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Lundi
23 juillet 2018

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Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 July 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 juillet 2018

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Today I have the distinct pleasure of welcoming my good friend all the way from Alberta: Garnett Genuis, MP for the riding of Sherwood Park–Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. David Piccini: Today I have the honour of introducing a young student who worked on my campaign and who, sadly, we'll be losing off to university, like so many others, come September but who is in my office over the summer. Nico Johnson is visiting from Cobourg.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know this is your prerogative and it is in no way indicative of how I will behave in this House, but I am in this instance going to beg the indulgence to introduce our friend and former colleague Deb Matthews, who is the former member for London North Centre.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And I would add that Deb Matthews served London North Centre in the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st Parliaments. Again, welcome back to the Ontario Legislature.

Mrs. Amy Fee: I would like to welcome a huge campaign supporter of mine who volunteered. His name is Alan Keeso. He was out door-knocking day after day with me and has been quite the supporter all along through my campaign. Thank you, Alan, for coming down today.

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I'd like to introduce Jay Heaman, who is visiting Queen's Park today from the great riding of Oxford. Thank you very much for coming to Queen's Park, Jay.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just see that my friend Stewart Kiff is here. Welcome once again. I'm so glad to see your face.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I know it's introduction of visitors, but I have just been notified that Alma Ferguson, the mother of Rob Ferguson, a reporter for the Toronto Star, passed away last night. I think it's appropriate that we note and give our condolences to Rob and his family.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce a good friend of mine from my riding of Sarnia–Lambton, Stephanie Lobsinger, who is in the east members' gallery. Her daughter is a page here again.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am very pleased to welcome this morning Harny Mendoza and Carla Neto from the

Woman Abuse Council of Toronto, or WomenACT; Roza Nozari, who is here from the 519; and Laura Hartley from Interim Place and the Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I wish to inform the House that we have in the House today, in the Speaker's gallery, a former member of the Legislature who served in the 32nd, 33rd, 34th and 35th Parliaments, representing the riding of Hamilton West: Richard Allen is here with us today.

ATTACK IN TORONTO

ATTAQUE À TORONTO

Hon. Todd Smith: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Todd Smith: I seek unanimous consent that five minutes be allotted to each of the recognized parties, five minutes to the independent Liberal members and five minutes to the independent Green member in order to make statements about the tragic shooting that took place on Danforth Avenue in Toronto last night, and that following the statements the House observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent that five minutes be allotted to each of the recognized parties, five minutes to the Liberal members and five minutes to the Green member in order to make statements about the tragic shooting that took place on Danforth Avenue in Toronto last night, and that following the statements the House observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims. Agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Today, the residents of this city and our entire province are in shock. During a year in which we have already lost too many people to gun violence, last night we witnessed the most brazen shooting yet. Today, people across Toronto woke up to the devastating news of a mass shooting in a crowd of pedestrians in one of the city's busiest neighbourhoods.

Our first thoughts go to the victims of the shootings and their loved ones. As of right now, we know two innocent people are dead, lives cut short and families devastated, and there are as many as 12 other victims. The thoughts of our entire province and country are with them and their families right now.

I also want to thank the police officers, paramedics and other first responders, who were so quick to act in

the aftermath of the shooting, as well as the bystanders on site who helped in the response.

The shooter is dead, but that will not delay or deter us from seeking justice. Our police services are engaged in a full-scale investigation. I encourage anybody with any knowledge of this horrific act of violence to contact the police immediately. I have been briefed by our provincial security adviser and our top officials. We will continue to monitor the situation closely.

As a lifelong Toronto resident, I've always been proud to speak up for and to defend this city. Unlike so many other places, we have always been confident that this is a safe city. Today, for too many, this confidence is shaken. But I want the people of Toronto to know that our entire province is behind you. What happened last night is tragic, and it should be a cause for anger. It reminds us that the status quo is not good enough. We must do everything we can to bring criminals to justice while preventing other potential shootings.

1040

As Premier, my commitment is that I will do everything in my power to keep our neighbourhoods safe. We will make sure our police have the tools and resources they need to do their jobs, and we will work with our municipal and federal counterparts to identify, apprehend and convict those who commit, or plan to commit, violence.

All of us can also do our part. If you know somebody in your life whom you believe is at risk of committing gun violence, I'm asking you to step forward and let the appropriate authorities know.

What happened on Sunday night was despicable, but I hope it is also a catalyst for all of us to come together to protect our communities against this kind of outrageous violence.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The leader of the official opposition.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm going to be sharing my time with the member for Toronto–Danforth.

Last night, our city and our province witnessed a terrible, senseless tragedy, one that has shattered the lives of many people, and one that leaves all of us holding our loved ones closer. This morning, like millions of people in this city and across Ontario, my heart is with the victims of last night's shooting, with their families and loved ones, and with everyone in the Danforth community, everyone in the city, everyone in the province. I know that we're all thinking of the victims who are in hospital. We're all praying for their recovery, and for those who need to recover from the emotional trauma of this horrific event.

On behalf of the official opposition and all New Democrat MPPs, I want to extend our deepest gratitude to all of the first responders—to the police and to the emergency services and paramedics.

Nous remercions la police et les services d'urgence.

I want to also extend our gratitude to the health care professionals who are working to this very minute to help the victims, and to all those on the Danforth who com-

ported a stranger, cared for a victim and aided the efforts of the police and emergency responders. Your quick thinking and immediate compassion and care have not only saved lives; you've reminded us, in the face of unbearable tragedy, that we live in an incredible community, in an incredible province where violence will never be tolerated, and where the people of Ontario always look out for each other.

Today, as the police continue their investigation, I know that all Ontarians stand together to support the victims and to support one another. The Danforth is a very vibrant, amazing neighbourhood. Lots of amazing small businesses are there—people who live their lives day in and day out in just such a great community. This tragedy last night does not reflect the Danforth. It does not reflect Toronto. It does not reflect our great province, and it's up to us to make sure that we stay strong together.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: This morning is a very hard day for my community and for this entire city. For people in my constituency, the Danforth is our home. It is the centre of our community. It's where families enjoy dinner together. It's where couples go for a stroll on a summer evening. It's where people spend time with those they love the most. That's what the Danforth is.

For a moment last night, our community was shattered by a despicable act of violence in the very heart of our neighbourhood. We are struggling to make sense of a senseless act. But I know that our strong, caring and vibrant community will come together. We already are. We will support the victims and their families. We will begin to heal.

To the victims of this violence and their loved ones, I offer you my deepest condolences on behalf of every member of the Toronto–Danforth community. I hope that the injured and the traumatized will find the strength to recover fully from the physical injuries and the emotional trauma that they have experienced.

To the first responders, emergency and police services, and hospital workers, I offer the appreciation and thanks of our entire community.

The Danforth is a wonderful community. It has been a safe home to families for many generations, and that's exactly what we will remain. We are a unified and loving community, and we will find answers together. We will offer each other strength and understanding together. We will heal together.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: I'll be sharing my time with the member from Don Valley West.

On behalf of our caucus, I would like to express our deep concern, prayers and support for all the victims of last night's senseless violence on the Danforth, and for their families. As a father and a grandfather, I cannot find the words to express the grief and the sadness of the two families of the two young people whose lives were lost. It is simply not fair that this would happen.

Nos pensées et nos prières sont avec les victimes et les familles prises dans la fusillade insensée d'hier soir.

Guns are claiming too many lives, too many young lives, in our communities. It is up to all of us in this Legislature, at all other levels of government and in our communities to put an end to the senseless loss of life.

Merci aux premiers répondants et aux professionnels de la santé qui ont pris soin des victimes.

I would like to thank all first responders for their swift and coordinated action. I would also like to thank all the health care professionals who treated and continue to treat the victims, and for doing their best to bring comfort and reassurance to their families.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Don Valley West.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am so saddened to stand here today to speak to this tragedy that unfolded on the Danforth last night. As many have already said, this is a senseless tragedy, and still our impulse is to try to make sense of it, to understand what happened and why. We have to do that.

But what we're all feeling today, I think, is the deep pain for the victims of this violence and for their families, their friends and their communities. We're worried about the lasting impact on all of those lives, and particularly mourn the two lives that were lost.

The Danforth is such a gathering place. As the member for Toronto–Danforth has described, most of us who live here have happy memories of great meals, parades in the cold—such life along all the storefronts and the restaurants of Greektown. The shock of this tragedy is only just settling in.

The community will respond. It will pull together. Already I've heard voices on radio reaffirming the vitality of the neighbourhood. But there's no way to deny the fear that we all feel when such a random and what we really think of as an impossible violent act takes place.

As in the aftermath of the van attack in North York, there will be questions, there will be more information and there will be some answers. But it will be up to all of us here, all of those in city government, in the community, in law enforcement and all of the first responders to work together to ensure that we do everything humanly possible to prevent this from ever happening again.

But today, we hold the victims and their families, and the people who love them, in our hearts. We weep with them and for them and want them to know that we are so deeply sorry that they are having to experience such fear and anger and loss.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Mr. Speaker, I rise with a heavy heart and much sadness today. The tragic and horrific shooting on the Danforth has shocked and saddened the city of Toronto, the people of our province and our entire country.

On behalf of all members of our party, my thoughts and prayers and condolences are with the victims and

their families. My heart goes out to everyone on the Danforth affected by this senseless act of violence.

It's hard to imagine the horror of that moment last night. I want to sincerely thank the first responders who ran into danger last night. The front-line police officers, EMS, hospital workers and fire services all deserve our gratitude and support. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

I also want to thank and acknowledge the everyday heroes who acted to help their co-workers, customers, friends, family and strangers. I'm inspired by your bravery and your deep instinct to care for people in need around you.

With tears in my eyes this morning, I read the news. I was especially moved by the story of Tanya Wilson, who exposed herself to danger by opening her tattoo shop to help two bleeding victims, a mother and her adult son. Placing them in her tattoo chairs, Ms. Wilson administered first aid, helping them for half an hour until paramedics arrived and found them. Her story and others give me hope that even in the face of unspeakable evil, the human spirit and courage are to put care for others before our own safety.

Senseless acts of violence have no place in our streets, but the sad fact is that such acts of violence are all too common in today's world. But I know that we are a strong and resilient people. Toronto is a proud and caring city. We will not, we cannot allow such random acts of violence to shut down this city or prevent us from spending time with family, friends and community in public spaces.

While we remain vigilant, we will not be afraid to celebrate the city and each other. We cannot allow the cowardly actions of a disturbed individual to drive us apart, make us afraid of each other or prevent us from opening our arms to strangers. We are stronger than that. We are better than that.

So while we mourn the loss of life today, I know that in the coming days, there will be discussions about how we prevent such tragedies in the future. I ask my colleagues in this House and my fellow citizens all across Ontario that we have that conversation in a respectful, dignified and productive way; in a way that honours those who lost their lives last night; in a way that brings us together, pursuing a collective agenda—that our cities, our streets and our communities be safe for everyone. If we stick together, we can turn a senseless act of violence into meaningful change.

I want to close by offering my heartfelt condolences to those who lost loved ones last night. The pain and loss you feel are real, and we are here for you, we grieve for you and we pray for you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to thank all the members who just participated with their eloquent comments, and would ask the House now to rise to observe a moment's silence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

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

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On Monday, July 16, 2018, the House leader of the official opposition, Mr. Bisson, rose on a question of privilege in order to indicate that the opposition members had not been provided with advance copies of the speech from the throne at the same time that the media had been provided with advance copies. Initially, the member framed this omission as a possible breach of privilege; he subsequently framed it as a contempt of the House.

The government House leader, Mr. Smith, noted that there is no requirement that the government must provide advance copies of the speech to members but that it had nevertheless done so shortly before its presentation to the House. He also indicated that the government had taken steps to protect the confidentiality of the embargoed media copies of the speech to prevent its premature disclosure before it was read to members of the House by the Lieutenant Governor.

Having reviewed the statement provided under standing order 21(c), the written submissions of both House leaders and the relevant precedents and procedural authorities, I am now prepared to rule on the matter.

Let me begin by explaining the concepts of privilege and contempt. Erskine May, the pre-eminent authority on Westminster parliamentary procedure, defines parliamentary privilege in the following terms at page 203 of its 24th edition:

“Parliamentary privilege is the sum of certain rights enjoyed by each House collectively as a constituent part of the High Court of Parliament; and by members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions, and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals. Some privileges rest solely on the law and custom of Parliament, while others have been defined by statute.”

Categories of “individual” or members’ privileges include freedom of speech, exemption from jury duty and exemption from being subpoenaed to attend court as a witness. Categories of “collective” or House privileges include the right to regulate internal affairs, the right to institute inquiries and the power to discipline.

It is important to distinguish breaches of privilege from the separate but related concept of contempt. The third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* explains the distinction in the following terms on pages 80 and 81:

“Any disregard of or attack on the rights, powers and immunities of the House and its members, either by an outside person or body, or by a member of the House, is referred to as a ‘breach of privilege’ and is punishable by the House. There are, however, other affronts against the dignity and authority of Parliament which may not fall within one of the specifically defined privileges. Thus, the House also claims the right to punish, as a contempt, any action which, though not a breach of a specific privilege: tends to obstruct or impede the House in the performance of its functions; obstructs or impedes any member or officer of the House in the discharge of their

duties; or is an offence against the authority or dignity of the House, such as disobedience of its legitimate commands or libels upon itself, its members or its officers.... In that sense, all breaches of privilege are contempts of the House, but not all contempts are necessarily breaches of privilege.”

Dealing first with the opposition House leader’s claim that there was a breach of privilege, I note that an October 23, 2007, ruling in the Canadian House of Commons, at page 283 of the Debates, indicated that there is “no procedural authority for the claims that the premature disclosure of the speech from the throne constitutes a breach of the privileges of the members of this House.” In that ruling, Speaker Milliken also indicated that the secrecy of the throne speech, like the secrecy of the budget speech, “is a matter of parliamentary convention, rather than one of privilege.”

1100

Speakers of this assembly have arrived at the same conclusion with respect to budget secrecy. I refer members to rulings at page 37 of the Journals for May 9, 1983, and page 62 of the Journals for March 25, 2008. In the latter ruling, the Speaker declined to find that a *prima facie* case of privilege was established on a question of privilege raised by the then member for Wellington—Halton Hills, and emphasized that:

“A successful question of privilege must convince the Speaker that the peculiar rights that are accorded to members of Parliament to permit them to discharge their parliamentary duties have in some way been violated. These rights are extremely narrow and specific—for instance, the right to speak freely in this place; or to attend here without obstruction. They relate to the member’s functions in this chamber.”

I note that the opposition House leader’s objection to what happened on throne speech day was not that the speech was released before it was read in the House but, rather, that members, particularly opposition members, did not receive advance copies of the speech when the media received advance copies under embargo. But if the premature disclosure of a throne speech does not rise to a valid question of privilege, it is difficult to see how failure to provide it in advance to any member somehow could; the one is the corollary of the other.

Nevertheless, according to the member, this deprived members of equitable access to the speech and compromised the opposition’s ability to effectively engage with the media and to scrutinize government initiatives.

However, a purported right to equitable access to advance copies of the throne speech, or to effectively engage with the media, is not a recognized individual or collective privilege. I can well appreciate any member’s desire to be well informed and well prepared before engaging with the press gallery, but this relates to a member’s role as a public official and not their role as a parliamentarian. For the purposes of parliamentary privilege, the distinction between the two is crucial.

As for the contention that members were denied information that they required in order to carry out their duties

effectively, many Speakers' rulings have indicated that members' right to information in the parliamentary workplace is a function of what the standing orders provide, not a privilege. I note that the standing orders do not provide for the pre-release of the speech from the throne to members.

Turning now to the case for contempt: The opposition House leader referenced Speaker Milliken's March 19, 2001, and October 15, 2001, rulings, which found a prima facie case of contempt in the context of a flawed embargo on a government bill that was at notice stage and awaiting introduction in the House.

The legislative process of the House of Commons varies from our own in that the introduction of any public bill in the House of Commons requires 48 hours' written notice. During this notice period, it is expected that the confidentiality of all information relating to the bill on notice is maintained. In our House, however, there is no mandatory notice stage for bills, so these rulings from a different jurisdiction are not directly applicable either to procedure in this House or to the case at hand, because they were not given in relation to any proceedings around the speech from the throne.

The opposition House leader takes no issue with the government's distribution of advance copies of the speech from the throne before it is read in the House. Although this practice does not rise to the level of contempt, it is reasonable to expect that, as a matter of courtesy, all members be on the distribution list.

In the final analysis, neither the House nor any member was obstructed or impeded in their strictly parliamentary functions. Members were able to be present in this chamber to hear the speech and for subsequent proceedings that took place that day.

For the reasons indicated, I find that neither a prima facie case of privilege nor a prima facie case of contempt has been established.

However, I would encourage the government to give due consideration to the important role and duties of the opposition in our parliamentary democracy and to foster document release practices that respect parliamentary sensibilities.

In closing, I want to thank both House leaders for their oral and written submissions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

CURRICULUM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

School starts in just a few weeks, and all we've seen from this Conservative government is chaos caused by the Premier's backroom deals. Radical extremists like Charles McVety and Tanya Granic Allen want to prevent kids from learning about consent, cyberbullying, gender identity and LGBTQ families. They want to drag Ontario back to 1998. I get that. That's who these people are. But this Premier is fulfilling their every wish.

Why does the Premier care more about satisfying social conservatives than he does about protecting the health and safety of our students?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition ran in the last election, went across the province, like I did. Maybe we talked to two different groups of people, but I don't think so. Every single group I went to visit told me they weren't consulted.

We did a little research on how many people were consulted. There were 4,000 online surveys. Out of the 4,000—now keep in mind we're a province of 14 million; I just want to remind people—1,638 people responded. That was after the curriculum was done, by the way. That is 0.001% of the population.

Now, the Leader of the Opposition thinks it's fine to consult with 0.001% and then ram their Liberal ideologies down the rest of the province. We believe in consulting with the people.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Supplementary question.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, scrapping the updated health curriculum puts students at risk. It is an irresponsible thing to do. Now the Conservatives are throwing school boards into limbo with just weeks before classes start. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association has received no official notice from the Ministry of Education about what exactly is happening this fall and how exactly they're supposed to teach the 1998 curriculum in the year 2018.

How does this Premier expect school boards to turn back the clock 20 years in less than six weeks?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I think the Leader of the Opposition is getting her numbers wrong. We're actually going back to the 2014 curriculum. I know there might be a problem with numbers and figures and I can appreciate that.

In saying that, we're going to go right across the province. We're going to contact 124 ridings, the constituents who live in those ridings. We're going to do a thorough, end-to-end consultation that has never taken place ever before when it comes to the sex ed curriculum.

We will go back to 2014. After we consult—I know the Leader of the Opposition doesn't believe in consulting with the parents, but we will consult with the parents. We'll get their input, and from there we will move forward with a more modern sex ed curriculum.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Maybe this Premier has trouble with what century we're living in, but in fact the 1998 curriculum is exactly the curriculum that he's dragging us back to, Speaker. They can pretend that it's 2014, but in 2014 they were using the 1998 curriculum. The Premier is dragging us backwards, and his backroom deal with radical social conservatives is throwing school board planning into chaos.

The Thames Valley school board is seeking a legal opinion to figure out what could be the legal ramifica-

tions if teachers in fact do what's right for students and continue to teach the updated health curriculum this September. They want to know what kind of penalties teachers will face if they stand up and teach about consent, gender identity and LGBTQ families in their classrooms.

Why is the Premier throwing these school boards into chaos and putting students' health at risk for no other reason, Speaker, than to please the radical social conservatives in his own party?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, I find it ironic that the Leader of the Opposition is calling us radical. That's the pot calling the kettle black. You just have to turn around and see your radicals.

Leader of the Opposition, as I've said over and over again, I know you don't believe in consulting with parents. They'd rather ram this through with 0.001% of the population even understanding it.

Our minister has been very clear. We've been very clear to all ministries and schools right across all the school boards. We're going back to 2014. Once we consult with the parents and we get their input—because the Leader of the Opposition has no interest in consulting with parents. The Leader of the Opposition truly believes in the nanny state, that they know better than the parents. We believe in consulting with the parents.

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Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Next question.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. The Premier isn't just making backroom deals that put students at risk; he's also making backroom deals that will cost Ontarians more on their hydro bills. The Premier's decision to cook up a deal with the board of Hydro One and give Mayo Schmidt at least \$9 million is causing American regulators to sit up and take a second look at Hydro One's acquisition of Avista. If regulatory deadlines are not met, Hydro One ratepayers could be required to pay a massive termination fee to a US company, all because of the chaos caused by this Premier.

When will the Premier come clean and tell us how much his backroom deal at Hydro One could cost the people of Ontario?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, our party ran on reducing the hydro rates by 12%. Our party ran on giving relief to business owners across this province and giving relief to the people of this province.

The Leader of the Opposition wanted to close down the Pickering energy facility. Next month, if it was up to the Leader of the Opposition, there would be 7,000 families looking for a paycheque they wouldn't have.

We believe in reducing the hydro rates. We promised we would get rid of the CEO of Hydro One and would

replace the board. That is exactly what we did, and we did it with zero severance.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, gee, Speaker. Talk about somebody who doesn't know how to deal with numbers. First, he said it was going to be a zero amount of money that this backroom deal was going to cost, and then we found out that his secret deal is actually going to turn the six-million-dollar man into a nine-million-dollar man, at least. Well, that's great math, Speaker. Now the price tag continues to go up, and the people who are going to pay that price are ratepayers.

American regulators in four US states are delaying regulatory hearings or reopening previous approvals all because of the chaos and uncertainty being caused by this Premier. If regulatory deadlines are not met, Hydro One will be on the hook to pay \$103 million to Avista, a dirty-coal-burning US power company.

Now why would the Premier make a backroom deal that would cost Hydro One ratepayers and the people of Ontario over \$100 million?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I think the Leader of the Opposition likes throwing figures around. We looked at her budget that was off by billions of dollars. So if you want to talk about numbers, we'll talk about numbers.

But, again, we promised to reduce the hydro rates by 12%, and we're on track to putting money back in the people's pockets instead of the government's pockets. We believe in making sure that Hydro One is run responsibly. We believe that the board members shouldn't be making \$180,000 a year when people are struggling to pay their bills, when they're struggling to put food on their table.

But the Leader of the Opposition is okay with that. The Leader of the Opposition is okay with having the highest hydro bills in North America. She's okay with struggling families. She's okay with people getting their hydro cut off—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Members will take their seats.

Restart the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: For 15 years under the Liberals, families and businesses watched their bills skyrocket, and New Democrats fought day in and day out to get them to turn back their position on the privatization of Hydro One. On the other hand, Conservatives had the privatization of Hydro One in their platform last time around.

But now, instead of fixing the problems in our hydro system—a chance that they have—the Premier is creating chaos and uncertainty that will only cost people more on their bills. He turned the six-million-dollar man into a nine-million-dollar man, and Hydro One ratepayers could

end up on the hook for \$103 million if the Avista deal fails.

Why did the Premier make a backroom deal that could cost the people of Ontario over \$100 million and counting?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Last time I checked, the Leader of the Opposition was down here the previous four years propping the other administration up, propping Hydro One up, propping wind turbines up—that we're paying 10 times the amount—and also propping up the folks who were actually selling hydro at a loss.

But again, the Leader of the Opposition is okay with that. She's okay with attacking struggling families. She's okay with attacking businesses and driving them out of the province.

If it was up to the Leader of the Opposition, we would have wind turbines everywhere. We would have even higher hydro costs. As one of her members said, they want the highest carbon tax anywhere in the world.

The Leader of the Opposition is anti-business and anti-people who are struggling. You're anti, anti, anti—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Members will take their seats. The House will come to order.

Restart the clock.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier.

Speaker, this morning, violence-against-women advocates were at Queen's Park to release an open letter to the Minister of Education about the rollback of the 2015 sexual health curriculum. The letter was signed by 87 organizations and experts from across Ontario and across the country. It highlights the serious consequences to women's safety when consent is no longer taught in our schools.

Almost half of female high school students have experienced sexual harassment. One third have felt pressure into having unwanted sex. This year alone, 41 women and girls in Ontario were killed as a result of dating violence or intimate partner violence.

Why is the Premier putting the health and safety of women and girls at risk by returning to a 1998 curriculum that provides no information about consent and healthy relationships?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, if I may pass on to my dear friend the member from Toronto–Danforth my condolences for what happened yesterday. Earlier in the day, my husband and I had been on the Danforth, and it really is regrettable and very tragic. So I just wanted to pass that on.

I'd also like to thank the member for her question. As the member responsible for children and youth as well as

women's issues, I welcome those in the gallery today who have come here to discuss this issue. I'd be happy to make myself available after question period to have a conversation with you.

But let me be perfectly clear: We ran a 28-day campaign on talking about bringing back responsibility to parents and making sure that they were part of the curriculum. There's a big difference between being on that side of the House and making a promise and then breaking it, and being on this side of the House and making a promise and keeping it. That's what we're doing for the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, people on the front lines of ending violence against women know that education on consent and healthy relationships is critical to prevent gender-based violence and advance gender equality. If this government was truly concerned about ending violence against women, they would ensure that students receive comprehensive, accurate information about consent, healthy relationships and the right of girls and young women to say no.

Why does this government care more about catering to a small group of social conservative insiders than about ending violence against women?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to thank the member again for her question. Let me be perfectly clear: The members on this side of the House, this government, will take violence against women very seriously, as well as gender-based violence, including those who are being trafficked. That is going to be a very important component of our government.

But during the campaign, we made a very clear promise to replace the entirety of Ontario's sex ed curriculum with an age-appropriate one that is based on real consultation with parents.

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I get it. Previous NDP and previous Liberal governments would come to this place, and they would make promises and then break them. But let me be perfectly clear: On this side of the House, when we make a promise, we keep it.

Interjections.

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

Next question.

HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

For the past 15 years, health care services in Ontario have deteriorated under the previous government's administration. Statistics for May 2018 say that nine out of 10 patients in Ontario spend, on average, 10.3 hours in emergency rooms, with some hospitals having ER wait times of over 20 hours.

How short-sighted was the former Liberal government when they failed to plan for a long-term-care strategy and

have not created a single long-term-care bed in 15 years? This oversight has resulted in immense backlogs in our acute care hospitals.

Speaker, we have all heard of alternative-level-of-care patients. These patients should be in long-term-care beds but are instead occupying acute care beds simply because there is nowhere else for them to go.

Can the minister tell us how our government for the people is going to fix the mess created by 15 years of neglect in Ontario's hospitals?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you to the member from Mississauga Centre for your question. The member is quite right that we are facing a health care crisis in this province, in large part driven by a long-term-care crisis due to the long-term inaction of the previous government.

We know that many hospitals across Ontario are consistently operating at over 100% capacity. That is simply unacceptable for both patients and our front-line health care workers who are trying to work with them.

We also know that one of the ways to address hospital overcrowding is to enhance supports for patients outside the hospital. That's why our government has committed to adding 15,000 long-term-care beds over five years and 30,000 long-term-care beds over 10 years.

Addressing the high alternate-level-of-care rates through a focused long-term-care strategy; reducing unnecessary emergency room visits by providing better community supports; and, finally, introducing a comprehensive and connected mental health care system are just some of the ways our government is committed to fixing this mess and getting patients—

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

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Back to the minister: The lack of a long-term-care strategy by the Liberals was not only fiscally irresponsible, but it also created a domino effect of backlog, preventing many Ontarians from getting the proper medical attention they deserve.

As an emergency room nurse myself, I spent many shifts in the back hall, taking care of five or six bedridden patients at a time. It was not only difficult to perform my nursing duties in this setting but, frankly, demoralizing.

Patients wait for hours or days in designated hallway beds to get proper treatment, without dignity or privacy.

Our health care professionals, nurses, doctors and other hospital staff work in this environment, trying to help patients in hallways, which is impacting their own mental health and burnout rates.

A hallway is not a place of work, and it definitely is not a place of healing. My question is simple: What will the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care do to put an end to hallway nursing in Ontario?

Hon. Christine Elliott: The member is right. I'm sure we could agree on all sides of this House that treating our loved ones in hallways and storage closets is not acceptable. That's why our government has been clear: Ending hallway medicine is one of our key priorities, and we will deliver.

Again, to start, our government has committed to building 15,000 long-term-care beds over five years and

30,000 beds over 10 years, which will help alleviate some of the pressures. We've also committed to finally and fully developing a mental health and addictions strategy, to give patients the ability to access supports outside the emergency room and before they are in crisis. And we will work with our front-line health care workers to improve access to primary care.

Together, we will listen to patients and caregivers and to front-line workers—to doctors and nurses—to create a health care system based on a comprehensive, long-term strategy for health care.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

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

Concern continues to grow around the hand-picked appointment of former BC Premier Gordon Campbell to audit the province's finances. It's becoming very clear why Premier Ford has chosen Mr. Campbell: He cut and privatized services while selling off public assets, just like this Conservative government plans to do. Mr. Campbell's former chief of staff said of his appointment, "No matter what he says I think it will be a fairly predictable outcome that he is ideologically aligned with the Ontario government."

Did the Premier appoint Mr. Campbell specifically because he will reinforce his own agenda of cuts and privatization?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you for the question. Our government has made a commitment to the people of Ontario to open up the books to fully understand the province's fiscal position and restore accountability and public trust in our government's finances, at long last.

Our government is carrying through with that promise with the appointment of former Premier Gordon Campbell, who will be joined by Mr. Michael Horgan, long-time federal public servant, and Dr. Al Rosen, one of the pre-eminent forensic accountants in all of the country. This is a commission of financial inquiry that's long overdue and much needed in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Back to the Premier: Ontarians are very concerned about what Mr. Campbell's record of cuts will mean to our public health care system. The Ontario Health Coalition has condemned Mr. Campbell and his premiership, saying that he ranks "among the very worst" when it comes to his government's actions on health care. Like Mr. Campbell's chief of staff, they are also worried that Mr. Campbell is a biased choice.

With Mr. Campbell's record and the Premier's promise to cut 4%, our already underfunded health care system is at risk to be decimated by more cuts. Will the Premier commit today that he will not follow in Mr. Campbell's footsteps and that he will not put more cuts to our health care system?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: It's very disappointing, Speaker, to hear a former Premier of British Columbia, a Liberal Premier at that, being denigrated here in the Legislature.

He is joined by pre-eminent financial speaker Dr. Alan Rosen. He is being joined by a long-time public servant, Michael Horgan, who not only served for 36 years as a public servant, but served for five years as the Deputy Minister of Finance for the federal government.

Let's be clear: We need to understand that with this commission of inquiry, the intention is to look back at what went wrong. The line-by-line will look at ways to fix it. This is an opportunity to look at past spending and accounting practices. That is the role of this commission.

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICY

Mr. Roman Baber: Good morning, Speaker. My question is to the Honourable Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and minister responsible for citizenship and immigration.

I was following with great interest the meeting of Premiers in New Brunswick last week. One important issue on which the Premier is finding more partners is illegal border crossing.

As a former landed immigrant myself, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that Ontario is a welcoming province that generously helps to settle more immigrants than any other province in Canada. Ontarians know that our province is stronger with a diverse and robust immigration system. We are a province of immigrants. That said, Ontarians want to know that there is integrity in the system and that our laws are respected.

My question is, could the minister responsible for citizenship and immigration tell the House what she is doing to help bring back integrity to the immigration system?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: To the member opposite: You really, truly, are somebody who is living the Canadian dream—born in the USSR, moving to Israel and then coming to Canada and not only setting up a successful law firm and practice in the city of Toronto but then becoming an MPP for York Centre. Congratulations. You truly are an inspiration.

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You know, we are a very welcoming society in Ontario. I think that was evidenced this past weekend, when I was able to travel to Junior Carnival in Scarborough with our colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River, as well as to the nation's capital, where I reside, to attend events with the Indo-Canadian community, the Lebanese community and the Ukrainian community.

Let me be perfectly clear: At each event that I went to, talking to hundreds of people who were newcomers to this country, either as refugees or as immigrants, they told me that they appreciated Premier Ford's strong leadership in ensuring that we have a strong and confident border system and that there's integrity in our immigration process. I'll speak more—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The member will take her seat.

Supplementary question.

Mr. Roman Baber: Speaker, back to the minister: I thank the minister for that answer, and wonder if this government's call for integrity in the immigration system will be heard? Could the minister kindly inform the House as to what measures she intends to take to ensure that Ontario's voice is heard by the federal government?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks again for the question. As you know, we have had some significant wins in the past couple of weeks under Premier Ford's leadership. First, we were able to ensure that the federal government understands that they have obligations with respect to resettlement, and that they will fund directly the provinces. We're going to continue to make sure that they fund us fully. We have about a \$175-million bill outstanding; we're going to continue to fight for that. The Prime Minister recognized the problems at the border and, within the week that we were talking about this, appointed somebody, Bill Blair, to become the minister responsible for border security. I think that was significant.

In addition, on Friday I was very heartened to see that every Premier in the country stood by with our Premier Ford to ensure that we send a very clear message to the federal government that they must pay their bills. Tomorrow I'll be going to Ottawa to appear before the federal immigration committee, and I will tell them that they need to pay their bills. We have a \$175-million-and-growing bill with the federal government and—

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

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. The Premier has said time and time again that he does not break the promises he makes. On May 29, the Premier made a promise to the people of Fort Erie. When he was asked if he would bring the slots back to the Fort Erie Race Track, he said, "Absolutely. We're going to get those slots back there."

I sent the Premier a personal invitation to attend the Prince of Wales Stakes running in Fort Erie tomorrow. Will the Premier confirm today that he will be at the Prince of Wales Stakes tomorrow, and that while he is there, he will be true to his word and return the slots to Fort Erie?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Under the previous Liberal government, the slots at Fort Erie Race Track were indeed closed in April 2012, putting approximately 220 people out of work. The slots there had operated for 13 years.

Speaker, it is certainly going to take a tremendous amount of time to correct all of the errors of this previous Liberal government. It is going to take time, but we've already started. We started by scrapping cap-and-trade. We're saving families \$285. We're working on lowering

the price of gasoline by 10 cents a litre. We're getting out of the expensive energy contracts, saving \$790 million along the way. This is all about promises made and promises kept.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: I didn't hear a yes, so I want to ask the question again. As the Premier knows, hundreds of good-paying jobs were lost in Fort Erie when the Liberal government made a reckless decision to rip the slots out of the track. Revenue that's important to the town was also lost.

We have a chance here to do the right thing. I'll read that again: We have a chance here to do the right thing, get the slots back in Fort Erie and create good-paying jobs. Given the Premier's promise to the people of Fort Erie, when can we expect to see the machines go back into the track? Promise made; so far, promise not kept.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, I am absolutely shocked at the question from the member of the opposition. Let's all remember that it was the official opposition that helped pass the previous budget in 2012, that voted to cancel slots at racetracks. It was those people right on that side who made the vote.

It was only the members sitting here—only these members, Speaker—who stood up against the Liberal government and voted against the budget that cancelled slots at racetracks. The NDP stood with the Liberal government in 2012 and shut down horse racing. I'm appalled to hear that.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock.

Next question.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: My question is for the Premier in his role as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Ontario's trade relationship with the United States is a very significant factor in our strong economy. I know that the Premier is aware that there are 28 states that count Ontario as their number one or number two trading partner, so the integration of our economies really cannot be overstated.

Over the last two years, Ontario has played a leading role in the Canadian push to make an outreach to Governors—38 Governors have been contacted—their relationships with auto sector industry organizations and agriculture industry organizations.

My question is: Given the acceleration of the trade conflict between Canada and the US, how is the government going to build on those relationships to assist the federal government as part of a team Canada approach to influence decisions being made in Washington? Because that outreach was done precisely for a moment like this, as the trade relationship deteriorates. Has the contact been made by the—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you, Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you for the question, a very good question.

Yes, one of his first actions upon becoming Premier—in fact he was still Premier-elect—was he began to contact Governors to build on the work that, frankly, the honourable member did when she was Premier of the province.

Also, I just came back from Washington, where for the first time in the history of Ontario and US relations, I appeared before the commerce committee to speak directly to decision-makers, to make sure that they understand that if President Trump were to bring in tariffs on automobiles and automobile parts, yes, we would be devastated on this side of the border. Some 900,000 jobs, it's estimated, would pretty much go overnight, or at least in the first 30 days. However, I reminded them—many of the Governors and many of the lawmakers we spoke to did not know—that some nine million jobs would be lost. If President Trump goes ahead, he's going to hurt us, but he's going to hurt his people a lot more.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the minister's visit to Washington, but unless he's going to move there, we don't have a representative anymore in Washington. Ontario has no representative in Washington.

Could the Premier, through the minister, update the Legislature on plans to fill that position in order that, like Alberta and like Quebec, we have an effective presence in the US? Issues like the Buy American provision in New York were pushed back to Ontario's advantage exactly because we had a representative in Washington, so I'll ask the Premier when he will appoint a replacement, given the urgency of the trade issues facing this province, including the fact that NAFTA talks are set to resume within weeks.

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you for the question. We not only were represented by the deputy ambassador to the United States—so Canada was represented by very capable bureaucrats at the bureaucratic level—but also by the minister. For the first time in our relationship with the United States, we didn't just send a bureaucrat to the hearings, we sent a minister. We were very well received.

Also for the first time, 148 members of Congress, on the first day we were there, wrote a letter, an unprecedented letter, to the President, saying that it would not be right—it would be very harmful to US citizens, to Ontario residents and to our workers—if he put these tariffs on automobiles and auto parts.

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So I think we made progress—I didn't get beat up over there; that was a tree in my front yard. We were well received and we were all rowing the oars in the same direction to tell people that Ontario is open for business.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Robin Martin: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Our government for

the people wants to make sure that Ontario's economy thrives. Can the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing speak to the changes announced to expedite development in downtown Toronto that will help create jobs?

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to take this opportunity to thank the member for the question and also to congratulate her on her election as a member of the Legislative Assembly. I have all the faith in the world that she's going to represent the good people of Eglinton–Lawrence in an exemplary fashion in this House. Thank you again.

Our government worked with the city of Toronto and also with my colleague the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry to streamline approvals for new construction in the lower Don. The changes will be felt not just in the city of Toronto, but they will have a huge impact in our province and in our country as well.

Our government used common sense and amended the building code to enable construction to proceed in this strategic location in downtown Toronto at the same time that flood protection is under way. The approach will save us time, it will save us money and it will protect health and safety at the same time.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Back to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: Thank you very much, Minister. This is great news for Toronto, for Ontario's economy and for businesses.

Could the minister tell the House how this announcement in Toronto fits into our government for the people's greater plan for creating a robust economy?

Hon. Steve Clark: Thanks again to the member. Speaker, I was remiss in not congratulating you on your selection as Speaker. I look forward to working with you, and I love seeing you in the chair.

You know, the people of Ontario gave us a very clear mandate to create jobs. We're doing that and we're signalling that Ontario is open for business. We're governing for the people, and in municipalities all across this province, municipalities are welcoming it.

We're smoothing the way for development in the lower Don Lands by cutting red tape and working collaboratively with the city of Toronto and private developers. We're unlocking an employment potential of over 50,000 jobs. Over \$5.1 billion will be added to the Canadian economy.

We're doing more. We're going to be attracting job creators to big cities and within municipalities. We're opening the door for businesses. I want to signal today that this announcement last week was just the first of many, many ways we're going to streamline—

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

Next question.

REFUGEES

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate you on your recent election as Speaker of this House.

Today my question is for the Premier. London's only family shelter, Rotholme manor, operated by Mission Services, currently provides a temporary shelter for refugees and their families. Already this year, 80 refugees and 18 families have been assisted.

I was shocked to learn that, as of last week, the shelter was at 219% capacity. City officials have recommended using federally and provincially owned properties as temporary shelters. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier commit today to providing these necessary shelters to the families at Rotholme manor?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much for your question. Your question signifies exactly what we have been trying to do for the past three weeks in making sure that the federal government helps support the province of Ontario and our municipalities, because our shelters are at capacity.

You don't have to take my word for it. The mayor of Toronto, who I spoke with on Saturday, is over capacity. We have invested 800 beds from the province to the city of Toronto, but those are going to be required back on August 9. Therefore, we have a looming crisis that we've requested the federal government be involved in. In addition, the city that I reside in, the city of Ottawa, has an \$11-million shortfall in its shelter costs.

This is happening right across Ontario, and it's happening because the federal government has lost control of its policies. That's why I'll be there tomorrow in Ottawa, making sure that the federal government pays its bills for its responsibility and that they stop shirking their responsibility. It's time you stood up for Ontario—

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: That answer is disappointing, and it does not deal with the need that we have in the shelters at this moment.

London is not the only city that requires more government support to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers are properly housed. Yet this Conservative government chose to walk away from \$11 million in federal funding for provincial refugee resettlement, downloading costs to already overwhelmed municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier take concrete steps to provide support and housing and stop shifting the responsibility to other governments? Will they be opening the provincially and federally owned properties now?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, where in the world does \$11 million equal \$175 million? I think that's an irresponsible response from the member opposite. He should know that the federal government has sole jurisdiction over border management and Canada's refugee and asylum programs, including who is eligible for a refugee claim.

Over \$328 million comes from my department in social assistance for refugee claimants. We support them in many different ways, including with over \$100 million in resettlement. What we are asking on this side of the

House, which Rachel Notley and John Horgan agreed with, is to make sure that when the illegal border crossers come in and they are seeking asylum during that period of time, the federal government pays its own way.

I ask you again, are you on the side of Ontario or are you on the side of Justin Trudeau?

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Stan Cho: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Since March 5, more than 45,000 students at York University have been out of the classroom. They have been unable to attend classes because of the ongoing strike by two units of CUPE 3903. Mr. Speaker, I know our government has introduced the Back to Class Act to get these students back into the classroom so they can finish their courses that were halted over four months ago.

Can the minister explain to the House why the government felt it was necessary to introduce the Back to Class Act?

Hon. Laurie Scott: I want to congratulate the member from Willowdale on getting elected and for his question in the Legislature today. It is a very important question. Let me be clear: Getting students back to the classroom is an immediate priority for us.

This strike is the longest post-secondary strike in Canadian history. More than 45,000 students, including first-year students, are affected by this strike. Understandably, the students are upset and concerned about losing their school year and uncertain about their future. Finding a resolution to this situation has to be done. We have every indication that both sides are deadlocked and there is no resolution in sight. We need to get the students back to the classroom and to get the two parties back to the table.

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

Mr. Stan Cho: Back to the minister: I agree there is a sense of urgency to get these students back into the classroom, and I'd like to thank the minister for her answer. During second reading debate on Thursday, I, along with many of our colleagues, shared with the House the experiences of students who have been affected by this very unfortunate strike.

Mr. Speaker, the government promised to put an end to this strike at York University by two units of CUPE Local 3903. Can the minister please elaborate for the members of this House why it's appropriate to move forward with this legislation?

Hon. Laurie Scott: Again, I'd like to thank the member for the very important question. The students at York University have been out of the classroom for more than four months. It's over 100 days. Faculty members of unit number 2 of CUPE 3903 have already settled. The remaining two parties are deadlocked. There seems to be no solution in sight. This is confirmed by an independent industrial inquiry commission.

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Our priority is clear. We need to get the students back to the classroom, get the two parties back to the table.

This is about getting the over 45,000 students affected by that strike back to the classroom.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is for the Premier. President Donald Trump's threat to impose tariffs on auto and auto part imports would be devastating to Ontario's auto sector. It would put thousands of good jobs at risk in Oshawa and across Ontario.

In the past, Conservatives have said that they would be content to see Ontario's auto sector die. There wasn't a single mention of auto manufacturing in the PC Party's platform. What the PC Party did promise was to kill the Jobs and Prosperity Fund, which supports millions of dollars of investment into the sector.

Speaker, will this Conservative government develop a comprehensive auto manufacturing strategy for Ontario?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you to the honourable member for the question. I know the NDP have asked this of the former government on many occasions, so I have directed the department to begin work on a comprehensive auto strategy. It's of personal interest to me; I have Honda of Canada Manufacturing in my riding.

The fact of the matter is that the honourable member is quite correct: We are extremely dependent on the automotive sector, automotive parts sector and automotive servicing sector. One in five jobs, or 1.3 million Ontarians, work in that sector, and the ripple effect is millions more people. Their jobs are dependent both on this side of the border, and on the American side of the border and in Mexico.

That's why I was down in the United States last week to remind them just how important the sector is. A lot of the Governors don't necessarily pay a lot of attention to Canada, but in this time of trade crisis, they're starting to pay attention. We're bringing the facts to their attention, so that they'll know that millions of their people will be affected should the President do what he wants to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Again to the Premier: For years, the auto and auto parts industry has been calling on the government of Ontario to develop a real and meaningful auto manufacturing strategy for the province. But to this day, Ontario has no strategic plan for an industry that accounts for one fifth, 20% of our GDP. This is beyond irresponsible and does put the entire Ontario economy at risk.

Speaker, we cannot predict what President Trump will do, but we can prepare for any outcome. Will this government do the responsible thing and work with the auto and auto parts sector to develop a real auto manufacturing strategy?

Hon. Jim Wilson: To the honourable member: I find it ironic. In the 28 years I've served here, it seemed to me that the NDP were against economic development. You want \$2-a-litre gas. You want higher hydro rates and cap-

and-trade. You were doing everything you possibly could as a party to kill the auto sector in this province, so we'll do what you failed to do and what the Liberals failed to do. We'll lower prices. We'll lower gasoline. We'll lower hydro. We'll make this place competitive again. Ontario is open for business, and that includes our auto sector, a sector you ignored for years.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Members will take their seats.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. David Piccini: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. There is a health care crisis in Ontario, and addressing this crisis starts by ending hallway medicine and alleviating the backlogs in our hospitals. But there is a silent killer amidst—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Apparently your cellphone was going off. I'll ask the member to restart his question.

Mr. David Piccini: There is a silent killer amidst the health care crisis and it has been ignored for far too long; that is, a lack of mental health supports.

Approximately 20% of individuals will directly experience a mental illness during their lifetime. Approximately 80% of individuals will be directly affected by mental illness among family members, friends or colleagues. Mood disorders, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, eating disorders and so on have a devastating effect on the lives of Ontarians and on their family members.

Will the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care lay out what this government is doing for those who are struggling with mental health issues?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much to the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South for this important question.

We have been very clear on this issue throughout the election campaign and now as a government. We will support Ontario's public health care system by adding \$3.8 billion to create a comprehensive mental health, addictions and housing strategy. That's \$1.9 billion provincially to match the \$1.9 billion to be committed by the federal government.

Developing and implementing a thorough, comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions strategy once and for all is a priority for us. As we all know, mental health is health. With increases to mental health funding, families, especially with children and youth who have mental health issues, no longer have to wait for the life-saving services they need; they will receive these services where they need them and when they need them.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. David Piccini: I would like to thank the minister for her answer and for moving swiftly to address this issue.

In follow-up: It is the people like our front-line health care workers whom we must fight for and support during our time in government. These front-line health workers are the heroes in our hospitals and health care centres who help Ontarians through difficult times, such as mental illness.

To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: How will you support our front-line health workers in Ontario hospitals and care centres and ensure we're listening to them?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Again, I thank the member for the question. As Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, I look forward to working with our front-line workers in mental health care in places like Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences, Children's Mental Health Ontario and CAMH. The government will supply the front-line workers with the resources they need to support and serve Ontario's patients and families so that we can all move forward to create a mental health and addictions strategy for Ontario that all Ontarians can navigate.

As the Premier has said in the past, the Ontario PC government will provide faster access to care by enhancing access to primary care providers, reducing unnecessary emergency room visits and bringing down wait times. Promise made, promise kept.

NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. In 2012, the Liberal government cancelled the Northlander passenger train, the only passenger rail link to northeastern Ontario, stranding thousands of northerners. During the campaign, the Premier promised to bring passenger rail back.

Northerners listened intently to the throne speech, and we didn't hear much about northern Ontario and we didn't hear anything about bringing back passenger rail in the northeast. There was no mention. Has the Premier forgotten his promise? If not, when will passenger rail come back to northeastern Ontario?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Northern Development.

Hon. Greg Rickford: We have a tremendous opportunity across this vast region of northern Ontario to open up corridors so people can move about from health care facilities and small towns to bigger city centres, to move mineral product, to move forestry products, to open northern Ontario up for business and contribute to that advantage that our Premier said throughout the campaign, the hope and prosperity for Ontario that we would all be open for business, including northern Ontario.

Mr. John Vanthof: Through you, Speaker: During the campaign, the Premier promised to bring back passenger rail to northeastern Ontario. Let me make that clear: passenger rail, the Northlander passenger train. We know all about freight, but we also have to move people.

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What I heard in that response is "promise made, promise maybe." That's what I heard.

Northerners want to work together to bring that rail back. When will you make that promise? And when will that train come back?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Well, I'll be a chicken fried in goose fat, Mr. Speaker. That's a member who voted to shut that corridor down and shut that rail service down.

We want to move people; we want to move product. We want northern Ontarians to be able to move across our vast region, very much including northwestern Ontario.

When the Premier says we're open for business, he means the great region of northern Ontario as well.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

Ms. Donna Skelly: My question is to the Minister of Finance.

Last week, the government for the people announced plans to restore trust and accountability to public finances. After 15 years of Liberal waste, mismanagement and scandal, this is badly needed.

In fact, the Toronto Sun editorialized that the commission of inquiry into the state of Ontario's finances, and the line-by-line audit of government spending, ordered by Premier Ford—as he promised in the election—are “critical first steps.” It is important for the public to understand why we need these two separate but connected endeavours to do this.

Through the Speaker to the minister: Can you explain to the House what exactly the commission of inquiry will be responsible for and how it is different from the line-by-line audit?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much for the question, to the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook. It's great to see you here.

The commission of inquiry will look back at what went wrong, while the line-by-line audit will look at ways to fix this. The commission, headed up by former British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell, will look at the province's past spending and accounting practices. The real crux of this, Speaker, is looking at the practices. Their job is to help to bring us to the present, to determine what the state is of Ontario's finances today. The commission will report back by August 30, and the public will see the same report that the Premier and the rest of us see.

As we highlighted last week, the Auditor General welcomes this and has said that she stands ready to assist.

Speaker, the Treasury Board president will address the line-by-line.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you for that response, Minister.

The previous Liberal government has left our public finances in a very challenging position. Ontario has the highest subnational debt of any jurisdiction in the world. It took 15 years for the previous government to create this mess, and it won't be solved overnight.

It is clear that the commission, working closely with the Ministry of Finance, will shed light on the accounting practices that led our economy into some of the challenges that we now face.

Mr. Speaker, would the President of the Treasury Board please update the House on the further steps the government is taking to ensure that the people of Ontario not only have a true picture of the province's finances, but also a clear understanding of this urgent and complex issue?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Mr. Speaker, through you, thank you to the member for Flamborough–Glanbrook. I also would like to commend you on your great victory, so congratulations.

As one of our first priorities, this government announced last week, as the Minister of Finance and the Premier mentioned, that we will commission a line-by-line audit of the province's finances, and the Treasury Board Secretariat is currently seeking bids from outside consultants. A firm will be selected in a few weeks.

Mr. Speaker, under this government, Ontario's finances will be healthy and honest once again. All provincial programs, agencies and transfer payments are within the scope of this audit. The results will be used to develop a responsible plan to achieve efficiencies for taxpayers.

We will not tire and we will not stop until we have uncovered all of the waste of the previous government.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

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

The sudden cancellation of the Green Ontario Fund has hurt families in my riding that had signed contracts worth several thousand dollars. In Wawa, where families face some of the highest energy costs in the province, 30 homeowners were approved to receive a rebate for installing new modern wood-heating appliances, but they have until September to finish the installation. This is not enough time. Many families will lose the rebate and many contractors will lose the work.

Will the Premier take thousands of dollars out of the pockets of northern Ontario families or will he extend the green Ontario program?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member, thank you for the question. We've been very clear and very honest with the people of Ontario. We campaigned on a promise to end the Liberals' cap-and-trade carbon tax program, and we will do just that.

We're proceeding with the orderly wind-down of the program, and we have proceeded with that because it is funded by the regressive tax that the previous govern-

ment put into place. We have made clear to all the participants in the program the timing for that, and we will not change our minds. We will not deviate from that schedule.

It's important that the people of Ontario know we are not in favour of a carbon tax cap-and-trade program. We will not support the programs from that, but we will wind them down on an orderly basis to support the businesses that in good faith worked with that program.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again to the Premier: A constituent of mine, Roland Dubois, the owner of Dubois Construction, is one of the many who are suffering from the unexpected cancellation of the GreenON program. Mr. Dubois did everything he was supposed to do. He invested in his employees and sent them for training to qualify under the GreenON program. He paid the mileage, the accommodation, the tuition and wages while they got the training, but now because of the Premier's cancellation of the GreenON program, the work will disappear and he and his workers will have invested that time and money for nothing.

Will the Premier continue to ignore people like Roly Dubois, or will he respect businesses and their workers and extend the GreenON program so all installations can be completed?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member, we campaigned quite clearly. We were honest with Ontarians that we would be eliminating the cap-and-trade carbon tax program and the programs funded by it.

Your constituent and other constituents would suffer much more under the NDP's version of a carbon tax—the highest carbon tax in the world—than they will from the straightforward approach of this government. We will not support the carbon tax.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time for question period.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before we adjourn for the morning, I want to introduce a guest who I have in the Speaker's gallery: my executive assistant, Judy Brownrigg, who has worked in my constituency office for 28 consecutive years. Welcome, Judy.

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

The House recessed from 1208 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Jane McKenna: I'd like to introduce my daughter Taylor McKenna, who is here today to listen to my maiden speech. My EA, Michele Carroll, is here too. I'm excited that they're both here.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I'd like to introduce my nephew Max Kienle and my sister Mary Hogarth, who are here to listen to my maiden speech.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CURRICULUM

Ms. Jennifer K. French: As a teacher, it was my privilege to educate, mentor and support children, and now it's my responsibility to defend their education and advocate for their right to be supported in their schools. An up-to-date and necessary sexual health curriculum should be taught.

Speaker, this government has rashly decreed that, come September, students will no longer be taught an up-to-date health and physical education curriculum. They have decided that LGBTQ families, consent and gender identity do not have a place in our schools. I staunchly believe that children deserve to be informed and protected and given the words and the tools to navigate a very different world, both online and off-line.

I've been working with those who are fighting human trafficking. I have learned from our front-line HT officers and from social workers and trauma experts who are trying to combat this scourge as well as support victims and survivors, and now here we are defending teaching kids about consent. Consent is protection from many harms, including something as extreme as human trafficking.

What is consent? Online we give consent to apps and strangers—we let our phones geotag us so we are findable. We allow apps to listen and record without our knowledge. Unknowingly, we give permission every day. Our children must understand how to live safely online.

Teaching kids about consent is a protective factor in all things. This isn't just about sex. We should teach our young children about personal space, about using their words to say, "Please don't be in my personal bubble." We should be reinforcing that you don't have to hug people that you don't want to, that surprises can be good, but secrets aren't always safe, and that every child should know the words to be able to talk about their bodies and about hurt and abuse.

This province has invested resources and energy into fighting human trafficking; you'd think they'd make the connection to education—

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

PRAVIN LATA SHARMA

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I'm very pleased today to rise in the House and recognize a very committed member of the Oakville community. On Friday, I had the honour of presenting a certificate of congratulations, on behalf of the government, recognizing Pravin Lata Sharma for her receipt of the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers from the Governor General of Canada.

Ms. Sharma is a dedicated volunteer with the Inter-faith Council of Halton and the Oakville Hospital Foundation since 2003, among other community organizations.

Her various roles at the hospital include being a patient visitor, convenor and, most recently, working one on one with patients who are at risk of cognitive and functional decline.

In addition to her personal support of patients, her leadership as a member of the Oakville Hospital Foundation's development committee helped oversee a \$46,000 grant from the Lions Clubs International Foundation, as well as an additional \$46,000 in donations from the community. Together these funded a new ophthalmology ultrasound unit for the Oakville hospital.

Volunteers provide a crucial level of support to communities across Ontario, efforts which often go unrecognized. It has been said that volunteers are unpaid not because they are worthless but because they are priceless.

Pravin's selfless dedication to her community has had such a profound impact on the citizens of Oakville. I am very glad that she is part of our community, and I wanted to recognize her here today in the chamber.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today I rise to remind the Premier of the promise he made to Ontarians: "The Doug Ford government will find efficiencies without cutting any jobs," he said. He stated, "No one will lose their job due to PC cuts."

He made that promise on May 7 in the election's first leaders' debate, on May 27 during the last leaders' debate, and he made that same statement at most campaign stops during the spring election campaign.

Well, I would like to hold him to those promises.

Health Sciences North in Sudbury is the regional hospital that provides care for all of the patients in the northeast. This is the hospital my constituents depend on in their times of need. The hospital is cutting 113 positions to meet their budget constraints for 2018-19. Our health care workers are stressed to the hilt, not sure if they are the next in line to lose their job. Those cuts are hurting families. Those are family-sustaining jobs being cut.

Citizens in Sudbury and Nickel Belt need your help, Premier. This is a continuation of the death by a thousand cuts that the Liberal government brought to our province's hospitals.

Mr. Ford said, and repeated, that they will find efficiencies without cutting any jobs. When he said that, did that apply only to southern Ontario? Because in northern Ontario, things are going from bad to worse.

JOHN GRAVES SIMCOE

Mr. Toby Barrett: This weekend, as people enjoy what's known as Simcoe Day—in the city of Toronto, anyway—it's important to pay tribute to Ontario's first Lieutenant Governor.

John Graves Simcoe was born February 25, 1752, in England. He was also a member of British Parliament

and fought George Washington's army. At age 24, Simcoe went to war to fight the American revolutionaries. His regiment arrived from Britain in June 1775 to take part in the siege of Boston.

In October 1777, Simcoe assumed command of the elite Queen's Rangers, largely composed of Loyalists and American deserters. It was a 400-man elite fighting force trained in woodcraft, scouting and guerrilla warfare instead of the protocol of the time of strict and rigid manoeuvres.

They wore green uniforms as camouflage.

Simcoe and his Rangers fought alongside Benedict Arnold and, in the winter of 1779, spared the life of George Washington himself, allowing him to escape. Simcoe was held as a prisoner of war and was paroled by Benjamin Franklin.

On September 12, 1791, Simcoe was appointed Lieutenant Governor, the first Lieutenant Governor of the newly created Upper Canada.

And for those with an interest, there is a statue of John Graves Simcoe on the southeast grounds of the precinct.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. Chris Glover: It's my pleasure to rise today. My name is Chris Glover, and I'm the member of provincial Parliament for Spadina-Fort York, and I'm still getting used to saying that.

I want to thank the people and voters in my riding for bestowing me with this position. I also want to thank my family and the volunteers who put in thousands of hours to get me here.

Before this position, I was a school board trustee. I ran for school board trustee in order to protect our public education system from the privatization wave that was hitting Ontario under the previous Conservative government and that has hit the United States and Britain. As a trustee, I was working very hard on bicycle safety, on employment opportunities for students with disabilities and on the issue of gun violence. I have been hosting meetings for the last six years on gun violence, and I have done my own academic research on it.

Last March, I brought a motion to the Toronto Board of Health to ask the board of health to take a public health approach to gun violence. What this means is that we need to deal with the trauma that comes out of gun violence, because every shooting, including the one that happened yesterday in this city, leads to trauma; it leads to anger, PTSD, anxiety and depression. If we don't deal with that trauma, then we will just feed back into that. That will feed back into the cycle of violence.

I have a lot more to say about gun violence. I look forward to future opportunities to talk about that.

RIDING OF ORLÉANS CIRCONSCRIPTION D'ORLÉANS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I am pleased to rise today to share three things with this House.

First and foremost, I want to sincerely thank the people of Orléans for trusting me in continuing to work for our great community. We have important projects to work on, and I am delighted to be their voice for the next four years.

Nous avons de beaux dossiers à travailler et à réaliser à Orléans, et c'est vraiment un honneur pour moi de pouvoir les représenter à nouveau pour les quatre prochaines années.

Also, I would like to share with the House that on June 30, I hosted my fifth seniors' strawberry social event to celebrate our senior community and their families.

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Ce fut un grand succès où plus de 150 personnes se sont retrouvées pour partager un moment ensemble, profiter de la saison estivale—et je dois dire qu'il faisait très, très chaud cette journée-là—tout en dégustant des fraises locales et surtout pour souligner l'importance de célébrer le mois des aînés en juin.

Finally, I would like to invite the community of Orléans to join me and my team for our fifth annual community corn roast and barbecue that will take place at Petrie Island, one of Orléans' jewels, on Thursday, August 16, from 5 till 8 p.m. I cannot wait to see you all.

Merci. And again: À la communauté d'Orléans, merci de votre confiance.

PELHAM SUMMERFEST

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: This past weekend, the beautiful town of Pelham celebrated, once again, their Pelham Summerfest, an annual tradition dearly beloved by local families who flock to the closed-off streets of downtown Pelham and Fonthill. Recognized as an Ontario top 100 festival, almost 50,000 people come out to celebrate this event every year, enjoying local headliners, delicious Niagara cuisine and beverages, and the talented arts and crafts on full display.

This past weekend, we welcomed a very special surprise visitor to Niagara when Premier Ford himself came down to experience the Pelham Summerfest. The Premier was warmly welcomed, and many families and individuals came over to take photos with the Premier, thanking him for the relief his plan for the people is bringing them.

We had the opportunity, also, to thank local firefighters and first responders, as well as the volunteer organizers of this important local event, for their commitment to the community. We were joined by Niagara chair Al Caslin and the mayor of Pelham, Dave Augustyn.

The fact that the Premier came down to Niagara again shows this government's commitment to rural and small-town Ontario, and I am proud to be part of a party that recognizes the rich heritage and culture across this wonderful province we call home.

Thank you to all the organizers and volunteers who made this amazing event so successful.

I invite all members and their families to come out next year to enjoy the Pelham Summerfest for themselves.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr. Joel Harden: Today I rise to speak about a matter that's pertinent in light of what happened last night in Toronto–Danforth. It concerns the rights and well-being of Ontario's first responders.

As we heard in news reports from last night and as we've seen in previous tragedies like it, the first responders rushed to the scene with little thought for their own physical and mental health. Crisis workers, paramedics, police and firefighters do such selfless acts all the time.

But after the media coverage ends, as it will—as it has in these tragedies that have happened in the past—first responders are left to deal with injuries that happen in the line of duty. Visible injuries are easier to treat. Mental health injuries are a lot more complicated, and we are not doing enough right now in Ontario to help first responders who fall prey to serious mental illness.

That leads me to the story of Norm Traversy, whose story I know you're familiar with. A firefighter who previously served in Mississauga, Norm now lives in Ottawa Centre, and he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder that he contracted in the line of duty. To date, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board has denied Norm's claim for benefits coverage given his PTSD, which has been documented by several medical professionals.

Meanwhile, the WSIB sits on an accumulated surplus of over \$35 billion, and it rewards its executives with massive salaries. According to the 2017 sunshine list, nine WSIB executives earn over \$300,000 a year.

I'm making the assumption in this House that we all value first responders, but it's time for us, in this sitting of the Legislature, to stand up for their mental health needs.

DANFORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: It's with a heavy heart that I rise today in the House. Like many, I'm shocked and saddened by the tragic, horrific and senseless shooting on the Danforth last night.

The Danforth is one of Toronto's most vibrant and diverse communities, and it happens to be North America's largest Greek neighbourhood. The families and people dining at Christina's and Demetres last night and the pedestrians walking along Logan Avenue were doing what any of us would have been doing last night, and that's why it hits so close to home.

Epictetus, a famous Greek philosopher, once said: "It is not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters." And so, in the face of last night's horrific action, I wish to react to the senseless act of violence by taking some time to celebrate this beautiful and vibrant community that holds a special place in all of our hearts.

I'd like to take a few moments to share a few quick memories. My best friend, Marie Konstantinou, who now lives in Greece, first introduced me to the Danforth years ago as a university student. She worked at Athens

Pastries. They have the best spanakopita and loukoumades in the area. With her, I learned to eat sushi at Katsu Sushi, which is located on Danforth near Logan, and she introduced me to Messini, which has the best gyros. Just a few weeks ago, I celebrated with my family at Messini.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take the time to thank the men and women of Toronto's paramedic services, Toronto firefighters, the nurses, the doctors and our Toronto police force for everything that they've done. And I wish to remind everyone that in the face of tragedy, we should always respond with love and we should respond by celebrating the diversity of our community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Parm Gill: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be part of a government that stands up for small businesses—and Milton businesses are excited.

This past weekend, the Downtown Milton BIA hosted the Downtown Milton Classic Car Show that saw over 150 classic, unique and beautiful cars, where hundreds of families came out. They enjoyed good food and entertainment and walked the street to see many of the vibrant businesses along Main Street in Milton.

I also had the opportunity to meet with our local chamber president and CEO, Scott McCammon, who is an amazing individual. I had a very, very productive meeting with him. The Milton chamber has been advocating for local businesses since 1888. There are currently over 700 members—small and medium-sized businesses.

There is lots of excitement in Milton, knowing there is finally a government in Ontario that will help small businesses create jobs and make life more affordable for all Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, under the previous Liberal government's 15 years, small and medium-sized businesses were burdened with red tape, sky-high hydro prices and high taxes, and businesses were being driven out of the province.

Under the Ontario PC government, businesses across Ontario are excited that Ontario is open for business again and help is here, not just for businesses but for all Ontarians.

PETITIONS

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario is situated on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples," many of whom have lived on this land for at least 12,000 years;

"Whereas in 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its final report: 'Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future' which made 94

recommendations or 'Calls to Action' for the government of Canada;

"Whereas reconciliation must be at the centre of all government decision-making;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to act to:

"—continue the reconciliation work in Ontario by implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;

"—reinstate the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation;

"—work with First Nations leaders to sign cooperative government-to-government accords;

"—support TRC education and community development (e.g. TRC summer writing sessions);

"—support Indigenous communities across the province (e.g. cleaning up Grassy Narrows)."

I fully endorse this petition and will be affixing my signature again.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Marit Stiles: Mr. Speaker, as you can see, I have quite a large pile here. These were presented to me on the weekend by Erin George, a young parent in my community in Davenport, so I'm presenting this on her behalf.

"Protecting Children: Forward, Not Backward, on Sex Ed.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the health and physical education curriculum empowers young people to make informed decisions about relationships and their bodies;

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"Whereas gender-based violence, gender inequality, unintended pregnancies, 'sexting,' and HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) pose serious risks to the safety and well-being of young people;

"Whereas one in three women and one in six men experience sexual violence in Canada, and a lack of age-appropriate education about sexual health and healthy relationships leaves children and youth vulnerable to exploitation;

"Whereas one in five parents reported their own child being a victim of cyberbullying; and

"Whereas Doug Ford and the Conservative government is dragging Ontario backward, requiring students to learn an outdated sex ed curriculum that excludes information about consent, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexting, cyberbullying and safe and healthy relationships;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Education to continue the use of the 2015 health and physical education curriculum in schools and move Ontario forward, not backward."

Along with over 1,000 other people who have affixed their signatures to this petition in just four hours in my community on the weekend, I will be affixing my signature to this petition.

ENERGY POLICIES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Joey Stafford for this petition. He lives in Val Caron in my riding. It goes as follows:

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

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

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

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows: to reduce hydro bills for businesses and families by up to 30%, eliminate mandatory time-of-use, end unfair rural delivery costs, and restore public ownership of Hydro One.

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

CURRICULUM

Mr. Joel Harden: I, like my colleague from Davenport, also have a petition from my constituents, “Protecting Children: Forward, Not Backward, on Sex Ed,” because some things bear repeating.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the health and physical education curriculum empowers young people to make informed decisions about relationships and their bodies;

“Whereas gender-based violence, gender inequality, unintended pregnancies, ‘sexting,’ and HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) pose serious risks to the safety and well-being of young people;

“Whereas one in three women and one in six men experience sexual violence in Canada, and a lack of age-appropriate education about sexual health and healthy relationships leaves children and youth vulnerable to exploitation;

“Whereas one in five parents reported their own child being a victim of cyber-bullying; and

“Whereas Doug Ford and the Conservative government is dragging Ontario backward, requiring students to learn an outdated sex ed curriculum that excludes information about consent, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexting, cyber-bullying and safe and healthy relationships;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Education to continue the use of the 2015 health and physical education curriculum in schools and move Ontario forward, not backward.”

I will be affixing my signature to this petition and will pass it to the relevant page.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the health and physical education curriculum empowers young people to make informed decisions about relationships and their bodies;

“Whereas gender-based violence, gender inequality, unintended pregnancies, ‘sexting,’ and HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) pose serious risks to the safety and well-being of young people;

“Whereas one in three women and one in six men experience sexual violence in Canada, and a lack of age-appropriate education about sexual health and healthy relationships leaves children and youth vulnerable to exploitation;

“Whereas one in five parents reported their own child being a victim of cyberbullying; and

“Whereas Doug Ford and the Conservative government is dragging Ontario backward, requiring students to learn an outdated sex ed curriculum that excludes information about consent, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexting, cyberbullying and safe and healthy relationships;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Education to continue the use of the 2015 health and physical education curriculum in schools and move Ontario forward, not backward.”

I fully endorse this petition and will be affixing my signature to it.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mrs. Maher from Brantford, Ontario, for sending me these petitions. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

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

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Jason Maloney from Lively in my riding for this petition. It reads as follows:

“Whereas in the past 10 years in Ontario, 86% of all movies with on-screen smoking were rated for youth, and the tobacco industry has a well-documented history of promoting tobacco use on-screen; and

“Whereas a scientific report released by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit estimated that 185,000 children in Ontario today will be recruited to smoking by exposure to on-screen smoking, and more than 59,000 will eventually die from tobacco-related diseases incurring at least \$1.1 billion in health care costs; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has a stated goal to achieve the lowest smoking rates in Canada, and 79% of Ontarians support not allowing smoking in movies rated G, PG, 14A ... and

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To examine the ways in which the regulations of the Film Classification Act could be amended to reduce smoking in youth-rated films released in Ontario.”

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

URGENT PRIORITIES ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 PORTANT SUR LES PRIORITÉS URGENTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 19, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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 / Projet de loi 2, Loi concernant Hydro One Limited, l'annulation du projet de parc éolien White Pines et les conflits de travail entre l'Université York et la section locale 3903 du Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It's a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I have to strongly speak against Bill 2, and to warn the government of the consequences that this bill will have on Ontario's families and workers. But more than that, I want to warn the province and this House of the precedent that this sets and the pattern that Premier Ford is setting—a pattern of making decisions quickly without full information, without transparency and without foresight.

Mr. Speaker, when sending this message, it's important to note that we're sending a message to the country and to the world that Ontario is not a place to put down roots and to start and grow a business—and Bill 2 is just one clear example. The government wants to cancel the White Pines project, a project that was legally approved and subject to all the laws, regulations and bylaws that come with it. By cancelling the project hastily, it is estimated that the province will incur at least \$100 million in damages. But the truth is, we don't know for sure how much ripping up the White Pines contract will cost Ontario. That's because this government hasn't taken the time or the effort to figure that out before sharpening their blades.

1330

The amendment that I tabled—and Mr. Speaker, I will refer to this reasoned amendment: That 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 be amended by deleting all the words after “that” and substituting therefore with the words “this bill be not now read a second time but be referred back to the government with instructions to first provide a report to the House containing a full assessment of the compensation package, prior to the statutory termination of contracts and permits, as well as the legal costs incurred to defend the act in front of any tribunal or board of arbitration.

Mr. Speaker, this would at least force this government to show the true costs—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Sorry to interrupt. I have to ask the member if she is verifying that she has moved the amendment or if she is just reading the amendment at this time.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Mr. Speaker, I'm simply referring to the reasoned amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Referring to the reasoned amendment—so it has not yet been moved? Okay.

Continue.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: This would at least force this government to show the true costs associated with cancellation. That's the very at least a government that is supposedly for the people can do. While the bill attempts to shield the province from taking a financial hit, there is absolutely no guarantee that the courts will uphold this provision. And why would they?

As I said before, it sends a message to businesses at home and abroad that the government is above contracts, that it is above the law. And I wonder: How much has this government allocated to fight this battle in the courts? How much more will it cost Ontario workers—costs that are grounded in this government's outdated disdain for clean energy and an unwillingness to be a leader in the fight against climate change?

This is setting Ontario back decades. Why would any company, international or domestic, want to grow in Ontario when this government scoffs at the most basic

concept underpinning the way that we do business and refuses to build a province that is cleaner, sustainable and more fair? I know I won't get an answer, Mr. Speaker, because this government simply doesn't have one.

With one face, it will hand over the costs of renting an apartment to their friends in the open market, and with another, it will intervene with a costly and heavy hand to prevent the progress towards a greener future. That is economic hypocrisy at its core, and it ignores the fact that this will have such a consequence on so many people.

So let's talk more about those consequences, because it's becoming more and more clear that this government will not. To start, it moves our province from being a leader in the fight against climate change to one that ignores the opportunity and job creation that come with green energy.

Speaking of jobs, this bill also puts the livelihood of over 100 workers on the line. As I mentioned earlier, ripping up the contracts of a project weeks away from completion will come at a significant cost to the province, either because of financial obligations, or the legal costs that will come from fighting those obligations. Those costs will be passed on to Ontario's families, likely in the form of higher electricity rates. What's more, the province's electricity supply is dependent on our following through with energy contracts. So not only is Premier Ford willing to rack up millions in legal fees on the backs of hard-working Ontarians, he is also willing to put the reliability and sustainability of our electricity system at real risk.

We've seen what happened to our electricity system in the past when the PCs had no plan for our grid. In fact, they allowed our grid to fall into a state of disrepair. We had rolling brownouts, and who can forget the 2003 blackout that cost our economy billions of dollars. It's déjà vu—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough–Guildwood has the floor.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you, Speaker. It is déjà vu all over again as Premier Ford and the PCs put us back on that track.

In sum, in a single bill, this government is managing to make our electricity less green, less sustainable, less reliable and less affordable, while at the same time putting a chill on investments, slowing innovation and growth, and essentially saying that Ontario is closed for business when it comes to the green economy. I guess Premier Ford did promise efficiency, but it turns out the only thing he's streamlining is the ways this government will take from families and take from business.

As an added slap in the face from a government supposedly business friendly, the PCs didn't even tell the proponent of the White Pines project about the cancellation. They found out about it through the media. But I'm not surprised by that. Every day, this government makes decisions closed off from the province, from the people they say that they are serving. These first few actions give us insight into a new government that does not bode well for openness and transparency.

Take, for instance, the York University strike. Rather than conciliate and encourage dialogue, this government has decided to show contempt for labour unions right out of the gate. While in power, the previous government made every effort possible to reach a negotiated agreement before introducing back-to-work legislation in the last Parliament. It was the previous government that put in place the industrial inquiry commission under William Kaplan. While there is certainly an urgency to this matter, we can't ignore fair and transparent process.

Since taking power, this Premier and his ministers have taken no action to encourage both sides to keep talking, take that step forward. Instead, they skipped every step in the book and have bragged in the media about their toughness with labour. All this does is further poison an already toxic and strained relationship and make long-term conciliation less likely. This government has opened itself up to legal challenges of bad-faith negotiations, which could further drag out an already lengthy battle.

At the centre of this dispute and this dialogue, we have to keep in mind the impact that it has on the students, both within the context of the strike but even beyond the strike. We have to keep students at the centre of our decision-making.

1340

It seems that it's casting a very grim shadow on other employers and unions with negotiations pending, like the developmental services sector, for instance, who are next up.

It seems that the unionized workers at York University are not part of the group this government claims that it is fighting for. In fact, every day, it becomes clearer and more apparent who is not included in "the people." It does not include workers who want a fair, good-faith negotiation. It does not include business owners who want a government that respects their work, contracts and partnerships that have been established. In my own constituency office in Scarborough–Guildwood, I am receiving so many complaints from residents who say that this government just doesn't get it. And it does not include parents who want to leave a greener, better future for their kids.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that all members of this House, as we debate the laws in Ontario, as we establish precedent, think about the future that we are leaving our kids, that they are inheriting. We have to keep that at the forefront of our minds and our discussions.

This government has opened itself up to legal challenges of bad-faith negotiations, which could further drag out an already lengthy battle and, in fact, impact those very students we are trying to assist. All of that is clear in this single bill, Bill 2.

Sadly, I have to rise today in this House to strongly disagree with Bill 2, its rush to decision-making and its lack of inclusion and transparency. So I ask the House to accept my amendments to Bill 2 that will force the government to show the true costs associated with cancelling a contract like this and, as I referred to—that the "gov-

ernment with instructions to first provide a report to the House containing a full assessment of the compensation package, prior to the statutory termination of contracts and permits, as well as the legal costs incurred to defend the act in front of any tribunal or board of arbitration.”

I recognize that in Bill 2 the government attempted to put a formula in place that will limit those costs. But we do not know if that will stand up if challenged in court, and that leaves this province exposed to untold costs as a result of the cancellation of this contract.

Mr. Speaker, I have been clear in my assessment of this bill, in my cautioning of this government as it is making decisions—making sure that it does not rush those decisions without having the full information, without knowing the true costs. If this Premier isn’t going to be for the people, he might as well tell us how much it is going to cost the people. He needs to come clean and tell people how much it is going to cost.

Hon. Todd Smith: The safety of the people.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Yes, I agree with the member opposite that the safety in the decision-making is absolutely important, but it’s also important that we know the full extent of the costs before we rush to a decision.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for members of this House having the time to speak to this very important piece of legislation. I think that, as one of the earliest bills that the government is putting forward, it’s important that we look into the precedent that this is setting, the tone in which this government will be making decisions and the extent of the impact on Ontarians, whether it’s our climate, whether it’s our economy and whether it is in fact what is in the best interests of our students and our young people.

It’s important that we hold this government to full account, not just for the words and the rhetoric that we talk about when we say “for the people”—but actually looking specifically into those actions and seeing how they are impacting the outcomes, whether it’s the costs that we all have to bear or the greater costs in terms of the outcomes for our climate and the health and the future of our great province.

I want to thank the members of the House for the opportunity to speak to this bill.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: I find it really interesting, cancelling a project that the people did not want and being accused of not listening to the people. I’d like to point out that the candidate the Liberal Party put forward in Prince Edward county said, “I want to make this perfectly clear, I am furious with the decision of the Liberal government.” That was in the Belleville Intelligencer, July 20, 2015.

She pointed out that we needed to have more generation capacity, yet we have 13,000 megawatts of surplus electricity, so I’m not sure what else we need to do. We only have a maximum peak usage right now of about 23,000, and we have 13,000 more than what we need, so where is this need that she keeps talking about?

She also said that we’re increasing the cost of hydro by doing this, and yet they guaranteed a contract that would pay more than what the retail price for electricity is, so how are we increasing the cost of electricity by cancelling this?

When she spoke about the York University students—there are 45,000 students that we’re listening to. We’ve heard their concerns. An independent organization has already stepped forward and said that the two groups are at loggerheads. We’re taking the students’ care into account. We want to support their education. We want to make sure that these students can realize their full potential, and we need to get them back to school in order to do that.

I find it very rich that two days prior to the election, the member from Scarborough–Guildwood’s party tried to enact legislation to put them back to work, but it was too little, too late.

We’re acting on the needs of those students.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? The member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Oh, I thought it would go to the NDP.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize. I was going in rotation, and I erred.

Questions and comments? The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. I must say, like my colleague, that it was rather interesting listening to the member talk about the bill. I mean, we were all there last fall when it was the Liberals who were bringing in back-to-work legislation, because at the time it was the college faculty who were on strike—for the exact same reason, though, because there are people who have worked and taught in our colleges for decades long, and every three months, every semester, they have to reapply for their jobs. They cannot get a full-time job there. They continue to be contract teachers for years and years.

A contract for one or two semesters, you can see, Speaker, but how can you build a life when you are forever having to reapply for your job? What happens to those female teachers if they get pregnant? Let me tell you what happens: Nobody renews your contract and you are out of a job. This is why they went on strike. This is why the good people at York are on strike: because they want some job security.

1350

It’s quite interesting to see that when the Liberals table back-to-work legislation, apparently that’s good; when the Conservatives table back-to-work legislation, apparently that’s bad. I know exactly where I stand, Speaker. I stand with the rights of workers to unionize, and I stand with the rights of workers to go on strike, to withdraw their labour if they cannot get a fair collective agreement—and the agreement that can go forward is an agreement that is negotiated, where nobody is happy but everybody can live with it. Legislating them back to work only causes more problems.

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

Mr. Doug Downey: The member from Scarborough–Guildwood waxes about the consequences on family and the consequences on workers with regard to White Pines, and says the government wants to cancel. But the government never wanted it. The people never wanted it. It's in a place people don't want. It's in a time that people don't need. It doesn't make sense to have done it in the first place.

Let me remind you, Mr. Speaker, that it was on May 9 that the election was called, the writ period started. The notice to proceed was issued on May 11, which is entirely inappropriate. The disdain for the people and the workers of this province shouldn't come out of the mouths of the former government who are now, all of a sudden, shocked at the cancellation of this.

We said we'd stand up for the people and we said that we would stand up for the areas that weren't being listened to, that were being ignored and that were having things rammed through. I've talked before about this White Pines decision, the issue and the notice to proceed, which just boggles my mind. We are sending a message to business. We're saying that we need to do things in an orderly manner. We will listen to the people, and the people will have a say in how we go forward.

With regard to the York strike, transparency—well, it's in the bill. It's pretty transparent. We were pretty straightforward about this. We didn't play cat and mouse, and bring forward some legislation and then dive away from it because we were out of time on something. We said we were going to do it. We're doing it. You've heard it before: We're going to follow through on the things we said we would do. Again, it's pretty straightforward.

The impact on the students: The member from Scarborough–Guildwood suggests that we're not looking out for the students. Well, that's exactly who we're looking out for. These are individuals who have signed leases for places to live, who have jobs on hold, who aren't going to get their co-ops done. This is the longest strike in post-secondary in the province. It's really quite unbelievable that anybody would want this to continue. The students are the ones paying the price, and the employers who want to hire them are paying the price.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am glad to be able to add my two minutes and my two cents in response to the remarks from the member from Scarborough–Guildwood on the government's Bill 2.

I take her point when she's discussing the extent of impacts and outcomes when we're looking ahead at climate, at our economy, at our learning environments for students. I think that everyone in this House should always factor those consequences into the decisions that we're making today. I appreciated her comment that we need to hold this government to full account, especially when it comes to who they are serving. They say "for the people"; we need to ensure that is, indeed, the case.

However, and as we have heard, it's interesting to hear that the member raised points challenging the govern-

ment for things that we have challenged the previous government for, especially when it comes to back-to-work legislation, which is neither right nor fair. When employers know that that is waiting for them, they don't show up at the table. We've seen that in this case. We've seen that, "Oh, there's no need to bargain because the government is just going to end this at some point and legislate us all back. Why on earth would we negotiate?"

That is not negotiation in good faith. Negotiation in good faith is with the parties who are not just willing but who have to have that dialogue, who have to work through that. So when this government says, "Don't worry; we'll get you out of it"—that is not how we should be proceeding with this province, nor was it the way we should have been proceeding with the previous government.

We should be having conversations about optimal learning environments for all of those students all the way along—that their educators need to have the resources that they deserve and job security. We should be fostering positive learning environments in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments.

I return to the member for Scarborough–Guildwood for her reply.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the members from Peterborough–Kawartha, from Nickel Belt, from Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte and from Oshawa for their comments and their responses. I appreciate the fact that all of the members were listening to the debate.

It's really important, as we begin the 42nd Parliament, that we have the opportunity to hear both sides of the issue, because the purpose of having bills debated in this House is that the government, or whoever is putting forward the bill, can pause and take a second look based on input that they have heard and the information that they have received. I would urge this government to do just that, in its early days, rather than rushing—to really be thoughtful about the impacts of its decisions on people. I see that just even in the rushed decision to cancel Ontario's health and physical education curriculum that has been in place and been taught in our schools for three years and now the massive confusion that everyone is experiencing with its cancellation, rolling it back to 1998. Rushing helps no one.

I ask this government, as it's making decisions, to really consider the facts and the information that are put forward, to think about the transparency in how that information is shared, and to be thoughtful in terms of how you are making decisions, because the impacts are going to be far-reaching, whether they are affecting our climate and our economy or the exposure and the risk that is being put forward, on the economic side, to our province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I'll just note that I'll be splitting my time with the honourable member for Peterborough–Kawartha, Dave Smith.

Mr. Speaker, in rising to address this assembly for the first time, I would sincerely like to congratulate you on

your election as Speaker—well deserved. I know you'll be exceptional and fair in your new role. I would also like to congratulate every MPP, especially the first-time MPPs. We all know the hard work it took for us to get here, and I know we'll all continue to work equally hard to serve the people in our communities. I would also like to thank the experienced members of this assembly for their guidance and their advice. I say it is certainly appreciated.

To the people of my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore who elected me to this assembly and put their trust in me, thank you. I am truly grateful for the honour to serve them as their member of provincial Parliament, and I hope to live up to their expectations. This is truly an honour and a lifetime ambition.

My family has been involved with the Progressive Conservative Party and political life in multiple capacities for decades. I am proud to say that my great-uncle General Donald McDonald Hogarth served in this Legislative Assembly from 1911 to 1934, representing the riding of Port Arthur. Even though it has been 84 years since my great-uncle served in this Legislature, I think of the trail that he blazed for me and other members of my family, instilling the values of great public service, putting others ahead of yourself, and fiscal responsibility. This outlook and this philosophy is the approach that I have taken all my life, and these are the values that I hope I will bring this assembly.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the service of others who have served the residents of Etobicoke–Lakeshore as their MPP. I would like to thank Peter Milczyn, who was the representative immediately before me. I would also like to recognize the previous MPPs Doug Holyday and Morley Kells for their instrumental roles in my campaign and the work they have done for the people in Etobicoke.

1400

Former MPPs Holyday and Kells were tremendously generous with their time, and I learned a great deal from them both. I thank them for their outstanding expertise and their continued guidance.

Campaigns are built on strong support and volunteer networks. I was fortunate to have both. I have a wonderful family that was alongside me from day one. My husband, Paul Demers, my mother, Marlene, my sister Mary, my nephew Max, my brother-in-law Fritz, and my many aunts and uncles were all so instrumental in our campaign. I cannot thank them enough not only for their support but for their hard work.

Of course, I had hundreds of volunteers who were so generous with their time, efforts and resources. I want to thank each and every one of them. They too want a better and more affordable Ontario, where government works for the people, not the insiders.

Mr. Speaker, I ran for office because I want to make people's lives easier. I have heard it for years, and I've heard it increasingly at the doors: People are hurting; people are struggling. They can't afford the massive

hydro rates, skyrocketing taxes and endless government red tape. Enough is enough.

I am proud to say that with a Doug Ford government, help is finally on the way. This is truly a great team. I couldn't be prouder to be part of this caucus and a member of a government that is for the people. We have listened to the concerns of Ontarians, and we have already gotten right down to work by implementing our plan.

Mr. Speaker, we were told by Ontarians that they could not afford cap-and-trade. That policy has now been done away with. This will bring tax relief to individuals and small businesses alike. This unaffordable tax put jobs at risk and created economic uncertainty. Promise made, promise kept.

We were told by parents and teachers that they wanted more input into the sex ed curriculum. Our government will now conduct the largest consultation possible with parents and teachers from all parts of this province. We will create an age-appropriate, healthy living curriculum that will meet the goals and objectives that will prepare our youth for today's society. Promise made and promise kept.

We were told by Ontarians that they had lost faith in their government and wanted an in-depth outside auditor to determine where tax dollars have been wasted and where we can be more efficient. We are now in the process of doing so. Promise made and promise kept.

We were told by Ontarians that hydro rates were through the roof. We listened. We cancelled 758 green energy contracts, which will substantially lower hydro rates for Ontario families. Promise made and promise kept.

Mr. Speaker, when we learned that the CEO of Hydro One was making \$6 million a year, we told Ontarians that a PC government would not stand for this. We got it done. We said goodbye to the six-million-dollar man at no cost to the taxpayers. Promise made, promise kept.

I want a better and more affordable province for Ontarians now and for generations to come. I don't want our youth to have to pay off our debts. I want them to prosper and to succeed, where government works for them and not the other way around. I don't want my nephew Max, who is here today, and my stepdaughters Janie and Bryanne to be left with a high government debt so they won't be able to succeed financially.

I want an Ontario where billion-dollar boondoggles aren't part of standard government operation. I want an Ontario where government gets out of the way of people reaching their hopes and their dreams—not the single biggest roadblock.

Our party and our government believe that individuals know how to spend their money best. No dollar is better spent than the dollar that is left in the pockets of taxpayers. This can only be done when government works for the people.

My community, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, is one of the best, most diverse communities in Ontario. We have very old, historic neighbourhoods such as Mimico, Long

Branch, Alderwood, New Toronto, Sunnylea, the Kingsway, the Queensway and Humber Bay. Etobicoke–Lakeshore is also the home of Humber Bay Shores, which is one of the most vibrant up-and-coming communities in Ontario. Our community is replete with some of the most stunning scenery and parks, and of course the south portion of our riding borders beautiful Lake Ontario.

There is work to be done, and I was elected to get that work done. Our wonderful community is growing considerably, and more and more people are calling Etobicoke–Lakeshore home. We need to give our residents better access to transit and increased transit infrastructure so that people can commute to other parts of the GTA. We need more. I was told by residents, especially in the Humber Bay Shores area, that they urgently need infrastructure to support our growth. I agree, and I'll work to get this done.

Our government will get more transit built along the lakeshore. I pledge myself to assist in keeping a watchful eye over the progress to ensure that we have additional stations to ease people's daily commutes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make people's lives easier, and by improving public transit and transit infrastructure, people's lives will get easier.

I know it's a lot of work, it's a big job, but our team will get it done. I know that the key to success in good governance is for politicians to continue to listen to and serve the people who elected them.

I look forward to serving the residents of Etobicoke–Lakeshore and working alongside my esteemed colleagues in this assembly to create a better future for the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to address this assembly today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next up is the member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I rise for my inaugural speech, I'd like to congratulate you on your election to the post. I have no doubt that your time serving in government, opposition and third party will also mean that you've been in our shoes at some point.

The Peterborough–Kawartha riding is one that was formed with the most recent redistribution. The southern parts of the former Peterborough riding will no doubt be well served by their new member, my colleague the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

The municipalities of North Kawartha and Trent Lakes are now being represented by me. They have been represented previously by the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, the Honourable Minister of Labour. It's my hope that I can prove to be as effective a representative as their previous MPP has been, although I know that the example that my colleague has provided throughout her tenure will be a lofty one for me to live up to.

I'd also like to say thank you to those who have represented Peterborough in the past. I'm old enough to

remember John M. Turner, who was a former Speaker of this House; Peter Adams; Jenny Carter; Gary Stewart; and, of course, most recently, Jeff Leal. Although I may have disagreed with decisions or policies of all of the former representatives, what can't be overstated is the obvious desire that all of them had to serve their community to the best of their ability.

Mr. Leal, in particular, served 15 years as a member of this House and previously had served our community for 18 years on municipal council. Anyone with a 33-year career dedicated to the service of his community is someone who must be commended.

The city of Peterborough, currently known as the Gateway to Cottage Country, has been referred to by a number of different nicknames for a number of different reasons. Some of you may know Peterborough as the Electric City and may associate that to the fact that General Electric has been a major employer for more than 125 years in the city. However, this is not why Peterborough was nicknamed the Electric City. Sadly, GE will be closing their doors later this year, after being in our city for a total of 127 years.

Others may think that we're referred to as the Electric City because the first electric streetcars ever built in Canada were built and tested in Peterborough. But this, too, would be wrong. Peterborough earned the nickname of Electric City because we were the first city in Canada with electric street lights.

Although we are losing GE, we still have a number of other large employers including Siemens, Quaker Oats—more correctly named now Quaker Tropicana PepsiCo—Bryston and Rolls-Royce, just to name a few.

Peterborough has been known as the junior hockey centre of the universe. Our Petes are the longest-running franchise in OHL history, and we have placed more players in the NHL than any other organization in the entire world. That includes the organization from the riding of my friend over to my right. To put it into perspective, only the countries of Canada and the United States have more NHL alumni than the Peterborough Petes do.

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But Peterborough is not just a hockey town. Since 1926, when the Mann Cup was first awarded as the national championship for lacrosse, Peterborough's 14 national championships are the most of any community in this country.

Now, I realize I've spent a fair bit of time talking about sports in my community, and I'm going to shift gears a little bit. We are also home to one of the greatest engineering feats of the 19th century. Lock 21, commonly known as the Peterborough Lift Lock, is the world's largest hydraulic lift lock, with a rise of 72 feet. Not only is this marvel of engineering achieved without the use of any electricity—not because of cost—but there are no motors of any kind to make it work. It's achieved simply with the power of water. At the time of its construction, it was also the largest structure in the entire world built out of concrete without a single piece of reinforcing steel in

it. Construction began in 1896 and was completed in 1904 without the use of modern heavy equipment. It stands as a testament to the ingenuity of good old-fashioned hard work.

To complete the circle with sports, Lock 21 also serves as the backdrop for Canada's only minor-hockey-sanctioned tournament played outside on a body of water. In 2013, this truly unique sporting event served as the host event for the CBC Hockey Day in Canada broadcast. I'm happy to say that since its inception, Under the Lock has had more than 10,000 young hockey players from New York state, Michigan state, Quebec and, of course, Ontario who have had the opportunity to make lifelong memories playing outside on the canal, with snowbanks instead of rink boards in what is truly a Canadian experience.

Very soon, Lock 21 will serve as the backdrop for another Canadian experience, as the Canadian Canoe Museum will soon be relocating from their current facility to a brand-new state-of-the-art facility being developed where the lift lock visitors' centre currently sits.

I'm sure you've heard the passion in my voice when I speak about my community. I'm truly proud of everything that we have to offer. We're blessed to not only have an exceptional community college in Sir Sandford Fleming, but also a world-class university, my very own alma mater, Trent.

With all of these wonderful things that I have spoken about, it should come as no surprise that I want to ensure the best possible life for the people I now represent. I have spent the last 12 years as the manager of product development at a software company and had the privilege of being the lead developer on the most widely used experiential learning management software in Ontario schools today. I have also been a member of the development team that created the most used software tool in the creation of individual education plans for our exceptional students in schools today.

I have a bachelor of science and a master of business administration. I've been a volunteer in my community for more than 15 years, serving on municipal committees and on the boards of a number of not-for-profits. When I take the love that I have for my community, the work experience, the life experience and the education that I have, I know I can do more to make life easier for the people in my community.

I have watched as major employers struggled under what I thought were poorly thought-out and implemented policies of the government of the day. Friends have lost their livelihood. Neighbours have found it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Members of our most vulnerable communities have not been provided with the supports they not only need, but truly deserve.

For me, the final straw that made me enter provincial politics was when I was chair of the Special Hockey International tournament, a tournament for special-needs players. I attended a forum on special needs. I listened to the struggles of one of the individuals in my area. Mr. Speaker, this man is blind and he has a failing kidney. He

requires kidney dialysis on a weekly basis. He's on ODSP. His accommodation portion is not high enough for him to rent in the city, so he rents a room in one of our rural communities.

When cap-and-trade was introduced, his cost to come to Peterborough regional hospital for life-sustaining dialysis increased by \$30 a month, but his support payments did not increase. One of cap-and-trade's intended purposes was to curb discretionary travel by increasing the cost of gasoline. But, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you, kidney dialysis is not discretionary.

Unfortunately, this man's life was negatively impacted by one of the unintended consequences of that needlessly punishing government policy. When he came to our representative at the time for help, he was advised to apply for a travel subsidy because he was disabled. But, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you, the government of Ontario denied him this funding. Being blind is not a physical disability, and this subsidy was for physical disabilities.

We've spoken repeatedly about being forced to choose between heating and eating, but because of the policies of the government of the time, this man was forced to choose between life-sustaining dialysis and keeping a roof over his head—decisions made by a government that was out of touch and not for the people.

I have the ability to make a difference. We have the responsibility to make that difference, and I'm proud to support the direction that we've chosen to go, with the priorities that we've laid out.

Mr. Speaker, help is here today. We will return Ontario to a place of prominence, to a place where every person living in this great province has the opportunity to succeed, to grow and to not only live their lives but thoroughly enjoy their life.

I'm truly humbled that the people of Peterborough-Kawartha have entrusted me to be their voice, and I give you my word I will do everything that I can to use this power that we're entrusted with to make the lives of every person in Ontario better.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to thank the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore and the member for Peterborough-Kawartha for their statements, and say that this government makes the claim of making their promises and keeping those promises. I actually have a few questions, because I've been receiving a lot of questions and a lot of emails from my constituents. A teacher actually emailed me, and this is what the teacher wrote to me:

"I have taught sex ed, grades 6, 7 and 8, for the past four years. Many of my students are sexually active, and some have no adult"—no adult—"that they trust in their lives other than teachers. I also have had many students in the LGBTQ community in my classes. Some of these students have had traumatic experiences with their families or people in their community with regard to their identity and, as a result, cannot ask them personal questions."

Mr. Speaker, she also adds, "I feel that under these circumstances, I would not be keeping my students safe

if I taught the old health curriculum. What can I do to make sure that my students make healthy, informed choices in their lives and make sure that my students feel comfortable asking me questions that they cannot ask their caregivers?

“How do I make sure that my students in the LGBTQ community know that society doesn’t think that their sexuality is somehow more inappropriate than heterosexual sexuality?”

“What actions can we take to make sure that the curriculum remains applicable to the needs of our province’s students and not the needs of the politicians?”

Mr. Speaker, my question is, what should I tell this teacher? Because what’s happening right now is, we’re not keeping any promises to the people. We’re making our students, our children unsafe, and I am very worried about that.

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

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to respond to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. Congratulations on your election, and I look forward to working with you here in the Legislature—and as well to the member from Peterborough–Kawartha on his election and for the comments that he made, which I thought were very gracious. Again, I look forward to working with him, too.

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I would like say a few things about some of the debate earlier on and thank the member from Scarborough–Guildwood for her reasoned amendment, which was entirely reasonable, which is to say, how much is this going to cost, folks? I think Ontarians would expect that. I think that you would actually respond in that way as well, too. So I want to thank her for putting that forward.

Ontarians expect us to have a plan. Part of a plan is something called process. We all don’t like process, but process is generally parts of steps in a plan. If you look at legislating out of the strike, as you’re doing right now, without making use of the industrial exemption, which you created as part of a process that’s recognized by the courts, you’re putting at risk the very thing that you’re trying to do. The member made it very clear in her debate, and she’s right. She’s right.

The other concern is legislating out of contracts and cancelling contracts. There are many business people on this side of the House and on that side of the House. It sends the wrong message to the investment community; I think we can all agree on that. If you come to Ontario, you want to know that if you sign a contract with a government or with a government entity, they’re going to respect that contract. Simply to say, “We don’t like it; we’re going to pass a law,” sends the wrong message. Keep doing that and there will be an Ontario premium on things, I guarantee you.

I want to thank you very much for the time, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate it.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I’m so pleased to rise and officially welcome—we heard the inaugural speech for our new member on this side of the House for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, and the member for Peterborough–Kawartha might sit on that side the House, but he’s part of the PC team. If people are watching at home and kind of taking it all in, we have members on both sides here in the Legislature.

Now, on the campaign trail, visiting the Etobicoke area, at a seniors’ residence, I did get to meet the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore. She’s a fantastic addition to our team. And the member for Peterborough–Kawartha is actually the MPP for a cottage I share with my two sisters on Lake Chemong, just north of Peterborough. I’ve been getting together with him a little bit. He is certainly very well known and very well liked in the Peterborough area, and knows all the businesses and some of the restaurants, of course, to refer them as well.

We just heard the member from Ottawa South speak. It’s disappointing to hear him speak about the process—because in what kind of process do you, two days after the writ drops, give a notice to proceed to a company that is not welcome by the residents and the municipal governments? If we want to talk about process, I think that certainly does not speak to the type of process that we want our government to enact.

We campaigned on many promises. Maybe some people feel that we’re getting to work too quickly, but time is of the essence. We have to turn this Ontario ship around and make sure that we are the driving economic force in Canada, the way we once were. I think that Ontario residents are counting on it. To tell you the truth, Mr. Speaker, I think that Canadians are counting on our government, the Premier Ford government, to turn the economy around in Ontario. We have to do this by all working together.

I’m looking forward to the fall session. We’re almost done the summer session after this week, I’m guessing, and we’ll all get to work.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It’s always a privilege to be able to hear the inaugural addresses from new members. It seems like only yesterday I gave my own. But it wasn’t yesterday; it was four whole years ago. So I’m glad to add my comments in response to the members from Etobicoke–Lakeshore and Peterborough–Kawartha.

Like the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, I represent a growing community and we have transit concerns. However, I think the fundamental difference is that—the money best spent is spent on public services to support our community members and ensure that they do have the transit and the supports and services that they need.

To the member from Peterborough–Kawartha, I remember when it was Quaker Oats. I certainly remember that because my grandmother lived in Peterborough for many, many years, and that was part of my childhood. In fact, I grew up skating on that canal at the foot of the phenomenal world’s largest hydraulic lift lock—so many

fond memories, of course, in Peterborough and in the Kawartha Lakes area.

His assertions about hockey, however—I would invite the member, anytime, to Oshawa to check out some fantastic hockey. I know that that's a fun theme in this room, to compete, so you're more than welcome anytime to come to Oshawa and check out a fantastic hockey game with our Oshawa Generals.

I'm glad to hear members share about their communities. I grew up, as I said, just near Beavermead Park, visiting Grandma, and we all have community connections across this province. It is a special reminder that we're not so different, in that we do have very special people in places that we represent and have a tremendous responsibility when we come to this place to keep them in mind as we get caught up in the bluster, the stomping, the snorting, the yelling and the pontificating. Really, it is about care and it is about our communities.

I congratulate both members on joining us here in this Legislature. Congratulations.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore can reply.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you to the members for Scarborough Southwest and Ottawa South for your comments, and the member for Oshawa. And especially thank you to the member for Thornhill, who has been so kind and supportive throughout the campaign and since we've started here in the House. All our former members have been so supportive of us and helping us learn through this process, so I am truly grateful and happy for your support—thankful for that.

The people of Ontario are looking for change. It was very clear on June 7, and I am honoured to take a spot here in the Legislature, as my great-uncle had done in the past, to be part of a government that is for the people, a government that is going to make a difference for the people and help those people who are struggling, trying to decide if they can pay their hydro bill or put food on the table. I'm proud to be part of that government, Mr. Speaker. People are continuously looking for change, and a Doug Ford government will bring that change.

Once again, I just want to thank everybody for their comments today. I look forward to getting down to business in the House. We need to keep our economy moving, so that we can create an environment for businesses to thrive. Businesses in Etobicoke–Lakeshore need to thrive. We had some troubles over the last couple of years with industries shutting down, and one thing we heard when we were knocking on doors was that we need to create an environment where people will continue to invest in Ontario, continue to create jobs and continue to hire people. Business people put their money on the line, their life on the line, for others, so we can create jobs for others. So I want to be part of that, and I want to be part of a government that will continue to encourage businesses to succeed in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It is an honour and a privilege to rise in the House and to deliver my inaugural speech. I'd

like to start by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on your election to this most important position. I'd also like to thank you personally for the assistance that you gave in your office this morning in accommodating my guest; that was very gracious of you.

I'd also like to congratulate all the members of this House on their election. While we may sit on opposite sides of the House—or opposite rumps, I suppose—what we share is the responsibility to exercise our duty with wisdom and with vigilance.

I'm proud to be representing the brand new riding of Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas. In fact, I am the very first MPP to serve in this riding. The good folks of Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas have seen fit to entrust me with this immense responsibility, and I thank them greatly.

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It's often said that politics is a blood sport, and believe me, after the first few weeks here, I'm really beginning to understand that phrase, Mr. Speaker. But first and foremost, politics is a team sport. And so, I owe an enormous debt of gratitude and thanks to the team of volunteers who put me here. It was a most remarkable team, indeed. It was a dream team, really, if I could use a hockey analogy. From the very outset of the campaign, we felt in our bones—we believed—that we were going to be part of something very special. We never wavered—none of us—in our commitment and our dedication to one another. It has been the honour of my life to get to know and to work with all of my volunteers. To all of you, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To my partner, Ted Hoyle: You are my rock. Thank you. And as it turns out, you're a pretty fantastic sign captain too, so thanks for that as well.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge my worthy opponent, the honourable Ted McMeekin. Mr. McMeekin served in this House for 18 years, and I wish Ted, his wife and his daughters nothing but the best in their future endeavours.

I would also like to recognize, yet again, the presence in this House of the honourable Richard Allen. Richard served as the MPP for Hamilton West in the 32nd, the 33rd, the 34th and the 35th Parliaments—a huge accomplishment indeed. Richard is an esteemed member of our community, and I would like to thank him personally for his service and for the sage advice that he has provided. He actually had a few words of advice for me this morning after question period. So I thank you for that, Richard. I would add that he still has proven himself to be a pretty keen and able campaigner as well. So thanks for your help on the campaign trail, Richard.

Mr. Speaker, I made my first trip to Queen's Park when I was a young girl. My parents brought me here to visit my grandmother. Her name was Margaret Shaw. For many years, she worked right here, below us, in the cafeteria downstairs. She, along with my grandfather, my father, Edward, and my uncle Adam came to Canada as immigrants to this country after the Second World War.

My Nana Shaw was a hard-working and very gracious woman, but she was also a very sharp judge of character.

She would often talk about her work, and she would also talk about MPPs whom she observed conducting themselves—in her opinion—let's say in less than a civil manner. It's a lesson I learned early on: The true measure of our character is how we treat and how we respect others, no matter the circumstances that they or that we come from.

Let me say how wonderful it is now, how wonderful it feels for me, that this has come full circle and I now have my own grandchildren visiting me here in this House. Welcome, Hawksley, Emmett and Levon. Thank you for coming. Thank you to my great family.

My mom and dad, Edward and Patricia, are watching today. They taught us, my brother and sisters, to be tough, but above all, they taught us to be fair. They taught us to be compassionate and tolerant of others. They always tell my brother and my sisters how proud they are of us, no matter what.

But, Mom and Dad, it is your family that is proud of you. We are proud to have been raised by such loving and wonderful people. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker, like so many others in this House, I am dismayed that the throne speech made no mention—no mention at all—of the incredible Indigenous, Métis and First Nations people of this land. It is an omission that cannot be ignored. My children are Mohawk, and so, for me and my family, as it is for many families in Ontario, this is deeply personal.

My children spend time at their father's reserve in Kahnawake. For them, this is a place that helps to deepen their connection to their history. It teaches them to stand tall and to stand proud, and to celebrate their heritage.

It would have been encouraging for them to have heard at the very least a simple acknowledgement in the throne speech. But to be clear, true and meaningful reconciliation will take more than symbolic gestures. It will require a commitment to establishing a true government-to-government relationship, and it will take real action in implementing the 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The petition that we saw here today is evidence that this is something that the people of Ontario want, and it's way past time.

I can only hope that the newly created Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and Indigenous Affairs is not reflective of the value and of the importance that this government places on Indigenous people. I must ask, then: Why is this a part-time minister? Why have the Indigenous people, the First Nations and the Métis people, only been honoured with a part-time minister?

It's also distressing that I must also ask whether putting Indigenous affairs together with mining reflects a government belief that Indigenous people are to be viewed and managed in the same way that we view commodities. In my humble opinion, this is a poor start for this government—a poor start indeed. We all have the responsibility to do so much better than this.

Applause.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you.

I am proud to be from Hamilton or, as we call it, the Hammer. I love the grit and I love the determination of the place. My riding of Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas is a diverse riding. The people who live there are diverse and the geography is diverse as well.

We have a mountain, which is actually the Niagara Escarpment. It's a pale version of a mountain—but we do have interesting geography in Hamilton. It is home to McMaster University, which is in Westdale. We have Mohawk College, which is on the West Mountain. There's beautiful Dundas, known as Valley Town. That is home to the well-known Dundas Valley School of Art. We also have the historic former village of Ancaster, which is home to Redeemer University College.

I am exceptionally proud of the work that I have done in Hamilton for many years. I've worked in the field of corporate social responsibility. I've also worked for organizations in both the not-for-profit and the corporate sectors, and this has given me a very unique perspective.

I spent many years working in the credit union sector. For those who may not be aware, credit unions are a stable, profitable and growing sector of the financial industry in Ontario. In fact, 1.6 million people choose to do their banking there. They are members of a credit union, une caisse populaire. The unique thing about the credit union model—the credit union difference, if you will—is that while they remain stable and profitable, it is not simply profits that credit unions pursue. Credit unions work to achieve a balanced bottom line, setting goals of achievement for social, environmental and economic good. The thing is that it works. This vibrant, thriving credit union sector is proof that it is possible to do well by doing good.

There's rock-solid evidence that all types of organizations and companies that set goals for such things as gender equity, diversity, social inclusion and environmental considerations are more profitable. They earn more customer loyalty, they attract and retain employees, and they are more resilient to negative effects—more so than companies that simply pursue profit. Corporate social responsibility, or having a balanced view of success measures, is not just the ethical thing to do; it turns out it is also the smart thing to do.

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Mr. Speaker, in my work with the credit union, I had the incredible pleasure of attending a conference with folks from our sister credit unions across Canada. A story that was related to us is a story that really drives home the importance of having a balanced and holistic view of not only business but of decisions that we make in our lives. It's a fishing tale about the cod industry in Newfoundland. As it was told to us, for many years, the sole key measure of success that was used in this industry was the number of tonnes of cod that were being taken from the ocean each year. Each year, this number grew. Based on this one measure alone, folks in the fishing industry looked to expand their operations, to buy bigger boats, just to grow their industry and increase their operations. Local credit unions, which were often in these

towns the only financial institutions available, were happy to make loans based on this measure of success. Because, really, what could possibly go wrong? Each year, we know that that amount of cod that was taken from the ocean continued to grow, but we all know how this ended: The industry fell off a cliff.

Viewed in hindsight through a more balanced lens, we now see that this was not a measure of success at all. It wasn't a measure of sustainable industry; it was, in fact, a predictor of an impending collapse.

I've spent time explaining this balanced approach because I believe it is relevant for this House. More specifically, it is relevant to the bill that is before us. Unfortunately, the lessons to be learned from taking a balanced approach, a measured approach, to complex issues are not reflected in this bill, not in the least.

The cancellation of hundreds of renewable energy projects says a lot about this government. It would appear that they do not believe that the impacts of climate change are real. We have heard in this House members who have been sharing their stories of how this bill is negatively impacting their constituents. It's negatively impacting individuals and small businesses. Small businesses that are the backbone of our economy are saying to us, and I am sure they're saying to others in this House, that this is hurting them and hurting their businesses. Yet, somehow, it seems that this government is hell-bent on pushing this legislation through.

But more than anything, it says to me, just as I described earlier, that this government is not willing to take a look at the bigger picture. This bill reflects an inability to take a balanced and measured approach. This bill is being spun out as a cost-saving measure, but it really does not take into account the full impact that it will have. In the end, this bill will cost taxpayers so much more than it could ever save them.

Mr. Speaker, for evidence of this, you don't need to look much further than how this will impact people in municipalities across Ontario. Whether you are a homeowner, a tenant or a small business, you pay property tax.

Like all cities, the city of Hamilton is on the front line when it comes to addressing climate change. With these so-called 100-year storms that seem to be happening every year, the tax rules in Hamilton have borne significant costs—costs to repair and protect municipal infrastructure from these historic floods; costs to compensate homeowners for flood damage; costs to install backflow preventers; and significant costs for oversizing pipes and upgrades to our water treatment plants.

And now, at a time when cities need more help, not less, scrapping the climate plan has cost my riding of Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas millions of dollars. Mohawk College lost \$1.2 million promised to open a new centre for climate change management, and \$2 million for a pilot project that would bring electric buses to our streets is now gone. These initiatives were intended to mitigate against climate change, and they were in part designed to reduce costs. Without reliable, predictable funding or without new revenue tools, the city of Hamil-

ton, like many cities and municipalities across Ontario, will be left without resources to build, to protect and to maintain their infrastructure. Homeowners, renters and small businesses also pay school board taxes, and because of the climate plan cancellation, Hamilton's public school board will no longer receive the \$2.1 million it was counting on to repair schools.

The last time that the Conservatives were in power, they downloaded significant costs to municipalities, and in the 15 years that the Liberals held power, they never really bothered to correct this either. Now, with this bill before the House, it appears that cities and towns across Ontario should be prepared for more of the same.

But the sad truth is that this is not just financial costs that this bill is downloading to municipalities, costs that will be shouldered by homeowners, small businesses and renters. With this bill, the government is downloading their responsibility. They are downloading their responsibility to protect Ontarians from these real-life impacts that are affecting their livelihoods, their standard of living and their well-being.

Mr. Speaker, I would respectfully like to offer some observations to the government of the day from this side of the House. There is no question that your government has won a majority of seats, and for that I offer my congratulations, but there remain well over three million Ontarians, some 60% of voters, who did not share your particular vision of Ontario. However, it is now your responsibility to ensure that you govern for all of Ontario and look out for all of our constituents.

If I've learned anything in all these years of fighting the good fight, it's that you need to have good people by your side. That is why I could not be prouder to be part of this caucus, Her Majesty's loyal opposition, the largest opposition in over 30 years. And so we stand before you, united in our shared values. We are united in our passionate commitment to equity, inclusion and social justice. These first few weeks of the Legislature have proved to be for us the fire that has forged the steel. It would be unwise to estimate the mighty impact that we will have in this House.

Mr. Speaker, let me close by saying that I too have made promises that I intend to keep. I promise to be vigilant and to hold this government accountable, to govern in the best interests of all the people of Ontario. I promise to work hard every minute of every day to be an MPP who will make my family, my friends and the people of Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas proud.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I thank you. Merci and nia:weh.

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

Hon. Monte McNaughton: It's my first time rising to speak since the election and returning here to Queen's Park. I want to begin by congratulating the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas. I thought you were very generous, very thoughtful in your remarks, especially when you paid tribute to the former member, Ted McMeekin. A personal story about Ted: When my daughter was born about four years ago, he showed up

here with a bundle of books for my wife and I to read to my daughter. He's a very thoughtful individual, and I wish him, as well, all the best in his life post-politics.

I also welcome all the new MPPs to Queen's Park: all of the NDP and Liberals, the Green member and, of course, all of our new members here on the Progressive Conservative government side of the House. We have an opportunity to get a lot of things done over the next four years, and I know the path that we've set this summer proves and demonstrates that we're going to move forward with our plan for the people of Ontario.

We laid out in the election campaign a number of priorities, like fixing the hydro mess. I congratulate the Minister of Energy, who is beginning that process by ridding Hydro One of their board and CEO and ending 758 renewable contracts across the province. That's going to save ratepayers nearly \$800 million, and this is the first major step in our government reducing hydro bills by 12%. I also thank the minister, because in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, the Otter Creek wind project was cancelled. That would have built 12 of the largest wind turbines in North America near Wallaceburg. So that's good that that has ended.

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We're going to continue on the path to putting more money back in people's pockets, creating good jobs, restoring accountability to the people of Ontario and ending hallway medicine—

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

Questions and comments?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am very pleased to be able to respond to the thoughtful inaugural address from my colleague the member from Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas. I congratulate her not only on her election, of course, but on a very thoughtful and important message today in this Legislature.

It is a very special place in which we find ourselves with an immense responsibility and privilege. I appreciate her sharing the personal story of coming here as a child. I didn't have the opportunity to come to Queen's Park as a child, but it is that reminder that this is the building for the whole province, and certainly inviting all the folks at home: If you've never been to Queen's Park, this is your building. Please come and visit. We applaud our pages, who have made the choice to come and to learn in this place. But it was an important reminder that, as your grandmother had mentioned, everybody is always listening. Now we're on TV as well, so it's an important place and space to behave ourselves—hopefully well.

I also wanted to echo her remarks about some of the concerns that we have seen so far, and certainly with the speech from the throne and very definitely missing some of our community members in that speech—those with disabilities as well, as you said. No mention of the peoples or priorities of our Indigenous communities, the First Nations, Métis and Inuit. That's concerning. I certainly hope that that was not an indication of things to come, that it was a chance for learning and growth on the

part of this government, to be able to move forward in a meaningful way and in pursuit of meaningful reconciliation.

But I think we're going to see great things from this member, as she has a strong, clear voice, being from Hamilton. I represent Oshawa, and we have that grit and determination in common, in centres of education, industry and history. I look forward to working with her and others in this House.

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

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: After 15 years of Liberal waste and mismanagement, the people of Ontario cannot afford to wait, and they don't have to wait. We are prepared to act.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to work with many youth throughout my school years, university years and during my campaign. Anyone who knows me knows that I have always been involved in some sort of youth organization or another, encouraged others and participated in youth activities.

I believe youth are not the leaders of tomorrow; they are the leaders of today. These youth have been neglected by the previous government. The York University strike has gone on for far too long, and the ones being hurt the most are the students. We plan to use all the tools at our disposal to end the strike and get them back in the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, we will keep our promises, and we will always put the best interests of the people first. I am proud to be part of this government, which is finally putting students first.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was a pleasure to listen to the member from Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas, a brand new riding—the very first MPP to represent this riding, hopefully for a long time—and to hear her passion about Hamilton. I'm always impressed, when I meet people from Hamilton, by how proud they are and how they can describe the escarpment and the different parts that make up the city. I've had the opportunity to visit on quite a few occasions, and they have every reason to be proud of where they're from.

I was also impressed with her involvement with the credit union and the example that she gave that, really, what you measure and what you see are not always the whole picture, and how she could tie this back to what we are doing with Bill 2, where you're looking at one part of what it means to have solar projects and wind projects, you're looking at one part of legislating people back to school and you're looking at one part of cancelling green energy. Life is more complicated than the slogans that you can use during an election campaign. Once you are at Queen's Park, we have the responsibility—she made that clear—to represent everybody. There are 14 million people who live here, who make Ontario their home. This responsibility is on each and everyone's shoulders. She made that really clear.

Finally, I did not know that her children were Mohawk. You always discover a little something new when you listen to somebody's inaugural speech. It has been very interesting. I wish her the best of luck.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the questions and comments. The member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas can now respond.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you to the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I have your old office now. I'd just like to mention that to you. Thank you. It's quite a comfortable couch.

To the members from Oshawa, Scarborough–Rouge Park and Nickel Belt, I thank you for your comments on my inaugural speech. All of you seem to understand that it is our job here, as people that are entrusted with this huge responsibility, to take the time, to take that sober second thought, to make sure that we are putting into place legislation or amendments where, actually, we know the whole story, that we don't have something that has unintended consequences.

I will just say that while it may seem easy, in some ways, to cut programs, to fire people and to cancel programs, what is really difficult is to face the consequences of this. In my riding of Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas, as I've mentioned, we've lost \$2.1 million that we were counting on to repair schools. I had heard some of the members opposite say that the money that was coming from that program was a drop in the bucket to fix these schools. But I would say that our schools would be happy to take that drop in the bucket.

In my school alone, we have kids that are being put at real risk. In recent tests, 56 drinking taps at 31 schools in Hamilton failed a lead test. This includes schools in my riding, Ancaster Senior and Dundas Central.

I am urging you and pleading that while you are rushing to keep your promises, do not be in such a rash rush that you forget the impacts that this is having on families and on children in communities all across Ontario.

Thank you very much for listening, and thank you for your time.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As this is my first time rising to speak in the House, I would like to congratulate you on your election. I would also like to congratulate everyone who is here today. You've worked very hard to get here. I'm very grateful to the constituents who have elected me here as well. I'm honoured.

It is a privilege and an honour to stand before this chamber today, and it is with gratitude that I make this inaugural address. It is gratitude that allows us to learn from the past, to live fully for today and to plan, with hope, for tomorrow. Gratitude is social glue. It respects and restores relationships, it encourages people to behave in ways that benefit others and it inspires duty.

I am grateful to be here today to represent the constituents of Kanata–Carleton and to serve the people

of Ontario. I give thanks to everyone who is engaged in our very important democratic processes and to all the people who supported me along the way.

Je suis reconnaissante d'être ici aujourd'hui pour représenter les électeurs de Kanata–Carleton. Je remercie très sincèrement tous ceux qui se sont engagés dans notre processus démocratique et tous ceux qui m'ont soutenue.

Contributing and giving back are important to me. What we leave behind for our children and how we prepare for the future matters. We all have something to contribute and must find our own unique and meaningful ways to share what we can.

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While we may not acknowledge it day to day, our lives and our characters are moulded by our families, where we have come from and where we live, the experiences we have—both positive and negative—and by the people we meet along the way who touch our lives. Sometimes the interactions are limited in time but very powerful. In other cases, there are events and lifelong relationships that influence our lives in ways we cannot fully appreciate at the time but only later understand when we reflect.

As I reflect on my journey to this point, I wish to express how grateful I am for the people who have come before me, for my parents and for my husband's parents, who have demonstrated throughout their lives the importance of persistence, resiliency and giving of themselves. I am fortunate to have had such wonderful people in my life to learn from. Life is a learning journey.

My father came to Canada at the age of three, in the late 1920s. His family was looking to start a new life here after experiencing hardship in Ireland. After a long ocean journey—there were no passenger planes in those days—they travelled from the east coast by train to Regina, Saskatchewan. Then the Great Depression hit. My father was the second-youngest of five children and, as soon as he was able, he sold sewing needles door-to-door with his older brother to help put food on the table. Times were tough. He was teased and ridiculed for his heavy, thick Irish accent, but he persevered, survived a ruptured appendix before the days of antibiotics and grew up to become a professional engineer with a successful 35-year career in the public service. He served us well. Dedication to learning and education was always important to him and he expected my two siblings and me to always do our best. He passed away in 2015, in his 90th year, after a lengthy illness. I think of his humility, loyalty and kindness often.

My mother was born prematurely in the winter of 1933, in Berwyn, Alberta, weighing less than two pounds. In those days there was little to be done except hope and pray. As the family story goes, her parents were told to do what they could, so they took her home in an apple basket and kept her near the wood stove to keep her warm. She survived and thrived and to this day, at the age of 85, she has a can-do mentality. She taught me, my brother and my sister that life is about choices and that no problem is so big that it cannot be solved. The three of us

became family doctors and have spent our careers helping others. Living through the events of World War II and the Great Depression, my mother's love of life and of people was never dampened. Everywhere I go in my hometown I regularly hear from others how wonderful my mother is—and yes, she is.

My parents instilled in me a “waste not, want not” mindset and a strong sense of fiscal conservatism. They wanted their children to have opportunities they did not have and they wanted to make sure we knew to be good stewards of the resources that we did have, and to be grateful.

When I see the massive debt left behind for Ontarians by the previous government, I worry about the associated costs which, in turn, make it harder to fund the many services on which Ontarians depend. Waste of tax dollars must not be normalized. It is one thing to take on debt when economic times are bad but quite another to rack up monstrous mountains of debt through waste and mismanagement. Fiscal responsibility allows government to have dollars to spend on important social programs and shared needs. Conservatism can be fiscally responsible and compassionate. It is good fiscal stewardship that allows government to provide for people in their time of need, and it is good fiscal policy that helps create opportunity and prosperity for us all.

Creating opportunity requires responsible spending, respect for people's hard work and hard-earned dollars, and it requires courage. People now and in the future are counting on us to do what is necessary to put Ontario back on track. The needs of future generations must matter. We must not squander their future.

Although the fiscal situation in Ontario may seem daunting, this government is ready to meet the challenge, and I am proud to be part of it. My parents always believed, as I do, that every problem has a solution. My sister and brother and I were encouraged to believe that if we put our minds to it, we could solve problems. Giving up was not an option.

Looking back on the lives of my parents, I recognize the hardships that they experienced not only shaped them, but they shaped me, and their ability to be resilient and bounce back after adversity was key to their success. There were many recollections of happy times too, but it is the foil of the hardship experienced that enhances the good and allows for the social emotion of gratitude to shine through.

My father-in-law and mother-in-law grew up during the Second World War in Poland—and I'd like to acknowledge my husband, who is sitting here today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

As I said, my father-in-law and mother-in-law grew up during the Second World War in Poland, and they experienced unbelievable adversity. Their amazing recollections and stunning accounts of their experiences have been shared over the years with their three children—including my husband—with me and with our children.

Life's experiences shape us, and my family is evidence that people can survive and thrive. Displaced

multiple times during the war, my father-in-law's family become DPs, deported persons. First deported from Poland in a boxcar to Siberia, they lived at one point in a dirt cave and survived on grass soup. Eventually, they travelled to Africa, to the base of Mount Kilimanjaro, searching for safety and peace, but only after losing their eldest son and brother to dysentery.

My husband's grandmother had left her remaining son—whom my husband is named after—in an orphanage, hoping that he would not starve during the deportation migration. But upon hearing of her eldest son's death, she was determined to be with her surviving son. So she returned to try to find him only to realize that the orphanage was gone. It wasn't just mass migration of people; it was mass migration of the orphanages as well. But she did not give up hope. She kept searching until one day she found him.

Meanwhile, the eldest sister, whom they had been separated from, had managed to find her mother and brother, and the surviving family was reunited. They came as immigrants to Canada at the end of the war, arriving in Halifax at Pier 21 as many others did, and they settled in Ottawa.

My father-in-law likes to say that he was removed from Poland as a DP, deported person, but came to Canada as a different kind of DP: a delayed pioneer. From the date he was put on a boxcar to Siberia at the age of five, on February 9, 1940, to the date that he arrived in Canada, on February 10, 1950, it was exactly 10 years—a decade of his life.

In Ottawa, they went to school and learned to speak English. My mother-in-law could already speak several other languages after being moved from country to country through war-torn Europe. They found jobs and they were successful in putting down roots.

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My father-in-law trained as a plumber, worked hard to establish himself and founded what eventually became one of the largest HVAC companies in Canada. He went on to create other successful companies in the true spirit of entrepreneurship, which was passed on to his three children.

He and his beloved wife, Sophie, and family have become part of the fabric of the Ottawa business community, making good lives for themselves and for others, and giving back to the community. My mother-in-law still belongs to the Polish church, and even though her three children and eight grandchildren are all grown, she keeps in touch with everyone.

My husband's grandmother never did learn to speak English or to read or to write, but she was intelligent and an astute observer. One day, she mentioned to my father-in-law in Polish that business must not be good. She had not seen many concrete trucks lately going up and down the road—and she was right. The recession hit shortly after. She lived until the astounding age of 111 and was the oldest person to receive anaesthesia at the Ottawa Hospital several years ago.

With determination, hard work and a sound fiscal approach, we can all have a promising future in Ontario.

People are sometimes surprised that a family doctor would end up in politics, and yet serving Ontarians seems to be a natural progression. I have spent many years in medical politics at the local, municipal, provincial and national levels, as well as having been an advocate for people and patient care for almost 30 years. Yes, I am new to provincial politics as an MPP, but having witnessed political dynamics of both the federal and provincial levels as an observer, I have wondered why it cannot be more civil. People have commented to me over the years, expressing their concern over the disrespect that MPs and MPPs appear to show one another at times.

We must expect government to be responsible and to serve its citizens compassionately. Elected representatives should strive to be diligent, respectful and trustworthy. We should consider how our behaviour inside and outside this chamber reflects on our credibility as politicians. As leaders not only in government but in society, I believe we must walk the talk. If we believe that bullying others and using stigmatizing labelling is wrong, then let our actions show that. If we believe that mental health matters, then let us consider how our actions demonstrate respect for each other. I implore members here to respect the dignity of the individual. In the political arena, attack an issue and oppose an idea strenuously, but consider how personal attacks on others affect your own self-respect. We can strive for a higher level of decorum and we would all be better for it.

When discussing issues and ideas and policies, let us value the importance of different perspectives and the importance of diverse opinions. Expressing opposing views can be done respectfully, and it is through the sharing of ideas that we have the best potential to find collaborative solutions. Civil society requires open and transparent dialogue for informed decision-making, and I believe that people can make good decisions for themselves if they are fully informed with accurate information.

The success of the riding in which I have lived for over 50 years has depended on the collaboration and sharing of ideas and the tenacity of the people who contributed and made it what it is today. Kanata–Carleton is a wonderful riding in which to grow up, live, work and play. It's a mixture of rural and urban communities.

I still recall driving into Kanata for the first time, when I was five, with my mother and sister. We all gasped with the taxi driver—he gasped too—when we caught our first glimpse of Kanata. It was like a park—there were houses, but it was like a park—and over the first hill, as we drove in, we all gasped. It was beautiful. Bill Teron, often referred to as the “Father of Kanata,” conceptualized a new urban-suburban community concept, one that included green space and schools within walking distance, as well as community facilities that would encourage activity and recreation as part of the community.

Such visionaries with entrepreneurial drive and know-how are responsible for the creation of Kanata back in the 1960s and for the evolution of its vibrant high-tech

sector in Kanata North. People like Terry Matthews—Sir Terence Matthews—contributed to creating what was called Silicon Valley North, and Kanata is now home to Canada's largest technology park and technology hub. It's an innovation centre with a business park that combines retail and business and supports hundreds of creative technology companies, including well-established companies and start-ups.

Kanata–Carleton is home to many important agricultural communities that have grown along with the families that have lived there, in some cases for generations, and who came as pioneers, creating their own life from the land. Agriculture, too, has been touched by innovation, evolving to use more technology than ever before.

It is a welcoming riding to newcomers. Kanata–Carleton continues to grow in population and is becoming more diverse. A few years ago, Kanata–Carleton's own town of Carp was named one of the friendliest communities in Canada, and it is easy to understand why. This year, from September 20 to 23 is the 155th Carp Fair, called “the best little fair in Canada,” and you're all invited.

I've been fortunate to have lived, worked and raised a family in Kanata–Carleton, and being part of this developing region taught me how important it is to contribute to the well-being of where we live. I was a newcomer to Kanata in 1967, arriving in Ontario after moving from Whitehorse, Yukon. I grew up in the riding and spent 26 years there as a family doc, helping people in the community; and the question I always ask myself is how we make things better.

I'm grateful to my amazing husband of 33 years, who has been such a wonderful husband and father and steadfast supporter. I'm so proud of our three children, adults now. They have taught me to be a better person. Where did the time go? And when I look at my children and others, I understand that they are the future. They are Ontario's greatest resource.

We need all Ontarians to reach their potential, and post-secondary education is critical to the future of Ontario and its prosperity. As Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, I will champion our education and employment programs that benefit students and job seekers. I will work with all our colleges and universities to create the conditions that make it easier for people to access high-quality education.

We need to build an economy that allows more Ontario workers to find a job in their home communities, start a business, grow a business or invest in Ontario. Our government is committed to bringing quality jobs back to this province, and my focus will be on making sure that we have prepared the people for those jobs.

I look forward to talking to the people of Ontario about how we can make our programs more efficient and cost-effective. Political leadership requires us to learn from those who have come before us, to have the courage to face the realities of today and the vision to combine compassion and pragmatism. We should lead with the head and the heart.

I'm grateful for this honour and privilege to serve Ontarians.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was very interesting listening to the inaugural speech from the honourable member and learning more about her family and some of the struggles that her parents and grandparents had to go through. I want to start by congratulating—I don't know if that's such a thing—your grandmother for making it to 111 years old. I certainly have met quite a few elderly people, people over 100 years old, but never to 111 years old. This is something to be proud of, for sure, and I wish you a long life, just as much as your grandmother had.

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I also thank you for deciding to run. It is interesting to go from health care professionals to coming into the House. There are many, many opportunities to help people when you become an MPP, and this is something that I find very rewarding. I'm pretty sure that you will share those sentiments.

I would like to make sure that the struggles that your parents and grandparents did to come and immigrate into our country are something that made your family proud and closer, and helped you move forward. I don't wish any harm upon anybody, but sometimes to overcome hurdles helps you to see life in a different way, to appreciate life and appreciate everything we have.

I did not know you were a physician. I certainly congratulate you on that also. We need to make sure that our publicly funded, publicly delivered health care system is something that defines us as Canadians and Ontarians. Each and every one of us has to work together to protect that.

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

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member from Nickel Belt for expressing her sentiments on the remarks of the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

I just want to start, Minister, by noting that another great politician and doctor was a former Father of Confederation, a former Premier in this country and a former Prime Minister: Sir Charles Tupper. So the future is friendly for you, Minister, I will submit.

I want to thank you for sharing your story. I think we're all very inspired, across party lines, by the life of service you've lived. Your family came to this country in pursuit of a better opportunity for their children and grandchildren. I can draw a shared experience from my family, who came seeking economic opportunity. It is amazing, coming through Pier 21—the humility, knowing where their lives started. It's so clear that in your life, the humble beginnings of your grandparents and forefathers have never left you. I think that spirit is something we could all learn from in this chamber.

I also want to note that this is a minister who spent 30 years in the advancement of public health care, the advancement of good-quality health care for the people of this province, in remote parts of this province and in

Ottawa region. That level of knowledge will improve the discourse in this Legislature and improve public health care for all Ontarians, especially at a critical time with hallway medicine.

Minister, you speak about the values that were enshrined in you by your family: the values of hard work, of personal responsibility, of love of country and of living within one's means. These are values that I think unite us all as Canadians. We now need government to do the same, and today we know, under the new government, that we're going to do just that.

You also spoke about the next generation of thinkers, of entrepreneurs, of people who want to take risks in this economy. We need to enable them to achieve their God-given talents, and I know under your leadership, we're going to do just that—to enable them to achieve their full potential, to give them the dignity of good jobs and to build a knowledge economy that will help us compete with the rest of the world.

On behalf of all of us, thank you for your service and thank you for running.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: To the member for Kanata–Carleton, thank you for sharing that story. It was really quite fascinating. It really created a picture in everyone's mind of the struggles that your families went through in their journey to get here.

I'd just like to mention that my parents are from Ireland and Scotland, so that accent—I get it. People used to ask my mother if she spoke a second language. She was Irish and she would point to my dad and say, "Well, I can understand him." So I understand that.

These stories that we can all tell remind me of the proverb that we all rise on the shoulders of giants. I think that will strike a chord with every one of us who understands where we come from.

As we tell these stories, I do hope that this government will keep these stories top of mind when they consider some of the issues around immigration and settlement, because settlement is a provincial responsibility. When we talk about asylum seekers, we have to have the same kind of compassion that we have for the stories of our forebears that we do for other people from other countries around the world. These stories that we're telling about our families are happening in countries around the world, and they are happening now.

I appreciate your story and I appreciate your compassion, and I do hope that we will continue to see a government that sees beyond just policy, but sees the compassion, the heart and the struggles of all people in our communities. Thank you very much for sharing that story.

I congratulate you on your ministry and I look forward to working with you in the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? The member for Sault Ste. Marie.

Mr. Ross Romano: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Applause.

Mr. Ross Romano: Thank you to my friends for that warm welcome.

I want to thank the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for that wonderful speech she provided. It's such a good experience that we have through these inaugural speeches; we get to learn so much more about our friends within our party lines and across party lines. That is so important for us to have that background, because notwithstanding what happens across lines, we are all people with great stories that brought us here, and hearing all of them has just been—I think we're all fortunate to have that opportunity, so thank you for sharing. I appreciate that a great deal, and I'm sure your background will serve you very well as you pursue, along with our government, the goal of trying to move our people forward as a province.

I do want to speak very briefly to the bill that we're debating right now, in just a few words. It's interesting to see, as we proceeded through the campaign and now into government, that what we typically would hear from the opposition and the Liberal Party is a lot of what sounds like Candy Land. It was all these promises and promises and promises, with no real intention to be able to follow through, and if you can't keep up with a promise, hey, you can just call it a "stretch goal" when you fail to follow it.

I look at things that I'm hearing now in terms of what our government has been doing, and the nature of the complaints is all essentially along the lines of another story or tale for kids from our youth, and that's Chicken Little. The sky is not falling. In fact, the sky is very bright. It's bright blue, because people see that we are now a government that is actually making promises and keeping them. We are following along with our province and doing what the people of this province need us to do, so I'm happy to be part of that government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities can now respond.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you for those comments. I appreciate them very much. Our member Stephen Lecce from King–Vaughan: Interesting that you should mention Sir Charles Tupper. That is the building that my father worked in for almost 35 years. It was called the Sir Charles Tupper Building in Ottawa. Isn't that an amazing coincidence?

And thank you to the member Ross Romano from Sault Ste. Marie. I remember coming across Canada numerous times, travelling back and forth across the country. That's what my parents always did to visit our relatives out west—going through Sault Ste. Marie many times. It's great to see the country that way.

I want to mention that I spoke about my family and my husband's family, but I know that they were not the only ones. General Sikorski, who was the Polish general who led many of the deported people out of Siberia and war-torn Poland, had an agreement with Churchill to get the people down to Mount Kilimanjaro. That was a deal that he had made with Churchill. My father-in-law was

telling me one day that they called General Sikorski the Polish Moses, because he led them out to safety. I think it's important to recognize that they were not alone, that these stories played out across the world—similar stories.

I want to come back to one phrase, which is that with determination, hard work and a sound fiscal approach, all Ontarians can have a promising future. That is something that I believe in strongly. I know that we can get Ontario onto a good footing.

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We must never give up trying do that. And we can do that with compassion; we can do it with courage, integrity, determination. These are the things that will get us there. We must persist and never give up. This is for the future Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to begin by acknowledging that we meet here in Toronto, in the Dish With One Spoon territory. I'd also like to recognize the treaty between the Anishnawbe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee peoples.

I am pleased to rise for my inaugural speech in this House, and I'd like to congratulate everyone assembled here on their recent election wins. I'd also like to thank the voters in London North Centre who have placed their confidence in me. We had a record voter turnout, and 47.6% of voters cast their vote for the NDP and change for the better.

I'd also like to acknowledge the outgoing member Deb Matthews, who visited us here today.

I started my campaign in the cold winter months after winning the nomination, and I was lucky to have the dedication and support of Dirka, Sara, Tina, Steve, Rod, Elliot, Robyn, Helen, Bryn, Craig, Glenda, Barry, Mark, Kathy, Deb, Susan, Judith and many, many more. We had a motivated and effective campaign team and riding association, who were absolutely brilliant. Before and during the election, it was an honour to meet so many people at the door and hear about their concerns. I only have so much time here today, so I won't begin to name all of the great people who helped during the campaign. It was, indeed, a movement.

London is a phenomenal city, and I'm proud to be one of three NDP members elected in London, alongside Peggy Sattler and Teresa Armstrong.

London is along the 401 corridor, near to prime agricultural land and centres on the forks of the Thames River, named so by John Graves Simcoe in 1793—thanks to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk—and is also known as the Eshkani-ziibi or "antlered river." Simcoe liked the place so much, he wanted to make it the capital of Upper Canada. Unfortunately, this did not happen, and someplace called York was selected instead.

My riding is also home to Museum London, Western University, the London Health Sciences Centre, numerous libraries, schools, places of worship, non-profit organizations, charities and shelters.

Everyone here knows about the London Knights in hockey and the London Lightning in basketball. Sir

Frederick Banting even discovered insulin in London, Ontario.

On that note, London has a long history of innovative businesses. Newer companies include Info-Tech, Arcane digital, Dibly and many more in the digital, creative and innovation sector.

Workers are the people who built London. As a teacher, I was honoured to belong to my local executive and be a delegate to our local labour council. We have great union strength in London, including ETFO, OSSTF, CUPE, Unifor, ATU, SEIU, OPSEU, PSAC, COPE, CUPW, LIUNA and many more.

We're also developing quite a name for our beer. Of course, Labatt started it all off, but now London Brewing Co-op is a truly innovative business approach where the workers own and make decisions about the business in a democratic fashion. They are a brilliant, community-minded organization that is revitalizing London's Old East Village. They also operate On the Move Organics, where can you order and have delivered locally sourced organic food, as well as The Root Cellar café, where can you have that organic produce prepared.

Anderson Craft Ales also brings delicious beer and life to London and is 100% family-owned and -operated.

We also look forward to welcoming Silver Stacks and Powerhouse Brewing Company in London North Centre.

London North Centre is also home to the Aeolian Hall in the heart of Old East Village. Aeolian Hall, built in 1882, is well known for the talent it attracts, the phenomenal acoustics and the wonderful volunteer staff, which includes Shirley, whose mother ran for the CCF 40 years ago to the day of our most recent election.

El Sistema, also offered at the Aeolian, provides a free intensive, innovative and accessible musical education for children and youth in London. It has earned TED, UNESCO and Glenn Gould awards. Not only do these gifted and talented artists change the lives of youth through musical instruction; the program provides daily meals and instruments free of charge.

Everyone in London is pretty excited that we are going to be the host for the 2019 Juno Awards. We have too many talented artists and writers to call by name, and we are known for some fantastic productions, such as Original Kids, the Grand Theatre, the Palace Theatre and many more.

I had the opportunity to meet thousands of Londoners over the course of the campaign. We value our health care in London. We watched as cut after cut from Conservative and Liberal governments have devastated our amazing facilities. As it stands now, London Health Sciences has a hallway transfer protocol, a form for staff to decide whether you belong in a hallway or in a room. This should be our first priority as elected officials: to make sure that people are healthy and, if they're sick, that they can get better.

We had an innovative program for patients who survived a cardiac episode. It was called the Cardiac Fitness Institute. Dr. Larry Patrick and Dr. Ross Bishop helped patients with their diet, exercise, lifestyle—and it

was a tight-knit community. They raised the majority of funding on their own but were neglected by the previous Liberal government when London Health Sciences withdrew funding.

First and foremost, this program prolonged and saved lives. I was so proud that Andrea Horwath, Peggy Sattler, Teresa Armstrong and the NDP called attention to their story. I was also pleased to see the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London at one CFI event.

When you compare the small amount of money this program cost in comparison to a cardiac event, it should be an easy decision. Unfortunately, we watched as this program was nearly lost. Now, if you're new to cardiac care, the provincial government funds the six-month CRSP program alone.

Long-term care is another issue that Londoners care deeply about. The last Conservative government removed the 2.5 hours of direct care per patient per day, and the Liberal government did nothing to restore it. How can we, as elected officials or even as a society, accept this? Seniors deserve to spend their golden years with dignity, with respect, and to enjoy their lives. They've earned it. Caring for our elder generation is not an option; it's our duty.

Currently, London has suffered losses in the manufacturing sector, largely from the previous Liberal government. People are struggling to find good jobs with decent pay and to build good lives. It is difficult for businesses to remain afloat with the sky-high prices of hydro, and I was so proud of Andrea's commitment to buy Hydro back and lower hydro bills genuinely. I hope that my colleagues across the floor will realize that Ontarians built the hydro system, so Ontarians should own it.

In London North Centre, we have a broad spectrum of socio-economic status. We have mansions and we have community housing. People struggle with food insecurity, and finding affordable housing is a crisis in London. If people do not have a place to call home, nothing else matters. I strongly believe in housing first. In a province as rich as Ontario, no one should be left out in the cold.

The city of London is also struggling with an opioid crisis. We're lucky to have dedicated and community-minded individuals who have started supervised injection sites, a place where addicts build relationships with caring individuals who can then help them with wrap-around supports. Six people who overdosed have been saved, and 100 people have been put in touch with housing and supports to combat addiction and mental illness.

While we could never put a price on a human life, the evidence is clear: The province bears the cost of addiction, whether it's through initiatives or the criminal justice system. I'm glad that people are finally realizing that this crisis affects us all, and I hope the government listens to experts and those with lived experience. Addiction is not limited to a certain segment of the population, and just because someone is an addict doesn't mean they want to die.

London is a vibrant city, home to a diverse population. Unfortunately, we've also seen a rise in racism. I want to

restate to everyone here that no matter where you come from, you have a home in London, Ontario.

Thank you again to everyone who put their trust in me. I look forward to representing everyone and being a champion for London North Centre, and for London, the heart of southwestern Ontario.

1540

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to take this time to tell you my story. During the recent throne speech, I heard the dog whistle loud and clear. Lieutenant Governor Dowdeswell read, "We must look beyond our differences—in race, region, language, gender, religion, lifestyle, sexual orientation or creed and recognize that all of us are Ontarians and Canadians first."

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Can I ask the member to withdraw his unparliamentary comment?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I will withdraw.

As a child, I always liked a challenge. When I was young, I thought about what would be the most difficult, but most rewarding, vocation. I decided to become an Anglican priest. I had a very strong faith, though most of my Bible study was on my own. Simply put, I believe helping others leads to a more fulfilling and longer-lasting happiness than simply helping oneself.

But growing up was very challenging. I come from a great family. I had amazing friends. But I always knew I was different. I can't honestly say when I figured this out, but it was just something that was always there, looming behind me. Eventually, I was able to admit to myself that I was gay. It was extraordinarily difficult because I had, quite literally, read what the Bible had to say, and, let's face it, read without interpretation, the Bible isn't too friendly to women and to gay people. I had no sense of allegory as a child.

Growing up, I had zero resources and was completely and utterly alone. It's quite apt that Oscar Wilde calls it "the love that dare not speak its name." I was afraid that if my secret were found out, I would be rejected, humiliated, possibly beaten and/or killed. Those were the stories, and that was the reality for some.

On the schoolyard, the worst thing you could call someone is "gay," "faggot," "homo," "queer." When "gay" is synonymous with the abject, the lowest of the low, the shameful, the rejected, you begin to feel like you are all of those things.

Throughout elementary and high school, I ignored it as best I could, but I did have the good fortune of finding out that there were openly gay teachers, that there were educated, respectable and kind gay people in the world—not some long-clawed bogeyman hiding in a dark alley somewhere. While I was never able to talk about being gay with them, it was powerful to find out that I was not alone. They are true heroes and giants.

During high school, I was lucky to have my friends Celine and Colleen, with whom I was able to talk about being gay. Well, to be honest, I probably started off by saying I was bisexual. They were so completely loving and supportive, I can't thank them enough. They are still my good friends to this day.

After entering Huron University College in London to pursue the ministry, I had the good fortune of being taught by Dr. Cory Davies and Dr. Dermot McCarthy in the English department. They were brilliant, profound and changed my life forever. I decided to instead become a teacher.

I decided to be honest with myself, the world and admit to everyone that I was gay. I gained some people's respect, while losing others. I lost friends, but gained others. I stand now, gay and proud that I live in a place where I have protected human rights, where I can marry the man I love, a place where I can be true to myself and not be afraid.

I count myself as lucky. Many, many, many LGBT+ youth resort to forms of self-harm, unhealthy relationships, addiction and even suicide. Stats Canada indicates that around 500 Canadian youth die at their own hands each year, but we'll never know how many are LGBT+ because even in death, many are still ashamed.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual students are four times more likely than straight youth to attempt suicide. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans students are twice as likely as straight youth to think about suicide. We can't ignore this. These are our children. Their mental and physical health are at stake.

In the throne speech, the Conservative government seemed to want to cater to the likes of Charles McVety and Tanya Granic Allen and use the word "lifestyle." This word makes me stand up and question it. I'd like to know what was meant by that word "lifestyle." Did that mean a healthy lifestyle? Did that mean an unhealthy lifestyle? A spiritual lifestyle? Guess again: The right is calling being gay a choice when they use the word "lifestyle."

Being gay is not a lifestyle. I am who I am, and I expect to be treated with respect, no matter what, because I live in Ontario, Canada, a place supported by a Human Rights Code and a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, I believe we should all be kind and decent to one another.

I am so proud that Andrea Horwath and the NDP support science, support facts and love the LGBT+ community for exactly who they are.

The throne speech says that this government will replace the sex ed curriculum, a curriculum that I, as a teacher, call the "health and physical education curriculum." But instead of replacing it, they have simply repealed without replacement, moving Ontario back 20 years—before texting, personal cellphones and social media, and before same sex marriage was legal. This is anachronism, pure and simple. The 1998 curriculum does not belong in our time.

Some 68% of trans students, 55% of lesbian and bisexual students, and 42% of gay and bisexual students reported being harassed about their perceived gender identity or sexual orientation. Mr. Speaker, why is the government removing LGBT+ students from the curriculum?

Some 20% of LGBT+ students reported being physically harassed or assaulted about their perceived gender

identity or sexual orientation. Mr. Speaker, is the government keeping these students safe? The Conservative government appears to be happy to reject science, reject data and put our students at risk.

Last but not least, with the House's permission, I'd like to talk about consent.

I have many close friends who are survivors of sexual assault. Lives can become shattered; people are sometimes never the same. Some people are able to overcome trauma, while others never pick up the pieces. Most are somewhere in between, but all are suffering. The government has a duty and a responsibility to stand up and protect everyone against assault and abuse.

I'd like you to think of the girls and boys who couldn't say no, who didn't know how to say no, who were afraid to say no.

As a teacher, I have heard from many educators who teach about consent. Discussions with students aren't limited to "no means no." Instead, students learn about enthusiastic consent, and how important it is for individuals in a relationship to stop, check in and make sure everything is okay before they move forward. Once students learn about consent, lives are forever changed.

Mr. Speaker, we in the NDP say no to the Conservative government's lack of consent education and the rollback to a previous century. I am calling on the government to reinstate the 2015 curriculum, for the safety and future of our children. Think about the boy who learns how to value a woman's voice, who stops, who checks, and who learns that by not asking, he could hurt someone forever. How many lives will be impacted by that type of understanding?

The Conservative government has effectively removed consent, online safety and LGBT+ families from the curriculum, including healthy relationships.

Mr. Speaker, I survived a culture of misunderstanding—of hatred, even. But my story is only one of many. I am lucky to stand on the shoulders of many in the LGBT+ community who have endured and survived far worse.

1550

My last question, Mr. Speaker: Is it or is it not the role of government to serve and protect our children? One life affected by hate, violence, misunderstanding and abuse is too many. I want this Conservative government to do the right thing and to protect our children, teach them tolerance and teach them consent.

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

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to thank the honourable member from London North Centre for his very passionate speech. It's never easy to share some of your personal experiences and the challenges that we might have faced in our lifetime and in some cases continue to face, so my hat is off to him for sharing what he had to go through, or in some cases still might be going through. It's unfortunate, but this is why we're here and trying to make our province and our country better each and every single day.

Mr. Speaker, one thing I do agree with the honourable member on is the fact that some of the challenges he mentioned in his community and what the community is facing—we all know life had become difficult under the previous Liberal government for the 15 years. I hear that in my riding all the time. This is why, as the Ontario PC Party and our now Ontario PC government, we ran on policies and clearly communicated them in terms of how we're going to improve the average life or family's life, and how we're going to help them make ends meet.

Far too many individuals, especially in the rural part of my riding, I can tell you, were having to make a choice whether they were going to pay their hydro bills or whether they were going to buy their groceries or how they were going to put food on the tables of their families. We ran on these policies, and I'm thankful that Ontario residents or voters gave the Ontario PC Party a strong mandate that we're looking forward to implementing, and we'll work every single day.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm glad to again add my comments in response to a thoughtful inaugural address at this time from my colleague from London North Centre. I, of course, appreciate hearing the various journeys from all of the new members in this Legislature, to hear the diversity but also to hear the things that we have in common, to hear about his community of London North Centre and recognize that folks in Oshawa and across the province are struggling with some of the same challenges when it comes to affordability, when it comes to seniors care, and that it isn't, as you said, an option; it is our duty to provide that care with dignity.

I know that we are going to be speaking at length over the next several years about the opioid crises and how to best address the mental health and addictions needs in our community, how to support those who are supporting people in crisis.

Of course, I thank him for his, frankly, vulnerability in sharing his personal journey. I know that many of the members in this Legislature have been telling their truths and sharing their family stories and, no exception, I appreciate the honesty and I am glad to make connections, as well, to the individual. You know, my brother grew up as a young man conflicted and finding his way, and now he's able to live authentically with his husband, and they are able to be safe and chart a forward course, as anyone deserves to do around the world, quite frankly.

To his points about the sex ed curriculum, the health and physical education curriculum—I spoke earlier today about consent. I'm glad to have the conversations about consent because they're conversations about permissions, and that is a conversation we need to have with all of our youth at all ages about what makes them comfortable, what makes them safe. That is not something to leave out. So I thank the member, and I look forward to having these conversations.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's a pleasure for me to again stand in this Legislature. I'd like to congratulate, first of all, the member from London North Centre on his recent election and his—I guess he would call it his maiden speech, which is wonderful.

One of the things I really enjoy—I enjoy listening to all the members, especially the new members, because you get to learn more about them and where they're coming from. I personally believe that the more you understand someone, the better you get to see things from their perspective as well.

One of the things that we as a party—I'm certainly glad that we have decided to do away with the Green Energy Act. We talk about the White Pines wind farm, but I'd also like to reference the fact that we're going to eliminate that Green Energy Act. I was very pleased when our Minister of Energy came up with the decision to in fact do away with 758 of those green energy contracts, one of which was Otter Creek down in my riding of Chatham-Kent. Actually, it's in my neighbouring riding. We've also promised to ensure that hydro rates are a lot lower, and we know, with over 500 industrial wind turbines down in my riding of Chatham-Kent-Leamington, the expense it's costing not just my constituents, but all of Ontario. So we'll do that.

One of the other things we had promised to do was to get rid of the CEO of Hydro One. Well, I'm pleased to say that he has resigned. The board has resigned at no cost to Ontarians. Promise made, promise kept.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I am really proud to stand here as a member of this House and a member of this caucus with my fellow member from London North Centre, who gave this really powerful speech. It was really wonderful that you were talking about—and it really spoke to the fact that it's 2018, where the member can talk about the fact that he is a gay man, and he is in this House and he's proud to be gay.

I marched in the gay Pride Parade a few weeks ago with the member, and it's such a fun event. If you've never been out to it, I highly recommend that everybody go. It is such a fun event that you forget that this is actually a protest march. But it is a protest march, because in this country until 1968, if you were openly gay, you could be arrested. In 1980, the mayor of Toronto, John Sewell, lost the election largely because he had marched in the gay Pride Parade in the previous year.

We have come so far in our society, but we still hear words that are prejudiced. There's an undercurrent of prejudice in that word "lifestyle" that has been used in this House. It's wrong, it's judgmental, and it's a euphemism for a lack of acceptance. I would encourage you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd encourage the members opposite to ask your caucus members not to use it out of respect for the LGBTQ+ members who are in this House, and the LGBTQ+ citizens of this province. I'd ask them not to use that term.

I'd ask you to take that into consideration, Mr. Speaker, and I'd ask the caucus members opposite to also

take into consideration banning that particular use of the word "lifestyle."

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. The member for London North Centre can now respond.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the honourable members from Milton, Oshawa, Chatham-Kent-Leamington as well as Spadina-Fort York. I've got to say, it was not an easy thought to get up here and to discuss these issues with you. They're very personal and something that I feel is very important. I think what we need to do as people—we need to be authentic and genuine. The way I look at it as a teacher is that one day, I hope that there are young people out there who will see that even though they may feel alone, may feel isolated, may feel as if they are the only one, they can take a look at different examples and see that they can do whatever they put their mind to.

I am still concerned, though, with the repeal of the sex education curriculum, that we've repealed without replacing. These are issues that are important. These are issues that are life-changing. I pointed out all the statistics that I did to let you know that for some students, this is life or death. Leaving them out is simply not acceptable. Pretending that they don't exist or that they'll get in there eventually is not okay either. Your government has committed to the most extensive consultation ever, in all 124 ridings. What is the timeline for that? It has to be asked.

1600

When I take a look at the issues that we're confronting, what people were speaking about most at the doors was health care and long-term care; it was hydro. People weren't saying, "We need to repeal, without replacing, the health and physical education curriculum." That simply was not on people's radar. I think this government—I'd like to remind it to really focus on its priorities. Focus on the priorities that affect everyone. That's health; that's hydro; that's long-term care.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been more than six and one-half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader or his designate specifies otherwise.

I recognize the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I think, Speaker, we'd like the debate to continue.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Further debate?

Ms. Jane McKenna: Mr. Speaker, I'll be taking my 10 minutes to do my maiden speech today.

I ran provincially in 2011 and won the opportunity to represent the people of my beautiful hometown of Burlington. I ran again in 2014 and I lost the seat, the first time the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario had lost the seat in 72 years. On June 7, 2018, I won it

back again. It was a resounding victory for a whole host of reasons that I'll come back to later.

If I was asked to compare the experiences of winning and losing, I would say that they are both the most deeply humbling experiences in my life. When I lost in 2014, I was reminded of a poem that most of us who went to public school in Ontario have studied in English class. The poem is *If*, written by Rudyard Kipling. If I may say a few lines from it now:

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

When on occasion during the campaign I felt momentarily too exhausted to carry on, these lines from this famous poem from 1910 would come to mind and help me find the drive, the tenacity and the stamina you need to keep going in a hard-fought campaign.

I'm always struck by the way we refer to political campaigns using the language of war. Political campaigns and warfare share strategy and tactics, jab and thrust, and candidate against opponent, but truly, for me, political campaigning is more about physical and mental endurance than it is about fighting to win. It is more about constantly honing and mastering the art of persuasion on a variety of issues, hundreds of times each day. It is about believing in yourself and the wisdom of the people you were asking to elect you. And, of course, it is always about believing that you can win. So in 2018, I held on. I gave the campaign all I had to give and was rewarded with a victory.

When I turned 50 years old, I decided it was time for a change. I have always believed that when one door closes, another one opens, and when the time comes, you've got to seize the day. My five children were more or less launched, so I ran for a seat at city council in ward 1 against the incumbent, Rick Craven. I lost, but in the process of that campaign, I learned so much about the people of Burlington, and I fell in love with politics.

I have lived in Burlington the majority of my life, and I love my city nestled between the beauty of Lake Ontario and the majesty of the Niagara Escarpment. But not until I was canvassing and chatting with so many people on their doorsteps or front lawns did I really understand the depth of attachment and love that our residents have for our fair city. Many had strong views

about the direction we were headed in, what improvements we needed and what changes they wanted to see. Most importantly, though, I learned that people didn't feel they had a voice. They felt that no one was listening and that their views were unimportant.

Even though I lost that election, I truly feel that it was a personal win for me: I had found what my calling was.

When I ran and won the seat provincially in 2011, I had developed a deeper understanding of my role as a representative and an advocate for my constituents.

I'm aware that back in the day, free votes in the Legislature were more common, and there were occasions when issues of morality and integrity were debated and voted on in this assembly. On those occasions, an MPP was expected to listen to the views of his or her constituents and vote with his or her conscience. We are very rarely called upon to balance the views of our constituents and reconcile those with our conscience. Thankfully, I know, as do my constituents, that my role is to represent them, to be their voice at Queen's Park.

I am often asked what I think is the most important issue today in Burlington. But in truth, every single person I speak to has an important issue or story to share with me. I always do everything I can to champion their cause and help them to work out whatever their problem may be. I find that work extremely satisfying.

I mentioned earlier that I was fortunate to win a strong victory on June 7, 2018. I want to share with you some of the reasons why I think that was the case.

Of course, every campaign is different, and I had a wonderful team of volunteers who gave their all and to whom I am eternally grateful.

The 2018 campaign is notable for the very significant increase in voter turnout. Burlington went from 42% voter turnout in 2014 to 66% in 2018. The people of Burlington had engaged on this issue, and they were ready for change in government. Canvassing became an energizing experience. People were so supportive at the door. In fact, when the number of PC lawn sign requests increased by 300% in Burlington, we knew that people were really taking an interest in changing the government.

Most gratifying for me was the number of young people I spoke to who were voting for the first time and really wanted to know their vote would count towards bringing in a new government. They told me they wanted a politician they could trust.

People generally felt they were working so much harder but not getting ahead as they had expected to. So many new taxes, and yet the schools were in disrepair. Too many people were experiencing hallway health care. Seniors were receiving what felt to them like tiny rations of home care. Hydro costs were soaring. People wanted to know and to believe that the government will respect their hard-earned tax dollars.

In fact, over the past 15 years, the Liberal government has been on a pretty wild spending spree. They more than doubled the provincial debt, taking spending to record levels and giving Ontario the dubious honour of holding

the highest sub-sovereign debt in the world. As we are all aware, Ontario's debt is more than \$300 billion. Ontario spends more than \$11 billion annually to service that debt. Debt servicing is our fourth-largest expenditure item in the budget, and as interest costs increase, we are going to continue to feel the squeeze.

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I'm not an economist but I can manage a household budget, and it's abundantly clear to me and all of us on this side of the House that the Liberals have never had a revenue problem. What they did have, though, was terrible spending habits. Government expenditures under the Liberals' government more than doubled from 2002 to 2018, to \$150 billion a year.

And yet, despite record-level spending, our schools have a maintenance backlog of some \$14 billion. Our hospitals have been living with a spending freeze for four years, and the people of Ontario are feeling the pain. Ontario's doctors have been without a contract for years, and 34,000 people are currently on the wait-list for long-term-care beds.

Well, finally, the party with the taxpayers' money is officially over.

Ontario will never accept a carbon tax. Families have done their part. They are stretched thin and they have had enough. Every single decision this government makes will be driven by one guiding principle: putting the interests of the hard-working people and families first.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on one of my goals in this Legislature, where I am so proud to be one of 124 members. I would like to contribute to elevating our debate, listening carefully to one another and showing our respect for the value of democracy. We must always use our heads but we must also consider and follow our hearts.

We all have a journey. This isn't a dress rehearsal. We all have to do the best we can to be the best we can, for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to my colleague from Markham–Thornhill to finish our 20 minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now we turn to the member from Markham–Thornhill.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say congratulations to you on your recent election as a Speaker of the House.

It's truly an honour and a humbling experience to be standing here representing the residents of Markham–Thornhill. It is hard for me to express the feelings I have here today and to put them into words, but I will try my best.

I want to thank the residents of Markham–Thornhill for the faith and confidence they placed in me.

I want to thank my dear and loving wife, Dr. Rajes, and my children, Pirathap, Kethika and Venorth, for being there through everything. They are my heroes and my inspiration to run for provincial office. Thank you for your unconditional love, support and strength.

To my campaign team and volunteers, thank you for being the heartbeat of this election. Thank you for your

friendship, your guidance, advice and ongoing support. This victory is all ours.

The Markham–Thornhill riding is a new riding that spans numerous historical communities. These new boundaries also encompass the city of Markham's ward 7, which I had the honour to represent for the last 12 years. I am proud to continue to serve this community at a different level and with a different perspective.

The Markham–Thornhill riding is the most ethnically diverse riding in the most diverse city and community in Canada. Each and every pocket has a unique cultural mosaic. You can see the whole world right here in Markham. We celebrate diversity, as it is one of the foundations for economic and cultural success.

Mr. Speaker, for me, "diversity" is not a buzzword. It is something I live, breathe and experience every day. Diversity is our strength, not our weakness. In order to celebrate diversity, we must celebrate inclusiveness. There is no point in speaking about diversity without inclusiveness.

According to the census, over 60% of my constituents were born outside of Canada. They are all proud to call Canada and Markham their homes, and we regularly celebrate their many contributions, regardless of their race, language, gender, religion or lifestyle.

The city of Markham is also home to a robust business community and a vibrant local economy. It is the largest of the nine municipalities that comprise York region and one of the fastest-growing regions in the GTA. It has been and will continue to serve as a hub for new housing and high-value employment opportunities in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech gave a road map to our vision of a better Ontario. This vision has been created by listening to everyone, to working Ontarians. This is not just a vision; it is a concrete plan with a goal to relieve the burden and take pressure off the shoulders of Ontarians. Ontarians and families are worried about making ends meet. We are here to clean up the mess of the last 15 years of Liberal government in Ontario.

Ontario used to be the economic engine of Canada, but we are now the most indebted subnational government in the world. We have a \$325-billion debt. The scary part is that Ontarians have to pay \$1 billion just on the interest per month. This does not only affect us; it is going to hurt our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I used to be the budget chief for Markham for many years. Fiscal responsibility and prudence is something that I believe in. I have learned to respect taxpayers' dollars and have managed to bring the lowest property tax and commercial industrial tax increase in the GTA. Most importantly, we did that without cutting services or jobs. We need a responsible government in Ontario. We need transparency and authenticity. That's why we ran on this platform of change.

More than ever before, youth are facing social and economic challenges. To combat this, youth education and employment opportunities need to be prioritized. I have worked with many youth, and I have seen first-hand the struggles they face. Anxiety and depression are on the

rise. We cannot lose this province's next generation because of inaction.

Critical health care programs need to be enhanced, improved and rebuilt. Our front-line health care workers need to be respected. With an aging population, our health care system is running at capacity. It is becoming unsustainable. I regularly hear these concerns from my wife, who is a family doctor in Markham.

We need to create an environment where Ontario business can thrive. This is exactly what we intend to do under Premier Ford's leadership. I am proud to be part of an Ontario PC team that is committed to doing these things.

Over 35 years ago, my father told me that I must leave Sri Lanka because of the intensity of the civil war and his concern for my personal safety. He was concerned not only because I was a Tamil minority but because I was a student human rights activist. I spent my time at university actively speaking against ethnic cleansing and the systemic oppression of the Tamil minority. I have learned and experienced first-hand the true cost of standing up for fundamental democratic and human rights.

When I fled Sri Lanka, it was a war-torn country. I left because of fear of persecution. I arrived in Canada as a political refugee. I came here with only one light bag and a few hundred dollars in my pocket. Though I lost everything and left my family behind, I didn't lose my dreams or aspirations.

I arrived in Canada and settled not far away from here—a few blocks away from this Legislative Assembly, in the neighbourhood of Wellesley and Parliament. In those early years, I often walked past and admired this beautiful historical building from outside. Mr. Speaker, I would never have thought or dreamed that I would end up here speaking to all of you now.

As the first elected Tamil politician in Canada, I am living proof of the Canadian dream. This is a place where dreams, aspirations and a better life are possible.

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Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of the PC caucus—we are here to preserve what Ontario and Canada is all about. I believe that now, more than ever, our collective future depends on how vigorously we defend and advocate for our core values of peace, opportunity, diversity, tolerance, unity, integrity, compassion and social justice.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I look forward to serving the people of Markham–Thornhill in collaboration with all the members of this caucus. I am committed to our goal of creating a better Ontario.

Lastly, I would like to share a 1,000-year-old Tamil proverb with all of you today.

Remarks in Tamil.

This means, “Every country is my country. Every man is my kinsman.”

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to first of all thank the member for Burlington and the member for Markham–Thornhill for their comments. It's always so interesting to

learn a little bit more about each of our colleagues. I think it helps us to all come together in a shared interest around serving the people of this province.

First of all, I want to congratulate the member from Burlington for her—I don't know if I can say re-election—but her election again, because I know this is not the first time, as you mentioned. I really appreciated her comments about listening to the voices of the people in her community and the importance of public service, particularly her references to long-term care.

I do want to mention that when I listen to the voices of the people in my community—and we all hear different stories—but I did want to pass on one comment from the weekend when I was at a street festival in my community. I had a young student who said to me, “I feel that nobody is listening to my voice as a queer youth. Nobody is listening to what matters for me and my safety.” That's the message that this person is hearing from this government. I think that's very unfortunate. We should listen to all voices.

I want to spend a few minutes responding as well to the member for Markham–Thornhill and to congratulate him on his election. That was a very poignant story that you told about your personal history; I want to thank you for that. I certainly congratulate you. I thought it was very interesting to hear a little bit about your history as a refugee from political violence. I appreciated you sharing that with us. I know that we share an interest in ensuring that all Ontarians who are looking for asylum find a province with open doors, a welcoming province.

So thank you very much again for your comments. I look forward to working together. I think you mentioned a particular focus on helping Ontarians who are having difficulty making ends meet. I know we may sometimes find different paths to that, but I certainly look forward to working together to that end.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments. The member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's very good to see you in the chair.

It's very emotional listening to some of the inaugural speeches from some of the new members of the House, from all parties. We just heard from the member from Burlington, who served with me for a few short months when I first got elected. It was too short a time to get to know her very well, so I'm looking forward to getting to know her better.

And to the member from Markham–Thornhill, who actually took 20% of my riding—I won't say “off my hands”; I was sorry to see it go. People were calling me and saying, “What does this mean? You were my representative. I was planning to take a lawn sign again and vote for you again. How come you're not representing our area?” I had to explain why the boundaries were changed and how the boundaries were changed. I said, “Don't worry. There's a fantastic candidate. You're really going to enjoy getting to know him.” And they did. People would report back to me. We would give out the campaign office number for our neighbouring campaign office in Markham–Thornhill. People would call, come in

to meet, and hopefully they volunteered and got to know you. I know that they're going to get to know you a lot better over the next four years.

We're here today debating Bill 2, but we're using the opportunity to have inaugural speeches—if anybody at home is a little confused. We're trying to give people an opportunity to get up and allow themselves to say why they're here and how they came to be here in the Legislature. But we are still going to be continuing the debate on Bill 2, which is to deal with the Hydro One bit of a crisis—people were upset to hear of the \$6-million salary for the CEO, but the CEO and the board are gone; the White Pines wind farm, which got a notice to proceed after the writ dropped, which is really not proper process; and, of course, the Back to Class Act, which was to get the students—45,000 students were suffering at York University.

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

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

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I want to start by congratulating the member from Markham–Thornhill. I'd like to join in saying that I have the pleasure and the privilege of having a very robust Tamil community in Brampton East as well. Very often on the election trail, I would go door to door and I'd need to say “Vanakkam” and “Eppadi irukeenga,” which are the greetings in the Tamil language. One specific one was [*remarks in Tamil*] which was eliciting the support of that individual, going door to door.

So I have a very robust and very amazing community in Brampton East. They're a very dynamic and very rich community. Just two weeks ago, we had the Tamil pavilion for Carabram, and I had the pleasure of visiting there and seeing the amazing, rich heritage of the Tamil people.

Also mentioned was a reference to the throne speech. One of the most important aspects—just raising a concern around something that's very relevant to the issue, particularly in Brampton East—is a big concern around the need for a university. There are projects under way for Brampton, but I want to really reiterate how much Brampton needs this university. So many students in Brampton right now are commuting to other cities in order to get their education. It has a huge impact on their cost of living—the cost of the day spent in transit; the value of their time being spent going from Brampton to York or to living outside of the city completely. Brampton needs this university. It needs to be kept as a priority for Brampton.

Universities are known for bringing jobs into the community, bringing innovation, and really making a city more alive and more robust. When we'd go door-knocking, one of the biggest concerns was the need to make sure that this project goes all the way, and that it's done in a fashion that will accommodate the huge need that's in Brampton.

I just wanted to join in this conversation to say that Brampton needs a university, and I really hope that it's kept as a priority.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? The member from Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte.

Mr. Doug Downey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish the Hansard would show tone. It's just wonderful.

I just love hearing the personal stories. It makes the interactions within this chamber so much more real. People come from so many different experiences.

I want to say congratulations to the member from Burlington on being back, and, of course, to the member from Markham–Thornhill on his election.

I hear about the perseverance and the kinds of things that the member from Burlington has gone through, and how she stayed involved and she stayed focused and she stayed committed to her constituents. It's a tough thing to do that, to have something and have it slip away, and then fight for it again.

But then I hear the member from Markham–Thornhill, and I think, “Wow.” It's touching, the things that you've gone through, from being a student activist to then coming to this area, to settling, with dreams and hopes and a hundred bucks in your pocket and a bag, to sitting in the Legislature. What a wonderful province this is, that this can happen, that we have the cultural mosaic. Some 60% of your riding, you said, are foreign-born. That is phenomenal. It's such a wonderful testament to the province that we're in. My great-aunt was a Brown, Mildred Brown, which is Brown's Corners in your area. The area sure has changed over the generations, and in a good way.

I welcome the diversity that all of our members bring and for all the right reasons. We're all worried about the same things. We're worried about the debt and the deficit, and the \$1 million an hour that we're spending on interest payments alone. We're worried about the opportunities for our children and our nieces and our nephews as we head in this direction.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, through you, to the members from Burlington and Markham–Thornhill. Congratulations.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now I will return to the member from Burlington for final comments.

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Ms. Jane McKenna: I'd first of all like to say to the member from Markham–Thornhill, you know what? It was amazing to listen to you. Dreams do come true. I, like a lot of people in here, had goosebumps listening to you because we never know what anyone has ever experienced in their life. I'm glad to call you my friend. Thank you very much for telling us about your story.

I also just wanted to quickly reiterate the member from Kanata–Carleton. She talked about treating people the way you want to be treated yourself. You will be in this House and you will recognize that you will have relationships with people on all sides that touch you. I've had great relationships with the member from Waterloo and with the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

I just want to tell a quick little story. When I was the MPP at the time, I was asked to be lead in Etobicoke–Lakeshore for Doug Holyday. It was an amazing experience. It was about 97 degrees in the shade every day when we went out. But besides that, the Premier, Doug Ford, was out there canvassing with us, and so was his brother Rob, who was the mayor at the time. I'll tell you a little story, because this is what brings us together, that we're all kind people that treat people the way we wanted to be treated.

We're on the street and it's very warm. As you know, we hopscotch from side to side and we always see where everybody is. I noticed, as I turned around—very, very hot—there was Mayor Ford helping this woman getting her groceries to her house. I was so touched, because there wasn't a camera around, media looking at him and what he was doing. He was genuinely, sincerely caring for this woman by taking her groceries up.

In those 28 days that I was there in that by-election there were many wonderful people who came out to help there that were statesmen like the Speaker, yourself, and my friend here across, from Leeds–Grenville, another statesperson, too.

Thank you very, very much. I enjoyed the time today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate.

Mr. Jeff Burch: It's an honour and a pleasure to rise and give my inaugural speech.

I would like to first of all thank my wife, Linda, and our 10-year-old son, Jackson, for their hard work on my bid to represent the people of Niagara Centre here at Queen's Park. I spent eight years as a city councillor in St. Catharines, so Linda and Jackson are very familiar with the demands of public service. Their support of this new role means folks in Niagara Centre have an MPP who's got his back covered at home, which is crucial.

I would also like to thank my mother and father, Jane and Eugene Burch, who have supported me in everything I've done. And I'd like to thank my wife's incredible Italian family, Gino and Connie Vespoli, and their friends, who turned out to be a potent political force, especially in their hometown of Thorold. There is truly nothing more important in life than family and health.

Speaker, one of the many reasons I decided to run for a seat at Queen's Park was due to the health of my father, Eugene, who suffered a massive stroke five years ago. My father is a victim of hallway medicine. Due to understaffing and poor decision-making, my father was taken to a Niagara hospital that was not equipped to deal with stroke victims and was left in a bed in an emergency room hallway for 36 hours. He is now paralyzed and unable to speak. These painful stories are all too common in our community, and I will fight for a better health care system until there are no more such stories.

So it's not lightly that I decided to try to bring my passion for advocacy to Queen's Park. My commitment to representing the people of Niagara Centre will be reflected in my work ethic and my approach to holding this government to account for its decisions over the next

four years, on this and many issues that are important to my constituents and their families.

I know that much of my inspiration when it comes to tenacity and perseverance will come from my best friend, Kim Clout, who passed away from prostate cancer at the young age of 43 while in the prime of life and his career in the Canadian Auto Workers Union.

Niagara Centre, formerly Welland riding, is a riding that is rich in history and culture. Made up of the municipalities of Welland, Port Colborne, Thorold and the south St. Catharines neighbourhoods of Merritton and Western Hill, Niagara Centre is home to most of the current and former Welland canals and the rich commercial and industrial heritage that comes along with them. Workers from all over the world came with their families to take part in the diverse economy of the Niagara region. The result is a rich tapestry of cultures: Italian, Maltese, German, Hungarian, Slovak and Filipino, to name a few—and one of the most vibrant French-speaking communities in Ontario, located in Welland.

I will take this opportunity to thank my incredible campaign team and, most of all, the amazing citizens of Niagara Centre for opening their hearts, homes and businesses to me. From my friends at the Italian Hall and the seniors at Friends Over 55 in Port Colborne to Welland Royal Canadian Legion Branch 4, and the Hungarian Greek Roman Catholic church in Welland to Club Castropignano and the Filipino Canadian association in Thorold, I met constituent after constituent voting for better health care, more opportunities for their children and grandchildren, and all of the other issues that are important to honest, hard-working families and seniors.

While much of my professional history has been in the labour movement as an elected officer and professional staff with various unions such as the United Steelworkers and the service employees, I have been blessed over the last eight and a half years to have worked as the executive director and CEO of the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre, a settlement agency responsible for most of the settlement and integration of newcomer and refugee families in the Niagara region. I am proud that my incredible staff of over 40 full-time professionals have helped not only thousands of newcomer families from all over the world but over 150 Syrian refugee families to settle and become productive members of our community.

Speaker, I can tell you that we never referred to asylum seekers as illegals or made statements suggesting that asylum seekers are the responsibility of the federal government. This would show not only ignorance with respect to constitutional rights and how refugees enter our country and province, but also a profound misunderstanding of the basic functional operation of our settlement system in the province of Ontario. Anyone with a basic working knowledge of our system knows that federal funding in the hundreds of settlement agencies across the province covers settlement counselling for permanent residents and new Canadians, while it

is exclusively provincial dollars that are responsible for refugee settlement counselling through the provincial newcomer support program.

Asylum seekers, refugees and newcomers from all over the world integrate and become some of the most hard-working and productive citizens in our society with the help of both federal and provincial supports. They built our province and will continue to do so.

I am also proud of the time I spent as a board member and south region director with OCASI, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, and the tremendous work we did in partnership with the city of Toronto to battle racism and Islamophobia in this city and across the province. I hope this government will see the need for education within its leadership and membership so that they are better informed and more competent to deal with these issues going forward.

In addition to its cultural history, Niagara Centre also has an incredibly rich political history. It has been an NDP riding for almost 44 years now, second only to the great riding of Nickel Belt in terms of loyalty to the New Democratic Party. Throughout the provincial election, I joked that I have not only big shoes to fill, but big work boots, cowboy boots and stilettos.

The work boots refer to Mel Swart, whom I was lucky enough to know for a time when I was just starting out in politics in my twenties. Mel was known as a humble and tireless worker for his constituents. No problem was too small or too big. He was known for using every manner of theatrical prop in the Legislature and would sleep on his office couch at Queen's Park to save money. After six failed attempts to get elected municipally and federally, he was elected provincially in 1975 and won every election after by a huge margin due to his immense work ethic and enormous heart.

The cowboy boots: Everyone knows they belong to Peter Kormos. Peter took over from Mel in 1988 and was adored by his constituents. As a student activist, Peter was arrested for demonstrating for public access to Niagara beaches. He was a complex person. He believed in civil disobedience but was a staunch defender of the law and a master of parliamentary procedure. He protested against beer ads for their exploitation of women but appeared as a Sunshine Boy in the Toronto Sun. He was respected by members of all parties and was good friends with colleagues on both sides of the House, such as Jim Wilson and Tim Hudak. He was, as many refer to him, the "socialist cowboy." He was a great mentor and friend, and we miss him dearly.

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Then came the high heels. In 2011, Peter stepped down from his career in provincial politics and worked hard to elect Cindy Forster as the new representative. A registered nurse and ONA rep by trade, Cindy was a former Welland mayor and Niagara regional councillor. Cindy became immensely popular, not only with her constituents but within her own caucus. She was elected NDP caucus chair and became a leader and great friend to her colleagues. In her riding, she worked tirelessly to

save the Welland hospital and strengthen public health care for seniors. As labour critic, she fought for minimum wage increases and protecting Ontario workers. She was fearless in fighting for transparency and accountability at the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. She is the best mentor any aspiring politician could hope for, and I owe her a huge debt of gratitude for the trust she placed in me and the time and effort she spent helping me to get elected.

So there you go: work boots, cowboy boots and stilettos.

Speaker, I was the only new NDP MPP fortunate enough to win in an existing NDP riding, meaning that I inherited three experienced staff from outgoing MPP Cindy Forster. The work of Mike Haines, Marie Chamberland and Caitlin Hipkiss provide experience in addressing the significant challenges that the people of my riding are facing. I am very grateful for their skill and expertise.

My election could not have been achieved without the support of my predecessors, but also the support of my campaign team. They worked tirelessly for 28 days to ensure that the NDP legacy continued in Niagara Centre. Dan Peat, Sean Polden, Angie Desmarais, Mary Ellen DuPon and the entire riding executive, thank you for your hard work. I would like to say a particular thank you to the youth volunteers who joined me throughout the campaign: Aidan Harold, Kristen Travagalini, Emily Polden and Keenan Howell. These young people canvassed the entire riding. I was very fortunate to have their support.

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the member from Niagara Centre. As a fellow Golden Horseshoe member here, I sincerely appreciate you speaking and also speaking to the hallway health care you mentioned and the personal effect it's had on you and your family. I can empathize with that. I think a lot of us here in the chamber and a lot of us here in the province, unfortunately, have stories related to that hallway health care. I know that the issues there are profound.

I met with executives in the hospital locally and found that one of the biggest issues affecting them today in the cost of running the hospital is actually hydro. The high cost of hydro made the hospital very, very expensive to run on a regular basis.

I know our government has made a very big commitment to getting hydro costs down for businesses, for consumers, for public institutions. That will be a benefit to everybody in the province. We're excited to do that.

The Auditor General concluded, about a year ago, that we will be overpaying by about \$9.2 billion over 20 years for energy we don't need, which is twice the rate of the US average for wind and three and a half times the price for solar. Ontario electricity costs were up 71% between 2008 and 2016 to an average in Canada of 34%. We've lost over 75,000 manufacturing jobs here in Ontario as a direct result of the high hydro costs.

The average Ontario family today pays \$1,000 more for electricity than since 2003. Hospitals, businesses and residents want change. They want responsible hydro. They want transparency.

I'm pleased that our government has taken the steps right off the bat, right through the summer session here, to help businesses and people in this province so we don't have to choose between heating and eating anymore. Promise made, promise kept.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? We will have the member from St. Catharines.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is also my first time rising in the House, so I'd like to welcome you and congratulate you on your seat.

I would like to add special congratulations to the member for Niagara Centre. I had the privilege of working with the member for Niagara Centre as a St. Catharines city councillor for eight years, while he was on the council for St. Catharines. It will be a privilege and an honour to sit beside him for the next four years, as I know that he will continue to work as a team with myself, because we do share a riding; the south end of St. Catharines borders along with Niagara Centre. The member and I have become very good friends over the years, and we'll continue to work together and represent the constituents of St. Catharines as well as Niagara Centre, and to work as a team.

I am well aware of the hospital hallway medicine that is happening in St. Catharines. The member had mentioned it, and the unfortunate circumstance that happened with his father, the 36 hours that he had to wait in the hallway while suffering a stroke. This is unacceptable, and we will make sure that working together, we will be a voice and make sure that hallway medicine will end.

The constituents of St. Catharines would like to thank the member's team for coming down for the past two weeks of my election, the past election, and working with me to help myself and my team get off the ground and work, again, as a team. We will continue to work with the member from Niagara Falls and the member from Niagara Centre, and we'll make one big team in Niagara.

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

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: It is a great honour and privilege for me to rise here today for the first time in this chamber. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the hard-working people of Mississauga-Lakeshore for their support and for their confidence in me, our Premier and our team. I will do everything I can to be worthy of their trust, and that starts with keeping my promise to work every day to make life easier and more affordable for families and students.

But it is clear that after extensive negotiations and many attempts at mediation, the parties are still deadlocked. I am a proud parent of my oldest son, Michael, who will be heading into his first year of university this

fall at McMaster. When he was deciding which university to attend, we saw how this five-month-long strike, the longest post-secondary strike in Canadian history, is hurting York students and their families.

Since March, these students have had to deal with uncertainty about when they can get back to class. Some 45,000 students are missing grades, and their year is in danger. Some 20% of students were not able to graduate last month, including 363 nursing students. Most of the burden of a deadlocked collective bargaining process has fallen on them.

Mr. Speaker, that's not fair. It is not right, and that's why I'm proud to support this bill. After over 100 days, it will allow our students to get back to class, while the labour dispute can finally be resolved by arbitration. I urge all members to join with me in supporting this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? The member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's always a pleasure to rise when you're sitting in that chair, Mr. Speaker, so I want to say good afternoon, everybody.

I want to talk about Jeff Burch. I've known Jeff for a long time. We've been friends for a long time. His son, Jackson, goes to my daughter's school and she's his teacher, so it extends into the extended family. Jackson, by the way, if anybody wants to know—Jeff can agree to this or disagree—loves politics, but his favourite politician ever—go ahead, guess.

Hon. Steve Clark: Wayne Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: You're right. You got it right. Am I right? Wayne Gates. He wears the Wayne Gates button with the moustache and the goofy eyebrows that I have, so it's really good.

Jeff, I want to say to you that you are following in incredible footsteps when you take a look at that riding in Welland. We had Mel Swart. I don't know if there's anybody old enough here other than—he's not here anymore—probably Jim Bradley was with him. Mel Swart was a guy who never gave up, loved his community and worked extremely hard, but he ran about seven times before he won. Do you remember this? He'd run and he'd run. It was something about the NDP: You had to run a number of times before you got elected. It's just the way it is. I have something in common with him: I ran seven times and lost seven times.

Then you moved on to Peter Kormos—the best. If anybody watched Peter Kormos—a lot of people are in the House who watched Peter Kormos. This is a theatre. You can say what you want, but there was nobody better than Peter Kormos at theatre and talking to people. But he also took care of his constituents in the Welland riding. He was absolutely amazing.

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And then Cindy, who was our caucus Chair for a number of years, did an incredible job with the labour file. Then she ran for regional council. Remember that? She was regional councillor, then she ran as mayor, and

then she became an MPP. Well, Jeff, you have the same type of history. You ran as a city councillor and now you're an MPP.

I'm going to do a quick story. I've got seven seconds. When they were looking to build the arena in St. Catharines, everybody said, "Don't build it. Don't build it. Don't build it." It wasn't popular. Guess what? He made the decision to work with everybody and get that arena built. It's one of the highlights of downtown today. To Jeff: That's the type of guy he is, and it's a pleasure to call him my friend and an MPP.

Thank you. I went a little long; I apologize.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. We now return to the member from Niagara West for final comment.

Mr. Jeff Burch: I want to mention one more friend of mine, Malcolm Allen. Malcolm served as the federal MP in the Welland riding, as well as federal agriculture critic. Among his many great initiatives, he also wrote and moved the bill, passed by all parties in the federal House, removing the tax from Remembrance Day poppies.

It's important that I point this out, Speaker, not only because I'm proud that a bill promoting poppies and putting money back in the hands of Legions across Canada came from the NDP out of my riding, but because I'm a fourth-generation member of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 138 in Merritton.

My great grandfather Charles Draysey was shot and wounded in the First World War, and returned to combat a second time only to be mustard-gassed. He was president of the Merritton Legion in 1930, and died a short while later at a young age due to weak lungs from the mustard gas poisoning. My grandfather Stanley Beeching fought at Monte Cassino and all across Europe in World War II. I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that you will not hear me use their sacrifice at a partisan political tool while I am in this office.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I apologize: It's not Niagara West; it's Niagara Centre. Thank you very much.

Further debate?

Mr. Roman Baber: I'd like to recognize two guests of mine today sitting in the members' gallery: first, my former legal assistant and now my special assistant, Bathusa Baskararajah, and my former articling student and former junior lawyer, now my executive assistant, William Lu.

It's on a bittersweet note that I rise in the House today for my inaugural speech. Myself and all of us in the House are deeply saddened and disturbed by the attack on the Danforth, a cowardly, senseless act of violence that, along with the recent spike in gun violence, threatens the very nature of our magnificent and safe city of Toronto. I have every ounce of faith in the generosity and goodness of Torontonians to help and stand by the victims of this senseless attack.

Most importantly, I want to commend our heroes, our first responders, for keeping us safe, for neutralizing danger wherever it arises, for enforcing the law while

staying within the bounds of the law and for running into a scene of chaos while the public runs away from the scene. The brave men and women of our police, EMS and fire forces: We love you and we owe you a debt of gratitude every day. I'll pray for the welfare of the victims and the well-being of their families.

I also know that this government will use every tool at its disposal to reduce, prevent and punish gun violence, whether through additional resources, prosecutorial priorities, education or prevention. Public safety is one of our most important mandates. We are a government for the people, and we shall discharge our duty to all Ontarians to undertake whatever lawful means are necessary to keep them safe.

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't be more humbled and proud to be elected to this House from the great riding of York Centre. This is the most momentous occasion of my life, and I couldn't think of a greater privilege than to represent and speak for my community and to serve the people of this province. I had the benefit of observing the House for the last week and hearing from some of my colleagues on both sides of the House. I also met a lot of them personally. I want to send them my congratulations and admiration—not only to the elected members of my party, but to all of you, the members of the official opposition and our independent members. Despite our political or ideological disagreements, all of you, without question, are here for the right reason. I admire your passion for public service and concern for ordinary Ontarians. I send you my deepest appreciation for your willingness to serve and extend a hand of friendship to all of you. After all, we're all here for the same purpose: to serve the province of Ontario; to serve our constituents, who placed their faith in us; to maintain the dignity of this institution; and to make sure that we do everything in our power to make Ontario better for future generations and all Ontarians. Congratulations to all of you, welcome, and thank you so much for allowing me to serve with you.

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to represent the beautiful riding of York Centre. Comprised of the west side of North York in north Toronto, York Centre is bordered by Highway 401 to the south, Steeles Avenue to the north, Bathurst Street as its eastern boundary and Keele Street to the west, except that it also forms an L shape and extends westward until Jane Street, between 401 and Sheppard, to form the beautiful community of Downsview.

With a population of 110,000 people, York Centre is home to Downsview Park, CFB Toronto, Bombardier airport, four subway stations, Earl Bales Park, G. Ross Lord Park and the West Don Lands. It's truly an urban oasis in north Toronto.

But what makes it even more special is its incredible diversity, with over 17,000 Filipino Canadians, 16,000 Russian Canadians, 15,000 people of the Jewish faith, approximately 9,000 people of Italian origin, one of the largest Vietnamese and Latino communities in the country, Lebanese, Tamils, Indo-Canadians and countless

other Canadians who chose and have been blessed to call Canada home. I'm proud to be one of those Canadians.

What makes York Centre York Centre is its incredible ethnic and cultural diversity: people from every corner of the world living together, working together, loving and caring for each other. You see, York Centre is not just an electoral district. Just like so many other ridings represented right here, York Centre is an idea—an idea that we all belong here; an idea that we live peacefully side by side; an idea respecting basic human decency and equality of human life—right here, between 401 and Steeles, an idea called Canada. I often say that York Centre is Canada and Canada is York Centre.

Mr. Speaker, this election has been very special to myself and my family. Like so many of us have mentioned, I am an immigrant in Canada. I was born in the Soviet Union, and we escaped Communism when I was eight. We then lived in Israel for eight years. When I was 15, on September 5, 1995, we moved to Canada, directly to Sheppard and Bathurst, in the heart of York Centre. I remember it like it was yesterday: It was in the middle of the night. I looked out the window and I saw Earl Bales Park and the Don Lands. On the other side of the park: Yonge Street, lights and towers, the great riding of Willowdale. I was in love from day one.

We didn't have a cent to our name. I remember what true poverty was like. My father sold ice cream on those yellow bicycles. But I've always had a job, and I've always had this incredible joy, because it didn't really matter. When you come to Canada, you don't really need much, because you have opportunity. There's nothing systemic standing in our way. This city, this province, this country has given me, and it has given all of us, every opportunity to study, to work, to succeed. All you need to do to succeed in Canada are two things: You need to work hard and you need to be nice to people. That's it—that's it. If you do those two things, everything will be fine.

We get to do that while keeping our cultural values and religious values. We get to be ourselves. That's me. I'm exhibit A for the Canadian dream, just like my friend from Mississauga Centre or my friend from Scarborough–Rouge Park or Markham–Thornhill. And why? What makes Canada Canada? It's not just our majestic trees or our beautiful lakes; it's Canadians. Canadians make Canada Canada—so gracious, so charitable, so caring and tolerant. This is without a doubt, Mr. Speaker, the best place on earth, and it is my responsibility, it is our collective responsibility, to make sure we keep it that way.

1700

I want to recognize my predecessor, the exceptional Monte Kwinter, who served this riding for 32 years. Mr. Kwinter was first elected to the Legislature in 1985. He served until June 7, 2018, at age 87, making him the oldest-serving MPP in the history of the province. Mr. Kwinter served under five Premiers and was the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, Minister of Financial Institutions, minister of industry and trade, and

minister of public safety and security. Mr. Kwinter helped tens of thousands of people. He served this province with distinction, and we are forever grateful to Monte Kwinter.

I'm proud to be serving in Doug Ford's Conservative government. We campaigned on a clear message, and Ontarians all over the province made a clear choice. They chose lower taxes and less debt. They chose subways over streetcars. They chose competent management instead of waste. They chose self-reliance and individual freedom. They chose Doug Ford and the Progressive Conservative government to get Ontario back on track.

We were hired to a job because, you see, people don't work for government; government works for the people. We're going to answer this call. We're going to do what we promised. In fact, we're already doing it. We're going to cut taxes and make life more affordable. We've already scrapped cap-and-trade, and we got rid of the evil carbon tax. We're taking steps to bring hydro prices under control. We'll get York University back to class. We're going to end hallway health care by investing into the front lines and long-term care. And my two personal favourites: We're going to build subways in the GTA, and we're going to bring the rule of law back to Ontario.

God bless Toronto. God bless Ontario and Canada. God bless Her Majesty.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? We'll hear from the member from Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I love the way that you announce the names.

Let's see. I'd like to thank the member from York Centre for his comments and for sharing some of his personal history with us. It is always very interesting in this House to hear about that and to learn a little bit more about the members we're going to be serving this province with over the next four years.

I want to talk a little bit about the first comment that you made, which was to acknowledge the shooting, that terrible, terrible shooting on the Danforth last night, and to give our hopes and prayers to the families who have lost people and to the people who are in the hospital.

I mentioned earlier in the House today that I've been looking at gun violence. I've been researching it and meeting with community members for the past six years. This is going to be one of the most important issues that we deal with in this House. It's absolutely essential that we get it right, because as we saw last night, lives depend on it.

In those conversations with the communities, the underlying issue that they talk about is poverty. If you look at a map of the shootings in this city and a map of poverty in the city, the same areas overlap. We need to address any decision that this House makes that increases that gap between the rich and the poor; it's going to feed into that gun violence. We need to make sure that we are alleviating poverty, that we're reducing the amount of poverty in the city.

The other thing community members have told me is that the police alone cannot resolve this issue. You

cannot arrest your way out of gun violence. If you could, then the United States would have one of the lowest levels of gun violence in the world, because they have three police officers per capita for every two that we have. They have the highest incarceration rate in the world, and yet their homicide rate remains four times what ours is.

If we want to address gun violence, we need to address poverty. We can't rely solely on the police to solve this problem; we need to look at the deeper, underlying issues.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: To the member from York Centre, you spoke passionately about serving the people of Ontario, and that passion will serve you greatly here.

I loved how you described the idea of what York Centre is—the idea that if you work hard, you can move forward; the idea that if you have a dream, you can live it in Ontario. I think that's a great message to give to everyone.

Giving a little bit of your background—being born in Russia and then moving to Israel, and the time that you spent there before you finally found your home here in Ontario, specifically in York Centre—I would like to say that, myself, as someone who was born in Ontario, I welcome you here and thank you very much for enriching our lives that way.

You had an opportunity and you took that opportunity. Through hard work and being nice to people, you took that opportunity and you've come to this place now, and you're trying to give that opportunity to others. That's a very commendable thing. You have the Canadian dream. You're living the Canadian dream, showing that through hard work you can do so many different things.

I know you didn't talk about sports, but you can play on my hockey team any time you like. That hard work and that ethic that you have shown are exactly what we need. I know that a lot of the things that you're going to be doing—a lot of the things that we, as the Progressive Conservative government in Ontario are going to do—we're going to get Ontario back to work, and we're going to do that in a number of different ways.

Specifically, you spoke about supporting the students at York University. I agree with you wholeheartedly. We need to get those students back to school, so they can get back to work.

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

Mr. Gurratan Singh: I want to thank the member for sharing his story, sharing his journey and really giving that perspective to this House and this Legislature.

As he had mentioned, I also want to speak to the tragic event that occurred yesterday in Toronto. The Danforth is such a vibrant and beautiful community. I have so many memories of spending time going up and down the Danforth, eating at the Big Carrot and just taking in the culture there. When we all heard this news from yesterday, it was incredibly tragic. It was something that

floored us all. I think it's important that we all take the time to thank the first responders and thank the police and thank the paramedics; and that we truly do to come together in this circumstance, that we come together and show unity and show support to one another, and just really give that support to everyone to get through these incredibly tragic times.

When we think about a community we want to build and when we think about the community that we all want to live in together, of course it's one that's safe. It's one where we can really get to know each other as neighbours. Effectively, we're all in this together, and I think it's truly important that any time there is any sort of travesty or anything of a tragic nature that we really do strengthen those bonds with one another.

I also want to thank the member for giving that opportunity to really delve deep and talk about his own personal journey, and talk about that process that went forward. For all of us, as we are all members here in this Legislature, as much as we can learn and grow from our shared experiences and our journeys, I think it's something that makes this process richer and more diverse. From that, we can hopefully gain different perspectives.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: It's a pleasure to rise and speak to the comments from my colleague from York Centre. There is a theme that prevailed in those comments, and we heard it: It's our privilege to serve. It is a privilege to serve.

Each day, Speaker, I walk up from the Queen's Park subway station. I take that long sidewalk. I take a moment to reflect, first of all, on my predecessors—as my colleague spoke about the honourable tenure of service of the honourable Monte Kwinter. I think about predecessors like the late James Michael Flaherty and Christine Elliott, my predecessors in the great riding of Whitby. It reminds me, as my colleague from York Centre said, about the purpose of why we're here, Speaker. It's to serve the people.

But it reminds us also of the priorities that we have here as members of the government, and a Premier Ford-led government.

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Some of those priorities the member from York Centre touched on, but they're promises, and they're promises that are underpinned by listening carefully to the people that we have the privilege of serving, illustrated by York University: students who have been out on strike for four months—four months. It's time to get them back to work. This legislation before us will accomplish that.

I was pleased to hear the member from York Centre introduce his new staff here at Queen's Park because it speaks also to the privilege of serving as well, because no one succeeds alone. As we walk up those four steps each afternoon to serve the people of Ontario, each of us is reminded about all of those people who have brought us to this moment. Every day they walk in with us. It's a privilege to serve, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now return to the member from York Centre for final comments.

Mr. Roman Baber: I'm deeply touched by some of the comments and responses raised in comments and questions with respect to my inaugural speech. I can certainly say in reply to the member from Whitby, I feel incredibly privileged coming to this House every day, even though I'm still having difficulties finding certain places. One of the things that I've experienced over the last couple of weeks is the kind, professional, outgoing, collaborative approach of the people who work for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I'm simply in awe of how gracious and helpful they have been towards all of us.

I also echo the comments of my friend, again with respect to last night's shooting on the Danforth, an event that has shocked so many of us, just as much as some of the recent violence in the city of Toronto. We need to be looking at all solutions. We need to be looking at root causes. We need to be looking at law enforcement. We need to be looking at ground priorities. Nothing is off the table. I think that the people of Ontario and Torontonians expect that this remains a world-class city. This is the best city in the world. Regretfully, what we're seeing in Toronto over the summer is compromising us, and the social cost of this, dare I say, yet another summer of the gun is something that is compromising our very essence. I'm of the view that this is one of this government's most urgent priorities going forward, and I look forward to contributing to that debate and to hearing from you as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate.

Ms. Marit Stiles: First of all, I do want to lend my voice to the many voices in this Legislature today that have expressed their deep sadness and condolences to the families who were affected and the community around Toronto–Danforth for the violence that they've experienced. I know some of us have had the experience of being in scenes that were of significant violence and know the trauma that can accompany you through your life, and so I really hope that there are many supports available for those families and for that community.

I want to talk a little bit about the bill that's before us now. Last week, when I spoke about this bill, I think I referred specifically to it being an omnibus bill, and therefore being really innately undemocratic and the nature of the legislation being undemocratic. When you throw three major pieces of legislation together, when you lump them together so as to limit debate, the proper and democratic debate that should be required of all legislation that comes before this House, well, that is, I believe, a really big issue with this legislation, simply put. But more certainly, when you have components of a bill like this, that so directly impact the lives of so many—I think it is deeply problematic that this is being presented in this omnibus legislation.

We can agree, I think, to disagree, Mr. Speaker, on the content of the bill, but surely we can agree that we are

elect not to unilaterally impose laws on the people but to rise above that partisanship and engage in some real and meaningful debate. Unfortunately, with this legislation, because of way it's being presented, that's hindering that opportunity.

I want to talk specifically about certain elements of the bill. I actually want to start with schedule 3 first of all, because the criteria in Bill 2 takes away a non-essential sector's ability to strike. It's punitive action that, in fact, contravenes several Supreme Court decisions which were themselves the result of labour challenges to back-to-work legislation.

The Liberals essentially introduced this legislation before the election was called, and if you'll recall, they tried to kind of sneak it through in a last-minute attempt to make this York University strike a big election issue and drive a wedge, frankly, between progressives. Well, thank you very much. I think they accomplished that, to some extent.

But this legislation that is before us is even more draconian. That has to do with the section that is referred to as the "restriction—discipline and discharge" section. I won't read it out in great detail. But I do want to point out that what it appears to do is to grant the employer the ability to sanction, discipline and fire bargaining unit members for their conduct during the dispute.

And you say, "What? How can they do that? What about the right to strike? What does this do to the workers' fundamental right to withhold their labour? What about the generations and generations who fought and, indeed, put their lives on the line for those rights?" It's very bad. It's very bad indeed.

It is also a gift to the York University administration. It will likely—and, I'm sure, mightily—be resisted by labour, as it should be. Because, you see, there are broader implications here, and that's why, fundamentally, we cannot support this back-to-work legislation.

I want to talk a little bit, as well, about the rest of the legislation of Bill 2, which has been called the Urgent Priorities Act. Thanks to Doug Ford, the Liberal government's six-million-dollar man is now the Conservative government's nine-million-dollar man. This bill will not reduce hydro costs, it will not make Hydro One public again and it will not get private profits off the sky-rocketing hydro bills of Ontario families and businesses that this government says they care so much about.

In fact, the Conservatives have endorsed the very worst hydro policies of the former Liberal government, including a \$40-billion hydro borrowing scheme that's going to drive up hydro bills by 70% over the next 10 years—70%—a scheme that the Conservative government House leader himself once called "deceitful, dishonest and shady." That's a quote.

Not only that, but the government is giving itself the power to suspend the rule of law, including the ability to make certain representations to the public, and this is unprecedented. It's going to send a message to businesses and investors that the government's word is worthless. This is a brazen act of bad faith. It's going to put a chill

on business and investment in Ontario that's going to hurt this economy. It's like putting up a big flashing sign that says "Bad faith this way."

Companies doing business with the government will now have to add a bad-faith risk premium onto their prices, which is going to drive up costs to the public. It might even scare away those honest companies that we depend on, leaving behind only the ones that have some kind of special relationship with this government.

The NDP supports green energy, but we strongly oppose the privatization of hydro. We think overpriced private hydro contracts should be reviewed, but the review process needs to be transparent, independent and based on evidence and the public interest.

It should really go without saying that this process should also respect the rule of law. Instead, this government is giving itself the power to unilaterally rip up contracts while singling out one private generator just because it's in a certain riding.

I want to talk a little bit more about schedule 2 and the White Pines Wind Project Termination Act, because there is nothing like it. To think that this is your government's priority, revoking a wind project?

We all talked today about the people who are lying untreated in the hallways of our hospitals. We've talked about the waiting list for long-term care. I'd like to talk about the waiting list for child care—in fact, the waiting lists for waiting lists for child care that mean so many families can't get back to work. Yet this is what this government decides is the priority for our province? It really is kind of baffling.

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I have to say, when I look at what this government says in terms of the appeal to business and getting Ontario back to work, and Ontario being open for business, I see this as absolutely exclusive from that kind of message you're sending. This is, in fact, as I said earlier, a big flashing sign to business not to invest here: "You can't trust us when we sign a contract with you." You can say, "Well it's a new government. It's a new day," but really, at the end of the day, are you not afraid? Are we not afraid, Mr. Speaker, of what the implications are of the signal that this sends, not to mention the enormous cost to the taxpayer of the legal settlements at the end of the day? I can tell you, the lawyers out there are just loving this. This is going to be a heyday for them. You want to talk about filling pockets? This is going to fill the pockets of a whole lot of lawyers who are going to be taking this government to court. In the end, it's going to be money that comes out of programs and services that communities need.

I know we come from different parts of the province, and what I heard in my community may be very different than the things that you heard on the doorsteps in your community, but I can tell you, not one person in my community ever asked for any of that—not a thing. I'll tell you, they were very upset about hydro privatization. They wanted to see Hydro back in public hands. The lack of accountability and the lack of transparency in what

this government is attempting to do in this bill is not what the people of this province were asking for when they told us, "Defeat the Liberal government. Bring Hydro back into public hands." This is not what they were asking for.

So I'm going to ask you again: These are the urgent priorities of this government? People dying in the hallways of our hospitals; a proliferation of guns in our city of Toronto and across our province—but here, a crisis, a proliferation of guns; deep, urgent social issues that need to be addressed; crumbling schools; child care spaces that are completely unaffordable, if you're lucky enough to get one; housing—young families can't ever imagine owning a house, let alone being able to afford rent; and yet these are this government's urgent priorities? I think it is baffling. I really do. I think it's baffling and it's insulting to Ontarians.

I'm really proud to share my perspective on this. I hope we can have a healthy debate, but I'll tell you, I will be so proud when I get to vote against this legislation as my second vote in this House.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I want to thank the member from Davenport for her comments today.

First, I would be remiss if I didn't add my voice on the victims of the crime on the Danforth last evening. As a member from the Toronto area—we've seen all too many gun incidents this year already. As I said, my heart goes out to the families and the victims of this terrible crime. It is definitely a sad day for all of us, and we have to have them in our thoughts and our prayers as we move forward.

Listening to what the member opposite was speaking about—we had a 28-day campaign to talk about some of our priorities after the 15 years of Liberal waste and mismanagement. We said very clearly that we were going to get rid of the six-million-dollar man under Hydro One. We promised during the election campaign that we would address the governance issue, and we've done that. Promise made, promise kept. This was a key promise.

It is a privilege for all of us here to be in this House today. I go back and I think of my first time, when I was a staff member here in the Legislature back in 1995. To be able to stand here with a seat on the floor—it is such an honour and a privilege to actually be sharing the views of my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore. One thing that they said to me: "Hydro rates are too high. We can't afford them. It's time to move on." I'm proud that the Doug Ford government, Premier Ford and all of us here, made sure that this promise was kept.

The other thing we're talking about in Bill 2 is the Back to Class Act. There are 49,000 students not going to school. One thing we talk about is getting Ontario working. We need to get people back in class so they can learn so they can get those jobs. It is a responsible thing for us to do and we are a responsible government, and I'm very proud that we are going to do that immediately.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: I think you're going to agree with me, Speaker: Some of our new members who are coming to the ranks in these seats are very articulate, are very good on their feet and are going to be representing their constituents quite well. I was happy to be in here listening to the brief speech that the member from Davenport brought to this House—mind you, it's not the first time that I've heard her speak—and the people of Davenport are very lucky to have her as a representative.

She did talk about this being an omnibus piece of legislation—and it is—and rightfully so. There are three specific pieces of legislation here that are being discussed that could be separated in its entirety and have a wholesome discussion on every single one of them.

The back-to-work legislation is exactly that: It's back-to-work legislation, taking away the democratic rights of a certain union to sit down, have a discussion and truly negotiate. Quite frankly, 15 minutes of negotiation is not true negotiation, and that's the essential crux of what that whole labour issue is. You have an employer that has decided to play hardball, not sit down and not have wholesome discussions. I've been part of many negotiation tables, and negotiation happens when you have a partner or an opposition who is actually going to sit down and discuss the matters that are there.

The \$40-billion Liberal scheme that this government is taking on and accepting as one of their ideas that they're going to be moving forward: My question is, will that be one of those items that is going to be under the line-by-line analysis? Is that going to be reflected as part of the auditor's report when it comes in or your analysis of that report? I don't know if it's going to come out. I'm going to be interested to see how much that cost is going to be.

Really, when you look at the priorities that this government is bringing forward, if these are the major priorities that they have—we're in for a heck of a long four years if these are their priorities, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I do want to respond to the members from the opposition. One of the members had commented about priorities, and, indeed, government is about making priorities. I do believe that as a symbol in the first days after getting elected, the Premier of this province took an extraordinary action to recall this Legislature as a symbol to the people that we are rolling up our sleeves to serve them, to put more money in their pockets and to fight for the next generation of this province. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is leadership, welcomed after 15 years of economic decline under the former government.

But the essential criticism actually wasn't derived from the members of the third party, the Liberal Party; it was actually derived from Her Majesty's loyal opposition. I want to remind the people of Ontario, for the dozens of Ontarians watching today—I want them to

know, and let us not forget, the record of the former New Democratic government in this province, because history often does repeat itself.

We were led under a former Premier who presided over the loss of 125,000 jobs. I'm referring to, of course, Bob Rae, Mr. Speaker: a government with skyrocketing youth unemployment, an increase in unemployment by over 28%, the highest marginal income tax on the continent, and now, even after a record of such economic stagnation, even still, they call for the highest carbon tax in the world. This is not a plan to foster productivity and prosperity in this province; it's a plan to cripple manufacturing and job creation in a province that needs it most.

Mr. Speaker, under the leadership of this Premier, under the leadership of this government, we are taking immediate action to remove bad energy contracts that exacerbate the cost of living for families, for workers and for seniors, and we're taking action to make sure that every single student at York University can get back in the classroom. I call on all members to rise above the ideological dispositions they may hold and put the interests of our economy and our young people first today.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: As some of the other members mentioned, it is an honour to walk into this building every day and to be representing a portion of the population of this province.

I've been thinking about it and I've been listening to this term "Ontario government." People use it in different terms. They often use it just to refer to the Ford government that's going to be here for the next four years until we replace them. But, really, the Ontario government is one entity. It began in 1867. It continues today and we are, all of us, just stewards of that government for the next generation. When we're making decisions, we have to think about what the reputation of this government will be going forward, the Ontario government.

This is one of the concerns that I have with this bill, because it unilaterally breaks contracts that were signed in good faith by members of the public, by business people in this province and by the government. We may not like them—and I've been on the other side. I've been a business owner. I have had to make a payroll. I've gotten into contracts and I've gotten partway through the contracts and thought, "This wasn't really a good deal. I'm not going to make any money." But because my reputation was on the line, I honoured the contract and I saw it through.

What this present government is doing, what the Ford government is doing, is saying with this legislation, "Not only will we break the contracts that were signed by the government of Ontario, but we reserve the right to break any future contracts we may sign as well." That will send a chill through the business community.

We are here to protect the reputation of this Ontario government, the one that began in 1867 and continues to this day. So I would ask the members opposite to please reconsider this bill. Instead of pushing it through, please send it to committee so that we can reconsider some of the more problematic clauses and make amendments so that ultimately, we are acting in the best interests of the province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now return to the member from Davenport for her final comment.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you for the comments from all the members. One of the members mentioned promises made, promises kept—

Interjection: Promises kept.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I know; you keep saying it. Well, I made a promise. I made a promise to my community that I would stand up to this government and against their regressive attack on working people—

Interjection: Hear, hear.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you—and I'm sure going to keep it.

I also want to point out that so far, from the moment you were sworn in and we were all sworn in—your accomplishments are measured from the moment you're sworn in, moving forward. They have every right to be under scrutiny. It's not enough to say "promises made" and all the rest of it.

I want to point out also, by the way, that you have already broken a pretty major promise, which was to repair our schools. Instead—

Hon. Todd Smith: No, no, no.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Oh, no, no. The Minister of Education signed a pledge to repair all of our schools, to deal with the \$16-billion debt, but instead has actually cut \$100 million already from school repairs.

In any case, I guess my point is simply, if it's a bad promise, if it's not good for Ontario, will you show the leadership to be able to step back and think twice? I ask you that when it comes to the contracts that you're breaking, but I also ask you that when it comes to the promise you made to deal with the sex education curriculum. As I said early on in my comments today, there are students right now who are afraid of the message you are sending in their schools, queer kids who are afraid of the message that you are sending to the kids in their school, that this is not something that they can talk about. So I ask you, please, reconsider your decisions, okay? Promises can be broken if they're in the best interests of the province.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to rise to raise my concerns about Bill 2. I grew up on a farm. My late father, who was a very Conservative farmer, always told me that your word is your honour. He finalized grain deals worth tens of thousands of dollars with a handshake. When I was running my small business, I approached it with a very similar philosophy. I

believe the people of Ontario deserve to expect that their government will operate in good faith as well, but this is clearly not the case with Bill 2.

Clearly, I support wind energy, but I also want to say that I disagreed with the previous government putting some projects in inappropriate and sensitive environmental areas. But breaking existing contracts like the White Pines Wind Project is a reckless approach to resolving this issue. It exposes the people of Ontario to significant financial, legal and reputational risk. Breaking contracts sends a message to businesses that Ontario is not a safe place to make investments.

This Conservative government is making the problem worse by saying that even if the government acts in bad faith, there will be legislative roadblocks for a company to protect itself. My Conservative father would be disappointed to know that this is how this new government plans to conduct business. Even the Ontario Chamber of Commerce is raising concerns. The director of policy was quoted in QP Briefing as saying, "The sanctity of contracts is fundamental. The government unilaterally cancelling contracts is harmful to business investment in Ontario."

Mr. Speaker, this bill does not say Ontario is open for business. It tells businesses that contracts are meaningless and the government can act with impunity. So I ask this government to reconsider, to take a moment and think about the actions they are about to take, because unless this government respects contracts and fixes the flaws in Bill 2, this will be a case of reckless promise made, reckless promise kept.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise and comment on the comments from the member from Guelph, who is newly elected. I knew him way back when; before I was elected, he was a guest a couple of times when I did a talk show in York region on Rogers local cable. He was a fantastic guest then and is wonderful to listen to now.

He spoke a bit about his Conservative father who did business on a handshake. What I would say is that his father understood the process of doing business. The White Pines wind farm that has been cancelled—I don't think that your father would have thought that was good process, to give an order to proceed two days after a writ drops by a government, when it didn't look like they were going to be re-elected. That's why they didn't want to wait. I don't think your father would have agreed with that.

The member himself said that he doesn't agree with industrial wind turbine projects being done in inappropriate and sensitive lands.

I would just say that I would be very interested to know how many businesses would not want to do business in Ontario because of what you feel is a lack of respect for contracts or process. I would say that there are probably thousands of businesses that do want to come to Ontario, because we're actually doing something about the high electricity rates.

So I think that you have to look at the big picture. I think we are going to see that Ontario is open for business. I think we are going to get a lot of interest in Ontario in the coming years. I look forward to celebrating with all these new companies and all the newly expanded companies that are going to be coming to a new Ontario that ensures that we are able to fulfill a mandate for our people to have good employment.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I've received a number of calls from my constituents who had ordered a Tesla Model 3, and the rebate on that model has been cancelled. One of them received their car on Saturday. They had expected the Ontario government to live up to its promise and to live up to its contract to maintain that rebate. But the Ontario government, under the stewardship of Doug Ford, has broken that promise.

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They've also broken the promise on the windmills contract, and they've also cancelled the rebate program. There are thousands of jobs for contractors in this province that are dependent on that rebate program, contracts that have already been signed, that people have already trained for, that people have already signed up to work for, so those are thousands of jobs that we're going to be losing.

I mentioned it before, and the discussion has been around breaking contracts: This legislation, particularly the clause that allows the government to break contracts unilaterally, sends a chill through the business community. I was at a meeting in my area last week with 1,600 innovative business leaders. They were talking about Canada, and Toronto and Ontario in particular, being a business leader in innovative technology, in IT, in artificial intelligence and in green technology. This unilateral cancelling of the GreenON program and of the rebates and of the windmills, all of that, sends a chill through those people.

These are people who are leading Ontario into the 21st century economy. What they are seeing from the Ford government is, "Promise made, promise broken, and we reserve the right to break any future promises that we may make, as well," and that's no way to do business, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments. The member from Haldimand-Norfolk.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thank you, Speaker. It's good to see you in the Chair. It's good to see people like yourself who have returned, and it's really good to see so many new members here from a variety of parties, including our member from Guelph, representing Guelph and representing a party first in this Legislative Assembly. It gives you and the people you represent quite a window on what goes on. In fact, where you're sitting, you do have a good view.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I do. I can see the whole House.

Mr. Toby Barrett: You can cover the waterfront.

You mentioned the importance of contracts, and then you mentioned, essentially, the way of doing business without contracts. I'm of a farm background. I know two of our families, my family and a neighbour, have farmed together probably for 15 years now, and there wasn't even a handshake; it's just an understanding.

Things change, depending on the weather and depending on commodity prices. Oftentimes, because of my present position, I rent farmland. If prices are bad—they're kind of heading that way right now—we skip a year on the rent. Essentially, we break the contract—new realities—and then you catch up. But there are different ways of doing things, obviously, especially in farming, with massive, massive changes in mechanization and technology. Things are constantly changing, and you have to be flexible.

With Bill 2 and cap-and-trade and the carbon tax, things that we're discussing during this debate—certainly in my experience in the last three elections, what has dominated is that people cannot afford to pay their hydro bills. That's been predominant at the door.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: The fact of the matter is the government is breaking its promise. The government of Ontario broke its promise to people who bought Teslas, to people who invested in wind turbines, to people who are waiting for rebates, to children who are waiting for school repairs. People who have invested in these things, Mr. Speaker, don't care which political party was in power. They made investments. When these projects are cancelled, they're going to lose money.

The member from Kingston has been having a heyday going around his riding finding small businesses who are losing money, who are going to have to lay people off, because they have made investments in employees, they've made investments in materials and they've signed contracts. Does this government not know what a contract is? Do they not know what a small business is? It's incredible.

Conservatives say they're the party of business. Small businesses all over Ontario have made investments in people and materials, have signed contracts, and this government is breaking contract after contract after contract. Breaking their promises, breaking contracts—that's what you're doing.

They can say "promise made, promise kept" all they want, but if you go to somebody in Kingston who is installing windows, and they have hired a few extra employees, they have invested thousands of dollars in materials and they are ready to go—and all of a sudden this government says: "Forget it, we're breaking your contract. Lay your employees off. You're going to have to suck up the money you have invested, because we don't know what a contract is." That's what this government is doing. They're hurting small businesses. That's why the chamber of commerce is raising questions. We should all question what this government is doing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now I return to the member from Guelph for final comments.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I just want to welcome the members from Spadina–Fort York and Niagara Centre to the Legislature. I'm looking forward to serving with you. I want to thank the members from Haldimand–Norfolk and Thornhill for your comments. We've known each other for many years, and while we don't always agree, we always have respectful debate and dialogue. I certainly appreciate that.

My hope is that we can have respectful debate and dialogue on how we proceed with the government honouring its contracts. Has the government reached out to this particular company and even attempted to negotiate an alternative way of moving forward so that we can, as a province, keep our word and honour our contract? Because you know that we have a serious issue with business confidence when even the Ontario Chamber of Commerce is saying that breaking contracts with impunity is bad for business, that it is hurting investor confidence in Ontario. So I ask this government to take this opportunity to honour our contracts and to proceed in a way that maintains the reputation of this province as a safe place to make investments, create jobs and generate prosperity.

I want to, finally, just reiterate the comments from my fellow members from Spadina–Fort York and Niagara Centre. I, too, am receiving numerous phone calls from businesses and from people who have made investments in good faith, who ordered things for their house or their car, and those rebates are not being honoured. I ask the government to extend the grace period so we can honour those rebates for people who made good-faith investments.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to rise and speak to 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. I want to applaud the Honourable Greg Rickford, the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, for bringing this piece of legislation through. Just a couple of days into this Legislature, and already he's putting action in place. He's making sure that we're doing what we said we would do. Promise made, promise kept—a man of action.

I'm going to talk about a couple of different items here. The Hydro One board submitted a letter to the provincial government that included the following terms. The entire board of directors will resign by August 15, and facilitate an orderly transition to a new board in the intervening period. The CEO of Hydro One is retiring from the company as of July 11. He will receive a \$400,000 lump sum in lieu of all post-retirement benefits. There will be no other severance or compensation of any kind paid to the parting CEO. The official opposition want to keep spinning this as though there's more money. All of the other terms and conditions that he's getting paid he was entitled to based on what was paid by the

former Liberal government. So \$400,000: I want to certainly applaud whoever did do this deal, because it's good for the people of Ontario. The board has actually reduced board compensation levels to what existed prior to January 1, 2018, and will forgo any compensation for work done after June 30.

Minister Rickford has accepted this letter on behalf of the government, and the terms have received cabinet approval. Promise made, promise kept.

This is a great day for Ontario ratepayers and an opportunity for Hydro One to turn a new page. We promised during the election campaign that we would address the governance of Hydro One. Everybody said that Premier Ford couldn't do it. We've proven that Mr. Ford, the Premier, did do it. This is an important step towards lowering hydro bills for people and businesses across Ontario.

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Some of the members over there were talking, particularly the members from Davenport and Guelph, in regard to breaking promises and not keeping promises. I don't know how they're standing in this House actually supporting what the Liberal government did before with the Green Energy Act, a program that's going to cost us \$133 billion over its lifetime. The member from Davenport talked about health care, hospitals and hallways; just think of what we could do with that \$133 billion if that had been negotiated. I notice that they didn't say anything about the Liberal government, which could have actually cancelled most of those contracts with no penalty to the province of Ontario or the taxpayers of Ontario. So again, I find it very interesting.

I wonder what they both would say in this House if members from their communities had wind turbines and the Green Energy Act provisions imposed on their residents, like it was on White Pines in my colleague's—

Hon. Todd Smith: They could put them in Davenport.

Mr. Bill Walker: They could put them in Davenport.

I wonder if they would actually support it in quite the same way.

In the case of White Pines, the people there were unwilling hosts from the first time my great colleague the House leader, the Minister of Consumer Services, stood very strongly as the MPP from that area, right from day one, and said, "This is not right. The people don't want it." Yet that Liberal government imposed it on them.

Hon. Todd Smith: And the NDP voted—

Mr. Bill Walker: And the NDP supported that. So they maybe should look in the mirror a little bit, the people who have voted on some of these things.

They talked a little bit about the GreenON energy program, but they left out that this was a Liberal mess that we inherited yet again. There were no approvals. There were no limits on what people could do there. Once again, just spend, spend, spend—and over the limit. So the minister has come in and our government has come in and had to take decisive action so that we don't continue to spend billions and billions down the road on projects for energy that we don't need.

I want to talk really briefly as well about the Back to Class Act. The York University strike has gone on far too long. Everyone, I hope, in this House would suggest that our priority has to be those students who are not in school. We have to ensure that we have the ability to get those students back, and we have to do whatever we can to do that.

At the end of the day, we are here because of the mess the Liberals created: \$133 billion on a Green Energy Act, which the bulk of municipalities across Ontario said they did not want: “We do not want these imposed in our backyard”—for power, let’s not forget, that we don’t need. We’re actually paying upwards of \$6 billion to get rid of our excess power, to the States and to Quebec, our competitors, to make them doubly competitive against our businesses here in Ontario.

I’ve heard some of the members of the opposition and the independent parties talking about small businesses. I’m hopeful that they’ll stand with us and make sure that we actually open the doors and make people welcome and want to bring business back to Ontario, to stay in Ontario and to expand our businesses in Ontario. I think these first couple of items in the first piece of legislation tabled in this House are going to do that. We’re going to bring prosperity back to Ontario. We’re going to create jobs in Ontario, and we’re going to actually open it up for business. Just like Premier Ford said all through that election campaign, we will open Ontario up for business. We’re going to put people back to work. We’re going to give people a reason to get up in the morning and have hope for the future.

I can’t talk enough about the couple of members over there that have—actually, they’re almost supporting that the highest rates in North America were okay under that Liberal government, the government that the NDP, in two elections, propped up. Yet their new members are coming along and saying, “This is all good. We’re okay with all this,” and trying to find little points to talk about.

At the end of the day, we wouldn’t be in this mess—we could have been out of this and actually started turning our great province around, like we’re attempting to do here in the PC caucus, two terms ago. We wouldn’t be in the debt—a billion dollars a month we’re spending because of that former 15 years of Liberal reign of terror: money that’s not going to hospitals; money that’s not going to front-line care; money that’s not going to schools; money that’s not going to social services; money that’s not going to seniors; money that was not going to mental health.

I want to reiterate that we are putting in \$1.9 billion to match the federal amount—\$3.8 billion is going to go to mental health; and 15,000 new long-term-care beds, which are going to address hallway health care, which those Liberals created and your party supported in two elections.

At the end of the day, I worked a lot of hours and a lot of time and went across this province talking about long-term care and seeing the challenges that are there. I see a few of the members from the Liberals shaking their head

no, but they know it’s the truth: We did go across the province, and we—

Hon. Todd Smith: There are only a few of them left, Bill.

Mr. Bill Walker: There are not too many nodding; you are correct, yes.

However, we’re going to ensure—because we did listen to the people of Ontario when we went across, and we heard how many people are struggling out there, who couldn’t get their loved ones into a long-term-care bed. The Liberal government never even talked about long-term-care beds until the last election.

We all know that the baby boom demographic is coming at us and that the time for action was 10 years ago. They talked about retrofitting 30,000 beds, and if I’m kind, they got about 10,000 done; 30% of their action record is not where I would want to be. So we’re coming in and we’re making that an absolute priority to make a difference, to ensure that those seniors who built our great province have the dignity and the care they so rightly deserve in their last years. I’m darn proud of our Premier and our party for making that an absolute commitment.

The only way that we can do that is to ensure that we are actually being very, very fiscally responsible. As my colleagues the finance minister and the Treasury Board president and the Premier have said, we’re going to go through and do a line-by-line audit. We’re going to ensure we know exactly where dollars are being spent, and where there is dollar for value, we’re going to continue to do that. We’re going to go through there and we’re going to put money back in Ontarians’ pockets, like we promised. Again, promise made, promise kept.

At the end of the day, we talk a little bit about this one act. It’s a start, Mr. Speaker, and I’m proud of the minister who stepped up in his very first week in his new House. He’s a very competent person who came with great experience. I’m proud to stand beside him and know that he’s going to bring legislation like that—as all of our cabinet. We have a very, very competent cabinet that is going to do the things that need to be done to turn our great province around.

We had to start with Hydro One because that was the biggest, colossal mess—one of the biggest, colossal messes; it’s hard to get to just number one with the Liberals after 15 years because there were so many colossal messes. It was tough to make one number one. I’ll see if they want to decide which one was number one. I certainly know that, for me, in my riding in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, I hear continually, every day, about hydro and how they want lower costs. The seniors at home who can’t afford it—it’s between heating and eating—are actually going to have some relief coming their way because of these actions. Those small independent businesses that we talked about: We’re going to encourage them and treat them with fairness and respect to ensure that they can thrive. We’re going to ensure that in places like White Pines, Green Energy Act turbine projects are not going to go forward and be imposed on unwilling hosts, bringing back the democratic

principle that the people should have their say, not someone in an ivory tower in Toronto. We're actually going to have the people of Ontario have a say.

And yes, we will consult. We will go across the province, we're going to listen and we're going to bring back legislation that serves the people, not the party and not the group that's in power. We're going to make sure that it's about the people. We are going to make it more affordable, we're going to give people relief and hope, and we're going to ensure that, at the end of the day, we stand and we do. We're going to make promises and we're going to keep promises. We're going to make sure that we do what we said in the election campaign, and we're going to stand up and be able to say, "Promise made, promise kept." I promise to you that we are all going to stand and do that every day.

For the next 10 seconds, I'm going to say to you again: promise made, promise kept; promise made, promise kept; promise made, promise kept.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would like to thank all members for active, enthusiastic debate this afternoon.

To the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound—this gentleman can take 15 minutes' worth of words and cram it into 10 minutes. As we learn about our members, he's also a professional auctioneer. So there you have it.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It is now 6 o'clock. This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1758.

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