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(Hansard)**

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Mercredi
12 septembre 2018

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Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 12 September 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 12 septembre 2018

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let us pray.
Prayers.

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, the Administrator has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in his office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The following is the title of the bill to which Your Honour did assent:

An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006, the Municipal Act, 2001 and the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 / Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto, la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités et la Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We're now going to do introduction of visitors, but I'd like to start it off. Would the members please join me in welcoming, in the Speaker's gallery, Mr. Tim Hudak, who served as MPP during the 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st Parliaments, and his friend David Reid. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

I have been informed and would want to add that we welcome George Smitherman, who was the member for Toronto Centre–Rosedale in the 37th and 38th Parliaments and the member for Toronto Centre in the 39th Parliament. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

I've been informed that David Zimmer is also here, the member for Willowdale who served in the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st Parliaments. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm just wanting to welcome all of those folks who have come here to watch the proceedings today, and who are trying to protect the charter rights of Ontarians and Torontonians.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Again, I would ask the members, when they're introducing guests, not to make a political statement to accompany the introduction.

Introduction of visitors.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would like to welcome to the Legislature a young and engaged constituent from Don Valley West, Jacob Landau. Welcome to the Legislature, Jacob.

Mr. Chris Glover: I would like to welcome constituents from Spadina–Fort York: Moira Clark and Eric Ladelpha.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: I would like to welcome my constituency assistants Melissa Edwards as well as Harleen Sandhu.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I would like to welcome my niece Hana R. Clayton. She's a student here at the Ontario College of Art and Design, and this is her first visit to the Ontario Legislature. Welcome, Hana.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce Chris Moise, a TDSB trustee. Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I would like to introduce TDSB trustee Ausma Malik, as well as welcome some of our city council candidates in Toronto here today: Jennifer Hollett; Chris Moise, who has already been mentioned; and Ausma Malik.

I would also like to welcome my partner in life, Jordan Berger.

Ms. Jill Andrew: I would like to welcome Krista Mihevc here, a constituent of Toronto–St. Paul's who is an amazing advocate for our rights.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I'm going to ask the members, please, do not make a political statement when you're introducing one of your guests.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome Mary Hynes, who is a constituent in Don Valley East. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I would like to welcome a constituent, Brandon Machado, to the Legislature.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my first question is to the Premier. Does the Premier believe that Canada needs a Charter of Rights?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Leader of the Opposition: What Canada needs and Ontario needs and Toronto needs is democracy. My friends, I want to remind the Leader of the Opposition that 2.3 million people voted for the PC Party. This is about preserving the will of the people. This is about preserving democracy.

Leader of the Opposition—through you, Mr. Speaker—the people will decide in four years. I'll tell you who won't decide: a politically appointed judge by one person. The

people of Ontario will decide if they want to move forward with saving people taxes, reducing hydro rates—

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, news flash for the Premier: Our democracy is upheld by our Charter of Rights and Freedoms in this country. However, earlier this week, while the Premier was trying to justify overriding the charter so that he could continue his vendetta against the voters of Toronto, the Premier stated that he and only he had the right to decide what was best for Ontario.

1040

Does the Premier think that there should be any checks at all on his power?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: This bill we're introducing was introduced to fix the gridlock down at city hall, the gridlock that took the factory worker, the construction worker, the person in the office over an hour to get to work down here.

My friends, we're going to make sure that we take care of the housing crisis and make sure that we take care of the crumbling infrastructure underneath our feet and make sure that transit gets moving, unlike the leader of the NDP. The leader of the NDP is here to protect her crony buddies: Mike Layton, Joe Cressy, Gord Perks—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Premier will take his seat.

I need to remind the members that we are not to ascribe motive. That's totally outside of the rules and traditions of the House. I would ask all members to cease doing that.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here are the facts: The Premier rammed through undemocratic changes to Toronto's elections, changes that he didn't have the guts to mention at all during the election campaign. A judge ruled that that wasn't just reckless and irresponsible but a violation of people's basic rights guaranteed by our charter. Now the Premier is going to override the Charter of Rights for the first time in Ontario's history just to get his way.

Our democratic rights, our democracy, include an independent judiciary and a free media to protect people from politicians who believe that an electoral majority gives them the mandate to trample on people's rights. Why does this Premier believe that democracy means he can do whatever he wants, whenever he wants?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Here, again, the Leader of the Opposition is down here protecting downtown NDP politicians' jobs. That's what the Leader of the Opposition is—again, worrying about her buddies Joe Cressy, Mike Layton, Perks, Fletcher. That's what the Leader of the Opposition is worried about.

I've yet to hear once the Leader of the Opposition worry about her own constituents in Hamilton. The people in Hamilton, when I visited, need jobs. They want lower taxes. They want lower hydro rates. That's what the people of Hamilton want. They want to make sure they have a voice.

For the people—we will make sure that we deliver our promises, and the people will decide over the next four years.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier, and I'd prefer to speak for myself, thank you very much, Premier. I really prefer to speak for myself.

What I'm here to do is actually to protect the interests of all Ontarians. That's what I'm here to do today, Speaker. That's what I'm here to do every day—Hamiltonians, Torontonians and all Ontarians.

Look, the Premier has stated that his personal vendetta against his enemies at Toronto city hall is so important that he is compelled to recall this Legislature to override the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in order to get that done. If it was so important to this Premier, why did he not mention it a single time during the election campaign that just ended?

Hon. Doug Ford: Leader of the Opposition, as I was criss-crossing Toronto talking to tens of thousands of people, they were frustrated. They know the city of Toronto is the most dysfunctional political system in all of Canada. They're frustrated with travelling hours to work. They're frustrated with the high taxes. They're frustrated with transit not being built.

The people of Scarborough are frustrated that the Scarborough subway was voted eight times. David Miller couldn't build transit; Rob Ford couldn't build transit and neither—

Interruption.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: You're making them puke. They're all going to throw up up there. You're making the whole gallery sick.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Essex, please come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The House will come to order so I can deal with this.

I'm now addressing the people in the gallery: We welcome you here today to observe the debate, but you cannot participate and you can't demonstrate in any way. Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Speaker: We're here to serve the people—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have to be able to debate without this disruption. If it continues, we will have to clear the gallery and you'll have to leave.

The Premier can finish his answer.

Interruption.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The official opposition will come to order. Order.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We're going to have to clear the galleries. We have to clear the galleries.

We're going to recess the House for 10 minutes.

The House recessed from 1049 to 1111.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We're now going to seek to resume question period where we left off. Start the clock.

I recognize the Leader of the Opposition on her first supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I don't have a Premier to give my supplementary to. My first question was to the Premier. He's not here to give a supplementary to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You can't make reference to the absence of any member, but you can put your question to the government.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Again I recognize the Leader of the Opposition on her supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. The second part of my second question is to the Premier. The people of Ontario are looking for a government to provide good schools for their kids, decent health care for their loved ones and jobs that you can raise a family on. But when they look to this Premier for his priorities, all they see is someone obsessed with his enemies on Toronto city council—so obsessed that he's going to toss aside the Charter of Rights to get what he wants; so obsessed that senior citizens are being taken out of our chamber in handcuffs so that he can get his way.

Why is this the Premier's top priority?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, again I'll remind the Leader of the Opposition that we were elected on making sure we fix this city. We were elected to make sure that we fix the infrastructure, that the hard-working people that took an hour, an hour and a half to get down to work today downtown have proper transit, proper subways to get them from point A to point B in a rapid fashion—unlike the NDP.

From the day the Leader of the Opposition came down here, she was worried about protecting her political, paid activists, making sure she protects the downtown NDP councillors that haven't even registered to run. The NDP is worried about one thing: raising taxes, having the highest carbon tax in the entire country, \$2-a-litre gasoline—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Once again, I will ask members on both sides of the House to cease and desist imputing motive in the course of their questions.

Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, we all know who pays for their activists. We saw it during the election campaign.

Members of this Legislature could be tackling the real emergencies that Ontario families are facing currently, like lead in school water, for example; wait times in our hospitals; 80,000 Ontario jobs lost in one month under this Premier's leadership. Instead, he called us here to cut the

size of Toronto city council and override the charter to do it. The Premier is trampling on people's basic rights to pass a law that he didn't even have the guts to campaign on.

Why can't the Premier just take a step back, take a deep breath—count to 10, for goodness' sake—and accept that there is a more pressing priority there, and many more pressing priorities, than his petty vendetta against his old enemies at city hall?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Leader of the Opposition: At least we can count to 10, unlike you folks. I know you get your budgets mixed up; I know that you were off by about \$5 billion.

We're there to save the taxpayers money. We're there to put money back into the taxpayer's pocket. We're there to make sure we speak for the will of the people and uphold democracy. That's why we are here.

We were elected to represent the people of this great province. We are here to make sure—again—we lower taxes, lower hydro rates, lower gas prices, and get rid of the worst tax ever, the carbon tax.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Attorney General. The “notwithstanding” clause allows the government to override sections of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is meant to be used only in the most extreme circumstances, when a judicial decision is contrary to the public interest. But right now, staff within the Attorney General's office are drafting a law that would invoke the “notwithstanding” clause for no better reason than to help her Premier settle personal scores with political rivals.

Does this Attorney General, charged with upholding the rule of law in our province, really believe that cutting Toronto's city council from 47 to 25 seats is worth violating our charter rights for?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Attorney General.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The question was to the Attorney General.

Hon. Doug Ford: Oh, sorry.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order on the opposition benches.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: We are using the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to uphold the Constitution.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Your old law firm must be so proud.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Essex will come to order.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: We believe that the Better Local Government Act is constitutional. That is why our government is appealing the judge's ruling and we are seeking a stay in the decision.

Section 92 of the Constitution makes it clear that the province has exclusive jurisdiction over municipalities, and section 33 of the charter confirms the paramountcy of the Legislature.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Taking away fundamental rights is an extremely serious measure. This is why Ontario has never, ever before invoked the “notwithstanding” clause. But after doing it once, it becomes easier to do it again. Indeed, after casually invoking the “notwithstanding” clause to indulge his personal Toronto obsession, the Premier said he “won’t be shy” about suspending charter rights again if the courts rule against him again.

Now, I think that the Attorney General understands the role of the courts in upholding democracy in our country and our province. If she doesn’t, she should go back to law school. Why is the Attorney General putting the Premier above the law and normalizing the suspension of fundamental charter rights?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: We take our duties at the Ministry of the Attorney General very seriously. There is nothing casual about what is going on here. We take this seriously. We are using the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to uphold the Constitution and we are appealing the decision, which we believe was wrongly decided, to the Court of Appeal and asking for a stay in the judge’s decision.

1120

Interjections.

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

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, time is of the essence. On October 22, there is an election happening in Toronto. We need to give the voters of the city of Toronto certainty about the rules under which the election will be conducted.

VETERANS

Mr. Doug Downey: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Yesterday marked the 17th anniversary of the senseless attack against the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon and the hijacked plane that crashed close to Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

The world was a different place after that day, and the effects of the attack were certainly felt right here in Canada. Twenty-four Canadians lost their lives that fateful day; that included 11 Ontarians. The ensuing war in Afghanistan also saw 159 Canadian soldiers make the ultimate sacrifice, defending our freedoms and fighting against terror abroad.

Can the minister tell us how the government intends to honour the Canadian lives lost due to this tragic attack?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Welcome back, Speaker.

Thank you for the question from my honourable colleague from Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte. We must never forget that tragic event of 9/11. I was proud that our Premier met the family of one of the victims of that tragic event yesterday. Thank you.

Canada stepped up in the face of evil to assist our friend and ally the United States. We know the story of Gander, Newfoundland and how that small town protected thousands of displaced visitors when air traffic was stranded. Canada then aided our allies in fighting terror abroad in the war in Afghanistan, where 159 Canadians made the ultimate sacrifice.

We’re committing to support and honour the sacrifice of those soldiers, and I’d like to elaborate on that more in my supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Doug Downey: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Thank you for your very thoughtful response. I, too, was glad to hear that the Premier had met with the family of one of the Canadian victims of 9/11. I also think it’s important to make sure we commemorate this event and the effects it had and the sacrifices made because of it. This includes honouring the fallen soldiers of those who bravely served in Afghanistan.

Can the minister please explain what our government is doing to honour the brave men and women who served Canada in the subsequent war in Afghanistan?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I’m pleased to share with you that our government for the people is committed to building Ontario’s first provincial memorial to honour Canadian heroes of the war in Afghanistan. The Memorial to the Canadian Heroes of the War in Afghanistan will be located here at Queen’s Park. This memorial will stand as a testament to the bravery of our veterans and the sacrifices made by our troops.

We have the utmost respect for our veterans, our soldiers and their families. We will ensure that their courage is honoured and express appreciation on behalf of all Ontarians for their service. We will have many more details in the months to come, but the sacrifices of these brave men and women will never be forgotten by the government of Ontario.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Premier Ford has threatened to employ the “notwithstanding” clause to violate our fundamental rights whenever there is a court decision that stands in his way. Premier Ford’s intentions are chilling. The “notwithstanding” clause can be used to override fundamental rights like freedom of religion or even our right to life, liberty and security of the person.

As the right hand to Mr. Ford, does the Deputy Premier support overriding our Charter of Rights and Freedoms to satisfy the whims of a would-be dictator, or will the Deputy Premier—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): First of all, we refer to each other by our riding or our official name. You can't refer to the Premier in that way.

Secondly, you have to withdraw.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Response?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, the will of the people—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Now we know why you wear a yellow tie, Vic.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member from Essex will come to order.

I would ask the member for Essex to withdraw.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: The will of the people will decide on this Legislature in four years, not a judge appointed by one person, a politically appointed judge.

My friends, do you know what people are worried about? People are worried about being gouged by the government. They are worried about getting a good-paying job. When I was in Hamilton, I talked to dozens of people who felt they weren't being represented in the Leader of the Opposition's area. They were unemployed. Do you know why they were unemployed? Because the Leader of the Opposition is too worried about protecting her political friends—

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

Interjection.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Premier will please take his seat.

Supplementary question?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Back to the Deputy Premier: It's clear by now that the Premier is willing to take the nuclear option when a less damaging option is available. But in a democracy, the government is more than just one person.

The Conservative Party sold the people of Ontario on the belief that Mr. Ford's cabinet would keep his worst impulses in check. As the highest-ranking member of the cabinet after the Premier, will the Deputy Premier do the right thing, keep the Premier in check and step up to stop his vendetta against the Toronto city council?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I'm going to ask members to stop imputing motive in their questions or in their statements in this House.

Premier, respond?

Hon. Doug Ford: My friends, do you know who is going to keep us all in check? The people are going to keep us in check. They're going to decide if the government is in better shape than we were before. The people will decide—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, I think—
Interjections.

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

Hon. Doug Ford: They're out of control, Mr. Speaker, like usual.

My friends, what is going to keep us in check are the people—

Interjections.

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

Premier, respond.

Hon. Doug Ford: This is about preserving the will of the people. It's about preserving the rights of the people. It's about letting them decide who they're going to vote for. I can assure you there are going to be a few people missing on the other side in the next election. My friends—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Next question.

SERVICE FEES

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Under the previous Liberal government, fees for driver's licences and other services were set to increase. This burden would have been placed directly on the people of Ontario.

Ontarians work harder than ever before and pay more than ever before. I was pleased to see that the government for the people froze these fee increases. Ontario has elected a government that works for the people. We have lowered day-to-day costs for the taxpayer.

1130

I have two questions for the Minister of Transportation: Can he outline for the House which fees were frozen and how the fee freeze will benefit Ontarians?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the member for the question today. When we travelled across the province during the campaign, and previous to that, we heard every day how life was getting more and more unaffordable in the province of Ontario under the previous government, and we listened to what the people said.

Effective September 1, there was supposed to be a fee increase. We made the decision that that fee increase would not proceed. I'll give more details in the supplementary, but what we recognized is that it was important for us to send a message to the people that we're going to do what we can in the Ford government to make life more affordable and not be putting our hands into the people's pockets each and every day that they wake up and go to work, but to try to make life easier for the people. Because this is a government for the people.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Minister, for these common sense changes. Under the previous government, life in Ontario had grown unaffordable, not only for my

constituents but for people across our province. The Liberal government wasted hard-earned money and spent tax dollars that only benefited Liberal insiders and political elites. But you know what? Ontarians know better.

I'm proud to serve in the government for the people that is committed to making life easier and more affordable. Minister, can you update the House on how much money this initiative will save the people of Ontario?

Hon. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much for the supplementary. What we have done with the decision that was made prior—the September 1 increase that would have been implemented under the previous government—is to freeze the cost of a driver's licence here in the province of Ontario, to freeze the cost of knowledge tests and to freeze the cost of road tests. This will result in millions of dollars of savings to the people of the province of Ontario.

It's not the largest amount of money, but it is a clear message to the people that this government is listening. We recognize what the previous government had done. Every time people got up in the morning, they looked at the news and the previous government was taking more money out of their pockets, more of their hard-earned money. We were elected on a platform to get rid of the unjust carbon tax and to make life more affordable for the people of Ontario. With the freezing of those fees, that's exactly—

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

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is for the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. The Premier has said very clearly that he will not be shy to use the “notwithstanding” clause to violate our charter rights in the future, whenever adhering to the rule of law is too onerous for him. Does the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility support overriding our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which protects the fundamental rights of all Canadians, or will the minister vote against the reintroduced Bill 5 during the free vote?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thanks for the question. I refer the question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to thank the member for the question. Speaker, I think what's being forgotten here is that virtually every constitutional expert, even those who don't support our party, felt we were well within our rights to table the Better Local Government Act. In fact, last weekend, candidates were actually campaigning in their new wards, and candidates were waiting at city hall for the decision, ready to register for the new wards. I think there was a general acceptance that this government was well within our rights to have an effective and efficient government at Toronto city hall.

That's why, today, we will be tabling a new bill. As the Attorney General said earlier, we'll be appealing the—

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

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Back to the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility—

Interjections.

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

Start the clock again. Supplementary.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Back to the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility: As the only cabinet minister to represent the people of Toronto, aside from the Premier, was the minister at the cabinet table when the decision was reached to take the unprecedented step of employing the “notwithstanding” clause, and will the minister do the right thing: respect the overwhelming opinion of the people he is supposed to represent and vote against Ford's unconstitutional attacks on Toronto and on charter rights?

Interjections.

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

Once again, I'll remind the House that we refer to the Premier by the name “Premier,” ministers by their ministerial responsibilities, and members by their riding names.

Response, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: Our government is doing the right thing. Given the decision, we're tabling a new bill. We are doing the right thing.

Speaker, we believe in better local government. We believe in an efficient and effective Toronto council of 25 people that mirrors the same electoral boundaries of the 25 MPs and the 25 MPPs. I think everyone acknowledges those 25 MPs have no problem representing those electoral districts and Legislative Assembly members have no problem representing their districts. We believe in better local government, we believe in 25 electoral districts in the city of Toronto, and we're—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Windsor–Tecumseh, come to order.

Hon. Steve Clark: —for the people on that pledge.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Premier. In response to the Ontario Superior Court ruling striking down a flawed Bill 5, the Premier made a hasty decision to invoke the “notwithstanding” clause, something that has never been done before in Ontario. It is seldom used because it overrides our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is a measure of last resort. It suspends people's civil liberties. The Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms are there to guide us as lawmakers and, most importantly, protect all of us.

Speaker, the Premier knows there are other remedies available to him. Reasonable people are asking, if he's willing to use it in this circumstance, where else will he use it?

To the Premier: Did the Premier ask the advice of the Deputy Premier, the Attorney General, the Secretary of the Cabinet or the Deputy Attorney General before making his decision?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the representative from Ottawa South in the minivan party: I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, they didn't have to worry about that because they had more political scandals, billions of dollars of waste. There was no party in the history of this government that was more politically corrupt than their party—there has been no party at all.

We are down here thanks to the Liberals, because they wasted billions and billions of dollars of taxpayers' money. They had scandal after scandal after scandal. No matter if it was eHealth, no matter what it was, there were billions of dollars wasted. And my friends, you'll be hearing about the billions of dollars that were wasted. The Auditor General came out and said they were cooking the books. I can tell you, they were more than cooking the books; they were frying—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the Premier to withdraw.

Hon. Doug Ford: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: I'll take that as a no. And somebody should check your material; it's a bit stale.

The Premier's impulsive decision to invoke the "notwithstanding" clause has not been fully thought through and is wrong. Did the Premier consult with the former Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney? Did he seek the advice of the former Progressive Conservative Attorney General, Roy McMurtry? Did he pick up the phone and call Mike Harris, who, if you remember, when he amalgamated cities across Ontario, did a public consultation?

We'll be filing a reasoned amendment. Impatience is not a good reason to take such an extreme measure.

Speaker, through you to the Premier: Will the Premier let the cooler heads in his caucus prevail, not suspend people's rights, and refrain from invoking the "notwithstanding" clause?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member for Ottawa South: You're going to be the last person I take advice from about running a government down here. You have destroyed this province for years to come. Every single taxpayer in Ontario is going to be paying for years for their mistakes. For years and years and years—billions of dollars—it was tax, tax, tax, spend, spend, spend.

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And who lifted the Liberals up but the leader of the NDP. They stood side by side with the Liberals, wasting billions of dollars, hand in hand with every single scandal the Liberals brought to this province.

My friends, we're going to turn this province around. We're going to make sure there's accountability, transparency and integrity back at Queen's Park.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Ms. Jane McKenna: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The free and open exchange of ideas is the fundamental element of post-secondary education. That is why I was so concerned to hear from young people during the campaign about examples of groups using violence and intimidation tactics to shut down free speech on campus.

Speaker, can the minister please tell us about the government's plan to uphold free speech on campus?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I ask the opposition to come to order. I have to be able to hear the question and the answer. The member for Burlington has the right to ask a question too.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the hard-working member for that question and the work that she does every day on behalf of the constituents of Burlington.

Our government made a commitment to the people of Ontario to uphold free speech on campus. On August 30, we announced measures which will do just that. Promise made, promise kept.

Speaker, any action that interferes with free speech on campus is absolutely unacceptable and is taken very seriously by this government. Our plan will put in place a minimum standard for free speech policy for all publicly assisted—

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

Ms. Jane McKenna: Thank you to the minister for your thoughtful response. It is great news to hear that our government is moving forward with delivering this promise to the people to uphold free speech on campuses.

Speaker, I believe that most Ontarians would be shocked to learn that students and groups are being shut down and intimidated simply for having a different opinion. In order to learn—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize for interrupting the member for Burlington. I cannot hear the member for Burlington. The opposition has to come to order. If I have to, I'll start warning and naming.

The member for Burlington can continue.

Ms. Jane McKenna: In order to learn about an idea you agree with, you also have to learn about and listen to ideas you fundamentally disagree with.

Can the minister tell us more about how the government's policy upholds free speech?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: As the member alluded to, colleges and universities should not shield their students from ideas or discourse they disagree with. Colleges and universities also need to ensure that students are not

stopped from sharing their opinions. By January 1, 2019, all universities and colleges must implement a free speech policy that includes a definition of free speech, that is based on best practices from around the globe and ensures existing student disciplinary measures apply to students who violate the policy.

To ensure that all students can expect the same standard, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario will monitor whether institutions are in compliance. If necessary, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities may reduce operating grants for institutions not taking appropriate action to uphold free speech.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Jeff Burch: To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: The Premier's decision to invoke the "notwithstanding" clause is an unprecedented abuse of power and displays nothing but pure contempt for the people of Toronto.

To add insult to injury, the Premier has also made it clear that he will not be shy about invoking the clause in the future.

Does the minister support trampling the rights and freedoms of Ontarians any time this Premier wants to interfere in municipal councils, or will the minister stand up, have a backbone and vote against this undemocratic move?

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question, but let me be clear: It's our government's intention to put forward new legislation to deal with this issue. We believe very strongly that a council that is streamlined and ready to work on October 22 is the best way to move forward.

Yes, we're disappointed with the judge's decision. The Attorney General made clear our intention to appeal, but time is of the essence. We have an election for October 22. We want to make sure that that council is a streamlined council that's ready to work to make those important decisions. Our government wants to make sure that the city of Toronto can build transit, can fix infrastructure and build new housing. We believe the best way to do that is with an efficient council of 25.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Speaker, it is shocking that the minister is standing here in this House, happily propping up this Premier's dictatorial move to invoke this clause—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'd ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You have to stand up and say "withdraw."

Mr. Jeff Burch: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Continue.

Mr. Jeff Burch: —a clause that we all know has nothing to do with efficiency and everything to do with this Premier settling a score with the city that rejected him as mayor and Premier. This is a hideous display of vengeance on one of our province's great cities—a shameful day for Ontario.

Why does the minister think it is appropriate for this government to use unprecedented nuclear measures to bulldoze the democratic rights of Torontonians at the whims of a Premier who is acting like a dictator?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I'd ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Response?

Hon. Steve Clark: This member time and time again uses unparliamentary language.

Let me be clear: Our government is committed to having an efficient and effective council. We made it very clear—crystal clear, as my colleague beside me said—during the election that we were going to reduce the size and cost of government. We want government to be accountable to the people. We want to ensure that new Toronto council is not dysfunctional, cannot just grind through week-long council meetings and get nothing done. We want to give that council the effective tools to make those tough decisions.

As I said before, we're going to be introducing new legislation, and I ask the member to consider the reason we want effective local government. That's why we're doing it, Speaker.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Christine Hogarth: My question is for the Minister of Education. Ontario students just went back to school and, once again, they are faced with learning Kathleen Wynne's ideologically driven discovery math curriculum. Everyone on this side of the House and—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to have to interrupt and once again remind the members that you have to refer to other members by their riding name, not by their personal name.

The member can continue.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you.

Everyone on this side of the House knows, and my colleagues on the other side of the House, and my residents—I spent the weekend at the Taste of the Kingsway, where hundreds of parents came to see me. Last night, I was knocking on doors in Alderwood, and parents again said this to me: Our discovery math program is not working.

In fact, EQAO scores have been dropping for years and this past year reached a new low. Half of Ontario's grade 6 students have failed to meet the provincial standards on math. By the time our students get to grade 9, more than half of them will be taking the applied math courses and failing to make the grade.

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I think we can all agree that these statistics are unacceptable. EQAO assessment results show that we must do better when it comes to math performances in Ontario. We must ensure that all students have the knowledge and skills they need—

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

Response? Minister of Education.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome you and the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore back to the House, as well as every other member, because this is what democracy is all about: It's about debating ideas and concepts.

You know what? Since the first day we took office our team has been focused on ensuring our education system accomplishes two goals: respecting parents—we know how to respect people on this side of the House—and also, prepare people for their future. We promised to deliver a system that puts the rights of parents first while getting back to the basics, Speaker. That's a promise we made, and we are delivering on that promise.

Mr. Speaker, it's with pride that I can say that we have already begun following through on our commitment to get back to the basics and focus on the fundamentals. We're taking the necessary steps to make sure Ontario students are once again leaders in mathematics. To date, we have introduced a number of initiatives to get—

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

Interjections.

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

Supplementary.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Thank you very much for your response. This is truly great news, and important news to the parents in my riding. I know my constituents will be pleased to finally have a government that will focus on giving their children the skills and the tools they need to be successful both inside and out of the classroom.

Minister, once again, I have heard from constituents as early as last night that it's not only fundamental math our students need to learn; they believe students need to know more about what it takes to be part of the growing technology sector in our province. They are looking forward to expressing these concerns in upcoming province-wide consultations.

Mr. Speaker, we finally have a government for the people that is putting the rights of parents first, and we'll be consulting them on their child's education, such as the new math curriculum.

Minister, what options are available to parents in my riding who wish to participate in our government's province-wide consultation process? And what can my constituents expect from these—

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

Response.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Before I answer the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, I want to ensure the people watching today that we have taken great steps in ensuring our students are going to get back to the basics in math. We've introduced a teachers' guide. We're introducing a fact sheet for parents and guardians to make sure they understand the importance of teaching the proper math in classrooms.

Furthermore, we're redirecting \$55 million to ensure that our teachers are prepared to teach math to prepare our students for the realities of today.

Over and above that, Speaker, I am so pleased to say that we are absolutely on track with our consultation. We look forward to it being comprehensive and soliciting information back from our teachers, our parents and our students. Anyone who wants to contribute to this consultation will have a manner to do so. We'll be utilizing technology. We'll be utilizing telephone town halls. We'll be doing online consultations. Also, we'll be receiving written submissions as well. I look—

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

Next question.

ÉLECTIONS MUNICIPALES

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Joel Harden: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. I'm going to pose it in French first.

Est-ce que la ministre pense que les gens d'Ottawa ont le droit de s'exprimer au sujet de la taille du conseil municipal? Oui ou non?

Does the minister believe that the people of Ottawa deserve to have a say in the size of their city council? Yes or no?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I answered that question yesterday, so I'll refer it to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The standing orders allow a minister to refer a question.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: How can they muzzle Lisa MacLeod?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Windsor–Tecumseh will come to order.

I have to remind the member that it has to be a straight referral without further explanation. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing can respond.

Hon. Steve Clark: Merci beaucoup pour la question. I'm not sure if the member was at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference. He's nodding his head, so he was. If you heard the Premier's speech, there was a clear statement by the Premier that the Better Local Government Act only deals with the city of Toronto.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, if the members would stop heckling and start listening, they would realize that the speech was clear. Bill 5 only deals with that. He said the same thing to many delegates who asked the question of him. I said the same thing to delegates who asked me. This bill only deals with the city of Toronto.

We feel, Speaker, that it's very appropriate, given the fact that there are 25 existing federal and provincial boundaries, that the city councillors in this city have those

same boundaries. There is no plan, as the Premier said at AMO, to include any other municipality.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm going to ask my friend the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, as a fellow Ottawa MPP, to answer the question, again, I hope.

I'll just remind my friend that the Premier recently stated, "I've had numerous calls from Ottawa, I'll tell you. I don't know what's going on out in Ottawa, but I'm getting endless calls from the Ottawa region." This was followed by a tweet from the minister referring to the Premier's address at AMO and saying that this government actually had no intention of targeting Ottawa the way it did Toronto. So which is it? Which is it?

Speaker, the people of Ottawa, whom the member and I both represent, deserve clarity. Will the minister confirm once and for all if the Premier will or will not apply the same drastic measures used to slash Toronto city council to Ottawa?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, Speaker, through you to the member: I'm not sure if the member was at the mayor's breakfast yesterday in Ottawa to hear my colleague the minister. The minister, in her speech, said no.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Mike Harris: My question is for the President of the Treasury Board. Under the past Liberal government, spending was out of control. Since 2004, the Liberals mismanaged the public finances and shamefully doubled the size of the debt. This is debt that future generations of Ontarians, including my own children, will be on the hook for.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Ontario threw out the last government because of irresponsible management. The people of Ontario wanted a government that would listen. Can the President of the Treasury Board please tell this House what the government is doing to listen to the people and get government spending under control?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for that very thoughtful question. Mr. Speaker, the government has a responsibility to ensure programs and services meet the needs of the people we serve and to keep those programs sustainable now and into the future. Make no mistake: Our expenditure review is about much more than tightening our purse strings. It's about planning for prosperity.

Our government, launching the Planning for Prosperity consultation, asked the people about public spending and services. Our government recognizes that Ontario's hard-working front-line workers and citizens have valuable input about service improvements. I'm pleased to say that the people of Ontario have so far flooded our office with submissions: over 6,000 survey responses and over 9,000 individual ideas. The people demanded a fiscally responsible government that listens, and that's exactly what they got.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Mike Harris: Mr. Speaker, through you: Thank you to the President of the Treasury Board for the response. It is clear that our government has committed to an unparalleled level of transparency and openness when it comes to reviewing the state of the province's finances.

I know that the people of Ontario are concerned about government spending and services, and that's why they elected our government for the people. We promised that we would get Ontario back on track.

Can the President of the Treasury Board inform this House on how the Planning for Prosperity public consultations will help the government get spending under control?

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Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Mr. Speaker, the province doesn't have a revenue problem, it has a spending problem—one which the previous government recklessly enabled. That spending ends here.

Efficiencies exist all over government, whether it's how different agencies and ministries purchase goods or how they deliver services. We will use what we hear during our Planning for Prosperity, which I hope the members opposite will participate in online—and yes, you can do it anonymously—to ensure that our vital public services are sustainable both now and in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, despite all the fearmongering from the opposition, the actions that we have taken are not about cuts. They're about rebuilding Ontario's finances so that we have a legacy of sustainable public services for future generations. It's about planning for prosperity.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is to the Minister of Education. This government's use of the "notwithstanding" clause to push through their unconstitutional changes to Toronto city council is not only unprecedented but just plain wrong. But to make matters worse, the Premier who thinks he's king said that he will be using the clause to override our charter rights whenever he pleases.

Does the Minister of Education support using the "notwithstanding" clause to override our fundamental rights and freedoms, or will she show some backbone and vote against it in the upcoming free vote?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Thank you, Speaker. Through you to the member for Davenport: There's only one reason why we're introducing new legislation, and that's to end the dysfunction and deadlock at Toronto city council.

During the campaign, we talked very clearly about reducing the size and cost of government. We believe that an accountable and efficient 25-person council at the city of Toronto is the only way to go and that's why we've made the decision. As I said earlier, the Attorney General very eloquently this morning talked about our appeal and

our use of section 33. It's very important for us. This is very, very important.

Interjections.

Hon. Steve Clark: I want the members to stop heckling and start listening a bit.

October 22 is fast approaching. We need to have a council in place. We need to introduce new legislation. This is very important and we're moving forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Through you, Mr. Speaker, back to the Minister of Education—because the battle over Bill 5 isn't the only court case that this government is embroiled in. There are also legal challenges over the government's repeal of a modern sex education curriculum, including a human rights complaint. That is why my question was directed to the Minister of Education.

This is not the kind of leadership that Ontarians are looking for in this very important role, Minister of Education. Will you show the students of Ontario what it means to stand up to a bully? Does the Minister of Education believe there are—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the member to withdraw.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Withdrawn.

Does the Minister of Education believe there are such things as fundamental human rights and, if so, does the minister believe the government has a responsibility for upholding those rights?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, the only party that is talking about wanting more politicians in the province of Ontario is the NDP. Come on, Speaker.

During the campaign people wanted a more efficient, more nimble, more effective government. They told us very clearly they wanted to stop the dysfunction and dead-lock. I'm sure my seatmate, the Minister of Transportation, would love to work with a streamlined council to build more transit. My colleague behind me is Minister of Infrastructure. He wants to work with a nimble Toronto council and build more infrastructure. I want to build more housing. I want to work with that new council and get things done for the people of Toronto.

That party is the only party that's standing up for more politicians, more waste, more mismanagement and more spending.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The time for question period has expired. This House stands in recess until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1205 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It's my pleasure to introduce a good friend of mine who has joined us this afternoon to watch the proceedings: Kevin Hearn from the Barenaked Ladies. Welcome, Kevin, to the Legislature.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's my pleasure to introduce my friend and constituent Steve Dyck, who is visiting Queen's Park today representing Fair Vote Canada, meeting with members and talking about democracy. Welcome to Queen's Park, Steve.

Mr. Joel Harden: It's a pleasure to introduce Declan Ingham, who's here today. Declan was part of our team in Ottawa Centre and did a lot of our riding and policy work. Declan is now lost to Toronto, unfortunately, but we hope to get him back soon. Declan, it's good to see you here in the people's House.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Ms. Doly Begum: In the last few weeks, we have witnessed the Premier's dislike of proper process, his dislike of appropriate public consultation, and his dislike of careful cost-benefit analysis. But his utter disrespect for our judicial system is not only appalling; it sets a dangerous precedent. The Premier's Wild West attitude to push this bill through by invoking the "notwithstanding" clause, a clause that is intended to be used only in exceptional circumstances such as a national security threat, directs us back to this question: Is this really about cost saving or is this personal? Is this the Premier using every tool in his tool box just to get his petty revenge on Torontonians?

Mr. Speaker, it appears that he does not have any problem with the number or cost of politicians as long as they're from his family or close group of friends.

Like many of my colleagues in this room, I'm a member of provincial Parliament, but unlike many of my colleagues in this room who are voting for this bill, I'm actually a proud resident of the city of Toronto, and we the people of this great city not only denounce the Premier's callous attitude towards the people's wishes and his plan to misuse government powers for personal vendetta, but also tell him, "Enough. You need to stop now."

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I'm going to remind members of the House that it is inappropriate to impute motive.

Members' statements.

BUILDING SOMETHING AMAZING

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to highlight the great work under way at Durham College in support of students and youth involved with the development of business ideas and plans. If Durham region's reputation for quality and innovation is to flourish, then we must work to create an environment where businesses can not only start locally but develop as well.

In that regard, I'm pleased to announce the new partnership between Durham College and 360insights, one

of Ontario's fastest-growing, innovative companies located in Whitby. 360insights is making a significant donation to Durham College's Building Something Amazing capital campaign to support construction of the college's new centre for collaborative education. The goal of the centre is to support students and youth in developing their business ideas and plans and getting them to market quickly.

Speaker, I applaud the creativity and foresight of both Durham College and 360insights in supporting students and youth in developing their business ideas and plans—a win-win for all involved and a boost for our local economy

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: For the past 48 hours, the phone in my constituency office has been ringing off the hook. Constituents have stopped me on the street and on the boardwalk, they've emailed and texted. They have had one message: Please stop Doug Ford and the Conservatives from trampling our fundamental freedoms and our charter rights.

Our charter rights matter. They are the very core and the very foundation of our democracy and of values that we as Canadians hold dear. As elected officials, we have a duty to protect those rights above all else. These are the rights for which people have struggled and protested and fought to leave with us. They're the rights for which generations of new Canadians have left their homes behind and travelled here, at great cost and great sacrifice, to enjoy and give to their children. They are the standard against which we must always strive to measure ourselves as elected officials, as citizens and as people. They are a sacred trust. To toss them so carelessly aside is to toss aside the very best of our society. This decision sets a terrifying precedent and we should all be vigilant.

We in the official opposition will do everything we can to defend what every elected official ought to defend: those rights and freedoms that are the most precious to us as Ontarians and as Canadians.

MARKHAM-UNIONVILLE COMMUNITY BARBECUE

Mr. Billy Pang: I am happy to speak about the event I co-hosted with MP Bob Saroya this past month. On August 11, a beautiful and sunny day, MP Bob Saroya and myself had the opportunity to co-host the annual Markham-Unionville community barbecue at Wismer Park in Markham.

We were exceptionally pleased that close to 2,500 constituents joined us, making the barbecue one of the largest annual events hosted by parliamentarians in Canada. Along with many of our constituents, friends and volunteers, fellow MPPs Aris Babikian, Logan Kanapathi for Markham-Thornhill and Michael Parsa for Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill, as well as other local city councillors, were able to join us. We also hosted Andrew Scheer, the federal leader of the official opposition. As you

can see, this event for the people included elected representatives from three levels of government working together to make it a great success.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to add that not only did this event include food, family and fun, this was an event that promoted and featured more than 15 different musical or dance performing groups.

Also joining us were the world traditional culture research institute, Canada branch, and STEM Kids Rock, which is a club that inspires the young generation of—

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

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I rise to speak about the unprecedented use of the “notwithstanding” clause. I'll be voting against this outrageous and needless attack on the rule of law.

The “notwithstanding” clause has never been used in Ontario, and for a good reason: It is a tool that is undemocratic and opens the door to unprecedented power that can be brought to bear against citizens. Most concerning is that the member from Etobicoke North has explicitly promised to use it again if his agenda violates the Charter of Rights. If this passes, it will send a message that the member from Etobicoke North can violate the charter whenever he so desires.

To maintain the integrity of the rule of law and our democratic institutions, it is high time that we all defend democracy, the rule of law and defend the rights and freedoms of the people of this city, Toronto, and of this great province of ours. Therefore, I will be voting against the use of the “notwithstanding” clause—and for freedom and democracy.

1510

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My constituency office is being inundated with people expressing their outrage that the Premier is trampling on their charter rights.

Guelph lawyer Cherolyn Knapp wrote:

“To justify using the notwithstanding clause to make a law that is unconstitutional because ‘judges aren't elected’ is arbitrary and nonsensical. Especially when the law reduces elected representation. You can't use democracy as a justification to interfere with democracy.”

My constituent Lori wrote:

“Doug Ford may be Premier, but really, nobody is above the law. If he can ignore the courts for Toronto, will he do that to the rest of Ontario?”

“As a voter who cares about respect for the law, I am asking you, my MPP, please vote against invoking the notwithstanding clause.”

Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear to my constituents that I share their outrage. Nobody is above the law. Winning a majority government should not entitle anyone to railroad the Constitution and suspend people's fundamental rights. The rule of law and the protection of

people's rights are essential to democracy. I want to be clear with my constituents that I know that I will fight for their charter rights and our democracy.

PETERBOROUGH LAKERS

Mr. Dave Smith: The Mann Cup, since 1932, has been awarded as the box lacrosse championship for Canada. Last night, the Peterborough Lakers won their 16th Mann Cup. I'd like to point out that that is the most of any community in Canada since it has been awarded, since 1932.

We finish this season with a 12-3-1 record. Our playoff record was an outstanding 12-5. In fact, we swept the team from Maple Ridge to win the Mann Cup. If there was any doubt as to whether or not Peterborough is the universe for lacrosse, it was erased last night. Maple Ridge had a single player born in Maple Ridge playing for their team. I'm proud to say that the Peterborough Lakers have 14 of 26 players born and raised in Peterborough, as well as an additional five players from my riding.

I'm very proud to say that the Peterborough Lakers repeated this year—it was their second championship in two years and actually their sixth since 2010.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Ms. Suze Morrison: Last night, I had the pleasure of attending a public meeting organized by the Corktown Residents and Business Association, a local group of active residents in my riding of Toronto Centre. During the meeting, a Corktown resident named Trisha spoke at length about the government's move to introduce legislation to enact section 33. She asked me why this government is choosing to demonstrate a total lack of respect for our judiciary system and ram through legislation that is contrary to the wishes of people in her community.

Mr. Speaker, I have received hundreds of similar emails from constituents across Toronto Centre since Monday afternoon. To quote one of the emails from a constituent named Gina: "Premier, this is outrageous behaviour. Shame on you."

The reply from the government: crickets.

The ruling of the Superior Court is clear: The Premier and his government have violated the rights of Torontonians. Instead of accepting that it has crossed a line, this government has chosen to push through legislation that suspends sections of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is not how a healthy democracy operates.

Toronto belongs to Torontonians; make no mistake about that.

TERRY FOX RUN

Mr. Doug Downey: This weekend, I look forward to joining thousands of fellow Canadians and Ontarians in carrying on the legacy of Terry Fox and his Marathon of

Hope. Now in its 38th year, the annual Terry Fox Run takes place in over 9,000 schools and communities across Canada, including Terry Fox Elementary School on Livingstone Street in Barrie.

Since 1992, the support has expanded internationally, with runs taking place from Lima, Peru to Dakar, Senegal to Hong Kong.

Thank you to all the run organizers and participants for your continuing support of Terry's elusive dream, a cure for cancer.

I would like to thank Michael McDougall, who is chair of the Barrie Terry Fox Run. We know this event and legacy rely on volunteers like him.

I would also like to recognize my friends Alison Stoneman and Jim Butticci, who have organized the Terry Fox Run for several years.

I want to tell you about the incredible efforts of Will Dwyer, a World War II veteran who lives in Barrie. Will was so inspired after watching the Marathon of Hope on television in 1980 that he set a goal to raise \$1 million for the Terry Fox Foundation. He is now 93 years old. He is knocking on doors and he is raising money. He is only \$200,000 short of his goal. Let's help him get there.

Please join us on Sunday in Barrie at 9 a.m. It starts at Centennial Park. You can bike, walk, run, stroller or roller-blade and do the 5K or 10K. I hope to see you there.

STEEL INDUSTRY

Ms. Donna Skelly: It's my pleasure to rise today to recognize the industry representatives and stakeholders who participated in the steel summit in Hamilton on Friday morning.

The summit, which I also attended, took place at a time when US steel tariffs and NAFTA are clearly top of mind. In fact, to underscore that point, the county executive from Erie county, New York, was also there to talk about impacts on both sides of the border.

Having said that, it was most important that steel producers be heard. None spoke more directly than Walter Koppelaar, the CEO and chairman of Walters Group, a family-owned and world-class steel construction company based out of Hamilton. He spoke from the heart about the significant impacts his business is facing, but also about the need for Ontario to be a competitive jurisdiction for his company to invest.

That's why I am happy that the Premier was proactive in coming to Hamilton just weeks after being elected. He met with the CEO and vice-president of Dofasco. He walked the steel production line. He saw how steel is made. He spoke with workers, and he spoke with business leaders, including Walter. In our discussions that day and with stakeholders since, Ontario's competitiveness has been a consistent theme.

I want to thank the Premier for his commitment and his tireless work day after day in ensuring that Ontario can and will be the economic engine of Canada once again.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

EFFICIENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 POUR DES ADMINISTRATIONS LOCALES EFFICACES

Mr. Clark moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006, the Municipal Act, 2001, the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and the Education Act and to revoke two regulations / Projet de loi 31, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto, la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités, la Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales et la Loi sur l'éducation et abrogeant deux règlements.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): If the official opposition members refuse to come to order, I will start warning.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm warning the member for Waterloo. Come to order. I am warning the member for Waterloo to come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Fife, you are named, and you will have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Ms. Fife was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The members will come to order or I will name them one by one.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'd ask the Leader of the Opposition to come to order. I am warning the Leader of the Opposition, if she doesn't come to order, she will be named.

1520

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Horwath, you are named. You will have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Ms. Horwath was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the member for Toronto–Danforth to come to order. The member for Toronto–Danforth will come to order. I am warning the member for Toronto–Danforth that if he doesn't come to order he will be named.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Tabuns, you have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day. You are named. Mr. Tabuns has been named.

Mr. Tabuns was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I will ask the member for Brampton Centre to please come to order. I am warning the member for Brampton Centre that if she doesn't come to order she will be named.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Singh, you are named. You will have to leave the chamber now for the duration of the day.

Ms. Sara Singh was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for Davenport to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for Davenport that if she doesn't come to order she will be named.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Stiles, you are named. You will have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Ms. Stiles was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the member for Essex to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for Essex that if he doesn't come to order he will be named.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Natyshak, you are named, and you will have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Mr. Natyshak was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for Algoma–Manitoulin to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for Algoma–Manitoulin that if he doesn't come to order he will be named.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Mantha, you are named. You now have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Mr. Mantha was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for Parkdale–High Park to come to order. I will warn the member for Parkdale–High Park that if she continues she'll be named.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Karpoche, you are named. You will have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Ms. Karpoche was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I will ask the member for Hamilton Mountain to come to order. I'm warning the member for Hamilton Mountain that she will be named if she doesn't come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Miss Taylor, you are named. You will have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Miss Taylor was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member from London North Centre to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for London North Centre that you're about to be named if you don't come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Kernaghan, you are named. You'll have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Mr. Kernaghan was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I will ask the member for Brampton East to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for Brampton East.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Singh, you are named, and you will have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Mr. Gurratan Singh was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm warning the member from Niagara Falls. I'm warning the member from Niagara Falls. Come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Gates, you are named, and you will have to leave the chamber as well for the day.

Mr. Gates was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would now ask the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas to come to order. I'm going to have to warn the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Shaw, you are named. You will have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Ms. Shaw was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll ask the member for Niagara Centre to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for Niagara Centre to come to order, or he will be named.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Burch, you are named, and you will have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Mr. Burch was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for St. Catharines to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for St. Catharines.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mrs. Stevens, you are named as well, and you'll have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Mrs. Stevens was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Brampton North will come to order. I'm going to warn the

member for Brampton North that he must come to order or he'll be named.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Yarde, you are named. You'll have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Mr. Yarde was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough Southwest: I will ask you to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for Scarborough Southwest.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Begum, you are named, and you will have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Ms. Begum was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for York South–Weston will come to order. I'm going to warn the member for York South–Weston.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Hassan, you are named. You'll have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Mr. Hassan was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll ask the member for Beaches–East York to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for Beaches–East York.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Berns-McGown, you too are named, and you'll have to leave the duration of the day.

Ms. Berns-McGown was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for Kingston and the Islands to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Arthur, you too are named, and you will have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Mr. Arthur was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I will ask the member for Mushkegowuk–James Bay to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for Mushkegowuk–James Bay.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Bourgoquin, you are named, and you will have to leave the chamber as well for the duration of the day.

Mr. Bourgoquin was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I am going to ask the member for University–Rosedale to come to order. I ask the member for University–Rosedale to come to order. I'm warning the member.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Bell, you are named, and you will have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Ms. Bell was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm asking the member for Spadina–Fort York to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for Spadina–Fort York.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Glover, you are named, and you will have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Mr. Glover was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for Toronto Centre to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for Toronto Centre.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Morrison, you are named and you will have to leave the chamber as well.

Ms. Morrison was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for Humber River–Black Creek to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for Humber River–Black Creek.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Rakocevic, you have to leave the chamber as well. You are named. You'll be out for the day.

Mr. Rakocevic was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for Ottawa Centre to come to order. I'm going to warn the member for Ottawa Centre that you'll be named if you persist.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Harden, you are named. You'll have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Mr. Harden was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'd ask the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan to come to order. I'm going to have to warn the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Monteith-Farrell, you are named. You will have to leave the chamber for the duration of the day.

Ms. Monteith-Farrell was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll ask the member for Sudbury to come to order. I warn the member for Sudbury.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. West, you are named as well. You'll have to leave the chamber for the rest of the day.

Mr. West was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Mr. Clark has moved that leave be given to introduce a bill entitled An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006, the Municipal Act, 2001, the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and the Education Act and to revoke two regulations, and that it now be read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1533 to 1538.

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

Mr. Clark has moved that leave be given to introduce a bill entitled An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006, the Municipal Act, 2001, the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and the Education Act and to revoke two regulations, and that it now be read for the first time.

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

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hardeman, Ernie	Phillips, Rod
Baber, Roman	Harris, Mike	Rasheed, Kaleed
Babikian, Aris	Hogarth, Christine	Rickford, Greg
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Roberts, Jeremy
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Kanapathi, Logan	Romano, Ross
Bouma, Will	Karahalios, Belinda	Sabawy, Sheref
Calandra, Paul	Ke, Vincent	Sandhu, Amarjot
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Khanjin, Andrea	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Stan	Kramp, Daryl	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Kusendova, Natalia	Simard, Amanda
Coe, Lorne	Lecce, Stephen	Skelly, Donna
Crawford, Stephen	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Dave
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martin, Robin	Smith, Todd
Downey, Doug	Martow, Gila	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dunlop, Jill	McDonell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	McKenna, Jane	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Norman	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Ford, Doug	Mulrone, Caroline	Wai, Daisy
Fullerton, Merrilee	Oosterhoff, Sam	Walker, Bill
Ghamari, Goldie	Pang, Billy	Wilson, Jim
Gill, Parm	Pettapiece, Randy	Yakabuski, John

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul
Bisson, Gilles	Gravelle, Michael	Sattler, Peggy
Coteau, Michael	Hatfield, Percy	Schreiner, Mike
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Hunter, Miltzie	Vanthof, John
Fraser, John	Lindo, Laura Mae	Wynne, Kathleen O.
French, Jennifer K.	Mamakwa, Sol	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 63; the nays are 17.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for a short statement. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: I rise to introduce, on behalf of the government, the Efficient Local Government Act, 2018. The act introduces new, significant changes to the Municipal Act, 2001, the City of Toronto Act, 2006, and the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.

Provisions in this act declare that the amendments in the act operate notwithstanding sections 2 and 7 to 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and changes the nomination day for the 2018 Toronto municipal election.

PETITIONS

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais remercier M. Dave Narozanski de Raft Lake, dans mon comté, pour la pétition.

It reads as follows:

"Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

"Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

"Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas price regulation; and

"Whereas jurisdictions with gas price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;

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

"Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition."

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

HIGHWAY TOLLS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition called "Stop the Unfair Tolling of Highways in Durham Region."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Highway 412 and the planned Highway 418 are community highways that are primarily used for local traffic travelling to and from Durham region; and

"Whereas Highway 412 and the planned Highway 418 are the only north-south 400-series highways in the entire greater Toronto and Hamilton area that are tolled; and

"Whereas tolls on the 412 have left the highway underutilized, resulting in additional congestion across residential roadways in the region; and

"Whereas residents across Durham region have been advocating for the removal of these unfair tolls since their introduction;

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

"Immediately remove the tolls from the 412 highway and protect the planned 418 highway from any future tolls."

I wholeheartedly support this, Madam Speaker, affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Corey.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I have a petition entitled "Stop the Cuts to Indigenous Reconciliation."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario is situated on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples, many of whom have been 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;

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

"—continue 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 co-operative 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 support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Jenny.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I'm putting forward a petition, "Scrapping the Basic Income Pilot Project is Not Being 'Compassionate' nor 'for the People.'"

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the priorities of the Conservative government are dragging Ontario backwards leaving people with no basic income to those living on low income;

"Whereas the Conservative government is breaking their promises by scrapping a program they said they would keep;

"Whereas cancelling the Basic Income Pilot project will leave 4,000 people living in Thunder Bay, Lindsay, Hamilton, Brantford and Brant county with no basic income, further deteriorating their health, well-being and living conditions;

“Whereas reducing poverty in the province of Ontario does not work by decreasing the rates for Ontario’s most disadvantaged and marginalized people on Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program;

“Whereas Ontarians have a right to know about—and have a say in—the government decisions that affect them;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services to continue the Basic Income Pilot project, and to reinstate the regulatory changes that would allow people to keep more of their part-time earnings. If this government is truly for the people, then it should be for all people, including the poor.”

I will sign this petition and give it to page Lawrence.

LONG-TERM CARE

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further petitions? The member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. It’s a pleasure to see you in the chair this afternoon.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

I fully agree. I’ll affix my name and give it to my friend the page to bring up to the desk.

CURRICULUM

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My constituents have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas young children and adolescents across Ontario are being lured into the sex trade and being sexually exploited every day;

“Whereas many youth have no idea what exploitation entails or that they may fall victim to it;

“Whereas prevention is the best strategy in eradicating human trafficking, education and awareness is key to prevention;

“Whereas incorporating mandatory human trafficking education will ensure our province is doing everything legally possible to protect our precious youth;

“Whereas our younger generations must be properly informed about true consent, the reality of sexual exploitation and the danger of online predators...;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to include informed consent, sexual exploitation, the warning signs of human trafficking and the dangers of online predators into the Ontario sexual education curriculum.”

I support this petition. I will affix my name to it and submit it to page David to send to the Clerk.

1550

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I’m pleased to present this petition on behalf of my constituents in London West. It calls on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund our schools. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas too many children are going to school in buildings without proper heating or cooling, with leaky roofs or stairways overdue for repair;

“Whereas after years of Conservative and Liberal governments neglecting schools, the backlog of needed repairs has reached \$16 billion;

“Whereas during the 2018 election, numerous members of the Conservative Party, including the current Minister of Education, pledged to provide adequate, stable funding for Ontario’s schools;

“Whereas less than three weeks into the legislative session, Doug Ford and the Conservative government have already cut \$100 million in much-needed school repairs, leaving our children and educators to suffer in classrooms that are unsafe and unhealthy;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Education to immediately reverse the decision to cut \$100 million in school repair funding, and invest the \$16 billion needed to tackle the repair backlog in Ontario’s schools.”

I fully support this petition. I affix my name and will give it to page Jen to take to the table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: This petition is entitled “Scrapping the Basic Income Pilot Project is Not Being ‘Compassionate’ nor ‘for the People.’”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the priorities of the Conservative government are dragging Ontario backwards leaving people with no basic income...;

“Whereas the Conservative government is breaking their promises by scrapping a program they said they would keep;

“Whereas cancelling the Basic Income Pilot project will leave 4,000 people living in Thunder Bay, Lindsay, Hamilton, Brantford and Brant county with no basic income, further deteriorating their health, well-being and living conditions;

“Whereas reducing poverty in the province of Ontario does not work by decreasing the rates for Ontario’s most disadvantaged and marginalized people on Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program;

“Whereas Ontarians have a right to know about—and have a say in—the government decisions that affect them;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services to continue the Basic Income Pilot project, and to reinstate the regulatory changes that would allow people to keep more of their part-time earnings. If this government is truly for the people, then it should be for all people, including the poor.”

I agree with this petition. I’m affixing my name to it and I’m giving it to page David.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition here from Darlene Olaya and others across my riding for affordable housing.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas for families throughout much of Ontario, owning a home they can afford remains a dream, while renting is painfully expensive;

“Whereas consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments have sat idle, while housing costs spiralled out of control, speculators made fortunes, and too many families had to put their hopes on hold;

“Whereas every Ontarian should have access to safe, affordable housing. Whether a family wants to rent or own, live in a house, an apartment, a condominium or a co-op, they should have affordable options;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately prioritize the repair of Ontario’s social housing stock, commit to building new affordable homes, crack down on housing speculators, and make rentals more affordable through rental controls and updated legislation.”

Madam Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree with this. I support this petition, I affix my name and will send it with page Jonathan to the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mrs. Donna Dool from Paris, Ontario, for sending me this petition. 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 (2007) for a legislated minimum care standard of four hours per resident per day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix.”

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

CURRICULUM

Mr. Percy Hatfield: “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 agree. I’ll sign and give it to Jonathan to bring up to the desk.

CURRICULUM

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to bring this petition forward from a group from the United Church of Toronto and my good friend Cheri DiNovo.

“In light of the Ministry of Education’s cancellation of two writing weeks with Indigenous educators and elders for the revision of Ontario’s kindergarten through grade 12 curriculum to address residential schools, treaties and Indigenous peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada, we are compelled to urge the completion of the work according to the original plan and timetable....

“Whereas for six years the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada ... listened to thousands of former students of residential schools and their families testify to the devastating legacy of this national policy of assimilation;

“Whereas the TRC called upon ‘the federal, provincial and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with survivors, Aboriginal peoples and educators, to make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, treaties and Aboriginal peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for kindergarten to grade 12 students’ ... ;

“Whereas on July 15, 2015, Canada’s Premiers indicated their support for all 94 Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action and said they would act on them in their own provinces and territories;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario urge the government of Ontario to fully implement such a curriculum for kindergarten through grade 12; and

“Whereas, in 2017, the government of Ontario had taken first steps to fulfill this action with a planned completion date of fall 2018;”

They ask “that the Ontario Ministry of Education immediately complete and implement the comprehensive revision of history, social studies, civics and other curriculum for kindergarten through grade 12 to fulfill the goals cited in call to action 62.i from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report.”

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

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The time for petitions is over.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CAP AND TRADE CANCELLATION ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 ANNULANT LE PROGRAMME DE PLAFONNEMENT ET D’ÉCHANGE

Resuming the debate adjourned on August 8, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act respecting the preparation of a climate change plan, providing for the wind down of the cap and trade program and repealing the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016 / Projet de loi 4, Loi concernant l’élaboration d’un plan sur le changement climatique, prévoyant la liquidation du programme de plafonnement et d’échange et abrogeant la Loi de 2016 sur l’atténuation du changement climatique et une économie sobre en carbone.

1600

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: As I had the floor the last time we were debating this, I was making the point of what the government was doing in regard to this whole cap-and-trade thing.

First of all, this government is trying to say that cap-and-trade is a carbon tax. Let’s be really clear here: A

carbon tax is a very different thing than cap-and-trade in itself. The first part is that cap-and-trade is about making sure that the polluter pays. Those who pollute are the ones who pay; those who don’t pollute are the ones who don’t pay. The money raised through cap-and-trade is then used to pay for offsets for those who want to do things that make our environment greener and reduce carbon emissions to our atmosphere and to our water.

For the government to argue that cap-and-trade is the same as a carbon tax, I think, is a big misnomer. A carbon tax is, everybody pays. So when you buy anything, you pay a carbon tax on anything you buy. The money from that goes to mitigation. That is a very different approach, and it’s one that we didn’t support. That’s why New Democrats thought that supporting cap-and-trade, even though there were problems with the bill that the Liberals put forward, was a step in the right direction because it’s about the polluter paying.

Here is the other thing—and I’ve only got about three minutes left in this debate that I want to make. I think it’s very much in keeping with what’s going on in the House today. We know that there are people who are bringing the government to court, yet again, because of the cancelled cap-and-trade. This legislation cancels cap-and-trade, and Greenpeace and others are bringing the government to court in order to uphold the rights of those people who are concerned about the environment when it comes to what the government is doing. There are a lot of people who are going to be hurt by the cancellation of the cap-and-trade system: a number of businesses and individuals, least of all the environment.

Where is the “notwithstanding” clause going to be used next? The government has said, in its comments through the Premier, that he’s prepared to use the “notwithstanding” clause on more than one occasion. He’s prepared to deny the citizens in Toronto their rights to a free and democratic election, as per the rules that were set out when the election started, by invoking the “notwithstanding” clause. Is the government going to utilize the “notwithstanding” clause in order to try to override the rights of people who may be found to be just in the courts when the courts rule in favour of those people who are bringing forward the court case against the government for the cancellation of cap-and-trade? Will the government use the “notwithstanding” clause against those people who have been affected by the cancellation of the programs thus far—because we know that there are a number of people who have already brought the government to court for the decisions on the cancellation of other programs. Will the government use the “notwithstanding” clause in order to deny people’s rights when it comes to that as well?

Will it be equity seekers who will be the next target of the “notwithstanding” clause? Will it be an equity group that is trying to get justice in our society over the issue that is important to them, where all of a sudden the government decides that those equity issues are not right because they don’t fit within the Conservative, right-wing ideology, and that, somehow or other, we’ve got to use the “notwithstanding” clause in order to give people some pause when it comes to their rights under our constitution?

I think this government is going down a slope, Madam Speaker, that is a very dangerous slope. To utilize the whole issue of the “notwithstanding” clause, in the context of the debate around Bill 5 or anything else, is dangerous. You only have to look to people like Bill Davis, Brian Mulroney and other Conservatives who preceded this particular government, to listen to what they have to say about the idea of invoking the “notwithstanding” clause on any legislation at a provincial level.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Doug Downey: I listened to the member from Timmins’ response and comments in trying to parse the difference between cap-and-trade and carbon pricing and different schemes. It makes me think of the Shakespeare line—if I can paraphrase—that a tax by any other name is a tax, and it increases the cost of living in Ontario. The fact that the NDP supported it on a certain principle and not on another principle is kind of hard to parse. I don’t remember there being a big debate about whether they should tax; it was just how they were going to tax.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Do you remember what Shakespeare said about lawyers?

Mr. Doug Downey: I remember what Shakespeare said about lawyers. He actually liked lawyers, and so did Stephen Leacock and other great writers.

Madam Speaker, the important thing here is that we’re talking about people in their homes trying to get by and businesses who are on the edge because the cost of living is so high. This tax inflates everything all the way down the line.

Madam Speaker, I hear from these people. These are people who aren’t necessarily going to come in here and pound the drums. They’re not going to come in here and sit up there and be disruptive, because they are busy working and they’re trying to get by and they are hurting. They are trying to find their way through this very expensive add-on tax that produces absolutely nothing except a slush fund for the previous government.

I guess I would be interested in knowing what the difference is and if there is some way to curb behaviour without adding a tax. But the member from Timmins isn’t offering any of that. This is not a constructive solution. It’s simply beating up our government because we’re trying to find a way to let families get by and solve the problem. There is a smarter way.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was quite interesting to listen to my colleague from Timmins now—it used to be Timmins–James Bay; it’s shortened to Timmins—talk about the cancellation of cap-and-trade. We both represent people in northern Ontario. In many areas in my riding, the only way to heat your house is with electricity or you chop wood. Chopping wood when you’re 85 years old gets to be really tough. So what you do when there is no natural gas—actually, the natural gas goes straight through Nickel Belt but doesn’t connect to us. There is no oil delivery or propane delivery because you’re just too far out in the

bush and the roads are not good enough, so you heat with electricity.

What did cap-and-trade do? It helped those people change the windows on their house so that their hydro bill could go down. It helped them insulate their attic so that the cost of heating their house would go down. It helped them in meaningful ways, in ways that were never available before.

When I hear the members say, “Oh, cap-and-trade makes everything more expensive,” well, let me tell you the truth. Once you remove cap-and-trade, the prices of goods are not going to go down. The prices of goods are not based on how much it costs to produce; it’s based on what the market can bear. Now that they know that the market can bear this higher cost, they will continue to sell it to us at that cost. So all of those savings that are supposed to come back into our pockets are dreams in Technicolor from the Progressive Conservatives. It’s not going to happen.

What will happen, though, is that for all of the good people of Nickel Belt who were supposed to finally have enough help to be able to insulate their house, to put the heat pump in, to get alternative sources of heat into their house, those programs are not available to them anymore. Once you are 85 years old and your only alternative is chopping wood, it is too hard, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I appreciated the comments from the member from Timmins. But during the previous provincial election, there was one theme that kept coming up time and time again at the doors, and that was the cost of living in Ontario and the cost of doing business in Ontario. Between rising hydro rates, the carbon tax and other taxes and costs, people in Ontario were feeling that they were getting pinched and squeezed at both ends. This was something that I heard at every single door.

One of the problems behind that was the failed cap-and-trade system that was introduced by the previous government. When you look at a policy, Speaker, it’s important to look at what is the impact that we’re hoping to have with this policy. The impact from the cap-and-trade program was to seek to reduce emissions in order to stem some of the harmful warming effects of climate change. Unfortunately, the cap-and-trade program was not accomplishing this. It was not going to reduce emissions anywhere near enough to have the kind of impact that would be needed.

To point to one statistic, in BC, a similar jurisdiction, they have a carbon tax of around \$30 per metric tonne. Studies say that that would have to be raised by 450%, to \$160 per metric tonne. Ontarians and Canadians, by and large, cannot afford that kind of cost.

So we have a policy that is not achieving its objective, but meanwhile, it’s making life more and more expensive.

1610

That’s why I’m incredibly proud to be here today supporting this bill, which is going to help reduce costs for Ontario businesses and families.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: I listened intently to my colleague from Timmins. Where I come from, people are having a hard time making it too. But the issue is, we need to also look at the long-term impact of climate change.

I listened to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. He did a TV interview, and he was specifically asked, “Are you going to meet the targets?”—the Kyoto targets, which are actually Stephen Harper’s targets. He evaded the question. “Are you going to come up with a climate change plan?” He evaded the question.

Climate change is a real thing. As an example, last week in Englehart, my hometown—we get storms. We actually get kind of boring weather in northern Ontario most of the time. We get really cold winters, and we get a few weeks of hot summer, and the rest is kind of just spring and fall. Last week, we had a rainstorm and a tornado in Kenabeek, but a rainstorm in Englehart that we have never experienced before. We had dry weather all summer, and all of a sudden—and I got calls, because some of our local lakes turned brown and they were wondering why. I said, “Well, one of the reasons is because the laneway from my house washed into the local lake.” It’s happening.

Do you know what? The costs are going to be much greater to the folks like me who have to fix their laneway. They’re going to be much greater.

You guys can be like ostriches with your heads in the sand. Until you come up with a plan, it’s pretty disingenuous to criticize other people’s plans and how they don’t work. That’s pretty disingenuous. Come up with a plan, and then you can criticize the lack of work for other people’s plans. So far, I haven’t seen anything but crickets from that side.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Member, I would ask you to withdraw.

Mr. John Vanthof: Withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. Back to the member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We did hear about crickets in a certain judgment, but we won’t go there.

I want to pick up on what a few of the members have said. First of all, there is a thing called climate change. We’re seeing it every day. Talk to my good friend the member from Kiiwetinoong, where normally the water levels are not as low as they are now in our rivers in northern Ontario. You can’t even navigate some of the rivers in northern Ontario as a result of the lack of water.

We can’t run winter roads in the way that we used to before. These are land-locked communities with no highways, no dirt roads, nothing to get in but an airplane or a winter road. Our winter road season now is about half of what it used to be 25 years ago.

You talk to the elders. The elders have never seen this before. You talk to a man like Mr. Vanthof, from Timiskaming–Cochrane, who talks about a microcosm of weather in a place called Earlton, where you see a deluge of water to the point that the water is running over the highway through the ditches, and then you’ve got a

tornado touching ground inside his riding—something that we never used to hear of before.

We had the most extreme dry summer that we have seen in a long time in northern Ontario.

Listen, I’ve got to say we like good weather, us in northern Ontario. We certainly deserve some. But I’ll tell you, it has been a hellish summer when it comes to forest fires in northern Ontario, to the chagrin of many.

To deny there’s any climate change, and to say nobody has got a plan because cap-and-trade was wrong, in the absence of their own plan—I have to agree with the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane. I think it’s pretty short.

The other part is, cap-and-trade is about making the polluter pay. This is the point that the government is trying to gloss over. You can have a carbon tax such as what Mr. Trudeau wants to do—which I don’t support—or you can have a program that says that those who pollute are the ones who are going to pay. That’s what cap-and-trade was all about.

This government at this point has no plan, and they’re getting rid of the only plan that was in place, which I think is pretty darn disingenuous.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I’m going to ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Disingenuous?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Yes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay. I withdraw disingenuous.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I need the member just to withdraw, without explanation.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay. I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Doug Downey: I rise today to address Bill 4, the same bill: the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act. This cap-and-trade scheme achieved certain outcomes. It did achieve certain outcomes, but it had nothing to do with the environment. The outcomes had absolutely nothing to do with the environment. It felt good. It felt like we were doing something. It felt like we were achieving something because we said we were going to say the word “environment.” But I think this cap-and-trade scheme is really the fidget spinner of legislation: a lot of motion, no action. It felt like you were doing something, but nothing was happening.

Except it wasn’t benign. It wasn’t benign; it was a tax. So actually something was happening. It was hurting businesses, it was hurting families, it was hurting individuals and it was hurting non-profits. It was hurting all of the pieces of our society that consume anything. It pushed up the cost of absolutely everything: everything that you had to move, everything that you had to grow and everything you had to consume. It pushed up the costs of absolutely everything.

Madam Speaker, this act will retire and cancel the cap-and-trade instruments. It will do several things. It will also protect the people of Ontario from the harm’s way that the previous government threw us into, with the support of the NDP. They threw us into harm’s way because they signed

contracts and they did things and they set up a scheme that put the government on the hook.

We will protect our people from that, the people of Ontario. Our government was elected on a mandate to put the people first and make life more affordable for families, make life more affordable for businesses. Madam Speaker, we made the commitment; we were clear. We won the election on June 7, and people said, "Oh, my goodness, they're going to do what they said. I can't believe it. Can you imagine?" We actually followed through. We didn't just say we were going to do it when we got elected; we got back here in this House, Madam Speaker, and we got to work. It's bill number 4. We took decisive action and we took it early. We followed through on what we promised we would do. So there shouldn't be shock and awe and angst about, "Oh, my goodness, it's happening." We've been talking about this for months. This has been in previous platforms of this government. It was in the election platform of this government, and we made it clear that it was a priority.

We also made clear our promise to oppose the federal government's plan. They want to impose a carbon tax. They want to impose it on all the people of Ontario and all the people of Canada. Regardless of size, we are going to oppose any movement from the federal government. We are committed to using all available resources to challenge the federal government on this. Their plan to impose a carbon tax on hard-working Ontario families must not go forward. We can't afford it, we don't want it, and it does not accomplish anything.

This isn't about whether climate change exists or not, as the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane suggested. We know climate change is happening. That's a fact; we accept that. But taxing things and fidget-spinning about them does nothing. The climbdown from the federal government is a bit of an acknowledgement about the serious economic impact that their job-killing carbon tax is having. It took a lot for them to even acknowledge that they had gone too far, so I welcome that and I don't want to beat them up too much for moving in the right direction. I would encourage the federal government to move even further in that direction, because we all have the same taxpayer at the end of the day, and surely they're hearing what we're hearing.

When I knocked on doors, I heard it loud and clear. I knocked on the door of one lady, and she was on social assistance. She said, "My single biggest issue isn't the amount I'm getting on social assistance. My single biggest issue is the cost of my hydro. It's the cost of my consumption, the things that I have and the things that I have to buy, the food that I eat. Those are the concerns." This carbon tax cap-and-trade program pushed up the costs of all those things.

If the federal government continues to press ahead with its job-killing carbon tax, we will proceed with our plan to cut taxes. We will cut taxes and we will create jobs. We will encourage growth and demonstrate to Ontario that we are in fact open for business.

The orderly wind-down of the cap-and-trade carbon tax will benefit all Ontarians regardless of partisan stripe or

job or background or ethnicity or anything. It's an equality piece. It applies to everybody equally because we all consume all of these things.

1620

The orderly wind-down of cap-and-trade is important. It will provide support for eligible registered participants in the previous program. It wasn't an immediate "everybody's out;" we are respecting those who had entered, knowing they will have to deal with certain costs. So that's built into the bill. It's a very responsible wind-down, and I just don't understand why the NDP wouldn't support that part of it.

Most importantly, we are ensuring no additional cap-and-trade tax costs will be passed on to consumers, because we're making sure the suppliers aren't bearing the brunt. I'm going to say that again: The suppliers are part of the wind-down because we don't want those costs being passed on to consumers anymore. That's an important piece of what we're doing.

The average family is going to save \$260 per year. Gas prices will go down. Energy costs will be cheaper. People will have more money in their pocket at the end of the day. A carbon tax of any kind makes life more unaffordable for the people of Ontario and is a competitive disadvantage for businesses in Ontario. In this time of trade discussions, a carbon tax is an input cost that serves nobody but our competition. Of course, under the previous government, it served their purposes—but we don't need to get into that. I think the people have spoken.

In a simplistic way—the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane, I know that he'll relate to this. For the farm worker who wakes up in the morning and his alarm clock goes off, the cost of running that alarm clock was jacked up. The cost of driving to work was jacked up. The cost of producing the food was jacked up. The cost of moving that food was jacked up. All that happened was the money went into a fund for pet projects for the last government. It didn't actually save the environment and it ran up the costs for farmers, whether it be dairy or cash crop or otherwise. The cost of the clothes the farmer and his workers wore went up, because somebody had to produce them and move them. This is really granular, simple stuff.

The point of cap-and-trade is to increase the price of everything—everything—through increasing the price of energy. Cap-and-trade disproportionately affects those—and I touched on this earlier—who have fewer choices to make. They need to eat food, they need to get places and they need to exist. They have simply increased costs on the poor. This is disproportionately more a tax on the poor than anybody else. Surely the opposition can see that. Surely they can hear from some of the people they fight so hard for that they can't afford this, either.

Cap-and-trade makes a less competitive environment. It's going to cause businesses to migrate elsewhere, or capital to not show up here at all. Yesterday I was at the Empire Club and listened to Victor Dodig, the president and CEO of CIBC. It was a very compelling speech. It was a very compelling overview of where we are in this country and in this province. I can tell you, my concern for

migrating capital is real. I'm concerned that people with capital and businesses that want to expand and grow look at the business environment in Ontario and say, "I can be here or I can be there." It doesn't have to be overseas; it can be just over the border, and that hurts us.

This is a tax. It increases the cost of everything and it causes money to migrate elsewhere. I think it's a mistake, and that's why we're moving to repeal it. The Auditor General confirmed in her 2016 report that Ontarians were going to pay about \$8 billion more to the government over four years, starting in 2017. That's a lot of cash drawn out of our economy for, again, a pool of money for the former government. We could decide, "Hey, this is great. We're the government. We'll take that pool of money. We'll pick winners and losers." We could do that, but that's not the responsible thing to do. That's not what the government is there to do. The government is not supposed to be taking money surreptitiously and giving it to winners and losers based on whether we like them or not.

The Conference Board of Canada and the Canadian Academy of Engineering's 2017 report touched on this. They made it clear that this is not a good idea. It's costing us too much and it's producing nothing. It's not producing anything at all. It's costing us jobs. Our cost of living is going up and it's costing us quality of life. Just on principle I think this is a bad idea—and in fact, it's a bad idea. I don't understand how the opposition can stand up and defend this.

I'm very proud of our government for taking this action in getting this province open for business and back on track.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments? The member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. I listened closely to what my friend from Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte had to say about cap-and-trade. You, especially, know more about trade than anyone else in here, representing a riding where it's the busiest trade border crossing in all of Canada.

We hear about trade a lot. One thing we heard this afternoon, according to AM800: another fiery crash has shut down the 401. We know transportation. We know trade. We know trade goes down the 401 to our border crossings.

I listened to the member speak about what they said at the doorway to him when he was campaigning. But he didn't say, "Oh, by the way, not one person mentioned, because I didn't mention it at the door, what we're going to do to the voters in Toronto or in the regions of Peel, York, Niagara and Muskoka." That wasn't talked about at the door. You may have heard people talking about their bills as you went door to door, but not one member of the Conservative government talked about what they were going to do. They snuck this Bill 5 in there.

One of the words he used was "respect." Where the heck was the respect for the municipal tax base in Toronto and in the regions? Absolutely missing.

He also talked about it not being the responsible thing to do. He talked about bad faith. That's exactly what they

did with Bill 5—in bad faith. Halfway through a municipal election, to stand up and say, "Hey, we're really going to mess this up"—and they have. Not one of them—talk about bad faith—ever said, "Oh, and we're going to invoke, for the first time in Ontario's history, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms." When you campaign, you should say what you mean and mean what you say, and you didn't do it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: I'm going to bring this back to Bill 4, because that's what this is about.

Going back to the member from Timmins, he said that cap-and-trade is not a carbon tax. He said that big polluters are the ones to pay. I'm going to say that that's incorrect.

(1) Not only is it a tax, but it is a deceptive tax—deceptive in that people don't see it listed on their bills like HST. It's in there. We don't know how much we're paying. We don't know where it's been hidden in our bills, but we know that the cost of things has gone up in the last five or 10 years. It is just another government tax grab.

(2) When a financial penalty—or burden or obligation or whatever you want to call it—is imposed on a company, it affects the price of things. Everything is going to go up. Again, this affects how you and I live our lives every single day.

High prices have not always proved to be the best way of promoting energy efficiency. We look at British Columbia, for example. They will not meet their 2020 carbon reduction goals: "Tax advocates there insist it works, but they're seeking an overhaul and rate increase in hopes of meeting future climate goals." I take this from something published on January 25, 2018: "Environmental group Food and Water Watch examined effects on the 70% of fuels subject to the tax. It concluded BC's tax is a 'failed experiment' and proponents 'have significantly overstated the purported beneficial effects.'"

This comes back to our mandate to put people first and make life more affordable for Ontario families. People did not vote for this tax. It was being pushed—imposed—on the people of Ontario. What people did vote for was change. The change that they voted for is our firm stance on removing, and fighting, a carbon tax.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I can't agree with what was just said, because cap-and-trade was making the big polluters pay.

Listen, I come from Sudbury. You've all seen the Superstack, because when you get a picture of Sudbury, you can't miss the Superstack. It's Vale. I am really proud to say that that Vale has made the biggest environmental investment ever: They invested \$1 billion to decrease their emissions so that they would be in line.

1630

This Friday, actually, at Bryston's on the Park, I think, we will be celebrating this milestone where this mining company called Vale invested \$1 billion of their revenues into their smelter in Sudbury, to the point that the

Superstack that you see, they won't be needing it anymore. We have two new white smaller chimneys that have popped up overtop of the smelter. It's called the Clean AER Project—as in A-E-R, atmospheric emissions reduction—and it works. Why? Because the company saw that if they were to continue to pollute, the price to pollute was such that it was worth making the \$1-billion investment—which they did, in my community, and sourced most of it locally. They spent \$1 billion to decrease their emissions and to make our environment safer.

It worked, Speaker. Taking it away without any replacement is not the way to go forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: As always, it's an honour to be able to stand and represent the fine constituents of Niagara West. I do want to thank the member for Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte for his excellent contributions to the debate on Bill 4 this afternoon.

Of course, this is an issue that is very important, one that was a cornerstone of our resounding electoral victory earlier this year, when the people of Ontario spoke and when the people of Ontario sent to Queen's Park a government that would listen to them, would bring their concerns and their priorities to this Legislature each and every day and work on their behalf.

Now, I have to say, as much as I admire my counterparts in the opposition benches, I've noticed a disturbing trend. I'm beginning to wonder if perhaps the Liberals and NDP may end up joining together because, quite frankly, every single piece of legislation that the Liberals put forward, the NDP spend all of their time defending. It's a little strange to hear the opposition today, which was also the third party in the past Parliament, defend all the very things that the Liberals seemed to put forward. I'm not sure if they've lost their way or if they have perhaps mixed up their colours, but they might want to talk with the Liberals about what that looks like, because they're really just defending everything that the previous government did without any new ideas of their own. I think we haven't heard any ideas from the opposition; they are really just doing their best to defend former Premier Wynne's agenda.

Also, one of the things that has become disturbing to me is to see the NDP lose their way. They know that cap-and-trade is a regressive tax on the most vulnerable amongst us. It truly is. It impacts transportation; it impacts the cost of food; it impacts the cost of home heating. It makes those poor seniors who are living on a fixed income have to worry about making the choice between heating and eating.

Madam Speaker, I always understood, at least from what the NDP said, that they were in it for the little guy, that they were in it for everyday Ontarians. Well, apparently they've lost their way and they are no longer in it for the little guy. That's why they're supporting a regressive tax that hurts the most vulnerable.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte.

Mr. Doug Downey: Thank you to the members from Windsor-Tecumseth, Cambridge, Nickel Belt and—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: “Tecumseh,” Doug.

Mr. Doug Downey: Tecumseh. I apologize to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh. I grew up near New Tecumseth, so it's a challenge for me to drop the “h”—and the member from Niagara West.

This is a very interesting debate. The way that it plays out on the ground when we repeal the cap-and-trade is very important, because the way that it employed itself on the ground is obvious to us and not obvious to those who supported it in the first place, because it is disproportionately hurting those who are most vulnerable.

When I talked about the lady at the door—I was talking about her cost of living and her hydro—these are people who are sometimes hesitant to voice their concern. We had quite a long discussion about her reality.

Madam Speaker, the truth is, we did talk at doors about the cost of government. We talked about the size of government. We talked about the complexity of government. We talked about the interaction of governments, whether it be federal and provincial or provincial and municipal. I talked about all of those things at the door.

I've talked municipal politics. I had a show about politics for about eight years on TV. I can tell you, I talk about these things all the time, because I'm passionate about them.

Madam Speaker, I heard these at the door. I heard people say they want smaller government. I heard people say they want government to get out of the way. I heard people say that they want government to be less of a burden, to reduce the cost of doing business, to reduce the cost of living, to make life easier, to open Ontario for business and to do the things that we said we would do.

People like when governments do what they said they would do. We said for a long time that we would do this. We're doing this, and I'm very proud of this government for doing it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the people I represent in London West to join the debate on Bill 4, the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act.

A number of my colleagues on this side of the House have already spoken to this legislation and have raised numerous concerns about this bill and expressed the reasons for our caucus to oppose this legislation. But I want to highlight some of those reasons, especially in light of some of the comments that have been made today, especially about the disproportionality of cap-and-trade.

We know from the government's own technical briefing that the cancellation of cap-and-trade is what is going to disproportionately benefit the most wealthy Ontarians, compared to families earning less than \$40,000. Rich families will see an average benefit of \$400, whereas the lowest-income families—less than \$40,000—will only save about \$100 a year on average.

In exchange for those savings, we get a government that is completely abdicating its responsibility to take any action on climate change and environmental protection.

We've seen the impact of climate change vividly this summer, with the outbreak of devastating forest fires. We know that climate change is real. I see my colleague the member for Windsor–Tecumseh. His community went through some devastating floods last year. He knows, and my community knows—all of us know that climate change is real and that it is having serious impacts on our ability to live a good life in this province.

We also know, despite the announcement by this government that Ontario is open for business, that one of the most damaging impacts of this bill—cancelling cap-and-trade, ripping up contracts—is what it is doing to investor confidence in the economy. We have businesses that have purchased almost \$3 billion in carbon allowances and credits. There has been almost nothing said by this government about what is going to happen to those businesses, that have made this investment in good faith. Some of them have purchased credits out a number of years, with the expectation that those credits would be honoured and that those contracts would be respected by this government. Instead, just as we saw with their very first piece of legislation on the White Pines project, this government is ripping up contracts and undermining investor confidence in our economy.

Of course, Speaker, there have been some recent developments with regard to this legislation since it was last debated in this place. This legislation is now joining a long list of other initiatives that have been undertaken by this government in the very brief time that it has been in office; it's joining them in being before the courts.

We heard just recently that Greenpeace Canada is now taking the government to court over its action on repealing cap-and-trade. Greenpeace is alleging—and I certainly agree—that this government brought this legislation forward without the required consultation, the consultation that is mandated under Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights. The government has not fulfilled its obligation to a 30-day consultation process on this legislation. It's hard to imagine any legislation that could be more environmentally significant.

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Of course, we know that the lawyers over on the government side are very busy these days as they prepare to respond to the Greenpeace Canada lawsuit. They're also dealing with a lawsuit from the Canadian Civil Liberties Association against the repeal of the elementary sexual health curriculum. They're responding to human rights lawyers who are acting on behalf of children whose human rights are at risk because of the government's decision on the sexual health curriculum. They are responding to applicants who are taking the government to court over the cancellation of the Basic Income Pilot.

They're also responding to applicants who are taking the government to court over the cancellation of the task force on contract faculty in the Ontario college sector. That task force, of course, was set up in the wake of the college strike as an agreement between the government, the colleges and college faculty to take a comprehensive look at what was going on in the college system. But of

course, this government doesn't care about the commitments that are made and honouring those commitments.

Now, we did see, recently, that two other lawsuits were concluded. They went to the courts and the courts made a decision. One of them, of course, relates to this legislation—

Mrs. Robin Martin: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence on a point of order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: No, excuse me, Speaker—on a point of order. The member for Eglinton–Lawrence knows she can't speak in this House unless she's in her assigned chair.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member is not in her chair.

Back to the member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you, Speaker. We did see—

Mrs. Robin Martin: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence on a point of order. You do have to be in your seat, though.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I know. I didn't realize that. Thank you.

I'm rising on a point of order under section 23(b). The member opposite has gone on and on about various proceedings, but we're talking about Bill 4. That's what is before the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thanks for the point of order.

Back to the member from London West. I just caution you to stay to the bill.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: We did see a recent court decision that is related to the cancellation of cap-and-trade, because what the cancellation of cap-and-trade does is also cancel all the projects that were going to be funded by the cap-and-trade revenues. One of those projects was electric vehicle subsidies, and we saw the court rule late in August that the government's decision to exclude Tesla from the electric vehicle rebate program was arbitrary, egregious and unfair. So the court in that case forced the government to reverse its decision.

We heard another recent court decision about the city of Toronto, and this government has decided to invoke the "notwithstanding" clause on that decision.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence on a point of order.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I rise again on a point of order. Under section 23(b), we're supposed to be focusing on the bill for debate, which is Bill 4. Again—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you for the point of order.

Again, I will remind the member to keep it tied to the bill.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member for London–Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: On behalf of the member from London West, she is speaking to legal issues. In this bill, they're taking away legal—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. That's not a point of order.

I'll return to the member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much, Speaker. We know that the government has decided to cancel cap-and-trade. One of our concerns is that they have not brought forward an alternative for how they are going to deal with climate change in this province. There are no deadlines for creating a plan; there are no targets for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Instead of doing the work to develop that plan, we saw the Attorney General announce that this government is not only cancelling cap-and-trade without bringing forward some kind of alternative plan, it's also taking the federal government to court on its ability to impose a carbon tax.

We heard from the Attorney General, when she held her press conference to announce that court challenge, that this government is prepared to use the “notwithstanding” clause if the federal government rules against it. We know that that is highly likely, that that's what's going to happen, because the government of Manitoba sought a legal decision and decided not to challenge the federal carbon tax because the legal opinion was that it is very likely to be upheld.

Speaker, I have very limited time left, but I do want to emphasize that this bill has a very significant impact on my community in London. I want to highlight just one of those aspects. The cancellation of cap-and-trade and the loss of those revenues for the GreenON program meant the loss of more than \$9 million in funding for social housing in London. We have a great need for social housing and that is now eliminated with this government's decision.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Robin Martin: I rise to respond to the member from London West.

Thank you for your comments on the legislation. I think it's a very important piece of legislation, and I'm delighted to stand here and speak in favour of it.

Toward the end of your comments, you talked about the impact on social assistance. Somebody else had mentioned the impact on schools, because they were relying on some of those funds. Those are certainly projects that we know need resources and we're working on it, but this is not the way to get those resources because, as my friends have pointed out, it increases the cost of everything by increasing the cost of energy. That is not a good way to do it. Everybody suffers under those kinds of rules.

We set up this legislation. My friend opposite said that it doesn't take account of the fact that companies have bought into this market, but it does take that into account. In fact, the government's legislation includes a plan to compensate eligible participants of the program, including the development of new regulations. Participants will be eligible for compensation, but they have to meet certain criteria. So we've put that in there. Participants who were

required to participate in the cap-and-trade program, participants whose accumulated costs are currently above and beyond their assessed emissions and participants who did not pass the program cost down to consumers will be compensated. That is the legislation. We're taking that into account.

We understand that there will be some impacts, but it's fair legislation, I think, and it will get Ontario back on track by putting the people first and making sure people can afford the cost of daily living. That's why we were elected, that's why we're here and that's why I support this legislation. You can have all the court challenges you want, but the Legislature gets to make this law, and that's what we're doing today.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Yes, indeed, it's a pleasure to comment on my friend from London West and the comments she has made on Bill 4. She talked a lot about the Conservatives saying that Ontario is open for business. I know that during the election campaign, the now Premier, when he was down our way, said that he wanted to put up a big neon sign on the border down around Windsor: “Open for Business.” We're still waiting for that, Speaker.

At the same time, when he was down in our area, he looked at Highway 3, where for years we've been after the Liberals to live up to their commitments to Bruce Crozier, a former member of this House. They called part of the highway the Bruce Crozier Way, as opposed to an expressway, and they promised they were going to widen it.

Mr. Ford came down campaigning and said this will be his number one priority, widening Highway 3, and he got some votes for it. He got some votes, because our member from Essex has been saying since he got here, “Widen Highway 3.” But now we find out from the Minister of Transportation that it's somewhere off into the future, somewhere out in the nether-nether land up there, and that they're not going to widen Highway 3 as they promised during the election.

We have billions of dollars in greenhouse produce that has to get to market coming up that highway. In the meantime, we keep having deadly accidents on that push of highway—we had another accident, a fiery crash, today on the 401—which all interrupt trade.

The cap-and-trade money was going to be used for social housing. It was going to be used to repair our schools. We know there are hundreds of millions of dollars in needed school repairs that won't be done because they've cancelled it—billions of dollars—and the same with social housing.

If we're open for business, let's open our hearts, open our minds and put some money into what was promised. Now, it's a promise broken.

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The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Deepak Anand: I was hearing the member from Eglinton–Lawrence. She talked about government and

what we've done so far—our promise. Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to be here, and I believe that we are doing the right things. We are doing what we said. Our government was elected on a simple promise: to be for the people.

Talking about cap-and-trade, \$2 billion a year, four times a year, four times in a term, is \$8 billion. That was a band-aid solution with 20% results. What on earth? Such important money that we have for the people—we were throwing it away with 20% results. I don't know what we're talking about; it's a simple thing to understand. We can't continue what is not working.

I talked about the same thing on August 8, that we are not against anything which is environment. We are not against the environment. What we are talking about is something which is not working and that we cannot continue.

During my campaign, and even after my campaign, during the last two weeks when I was on the road door-knocking, many, many times people asked me a simple question, and the question was, "When are we going to see the relief?" Madam Speaker, I firmly believe, and I am proud to tell my constituents, that Ontario's carbon tax is over and the relief is on the way. It is just a little bit more time and then they are going to see that relief is on the way into their pocket.

I believe, Madam Speaker, that this is the right thing to do. Something which was not working, which was only producing 20% results, is to be discontinued.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Here again, I have to disagree with some of the comments that were made after my colleague from London West made her comments on this bill. The scrapping of cap-and-trade with nothing to replace it is not good for business. It brings a ton of uncertainty. I represent a riding in northern Ontario. We are called Nickel Belt because all of the nickel mines are in my riding. The smelting, the concentrating, all of the work that you do—all of this has an effect on greenhouse gas emissions.

When the government set targets and when the government put a plan in place, those industries had to respond. Now they are in a vacuum. They know that cap-and-trade will be scrapped, so some of them that have invested mega dollars into buying trades that are now worthless don't know what's coming. This is the worst. It puts every single business on hold. You can't be on hold, Speaker, when you're running a big business, like the businesses that are going on in every industrial park in Nickel Belt, in the big mining companies, in all of this.

When you say that you are for the people, and we hear that Highway 69, where over a thousand people have died, is not going to be four-laned, that we will continue to have a stretch of over 100 kilometres of Highway 69, the highway that goes from Toronto to Sudbury, that won't be fixed, you can't help but think, whose people are they talking about? They're not talking about us in the north. We are not the people that this government is for. This government is for Toronto, and this is where it ends.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to thank the members for Eglinton–Lawrence, Windsor–Tecumseh, Mississauga–Malton and Nickel Belt for offering some thoughts on my remarks.

In response to the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, I'd like to point out that the bill that is before us includes up to \$5 million in a compensation framework. This is to compensate businesses and corporations that have spent almost \$3 billion to purchase carbon offsets and allowances. Frankly, Speaker, the compensation framework is completely inadequate if we are to respond to the needs of the investment community for some security and certainty about the climate for business in this province. So the government has a lot of work to do if it believes that that compensation package is anywhere near enough.

I also want to echo the comments from my friend the member for Windsor–Tecumseh about the need to invest those revenues that were generated by cap-and-trade into very important projects in our communities. In my city of London, the city lost \$9 million that was to be invested in social housing maintenance and repairs. That is a significant loss when we are looking at \$200 million in maintenance and repairs that can't be implemented because the city simply doesn't have the funding.

The Thames Valley District School Board lost \$750,000 in funding to move forward with some maintenance and repairs—and this is in a province that is dealing with a \$16-billion backlog in school maintenance and repairs. Those funds were vital to maintaining adequate housing and education for our students.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Ross Romano: I'm very pleased to rise at this time to address Bill 4.

I want to really rein in the discussion here, because the more and more I hear everyone talk—we seem to be getting away from the real nature of what we're talking about. What we're here to talk about is Justin Trudeau's job-killing carbon tax and the measure that was used by Ontario, the cap-and-trade, to try to appease Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Why are we talking about this today? We're talking about this for a very good reason. Bill 4 has been put forward to bring relief to the people of Ontario. The reason why we did this was because on June 7, we received a very clear mandate from the people of Ontario—crystal clear. They wanted us to do things differently. They were tired of the same old same old that we've been receiving for the last 14 years, and we were elected to be a government that was different. We were elected to bring change. We were elected on five key principles, three of which have a lot to do with the discussion we're having today: (1) We want to make life more affordable; (2) we want to reduce everyday costs, such as energy; and (3) we want to create jobs.

I know a lot of the time, people will look at change and get scared, because you know what? Sometimes change is difficult. But the people made it clear on June 7 that right now, change is absolutely necessary.

I want to speak to you a bit about affordability as a starting point. With respect to affordability—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Check for handcuffs under your desk.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member for Timmins will come to order.

Mr. Ross Romano: I find comments from the member from Timmins really rich because that's coming from a party that believes in the philosophy of tax, tax, tax and spend, spend, spend. With all the things I've heard from that side of the room, we need to do lots of things to help the people of this province—but not on the backs of the very people we want to help, by forcing more costs down their throats that they can't afford and that do absolutely nothing to help the environment. I have not heard a single comment from anyone on that side of the floor that would reference how cap-and-trade actually helps the environment, how a carbon tax helps the environment. No; it's a joke. It's an absolute joke, and it's a travesty that they would sit there and try to argue that all of this stuff we need ought to be paid for by the carbon tax.

Why was the carbon tax created? It was to help the environment, not to solve all these other issues. Perhaps they need to redefine why it is they're here, really look within and determine how this bill—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member from London—Fanshawe, come to order.

1700

Mr. Ross Romano: Pardon?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Go ahead.

Mr. Ross Romano: Oh, thank you. I still have the floor. I appreciate it.

I think you really need to look within and determine that if the government is going to impose a carbon tax and if Ontario is going to go ahead with cap-and-trade as a form of that, how is it actually helping the environment? It's not there to do all these other things that you would love to be able to do, and we would all love to be able to do. We have to find other ways to come up with those types of resources. We don't put that on the backs of our people.

Applause.

Mr. Ross Romano: Thank you.

Let's be honest: This is nothing more than an attempt by the former provincial Liberal government and the current federal Liberal government to simply put more money in government coffers. It does nothing to help the environment.

We have been listening to the people, and the people made it very clear. They don't want more taxes. They don't want everybody's hand in their pockets, especially the government's. They want their money to go further. We committed to making sure that we put more money in people's pockets, and that's exactly what we're doing through this measure.

This cap-and-trade program—to think that actual elected officials came up with a strategy where they would make up imaginary credits and an imaginary currency that we could trade with other jurisdictions, none of which, of

course, include Ontario—where we're going to ship—and proof is in the pudding. We've shipped over \$400 million to places like California and Quebec. So when we talk about not only affordability—which, let's be clear, the carbon tax increases the cost of your energy rates. It increases your costs at the pumps. It increases your costs when you go to the grocery store. It increases all of people's costs.

What else does it do? When you send \$400 million to our competition, it reduces our competitiveness, doesn't it? It reduces our businesses' ability to be competitive. And what does that result in? They leave. Why have we lost 350,000 manufacturing jobs in Ontario? People saw this on the way. Can we attribute all 350,000 to cap-and-trade or a carbon tax? Perhaps not all, but certainly a significant amount of those jobs. We're losing jobs because we're not competitive. We want to create jobs. We want to improve our competitiveness. We want to show the world that we are open for business. Cap-and-trade doesn't do it. It doesn't cut it. It doesn't solve an environmental problem; it solves a revenue problem. It doesn't do anything to help the environment and it costs us jobs.

We promised the people of Ontario that we were here not only to make their lives more affordable, but that we were going to show the world that we were open for business and we were going to create more jobs. We're keeping that promise by ending this terrible program that does absolutely nothing to help the environment, and does nothing more than fulfill a previous government's promise to tax, tax, tax, tax, and spend, spend, spend, spend. Look at Bill 148, as an example.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: We can't. We're talking about this bill.

Mr. Ross Romano: Bill 148 is a primary example. It cost us 50,000 jobs before the election and yet another 40,000 expected to be lost before—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member from Windsor—Tecumseh on a point of order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I think we're speaking on Bill 4, not Bill 148. I would like to get back to Bill 4.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. I caution the member to stay on topic.

Mr. Ross Romano: With respect to Bill 148, I will say that what it shows us—and if I may have your indulgence for a moment, Madam Speaker—what it shows us is that it demonstrates that when we restrict the competitiveness of our businesses and we ask them to do more with less, it costs us jobs. That's what cap-and-trade is going to do. You're asking businesses to do more with less, and who is going to pay for it? The people of Ontario. Jobs are going to be lost, with more money out of their pockets. That is not what we are about as a government. It is not what we were elected to do, Madam Speaker.

That's why we will continue on with our mandate. We will continue to show the world that we are, in fact, open for business. We will continue to show the world that we intend to reduce their taxes in the province. We intend to

reduce the cost of energy and everyday costs of living. We will make sure that they have more money in their pockets.

In conclusion, if I may say this, we have continuously said that we will keep our promises. The number one promise we made to the people of this good province was that we would keep our promises.

When we promised to look at the education curriculum, we said we would do it, and we looked into it and we ensured that parents have a fair say in dealing with those issues that are dealt with in our education curriculum. Promise made, promise kept.

When we looked at the energy contracts, we said we would terminate whatever contracts were no longer good for us, and we would not write new contracts and we would get out of the ones we could. Promise made, promise kept.

When we said we would save that money, we've now saved over \$700 million already for the Ontario taxpayer by getting rid of contracts we didn't need. Promise made, promise kept.

When we looked at the cap-and-trade program, we promised to everyone that we would get rid of it immediately. What are we doing right now? Getting rid of it. Promise made, promise kept.

When we looked at Justin Trudeau's carbon tax, we said we would stand up against it and we would unite all of the provinces against it. We have made it clear that we will go to the Court of Appeal and we will do what is necessary to get rid of Justin Trudeau's carbon tax, because that was a promise made, promise kept.

Number one, and first and foremost, we promised to be for the people. We promised to show this province that we would do everything in our power to make their life more affordable, to make businesses more competitive and to help them do more with less.

We will continue to keep our promises, because that's what we are all about in our government.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the last 10 minutes, and I've got to tell you that there is quite the stretch in this particular speech.

First of all, you can't purport to be for the people when you're doing the types of things that this government is doing. I can't talk about, for example, the "notwithstanding" clause in this debate that we're seeing, but that is just one example. But I want to come back to what the member said.

The member said cap-and-trade did nothing for people. That was the whole premise of what he had to say. I just say this to the government across the way: Listen, you either take climate change seriously or you don't. There are only three ways to achieve targets when it comes to reducing emissions in our atmosphere or into our water or onto the ground. You can go by way of a carbon tax, which we both agree is wrong. You tax every commodity or service out there by way of a GST type of tax. You increase it in the carbon tax, and you utilize the money from that in order to pay for programs that mitigate

emissions into the atmosphere. We both agree that's not the way to go.

The other way to go is you make the polluter pay, and that's what cap-and-trade does. Those who don't pollute don't pay; those who do pollute are the ones who pay. Those who pollute are the ones who pay. We use that money to do mitigation.

Or you do the third option, which is you regulate the issue by way of laws and regulation. You have a more stringent approach when it comes to what it is that you can emit into the atmosphere, the water or the ground. You use a legislative tool in order to get you there.

So you've got to pick one of three ways.

The government is saying it doesn't want to do a carbon tax, which I understand and which I support. But this government is also saying—and I heard the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks say, "Don't worry, we have a plan coming." This government is about to regulate its way out of a problem rather than use the cap-and-trade system, something that Tories have never stood for as long as I've seen Tories in this House. You guys are trying to have it both ways, both sucking and blowing.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I'm going to ask the member for Timmins to withdraw.

Interjection: Again?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, again. I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you to the member for Sault Ste. Marie for putting it so eloquently.

When we were knocking on doors and when we were talking, in my riding, to the people of Brampton South and talking to what the issues were for the people, affordability was one of the biggest issues. When we were going door to door, talking to families that were struggling—and the member pointed out that when we were elected, we ran on five priorities. Making life more affordable was one of them, and creating jobs. By slashing the cap-and-trade, we're going to do exactly that. Over 14,000 jobs will be created by slashing the cap-and-trade.

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Not only are we creating 14,000 jobs, we're fostering an environment where businesses can flourish. Investors are confident in Ontario because finally, for once, we have a government that's open for business and willing to create jobs for the hard-working people of Ontario.

On top of that, we want to make sure that the hard-working families in Brampton South and across this province also benefit. We see that through the \$260 that these families will receive after this tax is scrapped. It's exactly what we need because right now, families are feeling the pressure on their wallets. They can't take their kids out to go see a movie because taxes have gone up, fees have gone up. The government for the past 15 years has only led scandal after scandal, a mismanagement of our taxpayer dollars. It's a breath of fresh air to see us and our government commit to making life more affordable.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Far be it from me to say that cap-and-trade was the end all of it all, but to say that it didn't have an impact is wrong.

Come to Sudbury. Go on Google right now and Google Vale Clean AER Project. Everybody can see Vale invested \$1 billion. This is the biggest environmental investment made ever. With the \$1 billion, they were able to decrease sulphur dioxide by 85%; metals and particulates by 30% to 40%; and, under cap-and-trade, they decreased the amount of natural gas that they use, so they decreased greenhouse emissions by 40%. So 270 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide is now down to 150 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide. This is a lot of greenhouse emissions that is not going to be out there, and it is directly linked to cap-and-trade. So to say that it has done nothing—come to Sudbury and see.

It is phenomenal what has happened because there were regulations, because there was cap-and-trade, because there were rules that were clear and understood that business could follow. They knew that if they did that, they were going into a path that would make sure that Vale is sustainable, could continue to a cleaner environment and continue employment in the Sudbury basin for decades to come.

All of this is on their website. Do a Google. It will come right there. Stop staying that it did nothing because when you look at over 120 kilotonnes of greenhouse gas emissions yearly that is not going up the chimney in Sudbury, this has a huge impact and you can't deny it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Roman Baber: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's good to be back.

The member from Sault Ste. Marie is exactly right. Cap-and-trade is there to put more money in the government's pocket—to take it out of the people's pocket and put it into the government's pocket.

I'm surprised at the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane because he would have us believe that when you tax polluters, we don't all pay the price. No. What happens is—it's basic economics—polluters pass on the price to consumers, to everyday consumers. But there's a bigger—
Interjection.

Mr. Roman Baber: Wait a sec. There's a bigger problem with cap-and-trade. Not only is it a tax—and don't get me wrong, it is a tax. It is a tax on everything. But the worst part of it is, it's a very regressive tax.

One of the basic principles of tax policy is tax equity. Tax equity basically means that everyone ought to feel the bite of tax equally. But that is not the case with cap-and-trade and the resulting imposition. No. The cost added to a pair of sneakers is the same whether you're a low-income, middle-income or a high-income earner. So the result is that it hurts the most economically vulnerable members of our society. It isn't right. It isn't fair.

I cannot be any more proud to vote for Bill 4 and give families much-needed relief. It's a very simple proposition, Madam Speaker. The opposition wants to put more money in the government's pocket. The government wants to put more money in the people's pockets.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Sault Ste. Marie.

Mr. Ross Romano: Thank you. Just to get to a couple of points, the member from Timmins confirmed that you don't agree with the carbon tax, so you and I definitely have something we can agree on, which is great.

Applause.

Mr. Ross Romano: And I appreciate the applause, but let's be clear: You identified three areas in which you believe that we could fix the situation and referred to cap-and-trade as one of those ways. The problem is that cap-and-trade is a tax. So it's the same as the carbon tax. It's the version that Ontario rolled out. Perhaps you might want to look at the federal legislation in terms of what was required by the Prime Minister. Ontario rolled out the cap-and-trade program to meet the Prime Minister's requests on the carbon tax. So if you disagree with the carbon tax, you ought to be disagreeing with cap-and-trade.

There are more than just three ways to deal with our environmental situation with respect to emissions, and that is with innovation, technology and looking at our companies and finding other ways to do things. There are other ways to do things beyond jumping at the first idea that comes up just because Justin Trudeau said, "Jump." In fairness, we are a province that regulates our own laws; we are responsible for taxing our own people. We don't jump when Justin Trudeau says, "Jump." We look at the situation and determine how we can best serve our people. The best way to serve our people is not to tax them in a way that will do little to nothing to actually help our environmental situation, but is there just to simply fill government coffers so that we can come up with money to do other things.

Unfortunately for the opposition and the third party, or party without status, and fortunately for us, the people made it crystal clear on June 7 that they want to see things done differently. They don't want a cap-and-trade system. They don't want a carbon tax. They want their lives to be more affordable, they want more jobs, and they want a government that keeps its promises.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate. The member for—Kitchener—Conestoga?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: No, Kitchener Centre.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Kitchener Centre. Oh, I'm sorry.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Very close. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's kind of ironic that we were called back and this was the bill that we have the opportunity to discuss, because just this weekend I was invited to Rise for Climate, Jobs, and Justice, which was organized by a number of groups across Ontario, and actually further, because so many people believe in climate change. Imagine that. There were five groups that were representative of Waterloo region that did the organizing: the Citizens' Climate Lobby, Waterloo region; Waterloo Regional Labour Council; BlueDot; Divest Waterloo; and the People's Climate March of Waterloo region.

As every speaker took some time to think about climate change and think about what the government was doing or

not doing, it became really clear. Speaker after speaker after speaker explained that there was no leadership within the government to address climate change.

Then, when I read the title of Bill 4, it was really hard to keep turning the pages because it's an act "respecting the preparation of a climate change plan." When we talk about different ways of saving money for Ontarians, I don't understand why the government is okay with paying to have us here so that we can talk about when they happen to plan on making a climate change plan, as opposed to talking about the plan. People don't want to know that they're going to do it; they want it done. That's the promise that they want kept, Mr. Speaker.

So in order to not have my head explode with the fact that I had to seriously talk about whether or not we could vote on it maybe, perhaps, at some point—because there are no deadlines, dates or any kind of understanding being provided as to when we should expect the actual plan—I decided to breathe, to take a step back and think about what the purpose is of all of us being here. Climate change is so important. This impacts absolutely everyone, Mr. Speaker. If we don't understand why we are all gathered here to talk about this, I'm just worried that we won't have a way forward by the end of all of this.

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My background is in philosophy. I thought to myself, "Hobbes." Hobbes said that the reason that we should agree to be governed is because in a state of nature, life is "nasty, brutish and short." We have all entered into a social contract and have said that we are going to work together and trust each other; that when we elect the folks who are going to be responsible for the well-being of entire communities, we will be able to trust them; that the contracts that we enter into are contracts that will not be broken on a whim and are contracts that we've signed up; and that this is how we're going to make sure we bring something that is not nasty, not brutish and not short to us.

We've already seen that contracts entered into, treaties entered into with Indigenous people, have been broken. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report tells us that we have to find a way to fix this. What happens with the government? We don't bother. We've decided that we're just not going to talk about Indigenous folks in the throne speech.

Then we come with Bill 4. People say that we need to address issues with the climate. We need to address the way that we're going to ensure that our world is not short because we are actually taking care of the earth. We all believe in this. I've heard over and over and over again in this House that everybody sitting down here believes in climate change, that it's real. But I've also heard non-stop that the plans that had been put forth prior to this are ineffective.

The government isn't there to just tell us that things are ineffective; they're there to put into place something that is effective. Instead of doing that, we had to spend the morning talking about the invoking of a "notwithstanding" clause, which is scaring people across my riding and beyond. And then we have to sit here and talk about the potential of a plan to address climate change.

Mr. Mike Harris: We had to sit here and listen to you guys bang on your desks for 10 minutes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, that was really disruptive, eh?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Yes.

As I sat and I thought about leadership—and I ignored the heckles, because why bother?—I realized that if we are going to enter into any kind of agreement that says that the government can roll back all the contracts that they want whenever they want, if we're ever going to enter into an agreement, stand up and vote for the government to be allowed to make a determination as to whether or not you actually experienced harm with the rollback, harm with the changes—not telling us who they're going to talk to to make those determinations, but they, on their own, will just decide. It got worse when we came into the House today and saw that it was okay that everybody on the other side freely voted—freely voted—for the invocation of the "notwithstanding" clause. That was done as individuals.

I know that when I'm standing up here today, I can tell you that climate change is real, because there has been flooding non-stop all over the place and fires burning non-stop all over place. It's not the time for us to sit down and decide that nobody's rights matter and that's more important than spending the time telling me what the targets are going to be.

I can't actually answer any one of my constituents when they ask me about what the actual plan is that the government has to address climate change, what they plan on replacing cap-and-trade with. I know they're angry; I know that they're unhappy with the system that was there before, and that's fine. But what are you replacing it with? Because people are asking for leadership. That's what happened when I sat at the Rise for Climate, Jobs, and Justice gathering in the middle of Waterloo square. They weren't asking for a plan that had no plan in it. They were asking the government to tell them what they were going to do.

I anticipate that for many, many, many weekends to come I'm going to be invited to many more of those gatherings. My question, Mr. Speaker, is whether or not I will ever be able to say, "This is the plan." I don't want to say that people stood up and said, "Oh, yes, climate change is real, but everybody else did it wrong. Nothing else is working." I want to be able to say, "This is the government that's elected; here's what they want to try to do." That's what my job is, and I'm waiting desperately, counting the days—actually, Prince has a song that says, "I count the days." It's exactly what I'm doing. I'm counting the days until the plan comes because this is not a plan. The title tells me that it's not a plan.

I'm going to respect the preparation of the climate change plan. I think the fact that we all believe that climate change is real is enough to actually not have to pay me money to stand here to tell you that I believe that it would be great if you made a plan. You know what I'd like? A plan. That's what I'd like. Not a plan to plan something in the future, to plan it maybe—because they also say they can change said plan whenever they'd like to change the plan. Given what has happened in the last 24 hours—I've

received over 200 emails with regard to the fear that people have about the government's willingness to just change their mind about things whenever they feel like it. This isn't the transparency that Hobbes says we need to get out of the state of nature; this is putting us into the state of nature. That is so distressing.

So I will just wait respectfully for the government to take some time and figure out what part of what I've said in these last 10 minutes that they will never get back that they don't like, and what I will hope for is that one person will stand up and say to me, "MPP for Kitchener Centre, here's the plan." I think I may have to hold my breath, because I've been reading Bill 4—I keep reading it over and over again wondering if I missed something. Targets: Nobody tells me how; nobody says who they're going to talk to, what experts they're going to consult with, when they're going to have the plan, and what that plan is going to look like. I do know for a fact that the other plan was not okay; that's all I know. And that's fine. We don't have to like what happened before, but real leaders will never take something out and leave a gaping hole.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): When I heard you were going to quote lyrics from Prince, I thought you were going to tie climate change to Purple Rain.

Questions and comments?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: We all have a responsibility to protect our environment. The Progressive Conservative government doesn't think any differently under the leadership of Premier Ford—and it's leadership, Mr. Speaker. That's what it takes to combat the challenges of today. Gone are the days where we talk about hypotheticals, where we go down this reckless path, where we just tax people and feel good about solutions. This government is not going down that path. We are going down another path, a path that provides hope to Ontarians, a path that provides the opportunity for Ontarians—they can really get ahead—and provides tangible solutions, solutions that don't involve an 80% shortfall of our greenhouse gas emission targets. That's not my statistic, Mr. Speaker; that's the Auditor General's statistic.

I think it's important for all of us to make sure we choose that path, not the ideological path that says, "We will just tax everyone. We will put a gaping hole of \$7 million in our budget," like the NDP platform. It takes responsibility. Yes, it can be difficult, but those are the tough choices you have to make and they require leadership. That is why, under the leadership of our Premier, Premier Ford, we are committed to take a path that does not punish families, that when moms and dads do have to provide for their loved ones that they're not having to choose between heating and eating—they don't have to choose between taking their child to soccer practice or not taking their child to soccer practice.

Let's talk about the socio-economic factors here too. On this side of the House, with our colleagues, we believe that there should be equality of opportunity, not equality of outcomes. That is why we are calling the cap-and-trade system for what it is: It's a regressive tax. It punishes those

who need the help the most. This government is going to stand up for the people who need the help the most.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: I listened intently to the member for Kitchener Centre; I always do. I find her way of putting forward ideas very interesting. She focused on the lack of a plan.

Now, it's pretty obvious that the government across the way doesn't like cap-and-trade. They're trying to somehow make cap-and-trade and the carbon tax the same thing. Interestingly, once in a while, we hear from the government across the way about wasting money. This morning, they went with the "notwithstanding" clause because they don't like a judge telling them what to do, because they're elected, yet they're spending \$30 million to challenge the federal government in court on the carbon tax. Guess what? I don't really like Prime Minister Trudeau either, but he's elected.

Pick a lane. You can't have it both ways. Oh, he's an elected Liberal. That's why the judge should—guys, think about it. Think about it.

I heard the member across the way talk about how the last government was missing their targets by 80%. Who am I to stand up for the last government? But they had targets. You guys have got a bill in the House with a plan for perhaps big targets, or perhaps not.

We understand that people are having a tough time; we all want to work towards that. But a plan to make a plan, and complaining about somebody else's plan when you don't have a plan and you're unwilling to unveil your plan—that's pretty hollow. That is a complete waste of everyone's time, and we don't have the time to waste. We really don't.

So please, govern like grown-ups and pick a lane.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Harris: I'd like to make some comments, especially on leadership, hearing from my colleague just down the road in Kitchener Centre. The members from Timiskaming-Cochrane and Timmins will appreciate this. I'm just going to hearken back to my dad's era for a minute here.

One thing that I've heard for many, many years since my dad left politics—and it didn't matter which side or political stripe you were on—was that there were some tough decisions that had to be made. He said that he was going to make those decisions, he followed through with them and he kept his promises. That's one thing that we've done so far with this government. We campaigned on eliminating the cap-and-trade scheme. It was a major part of our platform. We also campaigned on putting more money back into people's pockets. If you look at the number that's related to this bill—this is Bill 4. When we came back for our special summer sitting here in the House, this was something that was very important to us: saving people money, putting \$260 back into people's pockets. I think it's a considerable amount when you tally

that up with the 14-some-odd million people who live in Ontario.

It's not only important to the people of Ontario, but when we're looking at fighting this carbon tax that's been imposed by Justin Trudeau, it's important to all the people of Canada. We already have several provinces on board with fighting this in the courts. It's something that we're hoping all of the country will get on board with so that we will have support from all of the provinces and territories across Canada.

Putting money back into people's pockets, whether that be through eliminating cap-and-trade or lowering hydro prices, making sure that those extra fees aren't passed on to consumers—something that's very important—I know that the people in Kitchener–Conestoga are very happy to see this happening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I just want to mention the realities of being up north, I guess. I have 27 fly-in communities that are remote. There are no roads. I know that over the years, the winter road access, when we use ice roads, has been very limited—it's shorter and shorter.

Not only that: it's been a real struggle as well, when we talk about saving dollars for the cost of fuel. You have to understand—sometimes people complain about gas prices down here, when communities are paying \$2.50 a litre, almost three bucks a litre, in the communities. The cost of doing business in the north is so critical.

Not only that. As a First Nations person, as a people who have been up north—we've been here for thousands of years and we're the keepers of the land. One of the things that really, really is starting to affect—I spoke about the land, how it affects the land. Not only that, but the animals, the animals that we hunt as well, and the waters—there are actually new bugs there in the north that are destroying the trees and spreading disease. I got a message this morning that somebody killed a moose and there were worms in that moose. That's all climate change.

But anyway, I don't think people think about the impacts of real climate change. A plan for a plan is just not good enough.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. Back to the member for Kitchener Centre for her two-minute wrap-up.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: If I take everything together, I've realized that there is no plan—that had been made clear from the discussions—and that there is a tough decision to be made. I think that's fair. The government has to make tough decisions. I'm sure that when they campaigned on what they would dismantle, people also hoped that there would be something to replace it. That's why my bringing up Hobbes was so important, because this is the nature of the social contract. It's not just that you take away everything that was there before, but that you replace it with something so that we don't kill Mother Earth. That's what people are asking you to do.

I also think that people were hopeful that every single person's reality would be included in the considerations

made by the government, not just the 2.3 million people who voted, but all of the people who make up Ontario. That means our northern communities, that means our First Nations communities, that means the poor, that means urban poor, that means the poor that are in all the different parts—north, south, east and west—in Ontario. Unfortunately, it doesn't appear as though those considerations are going to be central when the government is making tough decisions.

Bill 8—Bill 8; it feels like Bill 8—Bill 4 isn't providing us with any information, so I'm going to have to assume that the next bill, whatever number that will be, will potentially get me a step closer to knowing what we're going to do about the environment. Or maybe we'll just be dismantling more things in the interim.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: It's a great honour to rise and speak on this bill once again. When we as candidates set out and knocked on doors in our ridings and spoke to thousands of residents, for me in Brampton South one thing was clear: that life was unaffordable and they wanted a government that finally took this seriously and recognized the challenges that we currently live with. That's exactly what we've done.

I hear all this talk from the opposition that we don't take climate seriously, that we don't have a plan. It's disingenuous because the thing that we have to understand—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Withdraw, Madam Speaker.

The one thing I want to really reiterate here is that the solution to every problem is not to tax, tax and tax. Because that's what gotten our families, these hard-working families—when we knock on doors, you see the single mother trying to raise her kids; and the two parents working overtime shifts and taking any shifts possible, just to put food on the table and make sure their kids can go to hockey practice and play hockey. We need a plan that really takes into consideration the hard-working people of Ontario.

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That is the commitment that we made as a government: to scrap the cap-and-trade carbon tax that was imposed by the previous Liberal government. That's why it's an honour, again, to stand here as the MPP for Brampton South, so I can go back to my constituents and say, "Promise made, promise kept."

The legislation will officially remove the carbon tax from Ontario's books, and that's what we were elected on: a promise to be for the people.

One question that always came up while I was door-knocking, while I was going to events and while I was talking to members in the community, was: "How are you going to put people first and make life more affordable for my family?" Like I was saying, while we understand the challenges that climate change presents, a regressive tax is not a solution to these challenges.

The people of Brampton South have made it clear to me that they do not want an unfair tax that puts a burden on their families and a burden on small businesses. We ran on this platform, and the people of Brampton South voted no to a carbon tax.

The ineffective carbon tax has targeted the most vulnerable people—the low-income and middle-income families—for way too long. In removing the cap-and-trade, we are once again fulfilling our promise to the people of Ontario. Ontario's carbon tax era is over.

A cap-and-trade carbon tax increased the price on everything. That's why we know that the wind-down of the cap-and-trade will benefit all Ontarians. The conclusion of cap-and-trade is a key step towards fulfilling the government's commitment to reducing gas prices by 10 cents. But the benefits don't stop there: cheaper gas prices, lower energy bills, more money in the pockets of the hard-working families of Ontario.

Eliminating the cap-and-trade will save the average family over \$260 a year. In addition to saving the families money, the elimination of the cap-and-trade carbon tax will remove a cost burden from Ontario businesses, allowing them to grow, create jobs and compete in other jurisdictions.

This was, once again, another frustration that I heard from small businesses: that regulation after regulation, tax after tax, was making the market so uncompetitive for them that they didn't see fit to take on that extra risk and grow their business, because there was just no reward.

But finally, for once, we have a government that listens and governs for the people and will ensure that the future generations have great jobs, that businesses can grow and that we can all prosper.

It's anticipated that through the cancellation of the cap-and-trade and reducing the fuel tax, Ontario will create an estimated 14,000 jobs. That's what the people of Brampton South can look forward to: real progress that will ensure Ontario is open for business.

Cap-and-trade puts a burden on the backs of small, medium and large businesses. It puts a burden on the taxpayers of Ontario. The cap-and-trade carbon tax needs to be scrapped, because it's uncompetitive and it's unaffordable. It doesn't protect the environment. It only increases the price of gasoline, heating and everyday items like groceries and clothing.

There is really no proof that cap-and-trade reduces carbon emissions significantly. The cap-and-trade tax has nothing to do with the environment and everything to do with funding out-of-control spending by the previous government. We want to make life more affordable for the hard-working families of Ontario: the single mothers who are struggling, the families that struggle to put food on the table for their kids.

Where else to point than to the Auditor General's report that came out, which stated that cap-and-trade would cost businesses and consumers \$8 billion, and it would only see a slight reduction in emissions. Like the member for Barrie–Innisfil mentioned earlier today, it would fall 80% short of its targets, which is absolutely ridiculous. We tax, tax, tax, but there's absolutely no plan. Like I was saying

before, the consumers and the businesses are sick and tired of a simple solution of government just imposing tax after tax, which is eventually passed down to the consumer. It affects the consumer. They're sick and tired of that because life is just too unaffordable.

When we also look at who this was really benefiting, it's shocking to see that the previous government tried to sell this and make people believe that there was going to be a huge effect on the environment and the emissions in our society and our economy. In reality, what we see is \$400 million would have been going to the state of California. Money from Ontario's struggling families was going to the people of California, and that's exactly why we wanted to remove this plan. We wanted to make sure that we served the people of Ontario because our party, our government is committed to making life more affordable.

There was no bigger example of how out of touch this program was than the Tesla example that we give. We were forcing single mothers, we were forcing families to pay into the program so people could buy \$50,000, \$60,000, \$70,000 electric cars. How could we actually let that happen? How could we not look out and how could we let the hard-working taxpayers subsidize a Tesla for someone who can afford a \$50,000 car? That's absolutely ridiculous when we have families struggling to pay their hydro bills. We have families struggling to put food on the table, yet we sit here and allow a government tax to subsidize Tesla vehicles.

That's what we've made. We made a commitment to the people. And we made it loud and clear to the federal government as well that we will oppose—and the Attorney General has done a great job of making sure that we will fight this challenge in court and made sure that, regardless of the federal government leaving and forgetting about the families and the unaffordability that this tax will have, we're still there for them and we're still willing to fight for them.

We, as a government, are committed to finding real solutions to the environmental challenges we face. Our plan will make it clear in the coming months. It's our commitment to have a more effective plan, a made-in-Ontario solution to address the environmental challenges we face while respecting the taxpayers of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I listened to the comments from the member for Brampton South, and I heard him talk about the financial impact of cap-and-trade. Speaker, I think we have to weigh that against the financial costs of cancelling cap-and-trade. There's an editorial that was written in the *Globe and Mail* called "Scrapping Ontario's Cap-and-Trade Carbon Market Creates Far More Losers than Winners." The International Emissions Trading Association has calculated Ontario's losses at about \$5 billion when you look at the lawsuits that are going to potentially be brought against the government from companies that want to be reimbursed for the carbon allowances they purchased, the loss of federal funding from the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund and the \$30 million

that this government is spending to take the federal government to court.

The real loss is to our environment, it's to our future generations who will have to live with the damage, the harm that is done by this government's abdication in terms of its responsibility to replace cap-and-trade with something better.

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I brought an email from Mina in London West, one of the hundreds of constituents who have contacted me about this issue. She says, "If cap-and-trade isn't the answer for the environment, then replace it with something better, that's fine with me, whatever is better for the environment." But it has to "be based on facts such as (1) climate change is real; (2) burning fossil fuels is negatively affecting our climate ... and (3) commitments by the government ... should be honoured, not ripped out from under the feet of those trying to make a difference...."

Speaker, we need to see action by this government and we need it now.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Aris Babikian: Madam Speaker, during the campaign when I knocked on doors, I met some of the business owners of my riding. All of them were complaining about two things: regulation—they are heavily regulated—and taxes. Many of them stated very clearly, "If the previous government wins the election and continues its policies, we are going to close down and move to the United States. We are going to move to Europe. We are going to move even to the Middle East and other parts of the world to do business because we are sick and tired."

One of the things they complained about mostly is the carbon tax issue. My colleagues mentioned that the carbon tax issue is an important issue. That's why we immediately brought a change of regulation so that we can send a message to these business owners and individuals that we are serious, we are going to address their concerns so that they can start operating in Ontario as a business, that Ontario will be open again for business. They should not be penalized.

The other thing that they mentioned was that instead of paying all these taxes, they prefer to save that money and develop their business, spend it on their employees, their various needs. That's much better-spent money than paying taxes to the government, enriching the government and denying their employees and their business from development. By doing that, by scrapping the carbon tax, we are addressing the needs of the people. This government came to power to address the needs of the people.

We are going to save \$260 per family. We are going to create 14,000 jobs. We are going to reduce—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. *Interjection.*

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I'm going to remind the member that your time is up. Thank you.

The member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: To comment on my friend from Brampton South: I have great respect for the member from

Brampton South. He always makes very good arguments in this House. The one thing I take exception to is when he says families are going to save \$260. Families were going to save a lot more than \$260 on the energy retrofit program in residential homes that was cancelled by the Premier and the government because that money was being derived from the cap-and-trade revenue.

The schools across our province—you talk about single mothers with kids. These kids are now going to schools where the infrastructure is crumbling. There are billions of dollars in much-needed infrastructure that these children would have benefited from if the cap-and-trade money would not have been taken away, to the extent that it has been, from renovations to the schools.

It's the same with social housing. The member knows that we're not putting enough money into social housing, especially in the greater Toronto area. Social housing benefits would have increased much more under the cap-and-trade; we would have had more money for renovations.

As I say, I respect the member from Brampton South very much but he has to look at the wider picture, I believe, the bigger picture, that being that some of the money from cap-and-trade would have benefited the people much more so than what he says will benefit from the cancelling of this cap-and-trade program. I think that's what we're here for. If we're here for the people, that's for the people who would have benefited from the retrofits to their residential homes, to the schools that their children attend, and to the social housing, because most of us—at least on this side—agree that we need more affordable housing in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: The member from Timmins made a comment—I don't know if everyone heard—about drinking Kool-Aid. My response is that no one can afford the Kool-Aid anymore because of cap-and-trade. Everything is much more expensive.

Let's take the conversation to climate change. The conversation has actually been going to climate change, but this is not about whether or not we believe in it or whether it exists, because we've talked about that. This is a distraction tactic; that's what I think. This is about the cap-and-trade carbon tax, on which, by the way, former Premier Wynne actually said, "If you will, call it a tax."

Let's go back to the concept of the cap-and-trade carbon tax: making big polluters pay. "Great. Let me buy my way around this. I will pay to pollute." That's the mindset that these big polluters are in right now. So the prices go up for whatever goods or services they offer, and we, the consumers, are the ones that are hurting. There are no details as to what part of the item is more expensive, or why it's more expensive. It just costs more.

Then we get told, "Don't worry. Here are programs to make you feel good." The carbon tax—it's a feel-good, right? It's, "We're doing something for the environment. You know why? Because you're paying more for it. Here is a rebate for you to buy your \$50,000 or \$100,000 electric car." Guess what? Those who can afford those cars to begin with are probably not the ones hurting so much

from this carbon tax or this cap-and-trade. It's everyone else that's hurting from it—the ones who are taking the bus to work and who are going to have to pay more for their bus passes, who are having to drive their non-electric cars to work to Toronto, maybe two hours each way, and paying 60 cents a litre at the pump. They're the ones who are hurting. So, yes, there is a financial impact to this cap-and-trade.

The cap-and-trade is supposed to be used for greenhouse gas emissions, not for infrastructure. So I invite members opposite to join the conversation. If you have suggestions, we are open to them. Let's work on this together.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member from Brampton South for a wrap-up.

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I want to thank all the members for their comments, and I respect all the comments that were made. But I think we come back to the idea of why we were elected, why we got into government, and the promises that we made to make life more affordable. I've heard those comments from members so many times. That's exactly what we want to do: make life more affordable.

Our climate change plan that will come—we've made it clear that we're going to deliver real action on providing clean air and water, a focus on conservation, reducing emissions, and cleaning up litter, garbage and waste. But we don't think that the solution to every single problem is to tax, tax and tax. We want to get over this idea that the previous Liberal government implemented, which was this obsession with raising taxes, and instead focus on an environmental plan that actually works.

We know there are challenges in our environment, but we need to make sure that we do it in a responsible manner, and in a manner where we're not affecting the hard-working families that, when I was knocking on doors when I was campaigning, I was talking to. I said, "We promise you relief if we get elected," and that's exactly what we've done—whether it's through reducing the unnecessary renewable energy contracts that we took swift action on. That starts with reducing gas prices by removing this carbon tax, because everybody drives to and from work, and we want to make sure that the families that want to take their kids to soccer practice or hockey practice have that opportunity.

So I'm proud to stand here and—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. *Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member for Kiiwetinoong has given notice of his

dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

I turn the floor over to the member from Kiiwetinoong.
1800

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: *Remarks in Oji-Cree.*

During the last session, I asked the Minister of Indigenous Affairs a question that made reference to the ongoing legacy and inaction around Grassy Narrows and also Wabaseemoong, and the generational harm that's being done by the mercury poisoning that's happening in the rivers—specifically, what the Minister of Indigenous Affairs had discussed with his senior staff about the timeline for cleaning up the river.

But that's not all I asked.

I don't know if this government chose not to hear or not to respond to the rest of my question, but I also asked what First Nation leaders and communities this government had consulted with before they had reached out to Victoria, BC, wanting the statue of Sir John A. Macdonald. I didn't receive an answer to that question either, which is why I'm here to ask the same question today.

For the record, while, yes, it's true that Sir John A. Macdonald was one of the founders of Canada, and visitors to this place can see a statue here—and buildings throughout this great province—but I also realize that he was also one of the architects of the residential school system.

I know that many thousands of Indigenous people, First Nations people and people of my riding have suffered incredible hardship, abuse and intergenerational harm at the hands of the residential school system.

During that time when I was asking, I did ask one of the members across about the issues of strapping. The response I got was, "I got strapped too." But I don't think that member across realized that he got to go home, but others didn't.

Also, I know that our people lost our languages, we lost our culture and we lost our traditional family structures within the system. In some cases, we even lost the capacity to dream.

As one of the youth in one of our communities once said, when asked about his hopes and his dreams for the future—he said, "Why should I dream? I stopped dreaming a long time ago when I realized nothing that was in my life and in my community would ever change."

Speaker, while I didn't get the answer to the question, what I and other First Nations in Ontario heard loud and clear was this government's enthusiasm for the statue. One of the Grand Chiefs from the Anishinabek Nation has been quoted as wondering why this government would go to such lengths to acquire this statue. A number of other community leaders and First Nations leaders have wondered why they were not consulted, or even asked if this might be seen as an offensive move on the part of the government.

And to many of them, it has been. The architect of our country, your country, is also seen as an architect of misery and hardship for many Indigenous people across the land, including those in Ontario.

Furthermore, what First Nations haven't heard since the government has come into power is the word "reconciliation." We have not heard it in the throne speech, or anything about it from the Minister of Indigenous Affairs since his appointment.

"Reconciliation," I note, is no longer used when describing the new ministry. The words "relations" and "reconciliation" have been dropped. Why is that, Speaker?

Further, we haven't heard when this government will schedule the TRC curriculum writing sessions that have been cancelled this summer. When will they resume?

Finally, I'd like to just say that we were talking about this issue today, and there's—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I recognize the member for Barrie–Innisfil for a response.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the members opposite for your patience. I know that in question period there's not enough time in one minute to fully, wholesomely, answer the question that you posed about Grassy Narrows and the mercury cleanup, so I'm here this evening to give you a more fulsome answer. Certainly, we can continue that dialogue, as this government wants to continue that dialogue, and work with the Minister of Indigenous Affairs, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and myself as well on this matter.

Madam Speaker, this is a serious matter. The Premier and I, along with the Minister of Indigenous Affairs, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and all members of the Progressive Conservative government take this matter seriously.

The impact that this has had on the families who have been diagnosed with and are suffering from mercury poisoning due to the Dryden mill is startling. The mercury pollution in the English-Wabigoon River system has been an ongoing problem for decades and a failure of the previous Liberal government.

But, Madam Speaker, there is hope. Premier Ford is doing things differently and bringing change for the better. That is why there is an \$85-million English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Trust that was established in 2008

with input from First Nations. The funding will be used for the following remediation activities: preventing or reducing the risk of a discharge of mercury; reducing the presence, concentration or bio-availability of mercury, including its presence and concentration in fish; and post-remediation monitoring.

There was a panel created, and the members who participated in the panel include the participants of the Grassy Narrows First Nation, among other First Nation communities. One meeting had taken place in July, where Chief Turtle—the member opposite was referring to how he wanted an update. He was part of this panel in July. In fact, they're having another meeting next week, so stay tuned as to the outcome of that meeting next week.

Since the last meeting occurred with the panel, we have seen that mercury levels in the fish in parts of the river have declined. However, current mercury levels in the fish remain high, and advisories for eating fish are still in effect in many parts of the river system, because we care about the health and safety of everyone.

Mercury contaminants in the rivers have had a profound impact on the people of Grassy Narrows. We are concerned, and we want to properly address this matter. That is why Premier Ford and this government are committed to continuing to work with Indigenous communities to identify mercury contamination sites along the river and develop and implement a plan to remediate these sites.

Our government is working for all of the people in Ontario, including the Indigenous communities. We share a passion for the opportunities of renewed economic prosperity with Ontario's Indigenous peoples. The Minister of Indigenous Affairs has already engaged with community leaders from across the province and looks forward to strengthening those relationships as we move forward with our plan. But there is no quick-fix solution. Many of these issues are historic, complex and multi-jurisdictional. There is much work to be done, and we are dedicated to achieving progress on these matters. We will take the leadership that is required to make sure we find a solution on this matter.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1809.

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