fairly while putting the interests of patients first.

I want to move to another area, and that's health care. Due to the failed Liberal health care policies, more than 26,000 people are on wait-lists for long-term-care residency in Ontario, with an average wait time of over 100 days. That's 100 days. And seniors organizations and advocates for the long-term-care-home industry say those figures are only going to grow. That's why we will be investing in 15,000 new long-term-care beds in five years and 30,000 new beds over the next 10 years. Speaker, you know, and I know, that our parents and grandparents who require long-term care deserve more than long wait times and out-of-date homes.

You can also count on the government to respect parents, teachers and students by getting back to basics

and replacing failed ideological experiments in classrooms with tried-and-true methods that work.

Speaker, you can also count on the government to respect the men and women of Ontario's police services by freeing them from the onerous restrictions that treat those in uniform as subjects of suspicion and scorn. I'm sure like many in the Legislature, I meet regularly with the police association in the region of Durham. Not only do they identify issues, but they also provide solutions in the course of those meetings. Many of those particular solutions, more broadly, are adapted and reflected in the directions of the government. Our direction for policing will ensure that they have the tools, support and resources that they need to enforce the law and protect innocent families going forward.

We're getting to work quickly so that the people we have the privilege of serving, who gave us a clear mandate, can see real change and get the respect they deserve from their government, putting everyday workers and families first. They deserve no less. Speaker, it will require a unity of purpose, a clear vision and a lot of hard work, which you've seen already and will continue to be demonstrated in the days and months ahead. In our hands lies the future of this great province.

I'm pleased to turn over the balance of my time to the Minister of Education.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the Minister of Education, the member from Huron-Bruce.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's great to see you back in that chair.

I commend the member from Whitby. He is a great representative for his constituents. He always leads with his heart in a very respectful manner and gets the job done on their behalf. For that, I know they're very appreciative.

It's my pleasure today to rise in this House on behalf of my constituents of Huron-Bruce, who have entrusted to me again an opportunity to represent one of the best ridings in the entire province, Ontario's west coast. We have a very eclectic economy in the riding of Huron-Bruce, and I'm very pleased to see that, as said through our throne speech, this government, the PC government of Ontario, will be dedicated to making sure that Ontario is open for business again. That's going to have amazing, positive impacts, not only in Huron-Bruce but across this province. I'm going to be looking forward to talking about that in a moment or two.

Another thing that I want to share with you, Speaker, is that when we kicked off the 42nd Parliament of Ontario, Ontario saw a significant change. They heard some very significant promises, made in the throne speech, that I am so proud that Premier Doug Ford and the entire government caucus are committed to. I would dare say that it will be the first time in a long 15 years that people throughout Ontario have heard, finally, a government stand up and pledge to work for the people. I have to say this because I'm hearing really good feedback on the promises that we have made and kept, and we are going to continue to do more.

As the Ontario government, this PC caucus, under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford, will pledge to put forward policies based on the needs of taxpayers and making life easier for everyone in this province. While the opposition may think that they know best when it comes to spending the taxpayers' hard-earned dollars, it's our government and our team that made it clear last week with the throne speech that we're going to bring through thoughtful policies and enable taxpayers to decide on their priorities for themselves.

It is the first time in a long time that Ontarians heard from their government a pledge to bring tax relief to all Ontario families. While the opposition believes in big government, we believe in the people and their entrepreneurial spirit. Where the opposition would put in speed bumps and roadblocks such as more red tape, we're paving the way for the economy to get moving again.

1540

We heard the member from Whitby talk about putting patients first, getting things right and bringing down wait times in hospitals. I'm so pleased that the election of the Ontario PC government represents, for the first time in a very long time, that front-line health care workers have something to celebrate. I think about the amazing people who work on the front lines in Walkerton, Chesley, Kincardine, Wingham, Seaforth, Clinton, Goderich and Exeter. We are going to listen to them. They are the people who know how it works on the front lines, why there are wait times and why things are backing up in the hallways. By listening to them and working with them, we will be able to come forward and actually demonstrate how we can best put patients first. Again, I must underscore the fact that in order to do that, we must listen to our health care professionals, who have those patients' interests at heart.

Speaker, after years of being ignored by the people who were elected to serve them, parents of children with autism can finally rely on their government for help. The minister of youth and children's services is taking this situation very, very seriously, and I look forward to working with her in getting it right, because we know that the former government, the Liberal government, did not. In the speech from the throne, there were promised increases of supports—not cuts—to families with children with autism. No longer will these families have to be abandoned by their government. It's going to be the Ontario PC government that is going to make sure that families who have children with autism no longer have to make major sacrifices just to afford basic treatments. For the first time in a long time, it is with great pride that I stand with Premier Doug Ford, along with my other Ontario government caucus members, and say to these families that help is on the way for the families who need it most.

Speaker, an issue that was front of mind for years and years under Liberal rule in Huron-Bruce was runaway energy costs. Bad contract after bad contract was signed. We saw the impact in our local communities across my riding, hurting families and businesses. People were truly

struggling, and it was heartbreaking seeing the negative impacts of the bad Green Energy Act. But our government, showing respect for Ontarians who have had to endure skyrocketing hydro rates for years—those people are seeing action immediately with our government. Promises made; promises kept. We have seen the Hydro One CEO retire, and the entire board is now gone. It's time to start continuing down the road to lower hydro rates so that, as we've talked about, we can make Ontario competitive again and make life a little bit easier for families and businesses across this amazing province of ours.

We're also very proud to be scrapping the cap-and-trade carbon scheme. We've talked about this for years, Speaker. It hurts families across this province—rural families, urban families, farmers and all businesses in between. The rural way of life depends on affordable gas prices in order to maintain businesses and put food on the table. You can't expect everyone in Huron-Bruce to switch to expensive electric cars, because, quite frankly, we won't have a charge station close by. That's just our reality out there. People who can't afford to go green will not be punished with these harsh taxes. The cap-and-trade scheme was a lot of ideology, and the previous government was truly out of touch with the realities of Ontario in that regard. In the counties of Huron and Bruce and other rural areas—everywhere in Ontario; it doesn't matter if it's rural or urban—we just can't afford a price on carbon, and I am so proud to stand with Premier Doug Ford and this entire government and announce that we have eliminated the cap-and-trade carbon tax. That scheme has got to go, and we're taking quick steps in doing so to bring down the cost of fuel at the gas pumps as well.

One more issue that I would like to touch on is the respect for those who serve. This hit me very strongly during the campaign, and I am so pleased to see that the throne speech has promised a monument to Canadian heroes. I've spoken about our heroes and our service people in this House before. Erecting a monument for those who served in Afghanistan is so, so important, and to that I say, I can't wait for the Dinning family to come to Queen's Park and see their son honoured once again.

Those heroes who fought in Afghanistan can never be fully repaid for what they did in terms of honouring not only Ontario, Canada and around the world when it came to fighting terrorism, but we can do our best to honour those brave fallen soldiers and those who served. It is only the right thing to do.

And for the first time in a very, very long time, we're going to see a government that respects those who serve and protect us right here at home as well. To that, I say, thank you to Minister Tibollo, thank you to Premier Doug Ford and thank you to Minister Mulroney. We are going to get it right when it comes to those people who are serving in our home communities to protect us right here at home.

Despite what the opposition mistakenly believes, attacking those who protect us will not make us safer.

That's why this government, in the speech from the throne, has announced that our police officers will no longer be treated with suspicion and scorn.

Speaker, it's been a pleasure to speak on just a few elements of the throne speech. Please remember, Ontario, as I conclude, that we are making promises, we are keeping them, and we are respecting every taxpayer and every voter and every family in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? I recognize the member from Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Joel Harden: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to address this chamber for the first time. Because this is my first speech, I want to congratulate you on your election. I also want to congratulate all my colleagues on their election and congratulate my partner, Clare, and a great campaign team at home.

In the short amount of time I have, I want to bring up an issue that I hope will interest my friends in government. Over lunch today, I had the great opportunity to walk outside this great building with friends of mine in CUPE 3903 who have been on strike for eight months—eight months because 60% of the teaching at my former workplace, where I was a teacher too, at York University, is done by low-paid academic workers. York University, at this point in time, is being run by a president who makes \$486 million a year.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thousand.

Mr. Joel Harden: Sorry—\$486,000 a year. Thank you.

Where I used to work more recently, at Carleton University—that university was run by a president who earned \$460,000 a year, with a \$3,000-a-month housing allowance and a \$1,500-a-month car allowance.

This government ran under the promise that the party with taxpayers' dollars is over. I ask them if they intend to extend that courtesy to every single aspect of the public service. Friends of ours who teach our children should not have to walk in circles for eight months while a gravy train exists in the public sector that this government is ignoring. It's time for a government that's truly for the people and that will ask that the public's money be used with respect. That is not happening at York University.

What we don't need is legislated tough knuckles. What we need is bargaining. York management has bargained for a total of 15 minutes—15 minutes. I ask my friends in government: Is that adequate, good-faith bargaining? Or are you simply encouraging bad behaviour in public service management that is going to continue under your watch? It's time to truly stand up for the people, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Calandra: It's actually fitting that both the member for Huron-Bruce and the member for Whitby should be speaking together because both of their communities are so integral to the economic well-being of province. I know both of them have stood up—in the

member for Whitby's case, along with his colleagues in Durham, Pickering–Uxbridge and Ajax—for Darlington and Pickering. I know how important the Bruce nuclear power station is—again, not only to their local regions for the amount of jobs that it creates, but for the economic prosperity and opportunity that low-cost nuclear provides to all Ontarians and, by extension, all of Canada.

1550

I wanted to also just take a moment to reflect on the York University strike.

What has happened here is that we have students who have been out of the classroom since March. The opportunity to negotiate has existed for months. The only people who are suffering right now are the students who have had to put their lives on hold while the previous government did absolutely nothing.

There was an opportunity to put these people back to work, but the NDP opposition said no. Instead, they chose to leave students out on the streets, along with the educators, and that is completely unacceptable.

This government has come back now because we realize how important it is to put education on the right path, not only in primary and secondary but also in our post-secondary, and it starts with York University. What we're doing is laying a marker down, saying that our students come first, whether it's in primary, whether it's in secondary or in post-secondary.

To the students of York University: We're saying the days of waiting are over. We understand what you've suffered through. This government, this government for the people, will listen to you once and for all. Before we leave here, you will be back to school.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: To my friend the Minister of Education: I just want to let her know that I'm a very proud member of the Elliot Lake Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 561. I sit often with the legionnaires who are there, the veterans, and also the women's auxiliary. They love having me at their barbecues, at their fundraisers and also at their conventions.

I'll tell you something, Mr. Speaker: If there is a group of ladies who will make this gentleman, this guy, go red—it is sitting down with those ladies, having a beer and a couple of glasses of wine. There are some pretty hefty stories that come out of them.

Anyway, I don't think the honour of saying that you are the party that is recognizing veterans is fair. I think everybody in this House recognizes what the contributions have been from veterans in our entire country, not just our province. I think we all owe them very, very huge respect.

To the member from Whitby: I just wanted to comment on a few of his comments. He's talking about this government cutting back and saving Ontario people \$790 million by cutting the contracts with regard to the green energy in Whitby. At what cost? At what cost is that going to come?

We've seen what the previous McGuinty government came out with when they cancelled the gas plants. That came at a huge cost. They boasted about it only costing \$40 million. We all know the true cost. There was a lot of diligent work done by your finance critic and ours to track those dollars and pull that information out, when we found out exactly how much money it was going to cost Ontario taxpayers.

What are we going to find out that this is going to cost Ontario taxpayers?

Really? A 12% hydro savings, when we've seen, over the last 15 years, what this Liberal government has left us in a mess with, with raising the hydro rates by well over 330%? Really, 12%?

Deal with the real issues of hydro. Deal with the privatization, and return it to public hands.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka? Got it.

Mr. Norman Miller: Correct, Speaker.

Let me first of all begin by congratulating the member from Whitby on his re-election. He certainly did a great job in his first term, when we were in opposition. Of course, he was the critic for education and post-secondary education, so it makes sense that he would be talking about the York University strike and the fact that this government is going to be legislating an end to the York University strike.

I remember the member from Whitby, on many occasions, trying to urge the then Liberal government on to do something about it. There certainly was ample opportunity in the spring session to end that. It has gone on far too long. I certainly commend him for all the work that he did. Finally, there's going to be an end brought to this, and the students will be placed first.

Certainly, there's lots to talk about in both of the speeches. I want to also congratulate the member from Huron–Bruce on her re-election and the great job she's going to do as the new Minister of Education. Certainly, she did a great job in opposition, did a lot of hard work. I'm sure she's going to make an excellent Minister of Education.

She brought up a few different points. She talked about energy costs—both members did. That has been a huge issue in the last number of years, particularly in rural ridings, with businesses and individual families having to choose between heating and eating. Our government has made a very clear commitment to reduce the price of electricity by 12%. By ending some of those contracts that were at the early stages, to save, as was pointed out, some \$790 million—that's a small start to the process of reducing electricity by 12%.

I see that I'm out of time, but I want to congratulate both members.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member for final comment.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to provide the response not only for myself but also for the Minister of Education.

There are particular themes that we saw in the throne speech. It spoke about our plan for Hydro One, and it also spoke about the cancellation of cap-and-trade slush fund spending. It also talked about restoring accountability and trust and talked about it in the context of a commission of inquiry and a line-by-line audit of all government spending, which will bring an end to the culture of waste and mismanagement in government. That's what I heard when I canvassed across the great town of Whitby. I'm sure the members on the government side heard the same thing; didn't you? I'm sure you did too, on the opposition benches. Well, we're proceeding with that. This is going to be a thorough investigation into the province's finances and the state of the government's books. We're going to build on the work of the Auditor General of Ontario as well as the Financial Accountability Office. This commission of inquiry will be at arm's length from the government and will have the resources to get the job done.

This is about taking action, listening carefully to the people and shining a light on those darkest corners and finding out who's getting rich off their money. The people of Ontario deserve to know where their money is going. This is about cleaning up Ontario's finances and restoring confidence that people's hard-earned money is being spent with prudence and care. Promises made, promises kept.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's always with great pride that I take my seat in this House. It's something that I cherish. I want to thank the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin for having returned me to my seat for a third term. I'm very humbled. The message was a very clear one. I was always well received at doors with smiles, even by those who had different views. One thing that you can always count on in northern Ontario is, you'll always be received with a smile and a handshake, and it was something that I really enjoyed this campaign.

Speaker, I don't know what the process is, but I'd like to ask you a favour. It's the summer months and we're here dealing with some legislation, but these young pages are here on their summer break. I think that is quite remarkable, and I think they need a hand.

Applause.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I know the Speaker won't rise, but it would be nice, because that's the only way I can get these pages to rise so they can take a bow.

Anyway, I find myself a little puzzled today talking to this throne speech from this government, where I was expecting to hear some of their priorities as far as what they were going to put forward. Ontarians waited for a very long time on this Conservative government in order to see a platform, which was supposed to come out during the election but never really came. Quite frankly, it was nowhere to be found. They were silent on that platform. You're going to see, during my comments today, that that's going to be the theme of my comments: how silent this government was in their throne speech.

1600

I had some hope to see what this newly formed government was going to propose in its throne speech—so many new faces would probably be bringing new ideas to the floor—but again, we're going to wait. Call me naive, but I really thought we would hear about the new policies this government intended to put forward. But to my surprise—well, not really, Mr. Speaker. Just like their mysterious platform, their priorities were nowhere to be found in this throne speech.

So I asked myself, why is that? Why did Conservatives barely talk about northern Ontario during the election? They chose not to talk about it, either, during their throne speech—silence.

The same goes for Indigenous people, to whom we owe not only a stand-alone ministry but a true commitment to reconciliation: silence.

The same goes for forestry and mining, two key sectors in Ontario's economy, and that includes the Ring of Fire: silence.

I reflected on this over the weekend. I talked with constituents; I engaged with some stakeholders. All of them are quite concerned by the silence from the throne speech.

Being “for the people,” as this government calls itself, is also telling Ontarians what to expect and what this government plans on doing. But I'm afraid that they won't tell us, because we're hearing of all these back-room deals. Those are some punchy and often good lines that they like to use, but this is how this government chooses to play the game and how they're going to put it forward to Ontarians. The less information they can give out, the more wiggle room that they have in getting in and out of tough positions.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, this Conservative government has a plan, and the plan is not going to be enjoyed by Ontarians. The plan is going to be of cuts and divisive issues.

We northerners know that solidarity and good government services are essential to our well-being and prosperity. We know that when we stand together, we can accomplish so much, with so many great opportunities. People from northern Ontario are creative, resourceful and generous. We are also problem-solvers, and goodness knows we have solved quite a few.

I know that the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and Indigenous Affairs understands what I'm talking about. I hope he also understands that we can't afford any more cuts or service losses in northern Ontario.

We see first-hand, and more often than not, how, as a society, we can all chip in to make life more affordable for the large majority. We all deserve to have the best health care and education in the world. This government mentioned it in their throne speech, but again, it was silent on delivery. It's expensive? Yes, it is. We contribute to it, too, from northern Ontario. So when you build a new school or a new hospital down south, we pay our part. That's what solidarity is all about. That's what

being a province means. We take care of everyone. Northern Ontario is not asking for anything more, but we sure as heck aren't going to be settling for anything less. I'll say it again: We cannot afford any more cuts or loss of services in northern Ontario.

While resources are spread thinner than ever, more cuts would mean more people losing access to essential services. Over the past 25 years, northern Ontario has seen repetitive cuts to health care, education, roads, seniors care, and the list goes on. Tax cuts, in whatever shape or form, won't do it. Instead of cutting essential services to people who need the most and giving them an \$18 tax break, they should use that money to fix our roads, our hospitals and our schools.

Again, the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, and Indigenous Affairs, would surely agree that investments made in northern Ontario are investments that make the whole province prosper. However, there is not a single mention of northern Ontario in the throne speech, which is a bit of a red flag, in my humble opinion. Again, silence.

I also have concerns over the fact that one minister has inherited three major portfolios: energy, northern development and mines and Indigenous affairs. I hope the Premier will soon take the time to travel to remote communities in northern Ontario to familiarize himself first-hand with the issues, just like the leader of the official opposition did many times.

The Premier should probably try the Greyhound bus before they cancel all the routes. By the way, that's one of the big issues that we have in northern Ontario—another service lost. “Northern development” means developing the region. That means ensuring that citizens don't lose access to their services. Just like in southern Ontario, not everyone in northern Ontario has a car. The difference is that distances are far greater and transit options are very few. It is inevitable that this government needs to step in to ensure that people are not isolated in their communities and can move around freely. Prior to the throne speech, Greyhound announced cancelling all routes west of Sudbury.

Transit in northern Ontario was even an election issue. Conservatives even copied our promise to bring back the Northlander passenger train to the region. But again, the throne speech was silent. And how about Huron Central, the short rail between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, or the ACR? Silence. Maybe the member from Sault Ste. Marie knows what is going to happen. The silence is deafening. There was not a single mention in the throne speech of what they will do to fix the imminent crisis that will leave vulnerable people, students, seniors, with sometimes no other way to access services, medical appointments, schools, colleges, universities, job opportunities, social gatherings and so on.

It seems also without consideration for northern Ontario that this government is talking about taking action on fixing hydro. Let's be clear: Continuing on the path of privatization of our hydro system is not going to fix any of our problems. It is only going to multiply the effects

that it's going to have on us, the taxpayers. A reduction of 12% on electricity bills is not close to enough, and without fixing the hydro system, northern Ontario will continue to face some of the highest electricity prices in North America.

On top of that, this Conservative government has decided to get rid of the GreenON program that helped people retrofit their homes to make them energy efficient. A contractor out of Elliot Lake, Rolly Dubois of Dubois Construction, invested in his employees and sent them out for some training in order for them to qualify to be delivery agents for some of the programs that were under the GreenON program. He took the time for the mileage, the accommodations, the training, sending out his employees and paying them wages in order to get that training—that's gone. That is, I guess, the cost of doing business under the Conservative government. That is only one step. What about the manufacturers, the individuals who are doing the windows, who have prepared and gotten their own employees to come in and prepare the work that is to be done? What are we doing with the seniors who were looking at qualifying for this program? Basically, he's had to cancel all those orders, absorb the losses and tell all those individuals, “I'm sorry, but the Conservative government, with the stroke of a pen, cancelled the program.”

The economic development corporation up in Wawa, along with Sioux Lookout, was looking at a pilot project under the GreenON program, along with NAN, the Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory. They were looking at other ways, as far as heating, in order to get away from the electricity costs. They were looking at wood opportunities, propane, fuel, natural gas. Again, with the stroke of a pen, that's gone. Since most of us have no other options than to heat our home with electricity, helping folks have more energy-efficient houses wasn't a bad idea.

What are we going to do with our schools? That's \$100 million that has been taken away from investments into our schools. Where is that going to come from? Where are they going to cut? Where are the layoffs going to come from?

Again, to my point about solidarity: It's when we all chip in that we can help most of the people.

1610

Now, let's not forget about our roads and infrastructure as well. It's hard for me to not hear a word on the poor maintenance of our roads during the winter. Too many people die. That's what I said, Mr. Speaker: Too many people die every winter after snowstorms because roads are not properly cleared. Again, in the throne speech, silence.

Now let me be clear about this: The problem with our road maintenance is not the individuals who get up diligently and go to work for 12, 13, 14 hours during their shift to make sure that plow is on the road, to make sure that there's sand and salt there. That is not the problem. But it's their employers, the contractors who are overseeing them. You're basically asking the fox to

look over the henhouse. That's where the problem is. There is no accountability. When the accountability is coming from the individual who is creating his own oversight, that is the problem.

I remember a lot of my colleagues within the Conservative caucus who stood and took their place and talked about the problems that were happening with road maintenance. I'll be looking to them again, particularly my friend who has inherited the Ministry of Transportation. I'll be looking to him in order to fix some of these issues: the levies that were put on that were never collected; the opportunities for these contractors to get out of their contracts without paying those penalties, where there was no enforcement. I'll be looking to the minister in order to bring some clarity on this. We need to minimize those road closures and the impacts as much as possible for the good development of our region. It is key for our sustainability and growth.

I couldn't help but notice that something else key for development was missing from the speech: the Ring of Fire. It is hard to believe that the Premier would skip how he would ignite the Ring of Fire. After all, all I know from his plan is that he loves miners and that he plans on going to build the Ring of Fire himself, on a bulldozer. Needless to say, that leaves some details hanging. One detail is, maybe start by having a discussion with the First Nations. Maybe that's your first step before jumping on your bulldozer.

It's very concerning when such a massive project for Ontario is left unplanned. Mining companies are ready and they continue to talk with First Nations communities, but just like the Liberals, Conservatives are absent and silent. You would think a so-called pro-business party would be eager to develop such a profitable opportunity. But again, it seems like only the radical NDP is talking about developing natural resources to the benefit of all Ontarians. Mr. Speaker, we are actually so radical that we think that the Ring of Fire would be a good opportunity to create wealth in Ontario. We are so radical that we think that it would benefit most Indigenous communities, that it would help build infrastructure to remote communities and that it would create great long-term employment.

The mining sector continues to be an important industry in Ontario, and companies are always looking to hire in northern Ontario. Government action is not a handout. It's about giving a little push that can lead to better success. If this government is truly about job creation, they should prove it, not only in words but in action. Investments in the Ring of Fire are needed, and I would hate to see my fellow northerners continue to suffer and leave for other opportunities down south.

Another sad fact about this throne speech is that there was no mention whatsoever about Indigenous people. Now, Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, let me demonstrate to you what First Nations, Métis and Inuit people heard in the throne speech: nothing. Silence is what they heard. Access to clean drinking water, access to health care, access to dental care, access to education, jobs and

mental health issues: That's what they wanted to hear. That was uncomfortable, but that was only for 30 seconds, Speaker. Imagine the message that this government is sending to First Nations people: silence, not a single word. Now, I hope this government has taken good notes and that they are paying attention to what is being brought forward by the opposition, because people are watching this government, and they are watching them very closely.

It is truly shameful that the word "reconciliation" was taken out of the name of the ministry, because we still need to work towards reconciliation. I don't know how any of us can accept that so many communities on this land live through crisis after crisis without the help that First Nations people need and deserve.

But reconciliation is also about educating ourselves, and I find it extremely disappointing that the Conservative government has chosen to cancel the TRC curriculum, but I am proud to say that some of the school boards in my riding of Algoma-Manitoulin will still continue to push on that curriculum, that teachers are prepared to bring those tools to their classrooms, and they will. That's showing leadership, and I hope it's a lead that this government takes.

My colleague the MPP for London West mentioned yesterday or the day before that "Indigenous education benefits all students, and promises a better shared future. Scrapping the TRC curriculum writing sessions at the last second is a damaging step backwards on the road to reconciliation, and it sends a horrible message to Indigenous communities about their importance to the Ford government." It's sad to see that we are now going backwards on reconciliation, and I strongly encourage Premier Ford to be the Premier for all Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues in government were listening closely to what I just had to say on what was missing from their throne speech. What was evident was the silence that was in their throne speech on the many issues that are there. We cannot skip over pressing issues just because we don't want to commit ourselves. Some things need to be addressed urgently by this Conservative government, and they should move quickly, instead of desperately trying to bring us back to 1998.

J'aimerais aussi mentionner mon regret de ne pas avoir entendu un seul mot en français dans le discours du trône, et de ne pas avoir entendu non plus aucun engagement auprès de la communauté franco-ontarienne—encore, du silence.

Mr. Speaker, Ontarians deserve more than a broad stroke and a vague idea of what a government for the people looks like, but I will tell this government: If you still are looking for ideas, we have a document. It's called Change for the Better. It's a fully costed-out plan, and it has got some good ideas, and many Ontarians are looking for a change for the better, not a change for the worse.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Roman Baber: My name is Roman Baber, and I'm the newly elected member for the great riding of

York Centre. I'd like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to congratulate all members of the 42nd Parliament on their election. It is my distinguished privilege to rise in this House for the first time, as it is an even greater privilege to be serving the people of Ontario with all of you.

I take exception to my friend the member from Algoma–Manitoulin's comments. In the course of this election campaign, the Premier travelled to northern Ontario multiple times and, as have all of us in this House, has been listening to seniors and manufacturers. What was clearly heard from all the people and Ontario voters is that Ontario could not afford the previous government, and that life in Ontario has become completely unaffordable.

This is why we clearly campaigned on cancelling the cap-and-trade carbon tax. It was a commitment we made in our plan for the people, and we're keeping our promise. Cancelling the cap-and-trade carbon tax will put at least \$285 in the pockets of the average Ontarian, and it is a necessary first step to reducing gas prices by 10 cents per litre.

The cap-and-trade carbon tax has nothing to do with the environment and everything to do with out-of-control spending. The party with the taxpayer dollars is over. This government is committed to delivering in Ontario, to making life more affordable for seniors, for all people, and for manufacturers.

1620

Finally, as a former York University alum, it is my distinct pleasure to argue and stand in support of the bill before this House. It is a unique opportunity to stand up for students—in fact, to stand up for the people—and finally end a five-month-long strike that has affected so many people, to get students back in the classroom.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? The member from Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You know, I was going to say James Bay. I was so used to it for so many years. It just doesn't ring after a while.

I just want to say that the member from Algoma–Manitoulin I think made a very good point, and I think it was a dramatic way of doing it as well, in speaking about what we didn't hear in the throne speech when it came to what was needed by First Nations. He used 30 seconds of silence in order to highlight the point. I noted in the House myself a little bit taken by surprise, and you and others were wondering what that was all about. I think it clearly demonstrates the frustrations. Imagine what First Nations members felt.

I can tell you, talking to our member from Kiiwetinoong afterwards and talking to others who were outside who were here from the First Nations community, and hearing from people I talked to at the airport in Timmins when I got home—the Timmins airport is where most people jump off to get up to the James Bay—it was mentioned. People were saying, “What do we have to do? We've been at this for 160 years with Ontario and Canada, trying to deal with reconciliation.”

There are real issues to be dealt with. We understand they are complex and we understand that for some it's going to take a bit of a path, a journey, to get to reconciliation on both sides. But when you hear a government talk about their throne speech and there's no mention of the continuing process of reconciliation and how we're able to deal with the real issues that affect the communities not only on the James Bay but across this province when it comes to First Nations—it certainly was a discouragement not to hear that even referred to in the throne speech. As one who has represented those communities over the years, there are plenty of issues to be dealt with: child welfare, issues of housing, lack of water, lack of potable water, lack of infrastructure in the community, and the list goes on.

I just hope that this government understands that was an error and corrects its ways.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Lindsey Park: I want to thank the member from Algoma–Manitoulin for his comments on the speech from the throne and congratulate him on his election.

As we saw in the election campaign, unfortunately, fearmongering seems to be the way of the NDP—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

Ms. Lindsey Park: —saying we're going to make cuts to our health care and education. Look, there's simply no basis for that assumption.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

Ms. Lindsey Park: We agree with you. We agree with you.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I think that with all the noise, you weren't able to see me. I'm going to ask that shout-outs remain at a minimum, and I ask that they would subside.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Absolutely.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. I appreciate your upfrontness, your honesty and your willingness to co-operate in this Legislature.

I'm now going to turn it back to the member from Durham.

Ms. Lindsey Park: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member opposite. Ontarians deserve the best health care and education in the world. That's why we're going to end the record of waste and mismanagement, so we can invest in the services that matter most.

This afternoon, we had an announcement by this government about the commission of inquiry and the line-by-line audit of all government spending. That will help bring an end to this culture of waste and mismanagement in government. And I can tell you—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

Ms. Lindsey Park: Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All right. I guess it's still questions and comments, so I'm going to turn it back over to the member from—and I should know this already—Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just feel compelled to respond to my friend's comment about the need to have financial—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. The minister will withdraw.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I will withdraw, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

Now, back to the member from Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Joel Harden: Good job, Speaker. I'm almost disappointed, because I didn't overhear what the comment was.

Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, I just feel compelled, given what we just heard from our friend in the government about the need for financial prudence and going line by line through the people's money and making sure that we spend our dollars right in health care—their first act, this government's first act in health care, was to give somebody a million-dollar contract, somebody who used to be president of the Conservative Party, who, granted, is a physician.

But what is this government's actual strategy for fiscal prudence? You know, Mr. Speaker, I was raised in my formative years by a Conservative voter, a Presbyterian woman, my grandmother, in rural Ontario. I don't think she would see any resemblance in this government of fiscal prudence, particularly when they're legislating academic workers back to work and rewarding an employer who bargained for a total of 15 minutes over five months.

I ask you, what is any overpaid executive in any public institution going to think after this? They're going to think, "I'm going to ram my agenda through. I'm not going to listen to the front-line workers," as our friends like to say they want to do. "I'm just going to make sure my own feathered nest is maintained," and it's done at the expense of front-line workers, Mr. Speaker.

I am an academic teacher. I've been in the classroom at the university level. I'm seeing what's happening to kids. As long as this government continues the legacy of letting high-paid CEOs in public institutions run universities into the ground, this is not a government for the people; this is a government for the CEOs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now return to the member from Algoma-Manitoulin for final comments.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank the members from York Centre, Timmins, Durham and Ottawa Centre.

To the member from York Centre: Yes, affordability is a lot of what Ontarians have been asking for. But if you're not going to deal with the true problem of affordability, if you're not going to deal with the biggest problem—remember, my comments were made from a northern Ontario perspective. That is the cost of electricity and the cost of everyday living in northern Ontario

and how much that is a burden on us: hydro prices and the continued wrong decision of privatization. The sell-off of Hydro One was the biggest mistake that the previous government made. Opening it up was a mistake that the Conservative government, before the Liberal government, had initiated. If we cannot get back to a point where we see that in public hands, we will continue to see sky-high rates in regard to hydro.

My friend, welcome to the House. Fearmongering during the campaign—it was in the campaign. Everybody played with it. It was done through both ways, obviously. You did a better job, because you're in government. A lot of the fearmongering you were doing, quite frankly, I took quite personally, some of the stuff I had seen in the campaign: how I was told that I attacked veterans; how I was told that I was attacking seniors. At points, it was a hard pill to swallow, when you're seeing that on social media and on your television. But, you know what, that was the campaign. It's done. It's time to get to work and roll up your sleeves and get used to being in government, because our role as opposition is to criticize what the government is doing or not doing.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: You're good at it.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I am very good at it, and I've got a very good voice, my good friend.

Speaker, I was trying to bring light to what the essential issues are for northern Ontario, but, particularly, I wanted to make a very strong point and send a very strong message to this government in regard to the lack of attention and not a word mentioned in regard to Indigenous, First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Ottawa Centre—Ottawa South. There we go.

1630

Mr. John Fraser: Ottawa South. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's easy to confuse us.

It's a real privilege to be here today and to speak on behalf of the residents of Ottawa South and speak to the throne speech. I want to thank the voters of Ottawa South for once again expressing their confidence in me. I deeply appreciate their support, and I want to let them know that I will continue to work hard for them and be there for them.

Speaker, I'd also like to thank the 1.1 million Ontarians who voted Liberal in the last election. I want to assure all of them that our caucus will work hard to ensure that their voices are heard in this Legislature.

Throne speeches are an opportunity for a government to lay out its priorities for the upcoming session, an opportunity to highlight Ontario's strengths and the challenges that lie ahead.

Speaker, I was surprised by some of the negative tone of parts of the speech from the throne, especially as it relates to Ontario's economy. The speech did not reflect the fact that the current government is taking over at a time when Ontario has led the G7 in both job creation and growth for the past three years—over 800,000 jobs since the Great Recession, as they say. We have the

lowest unemployment in decades. Ontario's economy is strong, and that's why, for the last five years, Ontario has been one of the top jurisdictions in North America for foreign investment.

It's the job of the Premier and the government to sell Ontario to the world. When you fail to recognize our strengths, you make it harder to sell Ontario to the world. So I would caution the government about the risks of painting a negative picture of our economy.

The tearing-up of contracts, like White Pines and others across the province, is also sending a message to investors across the world. They are asking themselves if the Ontario government can be a trusted partner. That's not good for business. If you start legislating out of contracts, investors are going to think twice, and this will affect every sector of our economy and government, especially in infrastructure.

I was very pleased to see in the throne speech that the government was continuing the work with Canada, the other provinces and the 28 states with whom we are the primary trading partner, to fight barriers to trade. Barriers to trade hurt everyone, and it's important that we work together. In the coming days and months, I hope they will reveal their plans for their leadership for doing just that.

Mr. Speaker, we heard today that there's going to be a commission of inquiry. The assertion that Ontario's finances are precarious is simply not true. We've done the work. In Ontario, we have an independent officer of the Legislature, the Financial Accountability Officer. We also have an independent auditor, the Auditor General, who audits the province's books—again, an arm's-length officer of the Legislature.

We also have the pre-election report, which is something that we brought in as well. In the 2018 pre-election report, the Auditor General concluded that the report provides "a reasonable and somewhat cautious underpinning for the medium-term revenue forecasts."

She also said: "The government factored caution and prudence into its revenue forecast numbers" and "the government's economic outlook is reasonable when compared to private-sector forecasters' views on Ontario's economy" and "the government based its estimates of revenues, program expenses and interest on debt on cautious assumptions." Those are the words of the Auditor General in the pre-election report.

I believe that the announcement today is actually the government auditing the Auditor General. It displays an incredible lack of confidence. It does. It does. We have—

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: I'm glad I got you all excited, because that's exactly what you're doing. That's the message that you're sending. That's the message that you're sending to the Ontario people, very clearly. That's the message that you're sending.

I just read to you all the things that she said about our forecasts, projections and expenditures, , so I want you to know that that's what the auditor said.

So what's this really all about? What this is really all about is that it's just an extension of the election. If you

want to go ahead and do this, fill your boots. The work has been done. If you want to spend money on politics, that's just fine. Go ahead and do that on the other side. But what it's really all about—and we know this because during the election the Conservatives presented no plan.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: But then we won.

Mr. John Fraser: No plan. We can joke about it right now, but the thing that Ontarians depend on is a plan for those services that they depend on. So we need a plan. So far, the government hasn't shown a plan. They've removed us from the carbon market. They haven't told Ontarians how much that's going to cost, but we do know that it has cost \$100 million in schools—and that's just the beginning.

This government needs a plan. If they want to spend a few million dollars creating a smokescreen and creating some political fodder or political cover for the fact that they don't have a plan—oh, they're going to cut—knock yourself out. But we all know what it's all about. So we'll be following the government's fiscal plan, given there's not a semblance of a plan provided by this party—the party across—in the last election.

Ontarians depend on their government to have plans for the things that are important to them. Climate change is one of those things. Every generation is called to a challenge for the next. Climate change is our greatest challenge. It's one we must tackle for the next generation. Doing nothing about climate change is not an option.

The government has moved to remove us from the carbon market. It has not told Ontarians how much that's going to cost. Again, the \$100 million out of the schools, and we're going to see money come out of the hospitals: They've taken revenue out of the system that was used to fund those things that Ontarians depend on, and now it's not there. That's why they need a plan. You can't simply come in with a wrecking ball, flatten things and not put something in its place.

Here's what a plan does. By eliminating coal, as the previous government did, we lowered the rates of childhood asthma and premature death. We've just come through a heat wave. Not the biggest one in history, but it's been pretty hot. We haven't had one smog day. I remember when we had smog days in the double digits. I remember when we were burning diesel because we were buying expensive American power. That plan to eliminate coal resulted in health benefits to Ontarians. It also gave us a great advantage in the green economy.

I think I said this the other day, but I'm going to repeat it because I'd like them to hear this on the other side: It is possible for Conservatives to have a plan for the environment. A Prime Minister you may know, Brian Mulroney—a wonderful man and another Conservative; well, he was kind of conservative; actually, he was really conservative—and Ronald Reagan came together on their environmental challenge, which was acid rain. They made a plan and they executed it and they got results.

So it is possible for you guys to do that, and you need to do it. Doing nothing is not an option. I encourage the

government to take the same approach as their Conservative forefathers and foremothers and have a plan. There is a theme here: There's no plan. There's no plan for climate change.

The other interesting thing that I found was the repealing of the new sex ed curriculum. They described it as ideological. It's ideological?

Interjection: That's what it is.

1640

Mr. John Fraser: I'm not sure. I think it has been around for a while—at least, we've been teaching it for decades here in Ontario. It was the most consulted curriculum—

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It was 1,600—

Mr. John Fraser: No, it was 4,000 parents, 2,400 teachers, 700 students.

The curriculum has been taught for three years, folks—three years. Actually, it's as old as my grandson, who is three years old.

Simply repealing this is just bad for our kids. The program is there to protect our kids, to teach them how to say no, to teach them about differences, visible and invisible, and to respect those differences. It's about cyberbullying, the Internet, healthy relationships. What's wrong with that? I don't understand.

And now I don't understand because it's like—"Well, there's some third, magical curriculum that's out there."

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: That's right. You'll say anything. That's apparent. Thank you very much to the member from Nepean–Carleton.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me.

I don't mind a little bit of heckling going back and forth, but I would like to remind all members in this Legislature that if you choose to heckle, you'll do it professionally and you will be in your seat. I hope that message was sent and delivered.

Back to the member from Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: I'll give time for the member from Nepean–Carleton to get back to her seat.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's Nepean, not Carleton.

Mr. John Fraser: Nepean–Carleton; that's what I said. There we go.

Back on a serious note, you just have to read the remarks of Glen Canning, Rehtaeh Parsons's father. It's quite simple: "What happened to my daughter was preventable ... it was preventable with a good sex education program."

We've had tragedies in Ottawa where kids have been bullied, and the member from Nepean–Carleton would know that too—Jamie Hubleby. That kind of curriculum would have helped him.

We know there are countless unreported stories of kids who have suffered, whose lives have been changed. That's what this curriculum is here to prevent, and that's why this government needs to reinstate it.

Une autre chose qui est très préoccupante : il n'y avait aucune mention ni aucun mot en français dans le discours

du trône. Les Franco-Ontariens forment une communauté très importante dans l'histoire de l'Ontario, et les services en français sont très importants, particulièrement dans les soins de santé et les services sociaux. L'Université de l'Ontario français est un projet crucial pour la communauté, et c'est une grande erreur du gouvernement de ne mentionner aucun de ces enjeux.

Le caucus libéral et moi allons continuer de promouvoir les droits des Franco-Ontariens.

Applause.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you. Any other Franco-Ontarians in here?

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: Okay. Thank you very much. Merci.

The cancellation of updating the curriculum to reflect the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is deeply concerning and risks us failing to meet our commitments to the recommendations of the TRC. I want to commend the member from Algoma–Manitoulin on his remarks and his way of pointing out the lack of mention of that in the speech from the throne. The Ontario government's and our people's relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit is important to right the wrongs of the past, but it's crucial to how we're going to have collective success, and that's why it should have been there. I take the new minister at his word; I believe that it will be a priority for him. But what I have to say is, it's not starting out so well. So we'll be looking for that.

Health care is top of mind for most Ontarians. They depend on their government to deliver top-quality, world-class health care. We spend nearly half our provincial budget on funding health care. I'll be watching very closely the government's commitment to building 15,000 LTC beds. Having a good understanding of the sector, building and staffing of 700 new long-term-care homes—in around that number—in five years is not only a great financial change for all of us as government, but from a human resource perspective it's a challenge, and from a building capacity it's a challenge. So I think we have to be imaginative as a government, as this Legislature, us giving you advice—which you don't often take—about how we can manage this growing, aging population. We need to do that as governments, we need to do that as communities and we need to do that as families. It's a real community challenge.

The last thing that I'd like to say: I think some of the members opposite would know that in the last government I had a mandate for a province-wide system of palliative and end-of-life care in this province. I was very proud of the work we did: 20 new hospices, establishing a palliative care network. It's something that's personally very important to me. I would like to thank the member too. I know that he's got a private member's bill coming up this week.

That's not a partisan thing. How we care for each other at the end of our lives is as important as the beginning of life, and we have to put that kind of focus

on it. We have to put that focus on it as communities, as health care providers, as government.

I want to thank you for my time, Mr. Speaker. I appreciated the opportunity to respond to the speech from the throne, and I look forward to working with all of my colleagues in this Legislature to ensure that those things that Ontarians need and that they depend on are there for them when they need them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: To the member from Ottawa South, congratulations on your re-election, and good throne speech.

You mentioned former Prime Minister Mulroney and what he did with climate change. Yes, former Prime Minister Mulroney was able to make a positive change with climate, but he did so without adding a tax. Every cent of the cap-and-trade slush fund spending is money that has been taken out of the pockets of Ontario's families and businesses. We believe this money belongs in the pockets of the people. We openly and clearly campaigned on cancelling the cap-and-trade carbon tax and this fund. It was a commitment in our plan for the people, and we are keeping our promise.

You mentioned a wrecking ball. We're not a wrecking ball. What we have done is we're going to ensure an orderly wind-down of these programs that will include honouring all contracts as of June 29. While we may consider supporting specific initiatives in the future, any decision to do so would have to be funded out of the tax base and be justified in light of our plan for the people as well as our upcoming value-for-money audit.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

M. Michael Mantha: C'est avec plaisir que je donne mes commentaires à mon collègue d'Ottawa South. Écoutez, les commentaires qu'il a apportés sur le plancher—c'était très évident, ce qu'il voulait apporter. C'était sur les changements climatiques qui sont en train d'arriver et que le plan du gouvernement, dans leur message du trône, ne s'adresse vraiment pas aux besoins et aux problèmes qu'on a avec l'environnement climatique.

Beaucoup de ses commentaires ont été offerts d'une perspective : la sienne et celle de sa région. C'est tout le temps ce que j'encourage pour tous les gens de la Chambre. Ça nous donne, comme députés, la chance d'apprendre de nouvelles histoires des gens à travers la région, et puis de reconnaître—

M. Gilles Bisson: Les Belles Histoires des pays d'en haut.

M. Michael Mantha: Oui, oui—et puis, surtout, d'apprendre les perspectives de leur région. C'est une des grandes choses que j'attends avec enthousiasme quand je prends ma position ici.

Je veux partager une histoire avec mon collègue aussi. Je veux que tu regardes une jeune demoiselle de mon comté. Elle vient de Wikwemikong First Nation. Son nom est Autumn Peltier. Elle est super, super intelligente

en matière d'eau. C'est une jeune demoiselle. Elle a présentement 13 ans. Elle se promène à travers le pays, elle se promène à travers les États-Unis, et elle se promène à travers le monde avec un message de sauver les eaux qu'on a et du besoin de prendre des étapes aujourd'hui, maintenant, pour faire certain que les eaux qu'on a dans nos alentours, dans notre environnement, soient protégées.

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Elle est reconnue comme une femme qui protège les eaux. Son message est extrêmement fort. Son message a été apporté au premier ministre; son message a été apporté aux chefs de plusieurs pays à travers le monde.

Ce qui fait que je t'encourage beaucoup à regarder ce nom-là: son nom est Autumn Peltier. Je peux te l'offrir, je peux te le donner, et je peux te mettre en contact avec elle. Comme je te le dis, on a beaucoup à apprendre de notre jeunesse à travers notre pays, et il faudrait qu'on écoute nos jeunes voix d'aujourd'hui.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Merci. Further questions and comments?

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Félicitations, congratulations, to the member from Ottawa South upon his re-election to this chamber.

Mr. Speaker, after more than a decade of darkness in this province, I'm proud to report that light again is shining on the province of Ontario.

The member from Ottawa South spoke about shining light in the context of the Auditor General. This is the same political party that not only went to war with the Auditor General but was actually condemned by the Auditor General for spending \$54 million on political partisan ads, wasting taxpayer money.

While I very much respect your service to this House, I will take, and we will take, no lessons from a party that has left this province with the largest debt of any sub-sovereign territory or jurisdiction in the world.

The member is rolling his eyes, but there are people in this province who cannot afford their electricity bills, and that is because your government has left Ontario in such a place of economic mismanagement that families have to choose, as ministers have said, between eating and heating.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Address the Speaker, please.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Speaker, we also know that this is a political party that has overly regulated the province—more than California—a political party that has left 15,000 seniors without long-term-care beds, with some of the longest wait times in our country.

We know that we deserve better in this province. Under the leadership of this Premier, we're going to unleash the potential of our people, of our small businesses, and ultimately support the ideas that will help move our province forward.

One of those ideas, announced today by our Premier, as was mentioned, is a line-by-line audit to actually understand the economic decline left by the former

government. We have a plan to grow our economy, create jobs and restore hope in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to join the debate today on the throne speech, and to congratulate my dear friend from Ottawa South on his re-election and thank him for all the work that we have been able to collaborate on over the years.

I'll take this opportunity just to point out a couple of things that my parliamentary assistants pointed out, with respect to the acid rain treaty that came forward between former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, my seatmate's father, and the late Ronald Reagan, one of the greatest Presidents of the United States. That never cost the taxpayer a dime, because there was never a tax attributed to saving the environment through the acid rain treaty.

As Progressive Conservatives in this House, we are more than proud of the accomplishments. I used to say, "Just because we're blue doesn't mean we can't be green." You're going to see, in the days and weeks ahead, our policies evolve in that respect.

I also wanted to point out, with respect to anti-bullying and cyberbullying, those types of initiatives—I have a 13-year-old daughter. Last year, I was very clear that we had dealt with some cyberbullying with her. The curriculum can always be improved. Anybody in the Legislature who suggests otherwise is simply not listening to the parents of the province, like me, who actually have kids in actual classrooms across this actual province.

All Doug Ford has said—and he has said it very clearly—is that we are going to consult the parents that the Liberals refused to consult after 15 years of scandal, waste, mismanagement and ideology. We're going to broaden that. The Minister of Education will consult, and she will consult widely. I think that's a good starting point for this.

But to suggest we're not going to be talking about anti-bullying, mental health, suicide prevention, any of those issues—we all know, Speaker, that that's false. That's still going to happen, because it has all been part of the evolution of what's happening in our schools through assemblies and that sort of thing. I think we ought to be very careful with the type of rhetoric that people are using around here with respect to the choices that the people of Ontario made on June 7. We campaigned quite clearly on the respect of parents in the process when it comes to curriculum in our education facilities here in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now return to the member from Ottawa South for final comments.

M. John Fraser: Merci aux députés de Cambridge, Algoma–Manitoulin, King–Vaughan et Nepean.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Nepean!

Mr. John Fraser: Hey, how are you? I got it right.

To the member from Cambridge: I just said you needed a plan; that's all I said. I don't know why you're coming back at me. Just tell me there's a plan. If it

doesn't include a tax—I don't know how you're going to do it without a price on carbon, but if there's a plan, let us know how you're going to do it. You need a plan for it. Separate that out. That's all I wanted to let you know. I just wanted to let you know that it's not imperative that you have that in there; you need a plan for the environment, though.

Again, to the member from Algoma–Manitoulin: I appreciated very much his remarks, and his earlier remarks on the speech from the throne, especially with relation to Indigenous peoples and our First Nations, and his comments on climate change.

To the member from King–Vaughan: I want to let you know that we were the first government to measure wait times. They were never measured, so the reason that you can tell what wait times are is that there's a measurement there. That's a very important tool for governments. It'll be a very important tool for your government. They're very hard things to get control of. There are a lot of factors that go into that. So there is good work that has been done at the Ministry of Health to ensure that things like wait-lists are maintained, that wait times are maintained so people can know where to go.

I take your remarks as politics. I don't think you're going to find out anything from that inquiry that you don't already want to hear or say. That's my point. The auditor is an independent officer of the Legislature. You're not hiring independents. You're hiring your folks and you're going to get what you want. That's why we have an independent Auditor General. We don't always like government, we don't always like what we hear, but it's an important role.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: A former Liberal Premier. Yes, we're hiring our own, a former Liberal Premier.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

Further debate? I recognize the member from Davenport

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin by congratulating our new Speaker and deputy Speakers. I know we all respect the role of the Speaker immensely; thank you, and congratulations. And, indeed, congratulations to all the members of this House on their election or re-election. It is a great achievement, and I look forward to working with all of you.

I would like to start by acknowledging that this Legislature is situated on traditional territories. The territories include the Wendat, Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation and the Métis nation. The treaty that was signed for this particular parcel of land is collectively referred to as the Toronto Purchase and applies to lands east of Brown's Line to Woodbine Avenue and north towards Newmarket. I also recognize the enduring presence of Indigenous peoples on this land.

It is humbling to be in this chamber and to deliver this, my inaugural address. Just a few weeks ago, I was elected to represent the great riding of Davenport, a community in which my partner and I have lived for more

than 20 years and where we have raised our two daughters. Until that day, I had for four years the great honour and privilege to represent Davenport as their Toronto District School Board trustee.

I want to take a moment to thank all the people who got me here, but I also want to share a little bit about who I am, how I came to be here and what my hopes are for the next four years as we work together on behalf of the people of Ontario. First and foremost, I of course would like to thank the residents of Davenport for putting their trust in me. I promise that I'll ensure that your voices are heard in this Legislature. I know what a great responsibility you have bestowed on me, and you can count on me to work every single day to serve you.

I want to extend my most enthusiastic and heartfelt congratulations to my NDP colleagues and especially our leader, Andrea Horwath, for her incredible passion and determination. She has been an inspiration for many and for me personally, and so I thank her.

1700

Mr. Speaker, I have not the slightest doubt that I would not be here today if it were not for the support and tremendous campaign run by the leader of the official opposition.

Applause.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes.

Je veux aussi remercier mon premier vrai boss, M. Gilles Bisson. Je ne vais pas vous dire en quelle année c'était, mais je peux vous dire que le député de Timmins était un député provincial pour la première fois, et il était incroyable. Il m'a beaucoup appris—so be warned—et je suis toujours dans sa dette.

I most certainly—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You were pretty good staff.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, thank you.

I most certainly would not be here if it were not for the many people who supported me through my campaign. Many of them are here today to celebrate our swearing-in: my truly remarkable campaign staff, especially my campaign manager, Lorei de los Reyes. The talented team worked endless hours, engaging with volunteers and voters and being so very welcoming to everyone. It was truly an inclusive and engaging campaign, and that's because each one of them brought their passion and commitment to social justice to the effort.

I want to thank the 500-plus volunteers who worked so hard. I feel lucky to have met each of you, and I look forward to working with you in the years ahead, because I believe our task is not just to win and then wait until next time. We are building a movement, and our work never ends.

To that end, I want to thank the Davenport NDP riding association, who have steadfastly maintained their commitment to our movement through wins and losses. We are a family and we are strong.

I want to thank my predecessors, those who have represented our riding before me—most recently, Cristina Martins and, before her, my dear friend Jonah Schein—for their commitment and service.

Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to thank my closest friends and family. I was fortunate to be the child of parents who had a strong sense of social justice and weren't afraid of standing up for what they believed. They were born US citizens and they chose this country, like so many in the 1960s and 1970s, as conscientious objectors to the Vietnam War. There is not a day that goes by when I'm not thankful that they made that decision and that I am a Canadian.

Applause.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes.

My sister, herself an incredible leader, activist, businesswoman and, most of all, protector of our four-legged friends: veterinarian Enid Stiles, who is also here with her family; my brother-in-law David Berger, who is a teacher, and his family; and my partner's parents, who are strong New Democrats and great human beings.

Of course, my two wonderful daughters—I'm very thankful that most of my family is here today with me—who, I can say, even as teenagers, make me very proud and give me some of the most brutal and honest advice you'll ever hear. I appreciate it. I learn so much from them, and not just about Instagram.

My partner, Jordan Berger, has been with me for so many years. He ran before me, many years ago, and he should have been elected. He is absolutely my most steadfast support and my most trusted adviser, even though he is wrong more often than I am.

Some of you who have not met me before will think of me as maybe one of those latte-sipping downtown New Democrats—and I do like my lattes. But like so many who live here in this city—we come from all over. I was born and raised outside St. John's, Newfoundland, in a series of different villages and outports. I grew up in a place where poverty was rampant, where government policy literally defined which communities lived and which died, and where government services were a lifeline for so many.

Public education was what lifted many Newfoundlanders out of poverty, and it was the greatest equalizer. We didn't have private schools, thank goodness. We all went to public schools, and I saw first-hand what a difference good teachers, good guidance counsellors and social workers meant to so many of my fellow students, especially those in difficult situations.

Like most Newfoundlanders of my age, I had to look elsewhere to find employment, so I came to Ontario and eventually to Toronto. Indeed, when I first moved to this city, I moved into the very riding I am now representing.

The riding of Davenport is situated in downtown west-end Toronto. It touches Eglinton Avenue West in the north, dipping like a dagger along the rail lines and along Oakwood and Ossington Avenues to a point below Queen Street West. It is quite literally a slice of our great city.

Waves and waves of immigrants have passed through our neighbourhoods, but still, the largest single community is the Portuguese community, vibrant and centred in Davenport, where each year we host the Portugal Day

Parade and where, in the summer, the smell of grilling sardines permeates our laneways—which are delicious.

Interjection.

Ms. Marit Stiles: They are.

I was honoured in my campaign to be supported by so many in that community, including so many members of LIUNA 183. I want to extend my deepest gratitude. Muito obrigado.

As many people have said before me, Toronto is a city of many different neighbourhoods—and so is my riding. It's a riding of many different neighbourhoods. From Regal Heights to Little Portugal to Brockton Village to Dufferin Grove to the Junction Triangle and Northcliffe, we represent the best parts of this city and this province. In the words of my friend and one of the former MPPs for our riding, Jonah Schein, "The people of Davenport are scrappy. Through tough times, we never give up. We work hard every day and we're always proud of our communities." We are a riding with a rich and emerging history, with hard-working people who work hard to pay the bills and raise their families—construction workers, artists, innovators, teachers. We are also one of the youngest demographics in the country. And we work together.

I wanted to mention that Davenport residents have really been committed to community engagement and social action. We have a history of small groups of individuals coming together to solve a problem. Whether it's fixing up a park that has fallen into disuse, we fix the problem and then we build something really monumental from it to make our city more livable—things like Friends of Dufferin Grove Park, and especially Jutta Mason; like the Stop Community Food Centre that inspired a Canada-wide movement; like the Working Women Community Centre, which is driven by the passion of Marcie Ponte; like Loly and Francisco Rico of the FCJ Refugee Centre, who provide essential care, advocacy and services every single day; like the Friends of Oakwood, who came together to save their school; like Options for Davenport, who have fought to squeeze community benefit from a disastrous plan for a super-bridge through the Junction Triangle neighbourhood and that we now must press forward to ensure is electrified; and on and on.

Constituents in Davenport are doing their very best to make our province better. I see my role as helping them make it happen, to work with the community to make sure government is doing their part, because government services matter directly, increasingly to so many people in my community: those folks living in Toronto Community Housing in conditions that no one should ever have to experience—beyond intolerable in many cases; people living without the mental health supports they so desperately need; children who come to school hungry every single day; working parents whose children are on the waiting lists for waiting lists for affordable child care; people working multiple jobs, precariously employed without benefits and stability, the people that my friend and the former MP for our riding, who I also want to thank, Mr. Andrew Cash, calls the urban

workers; young people worried about whether we are going to stand up for the environment and fight climate change and make sure that polluters pay.

I think of families—like one of my volunteers, Gad, who works right down the road at University Health Network. He and his wife have three small children. They both have good jobs, they both have excellent degrees, and they work in research in the health field. Yet because they're being forced out of their apartment, which is two bedrooms, they cannot find anything they can afford. Two working people in this city cannot find anything they can afford to live in anywhere near their workplace. They're looking at two-hour commutes each way. I know many people choose those kinds of options, but there are also many people being driven out of our city because it has become simply unaffordable for families. So we are losing some of the diversity and the young families that we need to keep our communities vibrant and whole.

I'm thinking of two former students in my riding, Tessa and Lia, who made a little documentary, as a school project, about the need to teach consent in schools, that led to consent being included in the health and physical education curriculum, and who are now seeing all their work for naught as this government threatens a return to what my daughters might call a very vintage 1990s curriculum.

The seniors who can't get the long-term care they need; the schools with leaky roofs; the young people who can't imagine a debt-free future; the ODSP recipients—during the campaign, I heard from countless ODSP recipients. They clog our church halls and community dinners at the end of every month, stuffing containers with as much food as they can carry home because otherwise they simply will not eat, and I've volunteered at enough church dinners to know that.

People who put up with extraordinary pain because they simply cannot afford to see a dentist; people who suffer outrageous commutes every single day or wait endlessly for their buses to show up; the young Black students who shared with me, when I was a school board trustee, their experiences of carding, of the humiliation that followed them from the sidewalk to the school hallways, and how it created this deep self-doubt that threatened to overtake them. I have to ask how this government can be contemplating more carding, more discriminatory police checks. It is a move backward to legitimizing discrimination, and it is wrong.

1710

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to return to where I started today in my opening. For those of you who may be from other corners of the province, you may not be aware that the land acknowledgement that I read out at the start of my inaugural speech is how the school-children in some boards across the province, including the Toronto District School Board, start every single day.

I remember, just reflecting back on my very first day as a school board trustee—many of you have been school board trustees at some point as well. It was a very proud

moment, because the first motion we brought forward at my first school board meeting was a motion to teach the history of residential schools and residential school survivors in the curriculum that would be taught in our schools. School boards can do that. Indeed, just months later, we also became the first school board in North America to ensure that all our students participated in a land acknowledgement at the start of the day.

It was and remains a very small gesture. It is startling sometimes how quickly words become rote and to some extent meaningless if they aren't followed up by action. Already, we are impossibly behind. Reconciliation requires, at minimum, meeting the 94 calls to action in the Truth and Reconciliation report. It means economic equality. It means access to territory. It means so many things.

Back to the acknowledgement, because those words are inspiring action among a new generation, inspiring our students to ask questions, to demand answers and to understand what reconciliation really means.

Others have already shared their disappointment at the lack of an acknowledgement in the throne speech. I echo that and I share that disappointment, although, honestly, I think words are meaningless unless there is real commitment alongside them.

I am thinking of some of the people I've met in my community, some of the difficult conversations I've had, the disappointment from First Nations people in my community, because First Nations people make up a very large part of my community, and that lack of trust in politicians because of broken promises. I have committed on many occasions to do everything I could in my power, and again I share that disappointment in the government throne speech.

But I do remain hopeful. I remain hopeful that we can build a more livable city here. I remain hopeful that children will grow up knowing they are accepted and loved whoever they are, whatever their gender, however they identify. I remain hopeful that we can bring about real and meaningful reconciliation and that we can address climate change and push back against efforts to put corporate profits and greed ahead of what is good for our planet and for future generations. And I remain ultimately hopeful that we can work together across party lines to make our province work best for the very most vulnerable among us.

I want to end by sharing something that I've been saying in speeches I have made over the last four years. Whenever I would get up at a high school graduation—which I know many of us do, but I did as a trustee as well—I would say to the graduating class, “Soon you will be old enough to vote, if you aren't already. Make sure you do it. People like me, we get to make decisions that affect your lives. We can and we must be doing better. Hold us to account. Have high expectations. Demand more. Demand more from the people who are supposed to represent you: your city council, your government and, yes, even your school board trustee. Issues that are important to young people need to be

talked about: the environment, equity, youth jobs, and university and college education.” I tell them, “I believe we should never be satisfied by the status quo.” And I say, “If you see something that needs changing, get out there and make yourselves heard.”

Mr. Speaker, I want to end by saying that I think it is part of my role as an MPP and all of our roles to listen and to amplify those voices, particularly of subsequent generations.

Thank you again very much for this opportunity. It is a great honour to be here, and I look forward to working with all of you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jane McKenna: I'd like to thank MPP Stiles, the member from Davenport. One thing that you totally appreciate, with every member in this House, is that you love your passion and your dedication for your party. For that, thank you very much, and it's great to hear you speak today in the House.

I'd like to just pick up a couple of points today that were mentioned here by the former government. In the pre-election, the Auditor General and the Financial Accountability Officer came out numerous times to say that the numbers didn't add up and the deficit was much higher than they said. I think the most important thing, when I was knocking on doors in Burlington, was that people have lost faith because for the last 15 years they haven't been told the truth. The Auditor General, obviously, and the Financial Accountability Officer were not respected by the members on that side.

It's wonderful right now, knocking on doors and when I was out, because right now, for the first time, we have hope. We have the fact that this government is going to respect the people of Ontario and let them know where we actually stand and what we can do to make life better for every person in Ontario. How wonderful is that, that this government is for the people and is listening to the people?

Sometimes you get into this House and there's a lot of rhetoric going back and forth, a lot of things that are said, but at the end of the day, we all want the truth. We all want, Speaker, to be able to recognize the fact that we're all hard-working people. We all want to know where our money is going. I'm not an economist, but I know how to manage my own books at home. When we see that the former government had lots of money coming in and yet somehow education, infrastructure and health care—everything has got fewer, fewer and fewer, so where exactly did all that money go?

Thank you so much for the time, Speaker, and I appreciate it. I'm hoping to speak again.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? I recognize the member from—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mushkegowuk–James Bay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mushkegowuk–James Bay. Forgive me, but I'll get it down pat sooner or later—hopefully sooner.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Merci, monsieur le Président. Je voudrais remercier la députée de Davenport pour son « speech » initial très bien fait. Comme elle, je voudrais me lever pour présenter ma famille. J'ai ma femme, Manon; ma fille, Anabel; et mon garçon, Jérémy. Bienvenue dans la Chambre.

Je veux vous parler un petit peu de ma circonscription, parce qu'elle a parlé de la pauvreté et puis des problèmes que certaines communautés ont. Je peux vous dire que dans ma circonscription, ce n'est pas différent. Dans ma circonscription, ça comprend 60 % de francophones et 30 % de Premières Nations.

J'ai eu la chance, avec le député Gilles Bisson et puis aussi avec Charlie Angus, le député fédéral—on est allé visiter. Ils m'ont présenté et puis ils m'ont fait rencontrer beaucoup. Mais j'ai vu, dans des communautés autochtones, des Premières Nations, des situations que—comme ils disent en français, « loin des yeux, loin du coeur ». Je peux vous dire que j'inviterais plusieurs députés à venir faire un tour dans ma circonscription et voir ce qui se passe dans le Nord. Je pense que vous l'avez entendu pendant plusieurs années, avec mon confrère Gilles Bisson, le député de Timmins aujourd'hui, qui l'a amené à votre attention, mais je crois que ça tombe dans les oreilles des sourds.

Il est grand temps que, dans ma circonscription, ces « concerns » soient adressés. On a des familles où il y a deux ou trois générations qui demeurent dans la même maison. On a des places où l'eau n'est même pas potable. Ça ne serait pas acceptable dans une de nos communautés où on vit dans le sud de l'Ontario ou quelque part où on voit qu'il y aurait tellement un grabuge que ce serait inacceptable. Mais pour une raison quelconque—comme on dit, « loin des yeux, loin du coeur »—c'est acceptable dans le Nord. Je crois que ce n'est pas correct qu'un gouvernement laisse ça passer.

Monsieur le Président, je vous remercie. Bonne journée.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Merci. Further questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Again I congratulate the honourable member for her inaugural speech. I know it's a rare pleasure to have your family in the gallery watching you and being able to see you debate the important issues of the day. I know that you probably weren't looking over at your family, but you can tell the pride that your family has in you and in seeing you in the Legislature today. I can guess, just by what you briefly told us about your mom, that she's certainly somebody who could take me to task on a lot of issues.

1720

I can see why it is that we may be disagreeing on certain things over the life of this Legislature, but I think that's what makes this place the unique place that it is. The opportunity that we have been given over the next four years is certainly one that we should all be proud of.

Also, though, I think it's important that we talk about some of the things that we could probably agree on. I know the part of the city where the member comes from.

Obviously, I think we can both agree that it has become very difficult for the people of Ontario. Certainly in Toronto, and in the member's riding, affordability has become a big issue. The failed policies of the previous Liberal government with respect to housing have hurt the people in her riding as much as they have hurt the people in my riding.

I know that the members opposite are as concerned about the debt and deficit as we are. I know that the members opposite feel as passionate as we do that we have to put more money in the pockets of people—at least, I hope that they do. We may disagree on how that would happen. But I know that the honourable members believe, like we do, that the best thing for the province of Ontario is to move forward, to move away from the policies of the previous Liberal government, to balance the budget and put more money back into the people's pockets.

Again, I just want to congratulate the member, and congratulate the member's family for having the opportunity to see you give your inaugural address, and welcome you to the Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I am so honoured to rise today to add my comments to those of our newest colleague the member from Davenport. She may be new to some of the colleagues in this House, but I can tell you, as a New Democrat and as a member of this House for seven years, that she has been a star in every capacity that she has had, whether it be as a school board trustee, or as a member of the executive party of the Ontario NDP, or as a community advocate. Marit Stiles is somebody we've had our eye on for quite some time, and we are so lucky to have her as a colleague now, joining us on our benches here.

Speaker, you could tell from her inaugural address here that she has her priorities straight as well, talking about the most vulnerable in her community, starting from the bottom up—not top-down politics as we've seen in this House for 14 years and as we suspect is going to continue for at least the next four years, from what we heard from the speech from the throne. She's talking about health care, quality education and investments in our schools. She has talked about affordable housing, something that is at an epidemic level in Toronto and in the GTA. That's someone who has got their priorities straight on the part of their community, Speaker.

She started her address here today by acknowledging that we are guests on this land, that this massive megacity of Toronto and the GTA was once home to our First Nations, and that we have a responsibility to honour their legacy, to honour that they brought us in. They accepted us and our ancestors as guests, and we have a responsibility to oblige to the treaties that were signed back in the day, Speaker. This is someone who has those priorities straight and, I know, will work day in and day out for her constituents and for the province of Ontario.

I listened to her talk about Davenport. Davenport could be anywhere in Ontario, with those challenges. We

have a champion here for not only her region but for the entire province. I am so grateful to stand with her in this chamber.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I will now return to the member from Davenport for her final comments.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Not indefinitely, forever final—okay. Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I should also apologize. I meant to mention that I lost my voice a few days ago, and I only really got it back today. So aren't you lucky that I actually have any voice at all to croak out at you today? I apologize that I'm quite hoarse.

I want to thank the members from Burlington, Mushkegowuk—James Bay, Markham—Stouffville and Essex for their comments and questions. I appreciate that very much.

I certainly appreciate that we do share many concerns in common, and I hope that you understood that as part of my inaugural address as well. I believe that my constituents did not elect me to sit here and yell at you and oppose you. They want me to stand up against some of your policies, without a doubt, but they also want me to try to come up with some solutions with you. So I really think it is important that we are able to work together, that we remain congenial. I appreciate that.

To the member from Markham—Stouffville's comments: My mother did make the comment earlier today when she sat here during question period that, man, we shout at each other a lot. I know that's kind of shocking to a lot of people when they come into the room, especially for question period. The truth is that it is passion. We all feel like we were elected here with a great purpose and that we owe it to our communities to fight for what we believe in and to do the best for them. I know we all share that.

I want to thank you again for your kind comments and your welcomes. I look forward to continuing to work with you all.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Mr. Speaker, I would like to let you know that I will be sharing my time with the member from Scarborough—Rouge Park.

Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your re-election. I'm sure that your vast experience will allow you to serve this House very well.

Next, I would like to thank the wonderful constituents of Mississauga—Streetsville for the privilege of representing them and for the trust they have bestowed upon me. I would also like to thank my family, my volunteers, my friends, my great campaign team. Without their tireless support, we would not have had this overwhelming, convincing victory that allows me to stand before this House today.

My journey to where I am today began in elementary school back in England. A member of Tourism Canada came to speak about what life was like here, and I was

enticed. He spoke of the clean air, the newly built CN Tower, Niagara Falls, of course, how large this country is and how friendly its people are.

In August 1981, at the tender age of 15, I finally stepped off the plane in Toronto for my very first visit to Canada. The sun was bright, and I was excited. Upon arrival, we immediately left for Windsor, another three-hour drive from the airport. During that drive, my vision of Canada became a reality. I celebrated my sweet 16th birthday here before returning home to England.

When I returned, I told my mom that I really enjoyed staying here in Canada and that I would love to move here someday. As fate would have it, at the ripe old age of 18 I met my husband, Ashwani, who was visiting England. A mutual family friend introduced us, and the next thing we knew we were engaged and married. Later that year, I came to Canada and began my new life.

My mom was my first mentor. I am the youngest of six children, and when my father passed away when I was only eight years old, I saw my mom raise all six of us alone. She ran a successful business, kept us fed and made sure we were always loved.

Since coming to Canada, I have always lived in Mississauga, where our mayor at the time, Hazel McCallion, soon became my next mentor. I attended events where she spoke and was in awe of this strong woman who made a difference. Mississauga was clean and vibrant, and we had the best restaurants and great companies to work for. And we were debt free. We were fiscally prudent.

My first interest in politics began when I was very young. I would read speeches at school all the time and was even told then that I should take an interest in politics.

However, I became more active in 1995, when I would yell at the TV due to the decisions the government at the time was making—waste, disrespect for taxpayer dollars, and our province almost becoming bankrupt.

And then, a common sense perspective of how to run our province was exactly what we needed. My frustrations turned to hope. I attended my first convention as a delegate and began to serve on policy advisory councils and learn more and more about politics each and every day.

I have always been a Progressive Conservative. My loyalty has been second to none. Loyalty means a lot to me. Those who know me and who have seen my trials and tribulations often tell me and others that if there's anything to be learned about loyalty then I am the person to talk to.

My first run at politics taught me about understanding policy. It taught me to be mindful of the different parts of this province and country. It taught me about knowing that not everyone will agree with your opinion, and that's okay. I gained immense respect for those who stepped forward and put their name on a ballot.

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It is no secret that I ran a few times, and now that I have finally succeeded in being elected, I would like to

take this opportunity to acknowledge my predecessor, Bob Delaney, on his 15 years of service to the people of Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mississauga–Streetsville is home to many different communities. We are a world unto ourselves. Festivals, gourmet food and kindness are always readily available. Each weekend in summer, the Streetsville cenotaph is closed to traffic so that we can enjoy music, ice cream, dance and each other's company.

We are also home to the Streetsville Overseas Veterans' Club Royal Canadian Legion Branch 139, of which I am a proud member. The respect that I have for our vets and the sacrifices that they have made for our freedom should never be forgotten. Our annual Remembrance Day parade is extremely large, and quite frankly, my heart melts as I walk with the veterans, remembering what they have done for us. I am extremely pleased that our Premier, Doug Ford, has committed to build a new monument at Queen's Park to honour the service of Canadian armed forces veterans in Afghanistan.

In my great riding of Mississauga–Streetsville, we have great organizations: Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, food banks, youth drop-in centres and many, many more. We are also home to some of the largest employers in the GTA: Microsoft Canada, GlaxoSmithKline, General Electric, Stanley Black & Decker, the Amazon fulfillment centre and the Walmart corporate office, just to name a few, and there are many more. They are also very much supported by our great Mississauga Board of Trade.

We have a vast number of religious centres: churches, mosques, gurdwaras, Hindu temples, Buddhist temples, Egyptian Coptic churches, Lebanese churches and many other religious institutions. So as you can see, Mississauga–Streetsville is complete with people from all over the world, all of whom are very proud Canadians. We chose to live, work and raise our families here.

Mississauga–Streetsville is also home to three GO stations, Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville, all along the Milton line. I have been in discussions with the city of Mississauga and want to ensure that our PC government will work with the federal government and CP Rail to try and have an all-day GO service along the Milton line.

Our government has embarked on an exciting agenda, one that puts the people first, and one that encourages business entrepreneurship. Premier Doug Ford and the PC government will restore respect for our taxpayers' dollars. I heard time and time again from people who were worried and frustrated at the lack of prudent spending in the previous government. We will scrap the carbon tax and reduce gas prices by 10 cents per litre. We will clean up the hydro mess and lower your bills by 12%. And yes, we will send a clear message that Ontario is open for business. It's time. It's time to bring back quality jobs to Ontario by lowering taxes and reducing job-killing red tape.

Our line-by-line audit of government spending will bring an end to waste and mismanagement in govern-

ment, in this previous government. By doing this, we will restore accountability and trust. It's something that is close to me: I spent six years on the board of Credit Valley Hospital, where I learned so much about health care and how to find efficiencies. We need to get people out of the hospital who need an alternate level of care and place them in a long-term-care home, and this will free up desperately needed beds in the hospital, thus ending hallway health care.

We have come a long way in accepting and becoming more proactive in mental health. However, one suicide is one too many. I look forward to our additional support to provide for mental health, addictions and housing.

In closing, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address this Legislature today, and I look forward to Ontario becoming a prosperous province once again. I look forward to working with my fellow colleagues to get Ontario back on track, and we are here in Ontario for the people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now turn it over to the member for Scarborough–Rouge Park.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I congratulate you on your re-election.

It is my privilege to rise today to deliver my inaugural speech in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I would like to begin by offering my thanks and gratitude to the people of Scarborough–Rouge Park, the great riding I represent, for entrusting me with the responsibility of representing them and being their voice in this assembly. I also want to thank the best campaign team and the dedicated volunteers who stood shoulder to shoulder with me and have proved that, with hard work and dedication, anything is possible.

It goes without saying, but I will say it anyway: I am overjoyed to be part of Premier Ford's team. He has proven to be the genuine voice for the people of Ontario. In this short time, the work to effect positive change has already begun, with Premier Ford at the helm of the ship.

Premier Ford promised the CEO of Hydro One would be gone. Promise made, promise kept.

The Premier promised the board of Hydro One would be gone. Promise made, promise kept.

We are also bringing an end to the York University strike.

I would also like to congratulate all my colleagues here in the Legislature on their successful campaigns and thank all the candidates who put their names forward to run for political office.

I would now like to take this opportunity to point out some of my recent firsts.

This is my first speech in the Legislature. It is my first time running and my first time being elected for political office. Being from a new riding, I'm the first representative of Scarborough–Rouge Park provincially, and I'm also one of the first of Tamil descent to be elected in the provincial government of Ontario. This is the first for a lot of things, but I am ready to take on new challenges to make this already great province even better.

I mentioned that Scarborough–Rouge Park is a new riding, so I would like to take this time to talk a little bit about the riding. It was created in 2013 federally, and 2015 provincially. It is made up of the old ridings of Pickering–Scarborough East, Scarborough–Rouge River and Scarborough–Guildwood. The riding stretches across some of the wonderful neighbourhoods of Morningside Heights, Rouge, Port Union, West Rouge, Highland Creek, West Hill and Malvern.

I'm truly blessed to represent this riding, as I have one of the top-20 universities in the world, the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus; the first national urban park in Canada, Rouge Park; and the amazing Toronto Zoo. I also have the honour of representing one of the most diverse ridings in Canada.

Thank you to the residents of Scarborough–Rouge Park, again, for giving me the chance to represent them.

Actually, my good fortune began when I arrived to this country and, more specifically, this province. My family and I escaped a brutal genocide by the state of Sri Lanka and fled to southern India. Later, we immigrated legally to Canada. I landed at Toronto Pearson International Airport at the young age of 14, and in a short seven days began high school at Jean Vanier Catholic Secondary School in Scarborough.

In no time, I began working multiple part-time jobs, while attending high school and then university, to help support the family. In spite of my already full schedule, I immersed myself in community organizations. I also got involved in school politics. I made a conscious decision to volunteer in this community even though my time was limited.

It was perhaps this sense of duty that compelled me to run for political office, and I'm happy to serve. I feel a great deal of duty and responsibility to give back to this great country and this great province I call home. This is why, early in my life, I always made time to take part in the community.

1740

I believe the principles of duty and strong work ethics permeate the spirit of this new government, which I am proud to be part of. In fact, the ideals of duty to the people, work ethic and many more virtues were loudly pronounced in the throne speech.

You heard it when it was uttered, "This chamber belongs to the people."

You heard it when it was uttered, "When Ontarians work together, there is no challenge that cannot be overcome."

You heard it when it was uttered, "Ensure that we can afford to maintain and strengthen our hospitals, schools and vital public services."

You heard it when it was uttered, "Your government will take action to reduce gas prices.

"Lower your hydro bills.

"And provide meaningful and necessary tax relief to parents, small businesses and the working poor."

Although we are privileged to live in one of the best provinces in the world, we have faltered in the past 15

years. It won't be easy to put Ontario back on track, but very few things worth doing are easy. There will be times where we will face much resistance. That is when we will know that our government is doing well. This government will not falter. We will persevere by our sense of duty and a strong work ethic and bring the positive change that Ontario deserves.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to congratulate both of the members for what essentially are the members' maiden speeches—or first speeches might be a more appropriate way of saying it.

I remember being elected for the first time back in 1990, along with Mr. Wilson and the current Speaker, Mr. Arnott, and just how nervous it was for us to get up in this House. The little secret is, we still sometimes get nervous when we get up in this House because it is a pretty awesome place. All kidding aside, this is a very elite club that we come to. I don't want to call it a "club," but I think that members know what I'm getting at. We're here and we're lucky to be here, and those of us who manage to get re-elected by hook or by crook and end up back in this place are pretty lucky. I think, sometimes, we all look around and pinch ourselves and say, "How did that happen?"

The members are obviously embarking on a journey. I know that individually they all hope the journey is as long as some of us. For that, I wish you well—from my perspective, not too well, because our goal obviously is to be the government.

I want to say something. I don't want to start ill will in saying this, but I have heard a couple of members from the Conservative caucus get up and talk with pride about how they got to this country. In the case of Marit Stiles, her parents came here as a result of their dad being a conscientious objector. We've heard of a few people who came here as refugees to this country. I think that we should remember that, in our very own chamber, there are a number of people in this House who came to Canada because it was a choice about coming to a place where they can be safe, they can be respected and treated fairly within our province. When we see certain people—and I'm not pointing fingers here—who are trying to play to the darker angels of the immigration system, I would just remind ourselves to remember that all of us here are immigrants. The only people who were here at the beginning were the First Nations. We all came here as a result of somebody immigrating or claiming refugee status to get here, and we should remember that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? I'm going to recognize the member from Niagara West.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations to you again on your election.

What an honour it is to be able to stand today and respond to speeches by two new members of the Legislature, part of a new government, a government for the people, a government that is going to listen to the people.

I want to thank the member for Scarborough–Rouge Park for his excellent contributions and debate that were brought forward today. Of course, it's an honour to be able to hear your inaugural address. It's the beginning of a wonderful four years and, I'm sure, a much longer political career, one where you have dedicated yourself to your constituents and to the broader province of Ontario and improving this province and lifting it up.

The same goes for the new member for Mississauga–Streetsville. I think it's incredible to see new members such as yourself enter this House and participate in the great privilege of democracy, the incredible honour that we have, to speak to issues that are of great concern.

I want to say that my inaugural address, which I gave after my first address—it was a bit later than I intended it to be—is something that I hope to be able to look back on, after my political career is over, as a benchmark, as a time that reflected my commitment to the values of integrity, of hard work and of listening to my constituents.

I know that these speeches you gave today exemplify those very virtues. They exemplify your commitment to your communities, and they exemplify your commitment to our wonderful province and to the message of change that Premier Ford and the PC Party promised in the last election—a message of change that works for the people of Ontario; a message of change that will put money back into the pockets of hard-working Ontarians, making sure that when, after four years, we look back at what we've accomplished, we can say that we listened to the people and we were here for the people.

Thank you for speaking up on behalf of your constituents. Thank you for letting me be part of this. I look forward to serving with you both in the next four years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Joel Harden: It's a pleasure to rise again in this chamber. I just want to reflect and want to elaborate on something raised in the throne speech, something raised by many of my colleagues here today.

As somebody sitting here, a young socialist, I agree with my friends across the aisle about managing the people's money wisely. I do. But please, when you take that fine pen over the ledger of the province's finances, please don't forget to look at the sucking force in so many of our public institutions and executive positions that are using up so much wealth in administration.

Our friends who have been walking on a picket line for five months at York University, CUPE 3903—I've spoken about them already. I want to speak about the secretaries and administrative staff in my riding of Ottawa Centre, CUPE 2424, who had to walk around in circles for six weeks to defend the language in their collective agreement for their pension. They had to walk around in circles for six weeks while a parachuted president was clearly given a mandate by their negotiating committee to take that language out.

Do you know what that union did, Mr. Speaker? It's a tried-and-true Canadian value that my friend opposite

just mentioned. Through their hard work and their diligence, they held the line. I was there with them at 6 in the morning, at minus 32 degrees Celsius, in our cold city of Ottawa, and they did us proud.

I'm imploring this government to not reward laziness in the executive branch. That's what this government will do if they legislate this union back to work, in the name of students, after this administration bargained for 15 minutes.

Do you consider that adequate leadership in public institutions, Mr. Speaker? I don't. I've seen it at Carleton University. I've seen it at York University, where—

Interjection.

Mr. Joel Harden: The member is an alum? So am I.

I don't think you should be encouraging that kind of leadership, Mr. Speaker. I think you should be listening to the front-line workers and follow true to your rhetoric, make sure we don't have bloated executive salaries, bloated administrative compensation, and make sure that our students and teachers have the resources they need.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

Interjection: End the corporate gravy train.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please. Thank you very much.

Now I will turn to the member from Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: It is a very proud moment that I get to rise and speak and make comments on two of my fellow classmates for the 2018 Legislature. I, too, am a first-time MPP, and I've listened to the words that they've had to say.

Our member from Mississauga–Streetsville spoke about the strong women who were role models for her. I have two daughters, and I am proud to hold her up as a role model for my daughters.

She spoke passionately about her support for veterans and the people in her riding who will be able to proudly call her their representative. I myself am proud to call her my friend, and I look forward to working with her.

1750

My colleague from Scarborough–Rouge Park: I look forward to working alongside him as well, because when he makes a promise, like everyone else in our party, he intends to keep that promise. We've made many promises to the people of Ontario, and we as a government will be keeping those promises. The member from Scarborough–Rouge Park can also be held up as an example of what can be accomplished with hard work and integrity. As the first Tamil member in this Legislature, he's a perfect example of that Canadian dream.

Both of these members represent all that is good about Ontario. They moved here to give themselves a better life. They're doing that, and they're following through with it to make sure that everyone in Ontario has a better life. I greatly appreciate the ability and the chance that I have to work alongside both of them, and I commend them for their work.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now return to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for her final comments of the day.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Together with my colleague from Scarborough–Rouge Park, I'd like to thank the member from Timmins, the member from Niagara West, the member from Ottawa Centre and the member from Peterborough–Kawartha for their kind words and their welcoming us here today.

I can assure this Legislature that we will all work with high integrity and that we will be fiscally responsible, but we will also be very socially responsible, because that's what our people have sent us here to do. I'm really looking forward to working with everyone in this Legislature, in this 42nd Parliament. I think it's just going to be wonderful that we're going to be able to do the work that we said we're going to do.

I would really like to commend and thank Doug Ford, our Premier, with a great plan, together with our cabinet, our parliamentary assistants and each and every member here who is going to work very hard for the people of Ontario.

Like we said before, Ontario is open for business. We are here for the people, and we will make sure that we earn the respect of the people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member for Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's a pleasure to see you in the chair. It's a pleasure to see you again and to join all of our new colleagues in this House. Welcome. Although I'm only 40 years old, I feel like I've been here for 700 years.

Hon. Todd Smith: You look like it.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I know I look like it.

I've been here for seven years, just as long as my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings. He is looking his age as well these days, in his new portfolio. But I congratulate him, all the members who were newly elected and those who returned.

It's encouraging, a little bit heartwarming, to hear the stories and to reminisce about my inaugural speech seven years ago, and the anxiety and the nervousness, and the optimism that I think we all embed and infuse in each one of our inaugural speeches. We're all coming here with the best of intentions, and I think that's evident today from the speeches that I listened to. We all might have just a little bit of a different pathway towards those intentions, but undoubtedly they are focused on the betterment of our communities and on the people who sent us here.

So congratulations to those who are here who will do the hard work that is asked of them. It will be hard work indeed. It will be discouraging. It will be stressful. It will be sometimes sad and emotional. But that's a part of the job. We should all be here as colleagues to lift each other up. Even though we might disagree philosophically and ideologically, to make this place a healthy workplace and to make it a functional workplace—that's my commitment to you as a 40-year-old seven-year veteran. I think I

can assist not only my colleagues on this side of the House, but also those on the other side. I wish them well.

Speaker, I'll take the opportunity, as this is my inaugural address, to thank my campaign team and to thank the people of my riding, the wonderful people of the riding of Essex, who saw fit to send me here for a third mandate. I'm honoured and privileged to stand in this House, at this chair, to represent their values, to represent their concerns and their vision for our province and our community.

Speaker, as you would know, being my neighbour from the adjacent riding, we have some challenges down in southwestern Ontario. Our area is one of the areas in Ontario that I would say is first and hardest hit when our provincial economy starts to suffer. We've seen it in our agricultural sector, in a cyclical way. We've seen it in our manufacturing sector. Right now, I can tell my colleagues that in southwestern Ontario, in Windsor and Essex county, the heart of manufacturing in Ontario, we're concerned about our trading relationship not only with the United States, but around the world. Things are tumultuous. We need our government to be focused on maintaining and protecting our domestic manufacturing sector.

Those auto workers and parts manufacturers and the tool and die sector in Windsor and Essex county and across Ontario are trade-sensitive. Any disruption in our trading relationship with our partners to the south, Mexico and the United States, has an immediate effect on the communities in southwestern Ontario. We are concerned, and we hope that this government sees fit to address this and to be proactive and to work with our partners at the federal level to ensure that there is some stability and that the protections that those industries need—industries that are so vital to our economies—are there.

I would implore our government, this new government, to come down to southwestern Ontario and make sure we have round table meetings with those business leaders, those labour leaders who have the answers, who have put forward pathways. Jerry Dias with Unifor has talked about what a fair trade relationship means within a new NAFTA context—what it means to workers and what it means to communities—and what that should look like, but it will require a partnership between the provincial and federal governments that we haven't seen in a long time. We cannot be reactive; we have to be proactive when it comes to protecting these industries.

The same goes for our agriculture sector, Speaker. We know that Donald Trump and the Republican administration would love nothing more than to attack our supply-managed sectors, those programs that protect domestic agriculture production in Ontario. When we talk about food, Speaker, what we should be talking about is the sovereignty of our communities and of our nation. If we do not protect our ability to produce our own food, then we are at risk in terms of sovereignty, as we would be in any other context.

Again, I can't put enough emphasis on what I would like to see but, unfortunately, didn't hear from the speech

from the throne. I don't think I heard any mention of ensuring protecting our domestic manufacturing in a tumultuous trading context. That wasn't addressed. What I did hear was a focus on getting rid of—you know, empty rhetoric—a nine-million—or a six-million-dollar man. These are slogans that might appeal during elections, and I understand that. They're quick snippets of talk, you know, sound bites, but we need to see real action. We need to see legislative frameworks that protect these industries and protect the workers that rely on them and the communities that rely on them. We can no longer afford to let them go. Our economies will not be able to bear that brunt.

Speaker, I will get back to my thanks. My community, again, is a wonderful place and we have so much to offer and so much to add to the livability of this province and the economic prosperity of this province. But, Speaker,

it's the people like in my campaign who helped send me here and in your campaign who helped send you there, the people on the ground in our communities who are focused on that real work. I want to thank them, and I thank you, Speaker, for your indulgence and for that of my colleagues in the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Just to inform the member from Essex that there was time left on the clock and when this bill is brought forward again, you will have that opportunity as a leadoff on, perhaps, the next day.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I want to thank everyone for active participation and debate today, but it is now 6 o'clock and this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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