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ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

**Cannabis Statute Law Amendment Act, 2018, Bill
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 17 October 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 17 octobre 2018

The House met at 0900.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CANNABIS STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE CANNABIS

Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, on behalf of Ms. Mulroney, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to enact a new Act and make amendments to various other Acts respecting the use and sale of cannabis and vapour products in Ontario / Projet de loi 36, Loi édictant une nouvelle loi et modifiant diverses autres lois en ce qui concerne l'utilisation et la vente de cannabis et de produits de vapotage en Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I look to the government House leader to lead off the debate.

Hon. Todd Smith: It is a pleasure to rise and speak to this bill this morning here at Queen's Park. It's a beautiful Wednesday morning out there.

Interjection: Fragrant.

Hon. Todd Smith: Fragrant. Good word.

It is a pleasure to rise and speak to third reading of Bill 36, the Cannabis Statute Law Amendment Act, 2018. It's an act that will ensure strict controls on the purchase and usage of recreationable—recreational cannabis here in Ontario.

I should note that I will be splitting my time with the Minister of Finance, Minister Fedeli, who will be speaking later today on this important piece of legislation.

I want to start by thanking everyone who was involved in the preparation of Bill 36. It's a long list and it was a lot of work by a lot of people. First and foremost, I think it's very important that we thank the Attorney General, Caroline Mulroney, for all the work that she has done on this bill. I also want to thank the team at the Legalization of Cannabis Secretariat at the Ministry of the Attorney General that has been working around the clock to help make sure Ontario is ready for today's legalization of cannabis, led by Renu Kulendran—I hope I said that right—and all of the members of her great team, including Ryan Freeston and Jesse Todres. I know they've been working closely with officials from many ministries, including finance, municipal affairs, health and so many others. Thanks to the work of so many members of our dedicated professional public service as well, to ensure that Ontario is ready.

I also want to thank the parliamentary assistant for the Attorney General, the MPP for Durham, Lindsey Park; and the members of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, including its Chair, the member for Mississauga—Streetsville, Nina Tangri, for their work in reviewing and debating this bill as it's moved through the legislative process here in the House.

Finally, I want to thank each of the interested stakeholders who took time to make submissions as part of our consultation process before introducing this bill, and to the standing committee for their role in shaping this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, good morning. As you know, the federal government has proceeded with its decision to legalize cannabis. That wasn't a decision that was made here. If passed, Bill 36 would provide added certainty around the work that we're doing in Ontario to keep cannabis out of the hands of children and youth, while keeping our communities and roads safe and combating the illegal, illicit market.

Nous continuons à travailler pour éviter que le cannabis tombe entre les mains des enfants et des jeunes, tout en assurant la sécurité publique et routière et en combattant le marché illégal.

The federal government's legalization of cannabis is one of the most significant changes in terms of controlled substances in Canada since the repeal of Prohibition. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to take this time today to address members of this House and, indeed, all Ontarians, on our work to ensure a safe, reliable system in Ontario.

One of the significant changes contained in Bill 36 is the introduction of a private retail system for recreationable—recreational cannabis; I'll get this right before we're done today. And, no, it's not what you're thinking. I can read your mind over there.

After examining the previous government's model, we concluded that a system of government-run stores was incapable of seriously competing with the illegal market and, in turn, would leave our communities more vulnerable and susceptible to the underground market.

Après avoir examiné le modèle conçu par le gouvernement précédent, nous avons conclu qu'un système de magasins exploités par le gouvernement serait incapable de soutenir la concurrence du marché illégal et laisserait nos collectivités plus vulnérables face au marché noir.

A private retail store model would allow Ontario businesses to participate in the retail system. Increased competition would offer consumers more access and better combat the illegal market, while keeping gangs and criminals out of the marketplace. To help design the

private retail model proposed in the bill, our government conducted consultations with key stakeholders, including municipalities and ministers' round tables with key public safety, industry, health and consumer groups.

Pour concevoir le modèle de vente au détail privée que propose le projet de loi, notre gouvernement a consulté des intervenants clés, dont les municipalités, et a tenu des tables rondes de ministres avec des représentants des secteurs de la sécurité publique, de l'industrie et de la santé ainsi que des groupes de consommateurs.

Several ministers and MPPs also led their own parallel engagements on the retail model, Speaker. The input we received was invaluable in the creation of this bill. Municipalities, police and health stakeholders strongly advocated for the creation of a tightly regulated cannabis retail regime with broad provincial control and oversight. So that's what this bill proposes. If passed, the Cannabis Statute Law Amendment Act, 2018, would establish the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, or AGCO, as the provincial regulator for private cannabis retail sales in Ontario. In this new role, the AGCO would issue licences to eligible retailers across the province and enforce operator compliance.

0910

The AGCO would leverage its existing experience, expertise and infrastructure in regulating alcohol and gaming in Ontario to regulate cannabis retail stores, building on its mandate to regulate in the public interest.

La CAJO utiliserait son expérience, son expertise et son infrastructure en matière de réglementation des alcools et des jeux en Ontario pour réglementer les magasins de vente de cannabis, se fondant sur son mandat de réglementation dans l'intérêt public.

AGCO staff and their embedded OPP unit possess a deep understanding of compliance and enforcement in sectors that share similar risks as what we expect from the cannabis market. Turning to the AGCO, already an existing regulator, also eliminated the need to expand the size of government by creating a new regulatory oversight body.

Mr. Speaker, we heard through consultations that there's strong support for the AGCO being established as the provincial regulator for private cannabis retail sales in Ontario, especially by municipalities and police stakeholders. While some new resources would be needed to help get the AGCO up and running in the short term, ultimately we expect the licensing regime would run on a sustainable cost-recovery basis.

Establishing the AGCO as a province-wide regulator also would benefit smaller municipalities who could not implement their own municipal licensing regime due to their lack of administrative infrastructure. This approach also means that the AGCO can provide communities and operators more certainty through a one-stop licensing approach rather than allowing a patchwork of municipal licensing regimes to spread across Ontario.

In order to best compete with the illegal market, our government made the decision that the number of licences for cannabis retail stores would not be capped but, instead, would be issued based on market demand.

Afin de pouvoir lutter contre le marché illégal, notre gouvernement a pris la décision de ne pas limiter le nombre de licences délivrées à des magasins de vente de cannabis, mais d'en délivrer suivant la demande du marché.

Under our proposed plan, once an applicant has applied for a retail licence, the AGCO would conduct an in-depth assessment through criminal, financial integrity and background checks to ensure the business would be carried out in accordance with the law, honesty, integrity, good character, and in the public interest.

The OPP would be instrumental in the AGCO's due diligence and eligibility assessment of retail applicants. Their work in the AGCO provides significant assurance that individuals, notably those who may be aligned with organized crime, do not gain a foothold or are otherwise involved in any sector regulated by the AGCO.

If, and only if, the applicant meets the due diligence requirements, the business would be eligible to receive a retail operator licence. A retail operator would then need to get an authorization for each specific store location; once again, through replying to the AGCO.

Once the AGCO receives an application for a retail store authorization from a licensed retail operator, a public notice would be posted on the AGCO website and a placard displayed at the proposed retail store location to indicate that a licensee has applied for an authorization at that location. Local residents and municipalities would be provided with 15 days to provide written submissions to the AGCO with respect to the application. Further checks involving criminal and financial records, training verification and personal disclosures would also be necessary, as well as an inspection of the physical store itself.

Licensing would be enforced by the AGCO through regulatory measures, including licence suspensions and revocations and monetary penalties.

La délivrance des licences sera surveillée par la CAJO, qui appliquera des mesures de réglementation, dont la suspension et la révocation de licences et des pénalités pécuniaires.

The legislative framework would also establish general offences under the licensing scheme, including prohibitions against hindering inspectors or investigators.

The AGCO would also undertake additional compliance activities, including:

- physical store inspection prior to opening, to ensure licence conditions and regulatory requirements are met;
- ad hoc, on-site store inspections, including mystery shopping, to test age and ID requirements; and
- investigating and replying to public complaints, referring to municipal police and bylaw enforcement as necessary.

It should also be noted, Mr. Speaker, that Bill 36 would provide municipalities with the opportunity to decide whether there will be any stores in their communities at all. Each municipal council will have the right to opt out of having bricks and mortar cannabis retail stores in their communities by January 22, 2019.

Rappelons aussi, monsieur le Président, que le projet de loi 36 accorde aux municipalités la possibilité de décider

si elles acceptent ou non que des magasins soient ouverts sur leur territoire. Chaque conseil municipal aura le droit de refuser que des magasins de vente au détail de cannabis soient ouverts sur son territoire d'ici le 22 janvier 2019.

That gives each council three months from the municipal election date to make this decision, and the decision date is five months after we announced our intention to move to a private retail model.

Speaker, it seems that, in my experience, people run for office precisely because they want to help shape important decisions in their communities, and every municipal candidate has known for months that they'll have a very big, very important decision in front of them should they be elected next Monday, October 22. My guess is that the vast majority of municipal candidates have already formed an opinion on this issue one way or the other. I therefore have every confidence that after five months of debate, local councils will have no difficulty making the best decisions to meet the needs of the communities that they serve in.

Nevertheless, municipalities that feel they need more time to consider their community's specific circumstances would have the option of opting in to the private retail framework when the time is right for their community. For municipalities that do have stores, municipalities will have a say into where those stores go. This will be accomplished without resorting to duplicative licensing or a patchwork of zoning bylaws.

Should a municipality choose to opt out, they would send a copy of their resolution to the AGCO. Municipalities that opt out could later opt in; but if a municipality does not opt out by January 22, 2019, it cannot opt out at a later date. So if they're in, they're in.

Mr. Speaker, there has been much discussion about the fate of the illegal cannabis stores that have been operating in the province. Let me be crystal clear on this matter: If you're operating an unlicensed store today, you will not be eligible for a legal licence. If these operators have an interest in legitimizing their business, they must close their doors or face penalties. The Cannabis Act, 2017, and Bill 36 will, if passed, prohibit any person from selling or distributing recreational cannabis in Ontario other than the Ontario Cannabis Store or a licensed retail store. And to further enforce these laws, Mr. Speaker, the act also prohibits landlords from knowingly permitting such activities on their premises, and allows for the immediate closure of storefronts being used for the illegal sale or distribution of cannabis.

Individuals and corporations convicted of these offences will be subject to high maximum fines upon first conviction, with additional fines for each day on which the offence occurs or continues on subsequent convictions. Individuals may also face a potential jail sentence, proof positive that combating the illegal cannabis market has been and remains one of the central tenets of the plan for the legalization of cannabis in Ontario.

Preuve flagrante que la lutte contre le marché illégal de cannabis a été et demeure l'un des axes du plan de légalisation du cannabis.

0920

One of the additional subjects of great discussion regarding the legalization of cannabis has been where cannabis should be permitted to be consumed. Opinion has varied widely from community to community. For instance, I heard from Smiths Falls, a town looking to develop a cannabis tourism industry, that they wanted people to be able to smoke cannabis on the golf course. Other communities wanted stricter consumption rules.

The prior government had an unrealistic and unenforceable one-size-fits-all, province-wide model that meant that residents, particularly in large urban centres, would be highly limited in the places where they could legally consume cannabis once it was legal.

To remedy this issue, we took the advice of experts, including the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, and largely aligned the rules for cannabis consumption with the tobacco restrictions under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. This approach prohibits smoking and vaping of cannabis in areas where the smoking of tobacco is also prohibited, such as playgrounds, child cares, schools and hospitals. Our approach also allows local municipalities to enact bylaws that further restrict smoking cannabis beyond the provincial minimum standards in places like parks.

Notre approche autorise aussi les municipalités locales à adopter des règlements municipaux limitant le droit de fumer du cannabis au-delà des normes minimales provinciales, notamment dans des endroits comme des parcs.

Once again, these proposed amendments have been crafted after consultations across the province and are designed to allow each of Ontario's 444 municipalities to shape consumption rules that work for them.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take a bit of time today to outline to the House about the government's education campaign on the government's awareness campaign on the upcoming changes to the law regarding cannabis, because, as my colleague from Hastings-Lennox and Addington said last week, we can't just legislate; we need to educate. It's the same message we heard consistently in our consultations with health care professionals, educators and police. So, Mr. Speaker, we're launching an awareness campaign to educate and communicate with people regarding applicable rules, regulations and health and safety measures.

Donc, monsieur le Président, nous lançons une campagne de sensibilisation pour faire connaître à la population les règles, règlements et mesures de santé et sécurité applicables.

While Ontarians will be seeing some of our advertising on the airwaves, we are placing particular focus on engaging people, and particularly younger people, on the digital and social channels, where they're spending an increasing amount of their time. It should go without saying that these ads do not promote cannabis use or the cannabis market, but instead focus on social responsibility, including the serious health and addiction risks of short- and long-term cannabis use.

And our message will remain clear: We will plainly tell Ontarians how our children, communities and roads will

be protected and how we will work to combat criminals. Our messages will be apparent and accessible where people live and commute, on social media and where they view content online, on television and across university and college campuses.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we have a diverse province with many nationalities represented and languages spoken. To ensure we reach Ontarians in their communities, television and online video ads will also feature voice-overs in more than 10 languages.

The deterring effects of our zero-tolerance policies will be amplified through these ads, which will work to educate people about the dangers of driving impaired and the stiff penalties associated with that.

Many people will be looking for as much information as possible. Because of this, all ads, including search-optimized ads, will direct viewers to the government's Ontario.ca/cannabis homepage for more detailed information and resources. Again, that's Ontario.ca/cannabis.

No matter where or how you hear about your government's plans, our commitment to protecting youth, road and community safety and fighting the illegal market will be paramount.

Et quel que soit l'endroit où vous entendez parler des plans de notre gouvernement—ou comment—notre engagement à protéger les jeunes, à assurer la sécurité routière et à lutter contre le marché illégal sera primordial.

I have said it before but can't say it often enough: We and the AGCO will have zero tolerance for anyone who provides recreationable—I'm going to get that right before I'm done, Mr. Speaker—recreational cannabis to kids and youth.

We are confident that when taken together, the licensing model proposed in Bill 36, to be overseen by the AGCO, with flexibility and certainty provided to local communities and our public awareness campaign, are the best way forward to achieve our objectives: protecting our children, keeping our communities and roads safe, and combating the illegal market. These are the most important things associated with Bill 36.

Again, I'd like to thank the Attorney General, Ms. Mulroney, for the work that she has done on this very important and historic piece of legislation; our parliamentary assistant, Ms. Park, sitting right behind me; and all of the members of the public service who have worked so hard to bring this bill to reality on this very historic day, not just in Ontario but in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time this morning.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: Good morning. What a historic day. I am so proud to actually rise here today to be able to speak to Bill 36 as we usher in legalization across Canada and here in our province.

I just want to start us off on a high note: Today is actually David Nesta "Ziggy" Marley's birthday, so it is Bob Marley's son's birthday. I think it is fitting that we acknowledge that today. In addition to being a musician, Bob Marley and many of his family members are actually social justice warriors and use their music as a way to

engage the community in taking action and getting involved civically. I think it's really great that we're ushering in this legislation on a very historic day.

I appreciate the comments made by our government House leader today. I understand that today is the result of federal legislation, but that doesn't mean that as a province we don't have a responsibility to ensure we do our jobs in a timely, fair manner and with due process to ensure that any legislation we put forward takes into consideration the voices and the concerns of people from across this province. Frankly, this legislation doesn't adequately do that.

I'll just start by making a few comments about the process. I think there were many voices that were excluded, but this bill was introduced in a rushed manner and then promptly time-allocated. Time allocation, as we all know, is meant to truncate the debate and committee hearings for the sake of expediency. This meant that committee hearings were swift and, unfortunately, individuals, stakeholders and communities were offered very little time to prepare presentations. It should be noted that this tight timeline did not account for the resources or the means of many communities that would be directly affected by this monumental change in Ontario's laws.

In a written submission from the chief of Whitefish River Anishinabe First Nation, the community expressed their concerns, saying, "I must strongly state at the outset that this letter and the process by which these submissions were invited is utterly contrary to the duty to consult which is owed to my Nation and to all First Nations in Ontario when it comes to matters impacting our rights and interests."

We have all known that the cannabis legalization was coming on October 17, and for nearly four months this government did nothing. The Conservatives continue to point the finger at the federal government and hide behind what they deemed a tight deadline, but I'd like to remind this House that we sat here all summer—sat here overnight—and not once did a debate happen on this very—

Hon. Todd Smith: And you loved it.

Ms. Sara Singh: I would have loved to have a midnight debate on cannabis legislation. I think that would have been a worthwhile use of our time, not spending the time that we did debating the things that we did—

Mr. Roman Baber: We consulted stakeholders—

Ms. Sara Singh: Yes, and that's why we rushed through the committee hearing process and we didn't allow many stakeholders to actually present. I thank you for adding that, Mr. Baber—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Please use the member's riding.

Ms. Sara Singh: I don't know his riding.

Interjection: York Centre.

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you, York Centre; I appreciate that.

The government had ample time to recognize cannabis legalization as an urgent priority, so I find it shocking that they chose not to. If the Conservatives wanted to get this right the first time, they absolutely could have and should have. In fact, I would have been happy to have been called

to the people's House for a midnight session if it meant getting cannabis legalization right.

The fact is that, one way or another, this was delayed, and the government is still using time pressure as an excuse for rushing through a piece of legislation that will change history. This was a time for careful debate, not a rushed job.

0930

This is why municipalities are still up in smoke, trying to work through what they should be doing. While this government says they are ready, municipalities have clearly indicated they are not, and police services are indicating to us that they are not. What should have been one of the biggest priorities for this government are the needs of those Ontario municipalities. Cities across Ontario are going to feel the tangible effects of legalization, from retail locations opening up across the city, to the economic changes that they'll encounter, to enforcing this bill as it becomes law on their streets. But, unfortunately, again, this government has left them with little to prepare themselves and actually voted down some very critical amendments that would have offered municipalities more power. So you want to talk about the committee process? That's what it was like.

Just this morning, it was confirmed that in Markham, city council voted unanimously 11 to 0 to restrict the consumption of cannabis to private residences only. This bylaw will essentially replace sections of Bill 36, with Mayor Frank Scarpitti saying, "It has been clear from our residents that they weren't happy with the new rules so we passed this bylaw in response to that."

We've heard also from Mayor John Tory, who is expressing concerns that the city of Toronto will be "unfairly burdened" by the "increased enforcement and social costs triggered by this significant change." Bringing municipalities to the table as an equal partner would have allowed for their concerns to be addressed and integrated into this bill, rather than putting them in a precarious position, left to deal with the burden.

This is why we keep stressing the importance of public safety and also that this government find ways to work with communities to ensure that there is a balance: to destigmatize use or users and consumers, but ensure the public is kept safe. This bill didn't do enough to do that. How will law enforcement training be updated? How will municipal police forces be given the tools and resources they need? Companies, employers: They're all still waiting for answers from this government.

Furthermore, because of how little time we had, the topic of criminalization was not adequately explored through this bill nor through the committee hearing process. It came up very briefly through one presentation, and I'd like to take some time to explore that a little further.

Thousands of Ontarians have had their lives effectively derailed by a cannabis-related criminal charge. We are happy that the federal government has recognized this and will be moving to pardon these individuals, largely in part by the influence of our federal NDP counterparts, but we all know there is still so much more work to be done.

These records created barriers to employment and obstacles for people in their everyday lives. Many people were denied opportunities because of these charges, unable to volunteer, let alone be considered for the career of their choice, and barred from participating in their children's extracurricular activities or even accessing housing.

It is widely understood that there is a racial disparity when it comes to drug enforcement. Racialized individuals are more likely to be arrested for cannabis offences than non-racialized individuals, despite evidence showing that the consumption rates are very similar across all racial groups. Another concern for us is this ambiguity in the section on licences and authorizations. Racialized Ontarians—in particular, Black Ontarians—were, are and will continue to be criminalized in the context of cannabis. Many are currently in prison due to this criminalization. Quite likely, many will not be able to benefit from the corporatization of cannabis that we're about to see because of arbitrary factors left undefined in this bill, which could be used to deny an applicant's eligibility to hold a retail operator licence. These are just a few of the questions—many, many questions—that this bill has left us with.

I want to assure this government and the people of Ontario that are watching at home that, as the opposition, we will continue to press this government and ask them for clarity every step along the way, because there is still so much more to be understood about this process, to be understood about the legislation. As we usher in this historic piece of legislation, I am very proud to stand here and work with this government, as we tried to in committee, to ensure that voices were heard and concerns were considered. Unfortunately, this bill doesn't go far enough to ensure that those issues were dealt with accordingly.

We urge this government to continue to think of ways that it can engage communities, that it can ensure that public safety is paramount, and that we can continue to ensure that we don't allow the illegal market to thrive here in our province.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: Rather like my colleague from Brampton Centre just mentioned, it's an honour to rise in the House today. This is a historic day for our country and for our province.

But I'm worried about several things with this legislation. My colleague from Brampton Centre brought up many of them. Here's what I think the legislation should begin with—plain and simple language that most people in our province will understand very well. I think the legislation should begin with an apology. It should begin with an apology to all of those people, the thousands of people, who have been criminalized for possessing a substance that today is legal. That is something that this government could commit to rhetorically, at least, in the framing of the bill. Instead, I find it curious that the government has been preoccupied, as my colleague said, with a great deal of rush, rather like an undergraduate writing an essay tight to deadline, Speaker.

Interjection.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: It's okay, Speaker. I understand the member's sensibilities have been offended, but he's going to have to listen to what the opposition has to say in the people's House.

Here's why I think the framing of this legislation should begin with an apology: As my colleague from Brampton Centre said very well, disproportionately, racialized and Indigenous peoples in this country have been criminalized by Canada's war on drugs, particularly cannabis. There are 560,000 people right now, Speaker, with a criminal record due to cannabis possession. What does that do to people? It impacts their employment prospects. It impacts their travel prospects.

Today we are now on the cusp of an era of legalization. And what is our rush to get the consumption and distribution model ready? I'll tell you what the rush appears to be about for me, Speaker. It appears to be about companies—large companies; highly valued companies—that are poised to make, have already made, incredible profits. They are poised to make incredible amounts of money. That's the rush to get to deadline today—rather like an undergraduate writing their paper through the night. That's how this government has approached this legislation, and I think that's deeply concerning.

Interjection.

Mr. Joel Harden: The House leader is offended. I want to ask the House leader, through you, Speaker, why was it that we had a midnight session in this place on interfering in the city of Toronto's elections? Why was it that we spent weeks preoccupied with the grudge match that the government has with the city of Toronto? Why weren't my colleague from Brampton Centre, our lead on this file, and I and our party allowed to engage in a fulsome debate? Why was the Association of Municipalities of Ontario not given the right to testify at the social policy committee? We asked for them to be prioritized. They wanted a seat at the table. But they didn't come. Why didn't they come? Because we had 12 hours of hearings.

I'm detecting a theme with this government, Speaker. They feel passionate about something—and I respect passion. They want to move ahead quickly. But the problem is, you can only blame your invisible friend for so long. I've heard this government say every single day that I've been in this House, "The Liberals have set us up for failure." Well, that rhetoric, your invisible friend that you like to bash—at a certain point, you've got to own your own decisions. And I'm going to make a prediction: In the next three years, this government is going to own this decision.

As I said earlier, they should have framed this legislation with an apology, because they're aware of the research as well as we are. They should apologize to Jodie and Marc Emery, two people who operated an illegal dispensary in Toronto, in defiance of the law, because they knew the people they were helping had medicinal needs that they were helping to serve, and recreational needs. The stigma applied to cannabis and not applied to alcohol didn't make any sense to them. They were fined \$200,000

for operating a dispensary in the city of Toronto. Today it's legal and the market is ready for big producers like Aleafia, Aurora and Canopy Growth, whose market share I don't question, just like I don't question the fact that Budweiser has the ability to sell beer.

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But the question I have is, for people who have been criminalized by our approach to drugs, why is this government mute on that question? Why is this government not necessarily prioritizing the needs of people who have taken enormous risks?

Speaker, I invite my friends in this House to research the history of compassion clubs in this country when it comes to cannabis. I invite members of this House to research veterans' organizations, people who have struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder, who have used compassion clubs across this country to deal with the significant pain they've contracted in the line of duty of service for us, and how they have had to flout the law and utilize compassion clubs to access medicines they need to survive.

That's the history of cannabis in this country. That's what we've had to put people through. And yet this government is in a rush. Why are they in a rush? They're in a rush because there's a lot of money to be made.

I have to mention a few people, because I mentioned Jodie Emery and Marc Emery. I want to mention John Akpata.

Back home, in my approach to this job, when I don't know the answer, when I don't have fulsome background research on a public policy issue, I prefer to take my time. I prefer to host a town hall, to invite the community to tell me what I think I need to consider: What does your MPP need to consider on this subject?

We had a town hall last month on cannabis policy. John Akpata, in our city, has been somebody that the mayor of Ottawa has sought out for advice. John said to me, "Joel, this legislation, in its framing, should begin with an apology to all those who have been hurt by our approach to cannabis over the years. It should also make sure that the market that we're about to create for this isn't just about corporate cannabis and their shareholders and the dividends they get paid."

I have a question for the government. Why is it that they have—and I respect the fact that this is their philosophy. They believe that on the retail side, cannabis delivery and retail should be privatized. I'll acknowledge that they've even allowed people who previously have had criminal records to maintain the operation of a retail store. That's a progressive step. That's a good step, to try to include people in the retail market.

But on the supply side, we have what amounts to a monopoly. In principle, I don't mind that, because what you can do in regulation is make sure that the monopoly that supplies the retail sector with cannabis produces safe cannabis. I get it.

But on the one side of the ledger, they like privatization, and on the other, they like a state-run monopoly, the revenues from which are scarce. The Premier in this House said clearly that this isn't a revenue project for the

government. Last night we stood in this place and debated whether Brampton should have another hospital. My colleagues from Brampton—well, my colleagues, at least, on this side of the House were here, making the case for a hospital in Brampton. We need revenue in this province. This government is handing out a billion dollars in tax cuts to corporations—that's something they committed to in the election—and we are starving our public services for revenue. Other jurisdictions, like Colorado, California and the state of Oregon, actually have revenue streams.

I know that for my friends, “tax” is a four-letter word, but “tax” is actually a three-letter word. It's how we pay for stuff. The great Ed Broadbent, who lives in my riding, has impressed upon me that government is not just in the business of supervising expenditures. Government is in the business of making sure we procure appropriate revenues, particularly from the wealthiest among us, to pay for the services we need.

So Brampton needs a hospital. We're sitting on the cusp of a market that is about to be massively influential. Revenue streams will flow. Why is this government not contemplating, through the Ontario Cannabis Store, an appropriate revenue stream to build hospitals, to build schools, to make sure that kids aren't drinking water with lead in it, to make sure that people can get a skilled trade or a college or university education? That's what other jurisdictions are doing.

Instead, the religious commitment, the religious fervour my colleagues have to the free market would seem, on the retail side, to allow for no revenue or very limited revenue coming back to the province, and on the supply side, absolutely nothing. Why is it that we're poised, on this historic day, to offer no apology to people who have been hurt?

On the business side of this, this is simply about primping and getting ready an infrastructure where investors can make a lot of money. How much money? Well, this is interesting. The executives from Aurora were on television, on the Business News Network, the other night. Aurora, as a company, right now, is capitalized at \$13 billion. That's one of the biggest companies in the country. In the third quarter, that same company had a return of 211% from the previous third quarter. I mean, Speaker, if you and I are saving for our retirement, we'd love a return of between 4% to 7%; 211% tells me that the investors are clamouring at the gate. So what are we getting the cannabis industry ready for? Whose interests will it serve?

Other things I heard when people came to the town hall we hosted in Ottawa Centre in September: I had folks from Indigenous nations—the Algonquin peoples, where I'm from—come to the town hall and say, “Joel, we risk getting the treaty relationships wrong again in this market.” There is a nation-to-nation responsibility that Ontario and Canada have when thinking about Indigenous interests in this particular sector. As my colleague from Brampton Centre mentioned, Indigenous communities are divided. Some don't want to participate in this sector, and some do.

From what I read in a legal opinion yesterday and what I heard at home, they do not want to be understood in a subordinate relationship to the province of Ontario. That's

not the role of Ontario, to dictate to Indigenous nations how they should run their enterprises. There's a fiduciary duty that those groups have to produce products which are safe for market, but we have to respect the decision-making structures that the treaty system in which we live has bestowed upon us. Bill 36 does not do that. It does not do that.

What I'm telling my friends is we can't rise periodically when we open this place and at large ceremonies and acknowledge we're on the un-surrendered and unceded territory of whatever nation is in question, and then on the other hand, in major commercial transactions, absolutely undermine that commitment. You can't speak out of both sides of your mouth. Either we're committing to a new era of reconciliation where we acknowledge that our Indigenous friends—places like Tyendinaga, that I know the House leader opposite is intimately familiar with, and where I'm from, the Algonquin nations, want to make sure that they can participate in this market in a fair way.

Here's what I heard, also, at the town hall that we had in Ottawa Centre: I heard that in order to qualify as a licensed producer under the Health Canada regulations, you need between \$5 million to \$10 million to go through the elaborate set-up process. My question is, who will be able to navigate that federal bureaucracy? Who will be able to take advantage of this market? Well, I think I can answer my own question: the large organizations. If Indigenous organizations want to get in on this market, they're going to have to partner with the Tilrays, the Canopys, the Auroras of the world.

As this hot mess moves forward in the next three years, we're going to have to be asking ourselves what role will grassroots organizations play. If the government is going to forbid them from entering the market because of the high entry opportunities, if organizations at a grassroots level, through the compassion club model—which has been common in our country for years—decide to do co-operative grow-ops, keeping in line with federal requirements, four plants per household; if they decide to move forward with cannabis distribution at a grassroots level in that way, and this government, through policing realms or criminal justice realms decides to intervene in that, watch out. That's all I have to tell you.

One of my favourite moments in the election: When I was knocking on doors, I was down by the Legion on Metcalfe Street, if you know where that is, in Ottawa Centre. I walked in and I started talking to the Legionnaires, talking to the veterans. They pulled me aside and they said, “Joel, where are you at on cannabis? Where's the NDP at on cannabis?” I had to confess. “You know, it's not something that's featured heavily in our platform, but tell me what you think we should know.”

They said, “Well, Joel, we were the group of veterans that met with Julian Fantino when he was Veterans Affairs minister for the federal government,” when then-Minister Fantino decided he was going to take cannabis away from veterans because it doesn't have a drug information number from Health Canada. He was going to take that away. The veterans mobilized, and it was the veterans in

Ottawa Centre who led the charge and they turned him around. You know, Julian Fantino is a lobbyist for cannabis now. They worked on him. He changed his mind. That's great, okay?

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But they said to me, "Joel, when big corporate cannabis comes into the game and they start setting the prices, we're worried. We're worried that what will happen in Ontario is what happened in California." In California, when they legalized, the medicinal market got completely crowded out. It was just about the recreational market, and high prices, and veterans, the veterans that I talked to and whom I respect, told me they live on fixed incomes: "We are not interested, having fought for this country, in being disrespected by federal governments." They turned to me and they said, "Joel, we fought for you. Now you fight for us."

So that was my first epiphany, Speaker, back in August, that this was something I needed to take seriously—no, it wasn't in August, because the election happened. I think it was back in May.

Here's the point that I hope we can circle around to: As the advent of the legalization of cannabis becomes apparent to all that this is a new threshold, let's not forget—let's never forget—the Jodie and Marc Emerys; let's not forget Dana Larsen in Coast Salish territory out on the west coast; let's not forget the Indigenous peoples and the racialized peoples who have been criminalized by Canada's war on cannabis.

Do you know, in Ottawa, Speaker, there's a criminologist I used to work with at Carleton University. Some 6.3% of our city are Black Canadians, but 22% of possession-for-marijuana arrests are levied against Black citizens of our city. What the member for Brampton Centre talks about is absolutely true. And if we take marijuana out of the criminal realm and we put into it the civil realm, we will not get away from that problem. What will happen is the fines that are going to be levied are going to be levied—and this is what I worry about—disproportionately on communities who have already been over-surveilled, already been over-policed.

We have to make sure that this market is something that works for people and protects civil liberties. What I'll tell the government is that if they decide to line up behind big corporate cannabis—if that's who they want, if those are the interests they are interested in safeguarding—they can expect grassroots pushback. It has happened to me and it will happen to you.

At the end of the day, the history we have as a country is one in which there is always a push and pull between rights and obligations. At this point, the rights that have been asserted for decades by Canadians have been met with criminal enforcement. Today is historic, because today we have an obligation to make sure that cannabis is actually not criminalized on a recreational level, and it hasn't been criminalized on a medicinal level. But that's only because of the sacrifices and hard work that have been put in by so many of my neighbours, so many people in this great province, in this great country. They are the

people we should be thanking today. Those are the people we should be remembering.

For every single Canadian, for every single person in this province who is currently at risk, I welcome the news that I've heard from Ottawa. I'm glad that Justin Trudeau decided to do something else other than tour the country, and acknowledge that we needed amnesty on possession charges, on marijuana-related charges. It's not something that would be unique. Other jurisdictions—Oregon, California—have gone down this road.

I want to end, Speaker, by saying a couple of things. I want to end by saying a bit of a warning, actually. I haven't seen the PSAs the government has circulated yet. I look forward to seeing those. But some of the other folks that showed up at our town hall were young people, people based on campuses, and they were part of an organization called Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy. They were a group that would have loved to participate in our consultations. They didn't. But what they told us at our town hall very clearly is that if we move forward with a "This is your brain on drugs" approach for the teen audience, if that's how we think we're going to convince them not to use cannabis, then we are woefully unprepared for what we're going to get.

Heather D'Alessio, the local chapter president of Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy, told us that she had regular use of cannabis through her teen years, not because for some reason—you know, the analogy is often told, the Reefer Madness reason, that the drug compelled her to seek it out. She was using cannabis, literally waking and baking in the morning, Speaker, because she was covering up pain that she'd endured through her teen years—the terrible, strained circumstances in which she had to live through abuse. Cannabis was her refuge from that abuse. Her point to me was, in the city of Ottawa, there are six beds for people suffering with eating disorders—six beds, Speaker, six residential beds—and why do we have such little support for mental health services? If we want to make sure that kids don't get addicted to substances, let's make sure our health care system, our community care system, can meet them in the needs they have. And let's not stigmatize drug use. Let's understand that drug use comes from a place that usually is motivated by seeking self-medication from harms.

Speaker, it's been an honour to rise today to speak to this historic legislation. I hope my friends were listening to some of what my community had to tell me about this issue. I thank you for the opportunity to do so.

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

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: It's always a pleasure to rise in this House.

My points will be to raise a couple of cautions with respect to the bill. Some of the issues that have been raised in front of the committee and in my community are as to the power of the municipalities to decide where cannabis stores can be located. The choice that the government has made in this bill is to not allow municipalities to regulate the zoning of retail stores for cannabis. That has raised

some significant issues in Ottawa because of the possibility of a high density of many retail stores causing some social issues.

En particulier, je sais que la ville d'Ottawa aurait été intéressée à la possibilité de réglementer où les magasins de cannabis pourraient être établis pour éviter une concentration énorme de certains magasins, par exemple, sur le chemin Montréal.

One of the issues that arose in cities like Ottawa is that there are communities that are particularly vulnerable. There's a way in which we had tried in previous legislation, for example, to limit the number of payday loans to be in one particular area, because that community was being exploited by payday loans. One of the issues is, we had hoped that a similar approach could be undertaken with cannabis stores, to not have all the cannabis stores in one particular location where the population may be particularly vulnerable. This has been eliminated in this legislation, and I would have liked the government to listen a little bit to some of the positions of the municipalities in that regard.

My second point is, that's fair enough. The Liberal position on this was that it should be government-owned and that eventually it could be liberalized over time, with a view to proceeding with caution. A Conservative government chose the privatization of it—fair enough. Nevertheless, some of the issues that arise are whether the enforcement resources will be there to ensure that all of these stores that are going to be open will be sufficiently monitored.

There are some issues that we have seen elsewhere. In Colorado, when the market was completely open, there was significant increase in consumption, with some problems on the road and some problems also in terms of mental health addiction. So this caution-to-the-wind approach that has been put forward by the government raises some concerns in many communities.

It is interesting when we look at comparing the different legislation. Today is an historic day in Canada. Ontario's is not the only legislation, it's not the only province, that has to make some decisions about cannabis. When we compare the different legislation, we see that Ontario will be the place where, indeed, it's going to be the most liberal approach to cannabis sales. In the three provinces that have chosen to go the privatization route—Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba—both Saskatchewan and Manitoba have decided to have either a wave of first applications for retail or a cap on them to, a little bit, create an approach where it's going to be some monitoring and some learning as we go.

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Ontario has decided not to use a cap, like Alberta, and decided that the market is fully open and will let it ride as it wants to go. However, in Alberta, they at least have some restrictions on the ability of smoking on the street. So it's interesting that of all the choices that were open to this government, we chose the least restrictive at a time when many people say this is uncharted territory. We don't really know how this is going to play out.

We all agree that the war on drugs had significant costs and had to end. Legalization is part of a transition we are in, where we certainly are prepared to allow people to smoke. The question is, how far do we want to discourage this smoking, if indeed it's bad for health?

We don't want to put ourselves in the position where, like alcohol or like smoking, it becomes glorified like in the 1950s or in the 1960s, and then we spend years and years of public health dollars trying to deter people or educate people about not smoking. So that's one of the issues: We don't want to have the Mad Men era, where glorification is done about something that could be detrimental to health.

The cautionary approach that had been recommended, at least by some of the states that have gone the route of legalization, seems to have been tempered here. Those are the concerns that I want to express to this government. Soon I think we will be there, to continue to monitor the situation and ensure that we are prepared to react if indeed there are some excesses.

My three points were these: Maybe look at giving some more power to the municipalities to decide where stores could be located, in terms of protecting some vulnerable communities. Ensure that a share of the tax revenue that will be made is dedicated to public education and to research on cannabis. This is the approach we have on gambling, and I think it's an approach that we probably should endeavour to put here. Finally, I want to make sure that we continue to have the appropriate resources to enforce this bill and this privatization structure that we're putting in place.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm pleased to rise on this historic day to discuss Bill 36. For many years, since the previous government first introduced their legislation to monopolize the cannabis market, I was the first political leader in Ontario to speak out against that approach.

The reason I spoke out against that approach, Mr. Speaker, was that I felt it would not achieve the primary objective that I think cannabis legalization needs to achieve, and that is to eliminate the unsafe underground market, to get organized crime out of the cannabis market, and to take people who are in that grey zone, in what is known as the grey market, and bring them into the legal market.

While there are flaws in Bill 36, I believe the legislation starts to change the direction that the previous government was going in, to open the market up and to actually take on organized crime and get organized crime out of the cannabis market. That's why I think it's important that we support the shift in direction that this bill takes in moving us away from having 40 retail stores that, quite frankly, would do nothing to stop the unsafe underground market, and to move towards having enough retail access in the marketplace to eliminate the unsafe underground market. Therefore, I will be supporting that shift in direction.

Mr. Speaker, this is a massive sea change in public policy in Canada and in Ontario. I wish—I truly wish—that at committee, the government would have listened to

the concerns people raised and made amendments to this legislation.

It puts people like me in a bit of a difficult situation. We want to see a market set up in a way that's going to eliminate the underground market, but we also don't want to see legislation that is going to have people smoking cannabis in public parks and in places where our children might be located. I know there were a number of individuals, particularly in the public health sector, Mr. Speaker, who raised concerns about the fact that this legislation aligns with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act instead of taking a more restrictive approach and not allowing people to smoke cannabis in public places.

As this new change in public law rolls out, I hope this government listens and I hope this government starts putting evidence above ideology in politics. If we find—and I think there are some real reasons that we will likely find that having people smoke cannabis in public places is not desirable. And so I hope this government will be open to amending this legislation at some point in the future based on the evidence. We should follow that evidence, as we move forward, and do the proper research to ensure that we're adequately protecting public safety as we move forward with cannabis legalization.

Mr. Speaker, the second concern I have—again, I wish the government had listened to people at committee on this—is that the private market can go in one of two ways. It could be something that's monopolized by the private sector. We don't want to go from having a government monopoly to a private monopoly or oligopoly where just the big players have access to the marketplace. This is a huge opportunity to make sure that this legislation is about supporting small businesses, local entrepreneurs and Indigenous communities.

I was just hearing on the radio this morning about a First Nation in eastern Ontario that wants to take advantage of the opportunities in the cannabis market to start bringing revenue into a community that is low-income and doesn't have the financial resources it needs to invest adequately in supporting members of their community. So we can look at cannabis as an opportunity for small businesses, for entrepreneurs and for people who may face challenges in having the opportunity of being business owners—maybe, you know, individuals from disadvantaged communities—to participate in the cannabis market, to create small businesses, to create jobs in their communities, and to invest that money in their local communities to benefit those communities.

I believe the government needs to listen to those individuals, businesses and community advocates who want to see a cap either on the number of licences or on the percentage that any one company can have in the marketplace, because we don't want to see a monopoly in cannabis. The best way to ensure that the granting of licences goes to small businesses, supporting those local entrepreneurs, local economies and local communities, is to put a cap on the total number of licences that will be granted to any one company.

As we move forward and as the government puts together its regulatory regime about granting licences, I

think it's critically important for this government to listen to the entrepreneurs who have already been operating in this grey market to ensure that they have access to the marketplace. I can tell you that in my community of Guelph, which by the way has more small businesses than almost any community in Canada on a per-capita basis, local entrepreneurs want to participate in that marketplace and they want to make sure they're not frozen out by the big companies. And so I hope this government listens to those individuals who have been pioneers in developing the cannabis marketplace.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to use a bit of my time to focus on the federal side of things just briefly. I know we're in a provincial Legislature but I think it is so important, and I'm encouraged to hear, that the federal government is looking at granting amnesty to those individuals who were convicted on minor cannabis possession charges. I want to encourage the government to move forward on that because far too often in the history of cannabis prohibition in Canada—and I'd say across North America—too much of that has been directed to disadvantaged communities. It has been sometimes racially motivated and sometimes motivated by targeting people who are lower income and from more disadvantaged parts of our communities. Now that cannabis is legal, I think it's time for the government to grant that amnesty.

One of the things I would compliment this government on is the fact that you've made it clear that those businesses operating in the grey market prior to legalization will still have an opportunity to apply for a licence and participate in the marketplace. I want to compliment the government for making that move. That's something I've been advocating for and I'm happy that the government listened on that one.

In conclusion, even though I have some mixed emotions about some aspects of this legislation that I don't fully support, I still will be voting for this legislation because I think it's an important step forward to opening this market up to entrepreneurs, to making sure we have enough retail outlets available all across the province so we can stop the underground, unsafe illegal market.

Let's be clear: The war on drugs has not worked. Canada has the highest per capita youth usage of cannabis of any country in the world, and we have to change that. We have to reverse the trajectory of that because we know the evidence shows us that cannabis negatively affects the brains of young people who use it, particularly up to the age of 24. So that, for me, is one of the reasons it is so important to eliminate the underground market. I know this isn't going to happen overnight; it's going to take some time, but if we have a robust retail market out there it will put an end to the underground market. That's why I'll be supporting this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank all those involved in the debate this morning. Unfortunately, the time for debate this morning has expired and this House stands recessed now until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. It is with great privilege that I get to introduce two of my good friends who are travelling here from the great island of Trinidad and Tobago: Safraz Hussain, a lawyer and advocate, and his partner, Christie Borely, a lawyer who is actually clerking at the Supreme Court in Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Jim Wilson: It's my great pleasure to introduce Mr. Kelly Harris, vice-president of corporate and public affairs at FirstOntario Credit Union. Kelly is just making his way in. He is well known to us on our side of the House as a former staff member.

Ms. Jane McKenna: I'd like to introduce my favourite 25-year-old daughter, from the Ontario nuclear association, Taylor McKenna, who is here today.

Hon. John Yakabuski: I'd like to welcome to the House this morning the good folks from the CAA: Teresa Di Felice, government and community relations; Christina Hlusko, president and CEO, north and east Ontario; Amy Bryson, board chair; Marianne Bridge and Ethel Taylor, board members; Michael Goodale, a board member for Niagara; and Elliott Silverstein, the manager of government relations from the CAA. They'll be having a reception later today, so I hope everyone can join us. Thank you.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I'd like to welcome today two members of the Falun Dafa Practitioner Youth Club of Toronto, Adel Alexander Boufama and Qianmin Cui, who are with us in the gallery today.

Ms. Marit Stiles: It is my great pleasure to introduce in the members' gallery today Nikki Romano, one of our legislative interns, who is going to be working with me the next little while. Thank you, Nikki. I'm looking forward to working with you.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I'd like to introduce one of my most wonderful volunteers and supporters, Mr. Phil DeBruyne. He's a retired instructor at the Ontario Police College. He is joined by retired Lieutenant Colonel Angelo Caravaggio and retired Peterborough chief of police Murray Rodd.

Mr. Doug Downey: I'd like to introduce several members from the credit unions around Ontario: Michael Ras, with Meridian, and Kelly Patrick, who is a representative. There are several others we had breakfast with this morning.

Mr. Dave Smith: Although he's already been introduced, I'd like to acknowledge him as well: my wife's former boss, the former chief of police for Peterborough, Mr. Murray Rodd.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I also wanted to recognize Jay Denney, who is also here with the credit unions.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I'm pleased to rise this morning and to welcome the Corbrook developmental services agency, who will be visiting Queen's Park later today. We want to welcome them here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Introduction of visitors. The member for Flamborough—Glanbrook.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of privilege.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Yes, thank you. We are still doing introduction of visitors. Are there any more introductions of visitors?

I wish to inform the House that I have received notice from the member for Flamborough—Glanbrook of her intention to raise a point of privilege, and I wish to advise the member that I will hear her point following oral questions this morning, after question period.

It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

CANNABIS REGULATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question is to the Premier. The federal government announced their intention to legalize cannabis over three years ago. There's only one province in Canada not ready. When will the government have legislation in place to regulate its sale and distribution?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: As a matter of fact, Ontario is one of the only provinces that is ready. They handled well over 38,000 orders last night. I give all the kudos to the great team that we have here and the Ontario Cannabis Store. They did a great job. As a matter of fact, the Leader of the Opposition has to know they stayed up all night working to fulfill the orders, and I'm very, very proud of them.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, I'll remind the Premier that legislation has not yet passed and it became legal at midnight last night, Speaker.

Municipalities, local police, educators have been looking to this government for a plan to deal with this huge change. The government had all summer to prepare, but instead of preparing, this government spent the summer debating how many wards Toronto city council should have.

Why didn't the Premier make getting cannabis legalization right a priority?

Hon. Doug Ford: I just have to remind the Leader of the Opposition, through you, Mr. Speaker, it was the federal government that dumped this on our shoulders, dumped it on the country. They didn't give the police the tools they needed, as I addressed yesterday with the OPP.

Our job is to make sure we protect the children, protect neighbourhoods, keep it away from schools, keep it away from parks and hospitals.

We gave the authority to the municipalities. If they don't want anyone smoking marijuana, cannabis in their area, they'll vote against it. They can literally make it impossible for anyone to smoke cannabis in their area if they opted out.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, instead of prioritizing this issue, this Premier dumped on Toronto all summer. For a change this significant, the government could have

made it a top priority. Instead, we have a government scrambling to pass laws for a substance that is already legal, launching an education campaign hours before people can legally light up, and a Premier who says you can't smoke in parks while his Attorney General says you can. The Premier wants to blame everybody but himself. Why did he not make this his priority?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I missed the first part of the rebuttal from the Leader of the Opposition.

The legislation is passing today. We did a great job, once again. Our number one priority is to make sure our children are safe, make sure we keep it away from schools, make sure we let the municipalities decide if they're going to even sell it, where they can smoke cannabis. That's what I'm proud of. I'm proud of our great team down here and the Ontario Cannabis Store. They did a great job.

CANNABIS REGULATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. Ontario's police have been working around the clock to prepare for the legalization of cannabis. I, on behalf of all of my NDP members in this caucus, as the official opposition, want to commend them for working so hard for doing that. In fact, they say they're ready. However, yesterday the Premier said they're not ready. Which is it?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I'm glad the Leader of the Opposition and her whole team have a different outlook about the police than they did during the election. They had a big sign, "Eff the police." They're police-haters. That's what the NDP are. They don't like our police. I support our—

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

Hon. Doug Ford: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Back to the Premier, Speaker: What we're hearing from police is that the real confusion has been caused by a government that still doesn't have legislation in place. The Premier spent his summer holding weeks of debate—even through the night, as we all recall, Speaker—to fight his old enemies from his old job at Toronto city hall, but the legislation needed to deal with this major change is being rushed through with almost no public hearings whatsoever, and it still isn't ready. Why is this not his priority?

1040

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I've travelled across the province and talked to almost every police department in the province: OPP, Toronto, Peel, York and so on and so forth. I can tell you, they support our government more than they've ever supported any government ever. They love what we're doing. They love that they finally have a friendly voice down at Queen's Park rather than being attacked by the NDP constantly, being attacked by the Liberals—throwing out Bill 175 attacking the police. We stand shoulder to shoulder with all law enforcement across this province.

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, sticks and stones, Premier. People expect their government to have laws and a plan in place to keep their children safe and protect people's rights. Instead, they see Liberals in Ottawa and Tories at Queen's Park playing the blame game. This Premier wants to blame everyone but himself. We've known for three years that this was coming. Why is this Premier—of all Premiers, Speaker—still scrambling to get ready?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Why are you smiling so much this morning?

Hon. Doug Ford: Oh, boy. Because you guys are a bunch of jokers; that's why I'm smiling.

Anyway, through you, Mr. Speaker, again I will repeat what I've kept saying over and over again: Our priority is to make sure that our children are safe. Our priority is to make sure that we give the powers to the municipalities to make a decision to either opt in or opt out.

Again, we stand shoulder to shoulder with our police, unlike the NDP. They don't stand shoulder to shoulder with our police. They want to attack our police. I can tell you, our police are informed, our police are ready, and we will do everything we can to make sure this is a smooth transition.

CANNABIS REGULATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm going to go to the Minister of Community Safety, Speaker, and maybe he won't throw the same sticks and stones that the Premier likes to throw.

Can the minister tell us, as of right now, at this very moment in time, what law police are enforcing in this province with regard to marijuana use?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thanks for the question. First of all, our police are ready to go. We've invested time and energy into ensuring that they're able to do their jobs, and they are able to do their jobs.

Our ministry is committed to making sure that we work with the police to make sure that they have the tools to do what they need to do. Our top priority has been from the beginning—not three years ago but less than 120 days ago—to ensure that they had the tools that they needed to be able to do their jobs. We're confident that they are able to do their jobs effectively.

Interjections.

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

Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the police say that they're ready. The minister says that they're ready. The Premier doesn't think that they're ready. It's really pretty confusing out there, and it becomes worse when last night a memo was sent to chiefs of police across Ontario stating that, as of right now, the law of the land is still the Liberal

legislation. This is causing even more confusion than what the Premier is causing.

Police are doing their best to prepare for this significant change and, as I've said, we're very grateful for the hard work that they've done. But this government is raising more questions than it answers. What law are police supposed to be enforcing as of right this moment?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear that our priority as a government is to ensure that our children are safe, that our streets are safe and that we remove illegal sales of marijuana, and that is what our police are doing. They have the tools. They are doing their jobs and we fully support them. This government, unlike the opposition, has made public safety and supporting the police forces that enforce our laws a priority. That's what we've done, that's what we're doing, and we're going to continue to support the police.

CANNABIS REGULATION

Ms. Christine Hogarth: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. There continue to be a number of concerns in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore and from Ontarians across the province regarding the ability to keep our communities and streets safe after the federal Liberal government decided to rush through with the legalization of cannabis. Simply, there are many Ontarians, including many families, who are concerned about what the legalization of cannabis will look like in Ontario.

Minister, can you please explain to the members of this Legislature what your ministry is doing to ensure our communities can remain safe now that the federal government has legalized cannabis?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you to the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore for that question. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the federal government's legalization of cannabis is now in effect. Many Ontarians and their families will look to the hard-working and dedicated members of our police services to help keep communities safe.

Our government remains committed to tackling organized crime in this province, and we will ensure that our police services have the necessary tools to shut down the illegal cannabis market in the province. The men and women of our police services are the ones who will be taking the risks that are necessary for keeping the great people of this province safe.

These brave men and women didn't ask for this challenge. They're dealing with the challenge that was put forward to them by the federal government. I can assure you, however, and all members of the Legislature, that our government for the people will do everything in our power to ensure our front-line officers have the tools they need to be able to provide the services to the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I thank the minister for his response. Our dedicated front-line and emergency responders work very hard, putting their lives on the line day

in and day out to keep our cities and streets safe. I know the minister will continue to work with our government's policing partners so Ontario's communities can remain safe.

With the federal government having rushed the legalization of cannabis, Ontarians deserve to feel confident in their own safety and the safety of their families. Ontarians need to know that our government is listening and taking action to combat the illegal cannabis market.

Could the minister please update the members of this Legislature on how our government for the people is ensuring that this province takes a responsible and safe approach to the sale of cannabis?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you for the follow-up question. I want to begin by recognizing and thanking our Premier, the Attorney General, the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Finance for the incredible job they've done in such a short period of time.

Our government's top priority remains protecting Ontario families and their children, ensuring road safety and combating the illegal cannabis market. As of today, the only legal place to buy cannabis in Ontario is through the online Ontario Cannabis Store website. Starting today, the numerous illegal dispensaries that are operating in many parts of the province will remain illegal.

I want to assure all members of this Legislature that our government for the people will be working closely with the men and women of the province to ensure that illegal cannabis markets are closed.

1050

GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

Ms. Sandy Shaw: My question this morning is for the Minister of Finance.

Yesterday, the Financial Accountability Office declared that this government's cancellation of cap-and-trade would result in the loss of \$3 billion over the next four years.

Can the finance minister please tell us how this shortfall will impact the \$15-billion deficit that the Campbell report recently discovered?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member, thank you for the question. It is something, to hear the party opposite talk about the deficit, talk about accountability.

The fact that we're even aware there's a \$15-billion deficit is because the government made it clear to the people of Ontario that we were going to be transparent and we were going to make sure that taxpayers understood the state of the province's finances.

But to the question: We made a promise to the people of Ontario that we would get rid of the regressive job-killing cap-and-trade program. Clearly, that was going to reduce revenues to the government. We think that's a good thing, because it puts money back into taxpayers' pockets, \$264 a year for every family. We're proud of that. That's a commitment we made. That's a commitment we'll keep.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Mr. Speaker, any savings this government claims it will achieve in cancelling this program will be more than negatively impacted by the cancellation, by the substantial loss in revenue that cap-and-trade would have generated for this province.

So I ask the finance minister up front to please tell Ontarians what he is going to do to make up for the \$3-billion hole in the budget that this has created.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: It's just a difference between our points of view, that's all. We don't believe that every dollar the government gets is a dollar that is best spent. We think the dollars that are best spent are in taxpayers' pockets. The people of Ontario understood that. That's why they put our government into the position it's in. That's why we're the government: Because they know they can spend their dollars better.

We will address climate change. We will bring forward a climate plan, a balanced plan, that deals with the issues. But it will not be done at the expense of average Ontario families. And \$264 may not be a lot of money to you, but it's a lot of money to average Ontario families. We're going to give it to them.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Next question.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: My question is for the Minister of Finance. We have been hearing a lot about fairness in the auto insurance system. It is clear that action should have been taken a long time ago to support drivers in Ontario. While it's unfortunate the Liberals did nothing more than offer empty promises, it's encouraging now to see the work being done in our caucus.

The private member's bill introduced on Monday by the member from Milton moves us forward in developing an auto insurance system that is fair and serves the needs of drivers across Ontario.

Could the minister please explain the importance of combatting rate discrimination in Ontario's auto insurance industry?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Brampton West for the question. Let's be clear: Rate discrimination is simply unfair. A good driver in Toronto should not have to pay more for insurance than a good driver anywhere else in the province.

This is about fairness. This is about building an insurance system that works for drivers. This is about taking action that the Liberals, backed by the NDP, never did do.

I look forward to working with the member from Milton and other stakeholders across the industry to bring more fairness—finally—to the auto insurance system.

Over 10 million drivers in Ontario are counting on us. They've been ignored for far too long. It's about time someone started working for the people.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you, Minister. As a long-time advocate for lower auto insurance premiums, I'm proud to stand with a government that is finally taking action for the people of Brampton and Ontario.

Rate discrimination is an unfair practice that we must take action against. I'm pleased the member from Milton's private member's bill seeks, if passed, to address this issue across the entire province.

Ontario's drivers deserve more fairness in their system. They deserve an auto insurance system that works for them. Moving forward, we must continue to build a robust Ontario auto insurance system that serves the needs of drivers.

Could the minister please reiterate our government's commitments as we develop improvements to our auto insurance system?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Our government is committed to developing a system that puts the drivers first. We are committed to fairness in rate-setting, we are committed to ending discriminatory practices, and we are committed to taking action where the Liberals never did.

The Liberal-NDP failed attempt to provide relief on auto insurance is broken beyond repair. We must look for thoughtful ideas across the entire regulatory system in order to find improvements, thoughtful ideas like those found in the plan put forward by the member from Milton yesterday. His legislation, if passed, will bring more fairness to the system, allowing the auto insurance system to better serve drivers. Drivers across Ontario are grateful for his leadership on this file.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Gurratan Singh: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Ending postal code discrimination in auto insurance rates has been a long-standing priority of the NDP. That's why I introduced my bill to end the unfair practice of postal code discrimination, which is hurting my community of Brampton and communities across the GTA.

I am committed to ending this practice, the NDP is committed to ending this practice, but the government is only paying lip service to this very important issue. If the government were truly serious about ending postal code discrimination in auto insurance, then why didn't the government put forward legislation instead of putting forward a private member's bill?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: It's clear, it's very clear—in fact, it's crystal clear—that the Liberal-NDP system of failed stretch goals on auto insurance is absolutely broken.

To the member from Brampton East, I would say, welcome to the party, better late than never; but it's not even "better"; it's not good. The member from Brampton East wants the GTA to be considered a single geographic area when insurance companies set their rate. However, this will only serve to increase insurance costs across the entire GTA. In fact, the member's plan would cause rates

to rise in many of his own caucus colleagues' ridings. I wonder if you even caucused your own caucus on your idea before you rushed it in yesterday.

On the other hand, our member from Milton got it absolutely right. He took time to consult, to listen and to develop a plan that will deliver fairness—

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

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Yesterday I tabled a bill that, if passed, will not only end postal code discrimination in auto insurance, but also hold insurance companies to account. Drivers in areas like Brampton, Scarborough and Jane and Finch will no longer be gouged for the rates that they pay, and insurance companies will no longer be allowed to offer or renew discriminatory insurance contracts. But standing in the way of this, Mr. Speaker, is a government that in July approved a 9% increase in auto insurance rates for drivers.

1100

How can the government, in good conscience, say that they're trying to bring down rates on one hand and then increase rates on the other?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I realize the member did file a bill yesterday, so not only is he literally a day late, he is many, many, many dollars short. His bill will serve to increase insurance costs across the entire GTA, something that he and the Liberal Party know very well. In the deal that they concocted back in 2013 in order to pass the Liberal budget, the NDP supported this, and none of it has ever happened. It was a "stretch goal," to use the Premier's words, backed up by the NDP. So we will not be taking any lessons, especially a day late and a few dollars short, from that member.

EDUCATION

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: My question is for the Minister of Education. I had an opportunity to meet with the Ontario Public School Boards' Association representatives this morning, and I know the minister has had a chance to meet with some of them. First, I just want to do a shout-out to all the candidates in Ontario who are running for school trustee on Monday. I wish them luck. Everybody needs to go out and vote for their school trustee. If I had a crystal ball, I have a feeling trustees are going to be really important over the next few years.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just ask—there is a group that is called the partnership table that has been in existence for many years. It is school board representatives, parent representatives, teachers, support staff and caretaker staff, all of whom have input into the legislation and have input into budget priorities on an ongoing basis.

I want to ask the Minister of Education whether the partnership table has met since the new government has been elected.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I appreciate the question. But I think we have to make sure that we understand what

we inherited. When that member opposite was a trustee, she destroyed the school board that she was—

Interjections.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: And the government had to get involved to clean up their mess. It goes without saying—

Hon. Todd Smith: And then she did the province next.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Speaker, the bottom line to all of this is that we are being very thoughtful in how we move forward and work with our partners in a thoughtful way. We're encouraging everyone, and I might say, Speaker—I'm going to use this opportunity to remind all the partners that the member referenced to participate in our consultation. We're off to a great start. I encourage everyone who wants to have their voice heard at this time in terms of making a difference and helping us determine the path forward to clean up the mess that we inherited to get involved: fortheparents.ca.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'll take that as a no.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there is an online consultation on cellphones in classrooms and on math curriculum and on the health and physical education curriculum. But what we are hearing is that many, many initiatives have stopped, so the curriculum writing on social studies, the First Nations curriculum, the equity and inclusive education policies—those discussions. There are a lot of initiatives that have stopped.

My concern is that the partnership table was a place for all of the representatives within the education sector who were tapped into their communities, whether it was trustees or whether it was education workers or whether it was parents, to come together and talk to the government about priorities on budget. The partnership table was part of a broader consultation in the lead-up to, for example, the fall economic statement or the budget.

I would ask the Minister of Education: What is the plan for a broad consultation with all of those partners and whether the partnership table will be part of that in the lead-up to the fall economic statement and the budget?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Our number-one priority is making sure that we clean up the mess we inherited. Need I remind the member that they closed 600 schools across Ontario?

Parents received the EQAO results last week, and the math scores of their children in the schools that this previous Liberal government was responsible for have failed dismally with EQAO. We're going to fix that as well. That's what we're talking about and that's what we want to hear from every single person in this province about through our consultation.

I'm really pleased today to share with you, Speaker, that in two short weeks we're hearing from thousands of people who are taking time to submit written submissions on job skills, on life skills, on testing, on STEM, on health and physical education and on making a better path for

students because they know, over the last 15 years, our students went completely off the rails—

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

Interjections.

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

CANNABIS REGULATION

Ms. Donna Skelly: My question today—
Applause.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you. What a team. My question today is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. With recreational cannabis being legalized today, there have been numerous concerns regarding the federal government's approved roadside tests to ensure that Ontario's streets remain safe from those who choose to drive while impaired.

Speaker, the Premier wrote a letter to the federal government yesterday stating that the federal government has left the hard-working men and women of our police services without the necessary tools and support they need to reliably test for impaired driving.

With cannabis now legalized by the federal government, can the minister please explain to the members of this Legislature how this government will keep our communities safe from those who drive while impaired?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you to the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook for that question. Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the members of this Legislature, and all Ontarians, that we're committed to working with our policing partners to ensure they have the necessary tools and resources to enforce the federal legalization of cannabis.

One of our government's top priorities remains protecting our children, ensuring road safety and combating illegal cannabis sales in the province.

The fact remains that the federal government had three years to act and failed to do the work required to ensure our communities and streets could remain safe after the legalization of cannabis. In fact, the federal government has only approved one device for use for roadside cannabis testing, one that makes it completely impractical to operate in a police cruiser. In addition, this device has a number of problems associated with it, including numerous reported failures when utilized at temperatures below zero.

Our government will continue to work to ensure—

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: Back to the minister: While the lack of action from the federal Liberal government is concerning, I know that my constituents in Flamborough–Glanbrook are comforted knowing that our government for the people is taking impaired driving seriously.

Sadly, we know that people are willing to risk the lives of others and make the choice to get behind the wheel while they are under the influence.

Minister, while the federal Liberal government continues to be unprepared, what proactive measures is this

government taking to make sure that our roads stay safe, and that those who break the law are punished?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. John Yakabuski: I thank my colleague from Flamborough–Glanbrook for the question. Our government is taking a two-pronged approach. First of all, earlier this year, we instituted a zero-tolerance policy for young and novice drivers and commercial drivers when it comes to the presence of drugs in their system. We've also launched a very comprehensive public education campaign so that we can educate the public on the dangers of driving while under the influence of cannabis.

One thing we want to make absolutely clear to the people out there—there are misconceptions, but we want to make one thing absolutely clear: Impaired is impaired, whether it's by alcohol or drugs. Our ministry is making sure that we have educated the people with a two-pronged approach because we want our highways to be safe. It's our number one priority.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is to the Minister of Education. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education's Parents Reaching Out Grants provide modest but very important support to school councils for projects that engage with parents who may experience barriers to participation in their child's education. Now, with the school term nearing the halfway mark, school councils are in the dark about the status of their planned events, and some have been told the funding is under review.

1110

Can the minister tell us why her government is delaying approval of the Parents Reaching Out Grants for 2018-19?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much for that question.

Speaker, I want to remind everyone in this House that we are keeping a promise we made during the election, and that is, we're respecting parents. I think the first step in respecting parents is being responsible with their precious tax dollars.

While we're embarking on this consultation, which has far surpassed the dismal 1,638 responses the former Liberal government generated, we are actually listening to parents.

As we embark on a new path forward for the Ontario education curriculum, we've hit the pause button in some instances because we want to make sure we're getting our investments right.

To those parents who are listening today, I suggest to them—we want to hear from you, we want to hear your priorities, we want to hear your concerns—go to fortheparents.ca and participate in this very unique consultation.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: This was a very straightforward question about a program that parents and communities are concerned

about right now. It sounds to me like the priority, or the first step, as you said, for your government is actually to cut funding for parent councils.

From events focused on math skills to workshops on raising emotionally healthy kids, the Parents Reaching Out Grants have served to connect parents with their school communities. Some of these programs have already registered hundreds of parents, and the school councils have applied in good faith, following the ministry's process. Now they could be left with nothing—yet another example of this government changing the rules in the middle of the game.

Can the minister explain why this parent engagement funding is being withheld from parents wanting to be involved in their kids' education? Or is "For the Parents" just another empty slogan?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Well, Speaker, I have every confidence that that narrative that member on the opposite side of the House is trying to create is not going to stick at all because—again, when we start hearing from our parents that we're on the right track, that they're appreciative that they're finally being heard and that we're respecting hard-earned, precious tax dollars.

We're hitting the pause button until this consultation is finished. I would think that that member opposite would be well advised, instead of creating turmoil, to encourage her people to get involved in the consultation so that we can get involved in a thoughtful way and have a very good dialogue. Quit fearmongering.

TAXATION

Mr. Norman Miller: My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Speaker, our government has been clear: We are opposed to any tax that will impact the hard-working people of Ontario.

By threatening to impose their carbon tax, the federal Liberal government highlighted their lack of concern for Ontarians. The former provincial Liberal government's regressive, job-killing cap-and-trade carbon tax caused hydro bills to spike and gas prices to rise. The NDP, on several occasions, have stood up in this Legislature and defended the Liberal cap-and-trade carbon tax, making it clear that they do not intend on making life easier for Ontarians either.

With the release of the FAO's financial review of the cancellation of cap-and-trade, can the minister explain to us how our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, will benefit Ontarians by cancelling the cap-and-trade carbon tax?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: Under the leadership of Premier Ford, throughout the campaign we were very clear. We were going to

get rid of cap-and-trade and we were going to fight the carbon tax. We were going to do that because we believe there are more effective ways to protect our environment. We were going to do that, as well, because we want to put money back into the pockets of Ontario families.

The FAO report that the member references made it clear yesterday: \$264 per family, a \$1.3-billion reduction. We see this as good. The opposition sees this as lost revenue to the government. We see this as found revenue to families.

Mr. Speaker, our Premier has made it clear: We are going to do everything we can to make life more affordable in Ontario. This is just one step, and we are going to make sure it gets done.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Norman Miller: Speaker, through you back to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks: It's clear that on this side of the House, we truly do have the people of Ontario in mind when making each and every decision.

The FAO report highlights some great benefits for Ontarians. However, it also highlights the negative impacts that the federal backstop will have. My constituents are worried. Should the Trudeau carbon tax be imposed in Ontario, it will have a profound impact. Ontarians cannot afford a carbon tax. Ontarians are tired of paying inflated hydro bills and gas prices, and small business owners are struggling.

Can the Minister of the Environment describe how our government will fight the Trudeau carbon tax?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: For months on end, the opposition in Ottawa has risen in the House and asked questions about the Trudeau carbon tax. They've been faced with non-answers, re-dacted documents—some have said, a carbon tax cover-up.

How much is the Trudeau carbon tax going to cost? Well, yesterday, we got an answer. We got an answer from the FAO: \$648 a year. In four short years, it's \$648 a year. That's the price of four hydro bills—too much for Ontario families; too much for Canadian families.

That's why, with the leadership of our Premier, other Premiers are coming together—six now—to talk about alternatives, to talk about killing the Trudeau carbon tax. We will do everything in our power to fight this regressive, job-killing carbon tax.

HOME CARE

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: My question is to the Premier. Verna Gingerich is a senior in Kitchener Centre. Verna lives with compression on the spine, and unfortunately, a surgery resulted in serious nerve damage. In 2017, she was assessed to receive two hours of basic home care each day. She relies on this care to shower, dress, help open or partially open items, and prepare for her days. Without it, she's trapped in her apartment.

Inconsistent scheduling and changes to scheduled PSW appointments leave Verna's life in a state of chaos. Since 2017, Verna has had over 250 personal support workers

assist with her personal care. There is virtually no continuity of care, and seniors like Verna are suffering.

What measures will this government take to ensure that heart-breaking stories like Verna's aren't the norm?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: The example you raise today is one that, frankly, all of us have heard. The inconsistency that we see in the health care that is provided, particularly as it relates to home care, is a real issue for our government, and we've made some commitments to try to fix that system.

We're 110 days in. I trust that you will give us the time to make this happen and make it right, because we can't rush decisions. We can't keep doing the same thing over and over and expect different results.

We are doing this carefully, in a measured way. Our Minister of Health is more qualified to do this, as a former patient advocate, than anyone else I can imagine. We want to do it right, so we need the time to make sure that that happens.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Back to the Premier: This past summer, Verna received notice that her daily care time was going to be further reduced to only half an hour in the morning. Verna and her children advocated against this initial time reduction, yet the private company recently ordered another assessment to see if they could reduce her care further. Again, the occupational therapist determined that Verna needs the daily hour and a half of personal care. Verna needs these exercises so that she can become more independent. Does the Premier think it's right for a private company to prevent Verna from getting the care she needs by overriding the recommendations of health care professionals?

1120

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I trust that, as an MPP, you are actively engaged with conversations with the CCAC. I know in my own constituency office, and I'm sure in many of ours, we spend a lot of our time making sure that the people who need the service are getting it.

It is inappropriate for decisions to be made and to pit private and public is wrong, because the point is, the CCACs are making the decisions about how much care is needed and when that will happen. I would encourage you—and if you need some help with that, we're happy to help—to deal with the CCAC directly and make sure those cuts are not happening, because they certainly are not happening from this government.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: My question is for the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Yesterday, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers informed Canada Post that rotating strikes will begin on October 22 if a new agreement cannot be reached. Many Ontarians rely on Canada Post each and every day to receive important government services, programs and documentation. From social assistance programs to birth and death certificates, these services are vital to the people of Ontario.

While the federal government battles with the postal workers, can the Minister of Government and Consumer Services please update the Legislature on our government's plan should a postal strike occur?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to my honourable colleague for the question this morning. Our government recognizes that a Canada Post strike could cause inconveniences for many Ontarians.

We hope the federal government can reach a deal with the Canadian postal workers. In the meantime, I want to assure the people of Ontario that we are ready. We've been working collaboratively, government-wide, to minimize the impact on critical government services and programs. We've launched ontario.ca/mail to provide information to the people of Ontario. A contingency plan is ready, should alternative delivery processes be deemed necessary.

We also recognize that many Ontarians still receive social assistance and other government payments through Canada Post, and we encourage those who are receiving cheques via Canada Post to sign up for direct deposit if they haven't done so already. We're committed to ensuring Ontarians get access to critical Ontario government services—

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

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Thank you to the minister for his response. I'm happy to hear that our government planned ahead for this possibility and has a clear plan in place to ensure the people of Ontario can still access their services.

I'm sure many of us are also wondering how this potential postal strike will affect the Ontario Cannabis Store, given the federal government's decision to legalize cannabis in this country. With today being the first day Ontarians are able to order cannabis from the OCS online store, many will have questions about how their product will reach their doors. Could the minister please explain how the Ontario Cannabis Store could navigate a potential strike by Canada Post and how Ontario customers could be able to have their cannabis orders fulfilled?

Hon. Todd Smith: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for the question. Ontario will be ready in the event of Canada Post service disruptions. We have made our expectations clear to the Ontario Cannabis Store. They must be ready to continue delivery service in the event of a work stoppage at Canada Post. The Ontario Cannabis Store has been evaluating options to ensure cannabis delivery can continue in the event of a Canada Post strike. The OCS has indicated that they have a clear plan and they will be prepared with an alternate delivery process, should it be needed. However, in the meantime, we hope the federal government can come to an agreement with the postal workers.

ENERGY POLICIES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs.

Minister, Julie and Ronald Denomme from Hanmer in my riding have paid the deposit on a valid contract signed way before the June 19 deadline to change their windows as they try to decrease their heating costs. They expected a \$5,000 rebate from the GreenON program.

In Sudbury, contractors are racing flat-out to complete as many contracts as possible before the October 31 deadline. These contractors don't have time to drive the extra 40 minutes, 50 minutes or an hour to come to Nickel Belt because there is so much work to be done in town.

Will the minister please agree to extend the deadline so my constituents are not at a disadvantage to get the GreenON rebate simply because they live in rural northern Ontario?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: Thank you very much for the question. I appreciate the situation of your constituents, but when this government was elected, it was elected on the basis of eliminating the cap-and-trade program. The responsible thing to do with the elimination of the cap-and-trade program was to wind down the program in a very transparent way, and that is what we've done. Yesterday, the FAO confirmed that our estimates around the wind-up of that program were largely accurate.

With regard to the window program, the government set a date of the end of the month in terms of the end of eligibility for that program. We did so so that people who had been participating would have the time to carry it out, but we did so in a very transparent way, because we need to bring an end to this program because we brought an end to the funding for this program.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: This arbitrary deadline is, in effect, discriminating against rural and northern citizens. The Denommes are not the only ones affected. Madame Yvonne St-Denis from Red Deer Lake Road and Catherine and Richard Gagne are facing financial loss; so is Sheila Renton.

Contractors can work like two or three jobs together when they work in the city, so they are rescheduling my constituents for after the deadline. Many of my constituents are on the verge of losing thousands of dollars—dollars they don't have. So it looks like this PC government is actually taking money out of the pockets of rural and northern residents.

Will the minister change the deadline so rural and northern residents don't end up losing, big time?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: This government is in the business of putting money in people's pockets. That's why we got rid of the cap-and-trade program; that's why we're fighting the carbon tax.

When it comes to northern and rural Ontario, we've taken steps like the expansion of natural gas and others, because we understand—for the first time in a very long time, the people of rural and northern Ontario are seeing a government that understands the issues, and they are being responded to by ministers responsible.

We made a commitment to responsibly wind down this program. We are responsibly winding it down.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Ross Romano: My question today is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I know that our government for the people is very excited that this is Local Government Week. This is because we all know that our local governments play a vital role in helping Ontarians.

Unlike the previous Liberal government, which failed municipalities, downloading costs on them and making it harder for them to work on a day-to-day basis, we value our local partners and appreciate all they do for the people across Ontario. I'm particularly proud of the work being done by the city councillors in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie. Their efforts are vital in providing the key services my constituents need.

Minister, can you please explain why it is important to have a week like this dedicated to celebrating Ontario's local governments?

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to thank the member for Sault Ste. Marie for that excellent question. As the member said, local governments provide—they're really the closest level of government to the people, and they provide such essential services. Just to name a few, you have to look at the amount of community centres, things like libraries and the fact that local governments are instilled with making sure the garbage is picked up and the snow is removed from the streets. They provide such essential services.

Local Government Week gives a wonderful opportunity for us to teach children and students about the different levels of government. We give them the opportunity to understand what local governments do and how they differ between the provincial level of government and the federal level of government.

This Local Government Week is even more exciting as Ontarians go to the polls next week to vote for representatives at the local level.

In the supplementary, I'll talk more about how we're working with our local government partners.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Ross Romano: Thank you to the minister for that excellent answer about the importance of local governments and their critical role in the lives of Ontarians.

Our government is clearly committed to listening to Ontario's municipalities and working with them. At the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference this past August, we had a tremendous turnout from cabinet and caucus members who held productive meetings with our municipal partners. We also watched you, Minister, as you demonstrated our government's commitment to a strong working relationship with AMO by signing a new memorandum of understanding.

Would the minister please explain how we are working with local governments to help them deliver better services and address issues like reducing red tape and building more housing?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, I want to thank the member for the question.

The member is absolutely correct. This year, at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference, the AMO conference, our government had a record number of meetings with our municipal partners, some 540. He's also correct that I signed the memorandum of understanding, the MOU, one year before the renewal date. I have to tell you, we're continuing our work with AMO. We're going back to monthly MOU meetings to listen to their concerns and to proactively work on the issues.

Lastly—I think it's very important during Local Government Week—I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone running for municipal office our sincere best wishes. We want to thank them for putting their names forward on the ballot. Do you know what, Speaker?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Steve Clark: I look forward to dealing with all those newly elected councils in Ontario's 444 municipalities after October 22.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Minister of Transportation.

Riley Peterson travels for three hours on the TTC from her home in Weston to school every day. She could be studying, but instead she's stuck in an overcrowded bus. Commuters like Riley were looking forward to faster and cheaper commutes starting in January, when transit riders could pay a new low fare of \$3 to ride the GO and the Union Pearson Express in Toronto. But now, the \$3 GO fare program is in jeopardy because it was funded by Ontario's climate plan, a plan that will cost \$3 billion to cancel so the Premier can give favours to big polluters, a plan that funded cheaper transit fares so people like Riley could speed up their commute times and pay less.

Will the minister tackle congestion by moving forward with the \$3 fare program for GO and the Union Pearson Express in Toronto?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I thank the member for the question. As she knows, we have made it crystal clear on many occasions in this chamber how committed we are in the Doug Ford PC government to making the transit experience better, more efficient and more enjoyable for people all across the GTHA and, in fact, all across this great province of Ontario.

On the issue of the cap-and-trade, we also made a commitment in our campaign to cancel that Liberal cash grab and return that money to the people of Ontario, the \$1.9 billion a year that was being taken out of the pockets of the people of the province of Ontario. We're giving it back.

But I want to assure the member that we are absolutely committed to continuing our job of making transit better all across this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Toronto is a world-class city with a world-class transit problem. Our region has the longest

commute times in North America and transit fares are now the highest in Canada. Instead of improving congestion by giving commuters fast and affordable transit, this government is taking us from bad to worse.

I'm going to ask the question again: Are you going to move forward with the \$3 fare program for GO and Union Pearson Express, starting January, in Toronto?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I thank the member for that question. Again, I also want to remind her that we have a world-class hockey team in this city as well.

When we're prepared to make an announcement on any fare adjustments for GO or the TTC, I will let the member know. But we're in the process of examining all of the costs, line by line, item by item, in this province to see just what kind of mess and how big a mess the previous Liberal government left us, and also to re-evaluate all of those promises that they made in a last-ditch effort to try to get re-elected earlier this year.

We're examining everything right across the board, and I can assure the member that when we're ready to make an announcement on transit fares across this province, she'll be one of the first to know.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the government House leader. I'm proud of the work our government has done over its first 100 days. The constituents in my riding appreciate all the work being done for them and for Ontarians all across this great province.

I know our government has done a lot to protect our communities and keep Ontarians safe. Can the government House leader inform the Legislature on why it was so important to move quickly to deliver real results for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Todd Smith: Two days in a row we've got an excellent question from the government whip, and I'm pleased to answer it.

You know, as I was going door to door over the constituency week and people were thinking about turkey dinner over Thanksgiving, they were thankful that in the first 100 days, they didn't have a government like the previous one that wasted their money. They were thankful that they didn't have a government like the previous Liberal government that raised gas prices, hydro rates and taxes across the province and took money out of their pockets. They were thankful about that. They were thankful that they had a government that respected their tax dollars, that was trying to put more money back in their pockets, Mr. Speaker. They were thankful. They were thankful that they had a government that was making key investments in transportation, all-day GO trains, health care—over 6,000 long-term-care beds. And we're just getting started. What an—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. That concludes the time we have for question period this afternoon.

MEMBER'S PRIVILEGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm prepared to listen to the point of privilege by the member for Flam- borough–Glanbrook.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I'm rising on a point of privilege to address an incident which occurred at the end of debate yesterday. It's my understanding as a new member that in order for a point of privilege to be found, certain criteria have to be met. Having provided you with notice this morning, as well as the opposition and government House leaders, as laid out in standing order 21(c), I'm now going to articulate how the member from Hamilton Centre breached my privileges as a member with her conduct on the floor of the House yesterday.

The first criterion is timeliness. Standing order 8(a) states that the House adjourns at 6 p.m. on Tuesdays, excepting the last eight days of a sitting, which is on or about the time the incident occurred. As a result, this morning's proceedings were my first opportunity to bring this to your attention, and I delivered notice to the necessary offices this morning in accordance with the standing orders.

Regarding the incident in question, at the conclusion of debate, during the division bells yesterday, the member from Hamilton Centre crossed the chamber and initiated unwanted and intentional physical contact with me. At the time, I was sitting on this side of the House engaged in a conversation with a fellow member.

In my notice submitted this morning, I referenced two parliamentary authorities on the subject. I would now like to reference two more.

Erskine May states on page 262:

"Members and others have been punished for such molestation occurring within the precincts of the House, whether by assault or insulting or abusive language...."

"To molest members on account of their conduct in Parliament is also a contempt."

It was this rule which was enforced by Speaker Regan in the federal House of Commons on May 18, 2016, when the Speaker found that the Prime Minister had committed a similar breach with regard to unwanted and deliberate physical contact of the former member for Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands. That's because Marleau and Montpetit, the federal House of Commons guide for procedure, states, "Members are entitled to go about their parliamentary business undisturbed. The assaulting, menacing, or insulting of any member on the floor of the House or while he is coming or going to or from the House, or on account of his behaviour during a proceeding in Parliament, is a violation of the rights of Parliament."

Speaker Peters found a similar breach occurred in this Legislature on May 4, 2010, where he stated:

"This brings me to the nub of the point of privilege raised; that is, the right of members of this Legislative Assembly to attend to their parliamentary duties without interference or obstruction. I note that the House of Commons Procedure and Practice states the following: "In circumstances where members claim to be physically obstructed, impeded, interfered with or intimidated in the

performance of their parliamentary functions, the Speaker is apt to find that a prima facie breach of privilege has occurred."

Speaker, a number of members witnessed the events which occurred yesterday afternoon—too many, in fact, for this not to be worthy of further examination by the House. For this reason, I would ask you to find a prima facie case for breach of privilege in this matter.

Interjections.

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

Are there any other members who wish to participate in the discussion of this point of privilege? The member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, the antics displayed by the government members yesterday, in trying to block the cameras in the chamber from televising the speech from my leader on a very important health care issue facing Bramptonians, were absolutely inappropriate, disrespectful and beneath the dignity of this House. This point of order has no merit, so let's move on to the important issues that are facing Ontario families.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll consider the matter that has been raised, and I'll report back to the House in due course.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand that there are some members who want to introduce guests. The member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My guests arrived a little bit late, so I'd like to welcome them to the Legislature. I have my brother, my sister-in-law and her sister.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'd like to introduce, in the public gallery—although some of them have just left—Margaret Rao and Lyn Adamson from ClimateFast, and a good friend from teachers' college, James Snetsinger, who brought his grade 4 class from Thorncliffe Park Public School today.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Tabuns assumes ballot item number 25 and Mr. Vanthof assumes ballot item number 40.

This House stands in recess until 3 p.m. this afternoon.
The House recessed from 1143 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I'm joined today in the gallery here by two very wonderful people. One is one of my staff

from Ottawa, David Gibbons, my community liaison, the man who knows everyone there is in Ottawa. Secondly, I'm joined by Angela Wright, who has been involved in PC politics for a number of years, previously served as a riding association president and who is now working as a writer in Toronto. It's wonderful to have them both in Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Ian Arthur: Yesterday morning, the Financial Accountability Office released their report on the government's cancellation of the cap-and-trade program along with most of the Climate Change Action Plan, and the numbers are staggering. The FAO announced that these cancellations will result in a hit of \$3 billion to the province's bottom line, increasing the annual deficit by nearly \$800 million by 2021-22.

The government's compensation strategy of \$5 million excludes 99% of allowances purchased by businesses. If these companies are not compensated, these costs will be passed on to the consumer, and that is not money in the pockets of Ontarians.

How much more will be spent on lawsuits? Will Ontario lose the \$420 million in federal funding, at risk because we do not have a climate change plan? The government intends on spending about \$500 million per year on CCAP programs, but this government is picking and choosing which programs will be cut and which are going to be kept. We know the GreenON program was cancelled, but which ones are being kept at the expense of the taxpayers in Ontario? How did the government choose which programs are going to be kept and what ridings do they affect?

Mr. Speaker, I smell another billion-dollar boondoggle on its way.

CANADIAN REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY SEMINAR

Mr. Deepak Anand: Good afternoon, Speaker. Last week, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend the 40th Canadian regional seminar in Iqaluit, Nunavut. The seminar was attended by both federal and provincial representatives; 36 in total. There were six panel topics covered, with many notable moments.

On the panel discussion on decorum in the chamber, the Clerk from Quebec discussed the Quebec Legislature's move to ban clapping in the House during question period, a move to reduce antics and to be more productive. Our own Deputy Speaker, Rick Nicholls, also presented very well on the topic.

On mental health matters, the discussion was heavily participated in by all the members. It was interesting to note that there was consensus among all members for the

need to invest in mental health. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud that our Ontario government has already committed to investing \$3.8 billion in mental health.

I also had the opportunity to represent Ontario in a panel discussion, Reflecting and Respecting the Indigenous Presence in Parliament. I reported that while work has been done in the last decade to increase Indigenous participation and representation, there are still four provinces with zero political representation from the Indigenous community. I believe there's still a lot of work that needs to be done.

Lastly, I would like to give a shout-out to the Clerks' offices both here at Queen's Park and in Nunavut for their execution of a flawless event. I would encourage other members to attend.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Jessica Bell: Zoe Keary-Matzner spoke today at a rally led by youth concerned about the cancellation of Ontario's climate plan. Zoe is a youth in my riding of University-Rosedale. At the rally she said, "No children were consulted on the cancellation of the plan, and yet our future is severely endangered. Our voices are especially important because it is our future that is threatened."

Zoe is 11. In 2040, Zoe will be 33. The year 2040 is the year the UN predicts global climate catastrophe if we don't take urgent action now.

We're at a crossroads. We could have a hopeful world where our youth and children can live their best lives, or a grim world with food and water shortages, killer heat waves, coastal cities underwater and global sacrifice zones too hot to live in. We get to decide our future—us, Legislatures, adults living today. The Conservative government is choosing the grim option by cancelling our cap-and-trade plan and wasting \$3 billion of Ontario's money just to cater to big polluters.

Conservatives, choose the hopeful option, the option that gives kids like Zoe a good future, a good life. Listen to the evidence and say yes to a climate plan that limits warming to 1.5 degrees or below.

TORONTO RAPTORS

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Today I would like to take an opportunity to mark a very special day, the start of the 2018-19 Toronto Raptors season. Many of us may be divided on what NHL or CFL team we cheer for, but in Canada we are all united behind our only NBA team, the Toronto Raptors.

Tonight they kick off their season against the Cleveland Cavaliers. Fans across this country are going to tune in to watch them take on the Cavaliers and start their road to the NBA championship. This year is especially exciting after a blockbuster trade saw the Toronto Raptors land one of the best offensive and defensive players in the league, Kawhi Leonard. With the addition of Kawhi and a talented roster of young players and Kyle Lowry and Jonas Valanciunas, this team is being noticed across the league.

LeBron James is shaking in his boots at the thought of playing the Toronto Raptors this year.

I urge all members across all party lines in this House to show their support to Canada's team and cheer on the Toronto Raptors this year as we make history. Go, Raps, go.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yet again, I heard the Premier this week and then I heard the Minister of Finance saying, "Oh, we lowered the price of gas in Ontario." Here they go again. They haven't even taken the 4.5 cents off that they promised as a result of the cancellation of cap-and-trade. We're still paying that tax that they promised they were going to take off, but they're running around the province and are trying to say, "Hey, everybody, look at the price of gas. It's down."

There's something called winter blend. Every year, in the fall and in the spring, gas companies change the blend formula of gas and affect the price. The price of gas always goes down in the fall; then market conditions push the price up and push the price down according to the whims of whatever is going on in the market. I think the government has got to come clean. It's got to say that, in fact, at this point they have done absolutely nothing to affect the price of gas.

New Democrats have put forward a bill that's now in committee that would allow us to regulate the price of gas. If the government intends to hold to its promise by reducing by 4.5 cents the tax on the price of gas, well, then, they're going to have to do something such as pass the NDP bill that provides for regulation, because I'll tell you what will happen. If they take the 4.5 cents off and there's no protection for the consumer by way of regulation or other mechanism, the gas companies are going to take over the room and we're going to be paying right what we used to before and the gas companies are going to run away with the profits, laughing every day that they go to the bank.

I say to the government across the way: You should do the right thing. You should support gas price regulation and stop taking credit for something you haven't done yet.

THEATRE SCARBOROUGH

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I rise in the House today to congratulate Theatre Scarborough, from my riding of Scarborough-Guildwood, on receiving \$19,500 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The grant has provided Scarborough Village Theatre with a new hearing loop system, making it the first and only community theatre of its kind in Toronto. This investment will enhance the audience's experience by ensuring that they can hear more clearly during performances, particularly people with hearing loss. Theatre Scarborough has three producing companies that will benefit from the new hearing loop system: Scarborough Players, Scarborough Theatre Guild, and Scarborough Music Theatre.

1510

I had the opportunity to experience the new system at the Scarborough Players 60th anniversary opening night performance of *Noises Off*. The production was hilarious, entertaining and well produced. I'd like to say thank you to Katherine Turner and the Scarborough Players president, Chris Wakelin, for the invitation. I had the opportunity to speak with the producer of *Noises Off*, Elaine O'Neal, and her lovely daughter Grace.

Congratulations to Scarborough Players on their 60th anniversary. Thank you for providing a platform for local talent in Scarborough for the last 60 years. Your commitment and your contributions to the arts in my riding are exceptional, making our community more livable and more accessible for families to grow old.

I invite everyone to the performance, which runs until October 20.

PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS AWARENESS DAY

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: October 15 was Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day. This campaign started in America in 2002, with Canada joining in 2004.

In Ontario, Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day was officially declared on December 8, 2015, as one of the many elements of Bill 141, the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness, Research and Care Act.

The day is observed with remembrance ceremonies and candle-lighting vigils and concludes with the International Wave of Light. This day is a day of remembrance for all of those who have suffered the loss of a child, whether it is through miscarriage, stillbirth or SIDS. We acknowledge both the grieving parents as well as the loss of life.

While miscarriages are common, occurring in 15% to 20% of, or one in five, pregnancies, these statistics do not provide comfort to grieving parents. Stillbirths, though less common, with six stillborn infants in 1,000 total births, are equally devastating.

The Pregnancy and Infant Loss Network, or PAIL Network, is an organization that families can turn to for support in dealing with pregnancy and infant loss. Their number is 1-888-303-7245.

I know that this kind of grief is one that you will carry with you forever. I have suffered from four miscarriages, so I understand all too well.

To all of those who have had to bear this cross, please know that you are not alone.

RIDING OF LONDON WEST

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Over the last week, in London, two reports were released that have the potential to completely transform my community: London Community Foundation's Vital Signs and the Middlesex-London Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy. The two reports provide a powerful call to action and share a vision of a caring, connected and inclusive future where all citizens feel they belong.

The call to action comes from statistics that are stark and troubling:

—More than 70,000 Londoners are living in poverty, including one in four children;

—Only three in five working-age Londoners are working or looking for work, one of the lowest participation rates in the province;

—Almost half of all London tenants are spending more than 30% of their monthly income on rent; and

—Almost 6,000 people in London and Middlesex use injection drugs, with the harms of substance use disproportionately experienced by Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ and people living with mental illness.

The shared vision recognizes the importance of addressing social determinants of health and strengthening individuals' sense of belonging and connection. As Vital Signs points out, belonging is the glue that holds our community together.

Londoners are committed to achieving this shared vision, but we can't do it alone. Today, I call on the government to join with my community as a full partner. Provide us with the resources and policy changes necessary to end poverty, tackle inequities and help London to thrive.

SENIORS EVENTS IN SIMCOE NORTH

Ms. Jill Dunlop: A Day for Seniors began in Simcoe North back in September 2001, and 17 years later I am proud to say that this special event continues on.

On October 5 and October 12, I co-hosted my first annual seniors' event with the federal member of Parliament Mr. Bruce Stanton.

These events were held in Midland at the North Simcoe Sports and Recreation Centre and in Orillia at ODAS Park. We had an incredible turnout, with hundreds in attendance. Organizations from across the riding volunteered their time and hosted informational sessions in order to spread awareness on topics such as accessibility, home health care, nutrition and physical activity.

Our seniors heard from some wonderful guest speakers, such as Carmine Stumpo, the CEO at Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital; Dr. Kevin Young, lead geriatrician at the Seniors Care Clinic; Tom Cheel from the Canadian Anti-Fraud Agency; Tim Anderson from Crawford McLean law office; Jeremy Bertrand from the Ministry of Finance; and Melissa Brabant from the Ministry of Transportation.

I also had the honour to recognize Cliff Favell at the Orillia seniors' day. He is a recipient of the United Senior Citizens of Ontario Senior of the Year award and a dedicated member of my community.

Seniors are the foundation of our society. They have accumulated a wealth of knowledge and wisdom through their vast experiences and they serve as a beacon for younger generations. I feel privileged to acknowledge their contributions, celebrate their achievements and provide information to ensure they receive the support they deserve to lead healthy and happy lives.

EVA'S SATELLITE

Mr. Stan Cho: First of all, forgive me if my speaking ability is a little off. It's Small Business Week, and the business I decided to visit was that of Dr. John Ro, my dentist, so my mouth's a little bit frozen right now.

This weekend, I had the privilege of helping with a bottle drive organized by the Beer Store in my riding of Willowdale. The organizers gave me the privilege of picking the recipient of the proceeds, and I chose Eva's Satellite right away. Eva's Satellite is a local extension of Eva's Initiatives, an award-winning organization that provides shelter, transitional housing and programming to help young people build brighter futures.

Eva's Satellite in Willowdale is Canada's first harm-reduction shelter for youth. They are there to help those struggling with substance abuse and mental health issues, and it is truly an inspiring organization. The fact that it exists in my riding is a true honour. We need to take care of our future generations.

As a young man, I suffered with depression and anxiety, and it is only thanks to the support of my friends and family that I was able to get through those difficult times. We need to make sure that our youth who are at risk today have that same support mechanism so that we can make sure they are able to have a bright future and maybe sit in this House one day, not just to change their community but, indeed, to change our entire world.

Please get out there and support your local shelters or similar Eva's Satellite organizations in your community as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have for members' statements this afternoon.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS AMENDMENT ACT (NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS), 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA GARDE D'ENFANTS ET LA PETITE ENFANCE (ORGANISATIONS SANS BUT LUCRATIF)

Ms. Begum moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 45, An Act to amend the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 to limit funding of child care and early years programs and services to not-for-profit corporations / Projet de loi 45, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance pour limiter aux organisations sans but lucratif le financement des programmes et des services pour la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for Scarborough Southwest care to explain her bill?

Ms. Doly Begum: I'm honoured to introduce this bill. This bill amends the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, so that corporations are not eligible to receive funding for child care and early years programs and services unless they are not-for-profit corporations.

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PETITIONS

SPORT MARTIAL ARTS

Mr. Joel Harden: It's my great privilege to present this petition to the House today. It comes from my own riding: 216 signatures from people who frequent Douvris Martial Arts studios. The petition is called "Protecting Our Right to Safe Sports Martial Arts."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas sport martial arts is a safe method for adults and children to learn combat sports, practise in a welcoming and supportive environment and maintain a healthy lifestyle;

"Whereas participating in friendly tournaments of sport martial arts builds a sense of community and allows participants to improve their sparring skills;

"Whereas Order in Council 1087/2017 mandates that sparring competitions be sanctioned by a provincial sports organization (PSO), which restricts sport martial arts from hosting tournaments due to different sparring styles and rules; and

"Whereas for hundreds of sports martial arts schools in Ontario who fall between the two styles allowed by the PSO, Order in Council 1087/2017 makes it nearly impossible to obtain sanction for their events;

"We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to rescind or amend Order in Council 1087/2017 to permit sports martial artists to host legal tournaments in the province."

I will sign this petition, and I will hand it to page Harry for the Clerks' table.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas certain commercial operations known as 'puppy/kitten mills' have been reported to keep animals in precarious conditions in breach of provincial animal welfare laws; and

"Whereas dog/cat breeding in accordance with the law is a legitimate economic activity; and

"Whereas it is the duty of any government to ensure the laws of Canada and Ontario are respected and that the health and well-being of innocent animals is protected;

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

"That the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services work proactively with all amateur and

professional dog/cat breeders, as well as consumers, with the intent to tackle confirmed animal cruelty cases in puppy/kitten mills and to educate all stakeholders about animal welfare standards."

Of course, I'm affixing my signature and giving it to page Richa.

INJURED WORKERS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled "Workers' Comp is a Right."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition and will be affixing my signature to it as well.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mrs. Amy Fee: My petition is "Support Sarnia's Permanent Residential Withdrawal Management Facility."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, like many Ontario communities, the toll that drugs and alcohol have taken on Sarnia-Lambton is tremendous, but we have hope and importantly, we have a plan;

"Whereas a proposal for a permanent withdrawal management facility has been developed with input from many organizations in our community using the most current research available on withdrawal management;

"Whereas our plan is a vision of teamwork: a one-stop hub for addictions services, improving access to services and bringing care partners together for a team approach to caring for our community;

“Whereas a permanent facility would provide day, community and residential withdrawal management services, stabilization services and wraparound services for people who are battling their addictions;

“Whereas there is currently a temporary location providing some of these much-needed services but together we can provide better care and improve access to treatment for clients;

“Whereas our need is urgent, our plan is in place;

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

“That members of the Legislature please help us save lives and support our community members by supporting permanent withdrawal management services in Sarnia-Lambton.”

I, Amy Fee, as the member for Kitchener South-Hespeler, fully support this petition and will be affixing my signature to it.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Sara Singh: I’d like to thank my friends at the Workers’ Action Centre and the Fight for \$15 and Fairness for this petition entitled “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;...

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;...

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers;...

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I am proud to sign my name to this, and I’m going to send this off with page Amber.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition that reads:

“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 since time immemorial;

“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....”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and give it to page Ethan to bring to the Clerk.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Denise Giroux; her son, Lee; and Kayla, Kim, Jason and Carla Harris, who collected this petition. It reads as follows:

“Save the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Premier Doug Ford promised that there would not be cuts to nurses’ positions; and

“Whereas in Sudbury we have already lost 70 nurses, and Health Sciences North is closing part of the Breast Screening and Assessment Service; and

“Whereas cuts to” the breast screening service “will result in longer wait times, which is very stressful for women diagnosed with breast cancer; and

“Whereas cuts to the Sudbury Breast Screening and Assessment Service will only take us backwards;

“We ... petition the Legislative Assembly” as follows:

“To provide adequate funding to Health Sciences North to ensure northerners have equitable access to life-saving programs such as the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.”

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

SCHOOL BOARDS

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

“Whereas the Ministry of Education oversees all school boards in the province of Ontario and as such there is an immediate need for a ministerial investigation and oversight of the Rainbow District School Board for serious contraventions contrary to the Ontario Education Act, Ontario Clean Water Act, 2006, municipal freedom of information and rights to privacy act, Canadian Charter of

Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code; and

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“Whereas the Rainbow District School Board, by failing to adhere to the Ontario Clean Water Act and by failing to permanently remedy the unsafe levels of lead contamination in school drinking water (33 schools), are placing our students and educators at serious risk of lead poisoning; and

“Whereas the malfeasance, systemic discrimination, abuse of power, abuse of process, excessive pay increases, incurring large legal fees to defend their malfeasance, as well as unauthorized redundant spending by the Rainbow District School Board and school administration have taken money out of the classrooms and thus have created significant negative impact on students, parents, families and the community;

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

“To commence an immediate detailed ministerial investigation and oversight of the Rainbow District School Board, as well as a complete financial audit of school board spending since 2010, including exuberant pay increases to be conducted by the office of the provincial auditor, and detailed reports of findings to be submitted to the Ontario Legislature.”

I affix my signature to this on behalf of the parents of Mindemoya, Spring Bay, Gore Bay, Manitowaning, and also Providence Bay and other communities on Manitoulin Island.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Jessica Bell: This is a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

“Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers;

“Whereas ... in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that” includes:

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and” raising it to \$15 an hour “on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;”

Whereas, to make it easier to join unions;

Whereas to “ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours....

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I will be affixing my signature to this petition and giving it to page Maya.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélina: I would like to thank Madame Kathryn Nault from Onaping in my riding for the petition. 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;”

They 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 my good page Amber to bring it to the Clerk.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank the community members from Sheshegwaning First Nations on Manitoulin Island for submitting all these signatures. It’s 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 wholeheartedly support this petition, affix my signature and present it to page Marcel to bring it down to the Clerks’ table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CANNABIS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE CANNABIS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 17, 2018, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to enact a new Act and make amendments to various other Acts respecting the use and sale of cannabis and vapour products in Ontario / Projet de loi 36, Loi édictant une nouvelle loi et modifiant diverses autres lois en ce qui concerne l'utilisation et la vente de cannabis et de produits de vapotage en Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I look forward to my 27 minutes and 31 seconds of final discussion and opportunity to talk to everybody in our Legislature about this cannabis bill.

Speaker, I want to begin, first of all, by stressing that our government has been working to develop a retail and distribution system that protects youth and combats the illegal market. Every single thing we do begins with the premise that we are protecting our children, we are keeping our roads safe and we are curbing the illegal market.

So to that end, I want to begin by congratulating the Attorney General for an outstanding effort with her entire ministry and her entire staff for the work that you have done. It is an absolutely remarkable and historic event. You have delivered and delivered well for the people of Ontario, and for that I congratulate you—in fact, we all congratulate you, Minister Mulroney.

I want to also congratulate the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. One of our key partners in all of this has been our consultation with municipalities. It began through the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, AMO. It began there, where Minister Clark shepherded this very tricky consultation with 444 municipalities in Ontario. So I say to Minister Clark and his staff, congratulations.

I want to acknowledge the hard work done by our Minister of Indigenous Affairs. Minister Rickford has long been involved with our First Nations communities throughout Ontario and was of valuable insight in all of our discussions.

I want to end the thank yous with our own Ministry of Finance people, who worked long and hard with the Attorney General. It was under her direction. This is her bill, and a tremendous bill for Ontario, but I do want to acknowledge the long hours and the late nights of the Ministry of Finance people.

Then, I guess, this leads us to the creation of the Ontario Cannabis Store. This is where we are today. It's a historic day. I know the minister and I have talked since August publicly about this.

It's interesting. I was at the airport—as I get back and forth to North Bay once in a while; not as often as Patty

would like and certainly not as often as I used to—and they had a book for sale at the bookstore in the airport. It was called the Whisky King. I thought, “That’s a great pocket-book to grab.” I started reading it—

Miss Monique Taylor: I’m reading it.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Hamilton is really centred in it a lot, so it's of interest to you. North Bay is mentioned many, many times—too many, perhaps, for comfort. But it's about Prohibition. It's really about the end of Prohibition and how it came about. It just brought me to mind that, really, today is one of those incredibly historic days. Now, look, it's about cannabis; let's face it. But nonetheless, it is the end of an era, it is the end of a prohibition, like our predecessors 100 years ago on a June day, when they ended Prohibition and created the body that took care of our liquor in Ontario. It really is the same kind of thing. We had the opening at 12:01 of the Ontario Cannabis Store online—which I guess, in itself, is a bit interesting, the fact that we have an online presence. Of course, 100 years ago, they certainly had a completely different way of legalizing alcohol. It really is something that we need to just take a pause and think about—the history that is being made in the Legislature.

1540

I mentioned consulting with municipalities. We consulted with First Nations and we also consulted extensively with police services, public health officials and businesses to determine the best path forward. Again, everything we do is to keep our kids safe, to keep our roads safe and to curb the illegal market.

A lot of times, we're asked, “How much money is this going to make? What's the revenue profile of this?” I'll tell you, I have said the same answer for months now, and I know the Attorney General has done the same thing—we continue to say, “This is not about revenue.” This truly is not. This is not like the budget every year in the spring when alcohol and tobacco taxes are perhaps raised. This isn't about revenue. This is about keeping our kids safe, this is about keeping our roads safe and this really is about curbing that illegal market. It's not a revenue play, where we're looking for more money: “Where can we get more money? How much can we charge? How much more money can we bring in?” It's not about that, so we just need to keep that in mind.

We did open the OCS, the Ontario Cannabis Store, ocs.ca. It is a very safe, very secure, online shopping experience for consumers 19 years of age and over. In our briefings, when we were touring the site—it is indeed, first of all, a very “robust” site—that's a technical term—and very clean and very, very easy to navigate. It's a bilingual site that starts off with an opportunity where you must put your age in. There are three times where you're asked to verify your age.

I'm going to jump to the end of the story, just to finish this chapter off. When the product is delivered, that's when your actual ID is shown: at the door. You cannot put your hands on the package without valid ID being shown that proves that the person accepting it is 19 years of age

and over—but I get ahead of myself. It's a beautiful site, very clean, very simple—not a lot of fancy things on it.

The first thing you do is you learn that none of this material is saved—the data. It's not as if you have to register and that information is kept. This material, you must enter every time, so it's not material that we save. We need that information to print the shipping label, and that's the end of that. So you are told, very briefly and succinctly, the rules of engagement, that we're not going to keep your data and then you must verify your age.

Then you can enter the site, and you have two choices: You can learn all about cannabis and hit that button and then get through the site. It talks about the various grades and the various different bits of potency that you can learn about. You can learn all about the various brands. You can learn and educate yourself: What is this cannabis thing all about? What is cannabis? We certainly see a lot of information publicly, but this is an opportunity for you to take your time, go online, learn about it and understand what it is all about, what it does to you and what it can do to you individually as well. You can learn all about it or you can just jump right ahead and get into the product selection and go down through all of the various products and the various types. You can get a bit more of an understanding of each one, the potency and the grade: a sort of “good, better and best” option is there. There are also accessories that are there. It looks like, to me, a cheese grater. It's some kind of little card that has a bunch of holes on it, and it's used to grate the dry cannabis product. There are also other tools that you can buy.

There are a lot of interesting things that you can see, but if you want to spend some time—and I would encourage that you spend time understanding cannabis. I'm not suggesting you need to go online and order it, but I'm suggesting that ocs.ca, the Ontario Cannabis Store, is your way to learn. It's your way to educate yourself, and anybody 19 and over, to spend time understanding these product options that are available to you.

I can say that it is 24/7. It is securely monitored and will continually be tested. We have ongoing security testing that will not stop, and a privacy program that we talked about earlier. We also mentioned that on ocs.ca, you do not have to create an online account. It's one visit; you're in and you're out.

On the site, again, in terms of products, when it comes to cannabis itself, you will find that there is dry cannabis. There are pre-rolled cannabis, cannabis oils and capsules, and all are available to consumers 19 years of age and older across the province.

Let's remember: This is federally legislated today. Cannabis became legal in Canada today through federal legislation. Our job, basically, is to be able to purchase from the federally licensed producers; we call those the LPs, and they are licensed federally. Our job, our role as the province of Ontario, is to buy that material safely, wholesale it and distribute it to the public. We are the wholesaler and the distributor. We have a facility or facilities that do that for the people of Ontario. The first

way that we opted to retail the product is through ocs.ca, the Ontario Cannabis Store website.

In April 2019, stores right across Ontario will be licensed. These are the individual bricks-and-mortar stores. These will be private businesses that will obtain a licence—I'll speak to that in a moment—and these licences, when available, will be able to open a retail store on April 1, 2019. We expect these to be in all areas of the province of Ontario.

I'll come back to the website a little bit later. I just want to talk a little bit more about retail and distribution. If passed, our legislation will give municipalities until January 22 to opt out of hosting cannabis retail stores in their communities. October 22—Monday—is the municipal election, and three months later, the municipalities, in perhaps what we expect to be their first act as a municipality, will provide a decision on opting out. A municipality may decide, “We do not want to have retail cannabis stores in our community,” and that's fine. They have that opportunity. If, after opting out, they decide they are missing an opportunity, they have the option of coming back in and letting us know, “Yes, we've seen what has happened across the country. We've seen what has happened throughout Ontario. We would like to come back into the system.” They have that right to opt in.

However, if they do not opt out on January 22 and we begin the process of awarding stores throughout their community, they do not, after that date, have another opportunity to opt out. It's a one-time opt-out for communities.

1550

Now, our government will be contributing \$40 million over two years to help these local governments keep their communities safe. There's a long process about who gets what and how much each community gets, but I want the smaller communities—again, we have 444 communities in Ontario. I have 11 mayors in my riding of Nipissing: the mayor of North Bay and 10 other rural mayors. In fact, one mayor, believe it or not, the mayor of Mattawan, is the mayor of a town of 120 people. There's a mayor and a council. Some of the larger municipalities here are in the millions. We have a mayor and a council in Mattawan, for 120 people. I think the town hall is on the same street that's named after his family, if I'm not mistaken. I hope I'm not too insulting or too wrong.

But each municipality, no matter how small, will receive \$10,000: \$5,000 for each of the first two years. So, large or small, everybody gets \$10,000. After that, it's intended to be on a per-household basis. That's how the \$40 million will be divvied up. Now, there are other, more definitive rules for municipalities, but they already know those rules. They understand them, so there's not a lot of sense in giving the details of which municipality gets how much money, but they do have the option to opt out.

In many of these municipalities, there are existing illegal cannabis dispensaries. Let me be very clear that if you are walking or driving down the street yesterday, today or tomorrow and see a place that is selling cannabis, it is being sold illegally. If passed, our legislation will change all this. It was different yesterday, as it will be

today. Today the municipality will have the right to shut down these illegal dispensaries and apply a fee of up to \$250,000 to the operation. That option was never there. This is new.

In fact, the second weapon in the arsenal is that the owner of the building, the landlord, if knowingly housing an illegal dispensary, can also be fined up to \$250,000. If a corporation is involved, they can be fined up to \$1 million. This money will accrue to the municipality; this isn't provincial revenue. This is the incentive for the municipalities. This is the tool for the municipalities to go in and clean up these illegal dispensaries.

We have been warning the dispensaries from day one that you're in an illegal business and you should be shut down. If you are not shut down by October 17—today—you will never, ever be able to receive a licence to sell cannabis legally. We're definitive: There is zero tolerance. You will never get a licence in the province of Ontario if you are selling cannabis today.

This is an opportunity for new businesses to apply for a licence. Speaker, it will be later in the month of December that we will have an opportunity for the private sector to apply for a bricks-and-mortar retail store in a community that has not opted out. So they can begin the applications in December. On January 22, we'll know which, if any, communities opted out. And on April 1, we expect these private stores to be opened. In the meantime, cannabis is made legal in Canada by the federal government, and it's available online at ocs.ca.

We have been working diligently with the licensed producers, the LPs, the people who have a federal licence. It's only them who can grow cannabis. We are making certain that there's access to the legal sources, starting today. Seeds, incidentally, will not be available initially, but we're working closely with these LPs to begin to have access to a legal source of seeds in Ontario as well.

We have signed and announced our agreements with 32 federally licensed producers. That helps ensure that we have access to a broad selection of cannabis products throughout all of Ontario, starting online.

We're looking forward to this competitive process of bringing businesses into the retail sector. We're truly looking forward to having bricks-and-mortar operations right across the entire province.

I want to talk briefly about where you can consume cannabis. We know that common sense will prevail. It's the same as smoking. We will follow the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, except you also cannot consume cannabis in a motor vehicle or in a boat. Other than that, it's the same as the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. Just the same as smoking—we had to adjust to where you can smoke—it will take time for the public to adjust to the legalized environment. We're very, very confident that people will make socially responsible decisions as they are able to now mirror the smoking in the same areas as the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

I've used this example from home many, many times. We have a beautiful facility in North Bay that we built when I was mayor, the Steve Omischl sports complex. It's

an outdoor sports complex. It's huge, it's beautiful—soccer, parks and recreation. I tease my colleagues that the signage that says there's no smoking at this facility is three times more visible and plentiful than the actual sign that says you're on the Steve Omischl sports complex. Steve was a very young, very famous Olympian and successful skier. The Steve Omischl sports complex—you will know as you drive down Lakeshore Drive in North Bay that this is a place that you cannot smoke. And now, of course, because it follows the law, you can't consume cannabis there either.

Obviously, there will be opportunities for municipalities to do what they do as a municipality; as a former mayor, I can tell you that that will be the case. But if passed, our legislation will clarify rules around public consumption of cannabis. They will be aligned with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. That means, of course, that smoking and vaping cannabis will be prohibited in areas where smoking of tobacco is also prohibited, including motor vehicles and boats. We went that way through very active consultations with the public where we heard the recommendations—public health officials, police officials, our law enforcement officials—that to regulate the consumption of cannabis through the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, the rules regarding tobacco are already widely known.

1600

To be practical, Speaker, considering you can consume medical cannabis in many more places, if you are a law enforcement officer driving down a street and you look and see somebody smoking a cigarette, are you going to determine, each individually, whether it's consuming cannabis or smoking a cigarette? And then, if you've made the decision that it's cannabis, are you going to have to determine whether it's medical cannabis or not, which they're allowed to do? It just isn't even remotely practical to even imagine that occurring. That is a prime reason that it mirrors the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

But we're going to continue to listen to the people of Ontario, to consult with them. These are uncharted waters that we're entering to meet the federal legalization of cannabis.

Speaker, I want to continue to reiterate that in this entering of these uncharted waters, we put three things at the top of the chart: protecting our kids, keeping our roads safe and curbing the illegal element. We believe that we've put a suite of information together for the people of Ontario. We can take the federal legalization and, through our consultations—with municipalities, with First Nations, with police services, with businesses, with public health officials—we achieved and will continue to achieve our goal of keeping our kids safe, keeping our roads safe and combatting the illegal market.

I've gotten through page 1 of my speech and I still have about 15 or so pages to go, but I've only got another minute. I will tell you that the legislation, if passed, will also create a framework for private retailers. They will be licensed by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, the AGCO. The Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp.

would be the exclusive wholesaler and online retailer of cannabis in the province. Municipalities will be able to pass a council resolution by January 22, 2019, to opt out of retail stores, and First Nation communities would also be able to opt out of cannabis deliveries and retail stores. These are all the decisions that we made, based on excellent consultations right across the province of Ontario.

I will end as I began: by thanking the Attorney General. You have done an absolutely spectacular job of taking this federal legislation and putting it in place for the people of Ontario.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I guess I'm going to have the last 20 minutes ever before Bill 36 becomes law.

I want to draw the attention of people that there are actually four schedules in Bill 36. The first schedule is the Cannabis Act; the second schedule is the Cannabis Licence Act; the third schedule is the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act; and the fourth one is the amendments to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. More specifically: "Changes are also made to various provisions regarding vapour products and electronic cigarettes. For example ... the rules concerning the display and promotion of vapour products in stores."

I know that the minister started by saying that they have put this legislation together to protect youth, to protect kids. Well, schedule 4 goes completely in the opposite direction. What schedule 4 does is that it allows for vaping products to be marketed anywhere that kids have access. Right now, if you go in most convenience stores, you will see that right next to the candy bars, there will be advertising for vaping. Now that Juul has come into Ontario, they've made an arrangement with Shell gas stations so that in every Shell gas station, every time you fill up your car, every time you go in to pay, you will see the promotions for vaping.

I want to put a few things on the record regarding vaping. I see that there are quite a few MPPs in the House. While I'm speaking, text any 16- or 17-year-old you know, any of them who go to a high school in Ontario, and ask a 17- or 16-year-old how many people in their class vape and how many people in their schools vape. You're here, you're stuck, you have a phone. You must know somebody who is 16 or 17 going to high school in our province. Ask them.

I did that to my oldest grandson. I'm really proud to have six grandchildren. My oldest one, Tyson, is 17 years old. I text Tyson because at that age you don't talk; you text. I'm good with that. I texted Tyson and asked him, "Tyson, do you know if students in your school vape?" That was a pretty open question. The answer from Tyson was, "Every other student in my school from grade 9 to grade 12 vapes. I'd say that there are probably more kids who vape than kids who don't."

I fully realize, Speaker, that my grandchild is not a science connoisseur in vaping, but this is what it's like. I have seen this movie before. When I was a kid in high school, 48% of Ontarians smoked. It took us 50 years to

bring this down to 18%. In the area I represent, we never made it below; 28% of people still smoke.

Now we have this new product that the new generation is being hooked on. You wouldn't be surprised to know, Speaker, that it is the tobacco industry that owns the vaping products. They are looking for the next generation of people to get addicted. A lot of people will tell you, "Well, vaping is better than smoking." If you are a smoker, vaping is better than smoking, although in the vapours there are some cancer-carrying agents—not as many as in combusting tobacco.

But if you are a kid who has never smoked a day in your life, picking up vaping is picking up your addiction to nicotine. This addiction will increase your rate of heart attack; it will double your rate of heart attack. It will increase your rate of respiratory distress. We know how many kids have asthma—expect it to go through the roof. They are picking up an addiction. The tobacco industry that owns the vaping products knows that full well.

How do you hook the next generation of kids? By advertisements. We know that. We saw the tobacco industry. We remember that tobacco used to be in everything: in car racing, in downhill skiing, in tennis—the du Maurier cup; everybody remembers that? I'm looking around at sort of my age. We don't do this anymore because when you promote tobacco, people smoke more. If you promote vaping, kids will vape. Fifty per cent of kids in high school in Sudbury are vaping, and I bet you most of you have never seen what a Juul looks like, but text right now. Ask any 16- and 17-year-old what it looks like. They will be able to rhyme you off 15 different flavours as fast as they can answer a text.

We are not the target audience here, Speaker. The target audience is our children. So when this government and the Minister of Finance started his talk on Bill 36 by saying, "We have made sure that we protect kids"—then why did you include schedule 4 in that bill? Why did you make these changes to the regulations of vaping? Vaping was not supposed to be advertised unless you were in a speciality vaping shop. Kids under 19 years of age are not allowed to get into those shops, so you can advertise in there all you want. But don't advertise in convenience stores. Don't advertise in gas stations. Don't advertise everywhere kids go, because kids are getting addicted.

1610

Do you know what it is to live with an addiction? Do you know what it is to have the craving of nicotine? Any of us who have been smokers before—we all know what this feels like. It feels like you cannot get on a plane because by the time you get to Jamaica, you are ready to kill your spouse. Why? Because you need your nicotine fix. What should be a beautiful family vacation turns into a nightmare—not that I would know about that or anything—because somebody is addicted to nicotine.

It changes your life for the worse. An addiction to nicotine is not harmless. It comes with drastic consequences on your life, none of them good. But yet we have a bill right here right now in front of us that will change things for the worse for our kids, and I can't stand for that.

When you will look back in five years from now and look at what you have done when you enacted schedule 4 in that bill, you will all feel ashamed because by then your kids, your grandkids—the schools will have come to you and told you, “What are we doing with all of those kids who are addicted?”

I wanted to put a few things on the record from people who do work with kids quite regularly, so I went to teachers. A teacher told me, “Yesterday, in my high school in Toronto, we had an announcement over the PA system to remind students that vaping is not permitted in the hallway.” Really, we have PA announcements—did you know that, that in those schools right here in Toronto, the principals have to go over the PA because there are so many kids who vape in the hallways? They did that yesterday.

A grade 11 student says, “Everyone goes off the property at lunch so that they can vape off the property.” This grade 11 student says most of the kids do it.

I have another one that says about vaping: “The kids in our school—they vape in the parking lot. Sometimes, if one of them has a car, they will vape inside” the student’s car.

It keeps on. Another school, this time in and around Durham: “Kids vape in class. Kids were vaping in my class while I was in the lab. We know that it’s not allowed, but they are doing it anyway.”

We’ll now go to another school, where a teacher says, “Yes, I can smell it as I move through the hall. It’s also very easy to notice as soon as you enter the bathrooms because kids go and hide in the bathrooms and smoke in the halls.” Remember when we used to do that with cigarettes? The new generation of kids is doing that with vaping. The end result is not going to be any better than it was for us.

Another one: “We had an issue with the hockey players on a team bus coming back from a tournament. Almost every kid was vaping.” And those are the athletes. They are on the travelling hockey team.

Another, from teachers who have reached out to me: “We catch them in the bathroom quite often. We send them to the office. The juice is confiscated, the devices are collected, and they are asked not to bring this to school anymore.” It’s quite a world that we live in. It goes on and on.

I’d like to put on the record really quickly Ross Harvey, a teacher who reached out to me:

“Please feel free to share my letter in any manner that brings this issue to the forefront and initiates action to eliminate it. What is happening is a complete joke and sets us back decades with regards to the education and success ... with teen smoking. If it is not dealt with adequately and quickly, it will become an epidemic (which it is close to now). It has to be seen to be believed. Any government official who drags their feet on this has to be questioned regarding their motives.”

It goes on:

“Honourable Members of Parliament,

“I write this letter as an educator within the Ontario high school education system and in regard to my concern

with the rapid increase in use of vaping products among Ontario, and likely all Canadian, students. I watch daily, with despair as a new generation of youth become hooked on a product” that the provincial government seems oblivious to address. “While the government was adamant to eliminate flavoured cigars, which was a product that had little to no appeal to our youth, you sit back and allow this industry to lure our children in with vaping flavours such as strawberry-banana, blueberry cheesecake and vanilla custard!

“We have spent hundreds of millions of ... dollars combatting teen smoking and you sat idly by as this industry hooked our children with a likely equally addictive and poisonous product. You should all be ashamed!! Where is the government protection” of our teens? “Where is government legislation on an industry that seems to have zero accountability... ? We were winning the tobacco war and you sat back and let this industry and product entice our children. Using exotic flavour names, and promoting it as an alternative to smoking and a smoking cessation vehicle, it has subjected a whole new generation to a product that most of them have been tricked into thinking is safe.

“Drive around our schools, or go to the plazas” where kids hang out during lunchtime “and watch them smoke this silliness in groups. When you hear a teen ask another if they have any ‘juice,’” it’s because they need juice for vaping. “We had finally succeeded in reducing the curbside tobacco smokers around our schools only to see them return anew vaping and sending ridiculous amounts of smoke/vapour into the air. In my opinion, you have all failed to some degree in your responsibility to protect our youth. Are we all here to make the vaping industry rich, or to protect our children from an industry that has zero concern for their health? Have we learned nothing from tobacco?”

“This product came to light as a smoking alternative and cessation device. It holds no regard to whom it draws in and is riding to success on the backs of our youth. It should be banned, period! Those who want to use it should do so with a prescription, with the intended purpose to cease smoking tobacco. Who is making the decisions here, corporate greed,” or the government that is put in place to protect its citizens?

“It’s time to stand up before it’s too late. The children I see smoking these products would never have taken up tobacco, but readily vape. They have been sold a false bill of goods, with fancy flavours, and with government complicity! This is the saddest part.”

Signed, “Ross Harvey.”

I went on to ask—first I asked the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Any of you can do the same; he is an officer of the government. I asked him, “Dear Chief Medical Officer of Health: Is it true that vaping helps people quit?” He went on to say that the evidence for using e-cigarettes or vaping for smoking cessation is still limited and that they are finding that more smokers who have been using e-cigarettes to quit are not successful. He goes on to say there is concern that vaping and e-cigarette use may act as a gateway to smoking tobacco cigarettes among youth—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to try it now.

M^{me} France Gélinas: They taste pretty good, and they smell pretty good too, I must say. And they look super slick. Anybody who sees this, it looks cool; it smells cool. It is used by cool people. Are you surprised that the kids want to use this? Absolutely not. They have a recipe for success. But wait: The success will be kids who are addicted to nicotine and kids who will be at twice the risk of heart disease, cardiovascular disease and respiratory diseases. We have seen this movie before. I'm not interested in living through this movie once again.

1620

Basically, the chief medical officer agreed that 23% of students from grade 7 to grade 12 had tried vaping, and that was in 2014. We now know that this has increased by 46%. The number of kids who vape is going through the roof. Why are we worried? Because the nicotine that is found in vaping juice alters adolescent brain development, can affect memory and can affect their concentration. Nicotine is addictive.

You can not only vape nicotine; you can also vape cannabis. The smells are quite different: When a youth lights up a joint, everybody can smell it. When a youth vapes cannabis, nobody can tell the difference.

Of the past-30-day e-cigarette vapers, 32% had also vaped cannabis. Remember my grandson Tyson? Fifty per cent of the kids in their class—those are kids who are between the ages of 12 and 17—50% of the kids in their school vape. Well, you can take it to the bank that 32% of those also vape cannabis.

The symptoms of respiratory disease have been observed in younger vapers, including coughing, wheezing and worsening of asthma. If a teen around you starts to wheeze but has never wheezed before, if you see that they start to cough, have a look through their backpack, have a look at their laptop and have a look at the—man, I forgot the name of the little thing that you carry data on. The data sticks that you plug into—

Interjection.

M^{me} France Gélinas: USB key; thank you. Have a look at the USB key, because the vaper looks identical to a USB stick. You would see it plugged into the side of their computer and you think that they're doing their homework and downloading whatever homework they have done onto the USB stick—absolutely not, Speaker. They are charging their vaper so that the minute you have your back on them, they get their next hit of nicotine.

The kids quickly become dependent on vaping devices. There has been a 46% increase from 2014 in the number of youth from grade 10 to grade 12 who vape. Polling shows that 69% of Ontarians support restrictions on the promotion and marketing of vaping products, and 61% support banning fruit, bubble gum and other flavours that appeal to youth.

The research is there; the evidence is there. Why did you put that in the bill? We will all regret this. We will all pay, deeply, a very high price, for 50% of our youth growing up will be addicted to nicotine. We will all pay the price. You have a chance to fix this. You fix this by voting no to this bill and taking section 4 out of there.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I'm glad to be able to speak today to Bill 36. I want to say that I do support the legalization of marijuana—or cannabis, I should say. I do believe we should have had, across the country, a more deliberate and cautious approach.

Having said that, the legislation that's coming forward, I'm glad the government is still keeping the distribution part. I do want to congratulate them on their stated purpose of protecting our kids and zero tolerance. Some of the things in the bill don't do that; they don't make it any easier to do that. I know that that's what they want to do.

I think no caps on stores, allowing smoking in public places, and not giving municipalities the power to be able to restrict those stores in certain areas are all errors in this bill. I can't support the bill for this reason.

More importantly, to what the member from Nickel Belt said, I think the thing that is most concerning about this bill is schedule 4. Everything she said is right. We shouldn't be doing this. This shouldn't be in this bill. We don't know the effects that vaping is going to have on vapers in the long term. We do know that it's going to be a gateway for kids and that the companies that are marketing this are marketing towards kids. We've seen this before. It happened when I was young, it happened when my kids were young, and it's happening right now.

We had an opportunity here to take a stand and do the right thing with regard to vape products, and the government hasn't done this. I can't support the bill.

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I want to rise and speak to this bill. It's very important. As legislators, there is a time when we make rules and laws in this province that affect future generations, and I think this is such a time.

I'm pleased to see that the legal age has been maintained at 19 in this province, because we don't yet know the full extent of the medical and public health impacts of the legalization of cannabis.

I say to this government that you cannot throw caution to the wind. It's far too important. There are many questions that remain—such as enforcement. Many municipalities have spoken out against that and said that we're in fact setting up a patchwork network in our province based on this bill.

I would also urge the Attorney General to support the federal government's direction in expunging the criminal records for those Ontarians who were criminalized as a result of the previous state. Just yesterday this was a criminal drug, and today it is legal. There are certain groups that have been adversely impacted, and I urge the Attorney General to really think about that and to think about how we can support Ontarians.

Once again, throwing caution to the wind is not what we should be doing. When we look at schedule 4, allowing cannabis use anywhere in our communities—what about the impact on the health of young people, on children, on youth, and the effects of taking up smoking? That's

something that we have to think about not just now, but for future generations.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time allotted for debate and third reading of Bill 36 has now expired. Therefore, pursuant to the order of the House dated October 3, 2018, I'm now required to put the question.

Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, has moved third reading of Bill 36, An Act to enact a new Act and make amendments to various other Acts respecting the use and sale of cannabis and vapour products in Ontario.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I believe I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1629 to 1639.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, has moved third reading of Bill 36, An Act to enact a new Act and make amendments to various other Acts respecting the use and sale of cannabis and vapour products in Ontario.

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

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hillier, Randy	Rasheed, Kaleed
Baber, Roman	Hogarth, Christine	Rickford, Greg
Babikian, Aris	Kanapathi, Logan	Roberts, Jeremy
Bailey, Robert	Karahalios, Belinda	Romano, Ross
Barrett, Toby	Ke, Vincent	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bouma, Will	Khanjin, Andrea	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Kramp, Daryl	Schreiner, Mike
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kusendova, Natalia	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Stan	Lecce, Stephen	Simard, Amanda
Clark, Steve	Martin, Robin	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Martow, Gila	Smith, Dave
Coteau, Michael	McDonell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Crawford, Stephen	McKenna, Jane	Surma, Kinga
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McNaughton, Monte	Tangri, Nina
Dunlop, Jill	Miller, Norman	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fee, Amy	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Ford, Doug	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Park, Lindsey	Wai, Daisy
Ghamari, Goldie	Parsa, Michael	Walker, Bill
Gill, Parm	Pettapiece, Randy	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Phillips, Rod	Yakabuski, John
Harris, Mike	Piccini, David	Yurek, Jeff

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gretzky, Lisa	Morrison, Suze
Arthur, Ian	Harden, Joel	Natyshak, Taras
Bell, Jessica	Hassan, Faisal	Sattler, Peggy
Berns-McGown, Rima	Hatfield, Percy	Shaw, Sandy
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Singh, Gurratan
Bourgouin, Guy	Hunter, Mitzie	Singh, Sara

Burch, Jeff	Karpoche, Bhutila	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Fife, Catherine	Lalonde, Marie-France	Tabuns, Peter
Fraser, John	Lindo, Laura Mae	Taylor, Monique
French, Jennifer K.	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanhof, John
Gates, Wayne	Mantha, Michael	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	Yarde, Kevin
Glover, Chris	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 69; the nays are 41.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I declare the motion carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Orders of the day? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding extending the sitting of the Standing Committee on General Government for Wednesday, October 17, which is today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Back to the government House leader. I recognize you again.

Hon. Todd Smith: I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated October 3, the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to sit until 6:30 p.m. tonight.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The government House leader, Mr. Smith, has moved that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated October 3, the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to sit until 6:30 p.m. tonight.

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

Motion agreed to.

STANDING ORDERS

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 24, 2018, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion regarding amendments to the standing orders.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 16, 2018, I am now required to put the question.

Madame Des Rosiers has moved an amendment to the amendment to the government notice of motion number 5, relating to changes to the standing orders, currently government order number 4.

Is it the pleasure of the House that Madame Des Rosiers's motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1646 to 1647.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): On September 19, 2018, Madame Des Rosiers moved an amendment to the amendment to government notice of motion number 5, relating to changes to the standing orders, currently government order number 4.

All those in favour of Madame Des Rosiers's motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Coteau, Michael	Hunter, Mitzie	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Lalonde, Marie-France	
Fraser, John	Schreiner, Mike	

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All those opposed to Madame Des Rosiers's motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Anand, Deepak	Harris, Mike	Piccini, David
Andrew, Jill	Hassan, Faisal	Rasheed, Kaleed
Arthur, Ian	Hatfield, Percy	Rickford, Greg
Baber, Roman	Hillier, Randy	Roberts, Jeremy
Babikian, Aris	Hogarth, Christine	Romano, Ross
Bailey, Robert	Horwath, Andrea	Sandhu, Amarjot
Barrett, Toby	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bell, Jessica	Karahalios, Belinda	Sattler, Peggy
Berns-McGown, Rima	Karpoche, Bhutla	Scott, Laurie
Bisson, Gilles	Ke, Vincent	Shaw, Sandy
Bouma, Will	Kernaghan, Terence	Simard, Amanda
Bourgouin, Guy	Khanjin, Andrea	Singh, Gurratan
Burch, Jeff	Kramp, Daryl	Singh, Sara
Calandra, Paul	Kusendova, Natalia	Skelly, Donna
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Dave
Cho, Stan	Lindo, Laura Mae	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	Mamakwa, Sol	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Coe, Lorne	Mantha, Michael	Stiles, Marit
Crawford, Stephen	Martin, Robin	Surma, Kinga
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martow, Gila	Tabuns, Pether
Dunlop, Jill	McDonell, Jim	Tangri, Nina
Fedeli, Victor	McKenna, Jane	Taylor, Monique
Fee, Amy	McNaughton, Monte	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fife, Catherine	Miller, Norman	Thompson, Lisa M.
Ford, Doug	Miller, Paul	Tibollo, Michael A.
French, Jennifer K.	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Morrison, Suze	Vanthof, John
Gates, Wayne	Mulrone, Caroline	Wai, Daisy
Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras	Walker, Bill
Ghamari, Goldie	Oosterhoff, Sam	Wilson, Jim
Gill, Parm	Pang, Billy	Yakabuski, John
Glover, Chris	Park, Lindsey	Yarde, Kevin
Gretzky, Lisa	Parsa, Michael	Yurek, Jeff
Hardeman, Ernie	Pettapiece, Randy	
Harden, Joel	Phillips, Rod	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 7; the nays are 103.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I declare the motion lost.

We will now vote on Madame Gélinas's amendment to the motion.

Madame Gélinas has moved an amendment to government notice of motion number 5 relating to the changes to the standing orders, currently government order number 4.

Is it the pleasure of the House that Madame Gélinas's motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1652 to 1653.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): On September 19, 2018, Madame Gélinas moved an amendment to government notice of motion number 5 relating to the changes to the standing orders, currently government order number 4.

All those in favour of Madame Gélinas's motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Andrew, Jill	Gretzky, Lisa	Natyshak, Taras
Arthur, Ian	Harden, Joel	Sattler, Peggy
Bell, Jessica	Hassan, Faisal	Schreiner, Mike
Berns-McGown, Rima	Hatfield, Percy	Shaw, Sandy
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Singh, Gurratan
Bourgouin, Guy	Hunter, Mitzie	Singh, Sara
Burch, Jeff	Karpoche, Bhutla	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Coteau, Michael	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Lalonde, Marie-France	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Lindo, Laura Mae	Taylor, Monique
Fraser, John	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Mantha, Michael	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul	Yarde, Kevin
Gélinas, France	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	
Glover, Chris	Morrison, Suze	

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All those opposed to Madame Gélinas's motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 43; the nays are 67.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I declare the motion lost.

We will now return to debate on the main motion.

Further debate?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Ottawa West–Nepean.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge a special guest in the gallery here. We have a former member of Parliament for North Vancouver, Mr. Andrew Saxton, who was also parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance who balanced Canada's budget.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): That wasn't a point of order. However, we do like to recognize our guests when they visit us. Welcome.

Further debate?

Mr. David Piccini: It's a privilege to rise before the House to speak to this today. Before I discuss specifics, let me reiterate that every member of provincial Parliament was elected to uphold the integrity of the democratic system that brought us to this place.

Mr. Speaker, both sides are often quick to say they represent the will of the people, but in reality the answer is a little more nuanced. Our majority government reflects the broad will of the people of Ontario as distributed through our 124 ridings. The opposition, too, reflect the will of a great number of Ontarians. And the orderly debate in this place underpins our democratic process that we agree to uphold. The structures in place, including the standing orders which guide the proceedings of this chamber, ensure that this important debate actually happens. If this debate does not happen or, alternatively, if it does not happen in a fair and efficient manner, we compromise the principles of democracy we vow to uphold.

Standing orders are structures that allow us to perform our duties as elected representatives, enabling peace, order and good governance in Ontario.

Despite the short time that this Progressive Conservative Party has been in power, there has been an amazing demonstration by this government to truly represent the people of Ontario by getting to work on bills and motions that will help Ontarians in a timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, we ensured the future of our next generation by getting the students back to class at York University.

We ensured a viable health care system is there for Ontarians when they need it by alleviating hallway health care and taking that important first step by adding 6,000 long-term-care beds and adding required surge funding to hospitals like mine in Northumberland–Peterborough South.

In addition, we've worked with our SMEs. We've held valuable SME round tables, like the red tape reduction round table held by PA Parsa in my riding, where we heard countless—countless—numbers of small businesses that said we've got to reduce the red tape. They said, "Thank you for listening, reducing the small business tax rate, reducing the corporate tax rate"—by listening, voicing their concerns on Bill 148.

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Mr. Speaker, they have a champion in our government, which truly is a government for the people.

To properly contextualize the amendments we're looking to introduce, we need to recognize that sometimes we do, in this House, get off track. As such, these amendments will bring greater effectiveness to the proceedings of this House, but more importantly, they ensure that the integrity of the democratic process is upheld.

Our government has introduced six minor procedural changes that would essentially add 40 more hours of debate to this place—yes, 40 more hours of debate—so that we can debate the important issues in this province. Those 40 more hours of debate will allow all sides to be heard and debated, and all ideas to be contemplated.

Instead, the Liberal member from Ottawa–Vanier proposed an amendment saying, "Forget about everything the government House leader said. Let's strike a committee. Let's also make a bunch of procedural changes in the interim as well."

Mr. Speaker, we don't need more bureaucratic processes. We saw, in the last 15 years, the bureaucratic mess that the previous government got us in.

What's even more worrying about those proposed amendments made by the member—thankfully, we voted them down—is that it truly shows that she learned very little from the resounding defeat and the resounding message Ontarians sent her party in the last election. As the interim leader of the Liberal Party said at their convention, Ontarians gave them a "time-out."

I would argue that Ontarians sent a much stronger message in the last election. Time-outs are for players on a team. Ontarians were so fed up with the Liberals in the last election that they ensured that the Liberals didn't even have enough players to field a team. This was the strong message they sent. As such, they are independents, no different from our very first Green member elected to this House, and they shouldn't be treated any differently. They are not entitled to their entitlements. Mr. Speaker, it was far more than a time-out. It was a clear message that Ontarians had had enough with those who were entitled to their entitlements.

We don't need to strike a committee for every amendment proposed by government, especially for this minor procedural changes which give all parties more time to speak in this Legislature. We must all agree that every member in this House will benefit from these changes, regardless of party.

What we do need, what we are working on with these changes, is more effective government, more effective debate in this Legislature, more debate in this Legislature. Let me reiterate this: The reason for introducing these amendments is to ensure flexibility, fairness and sufficient debate.

Without putting members opposite to sleep, I do want to discuss the proposed amendments, because it's important to let Ontarians know what we are doing. What we're doing is working for them and making government more efficient and more effective.

Primarily, the proposed amendment to standing order 6(b) specifically addresses the last number of fall and spring sessional days. The current standing orders allow for a motion to extend the sitting hours on those last number of days, specifically the last eight. This government's amendment simply proposes that this flexibility be extended to the last 12 days of the session, not exclusively the last eight. This would provide greater opportunity for a substantive debate to occur the right way. This would also give members in this place certainty that they can bring business before the House.

Quite literally, this motion benefits the opposition in a huge way. Specifically, private members' bills can be completed within the time frame of that session, effectively ensuring that everyone's ridings' issues and/or their needs can be addressed in this House. Mr. Speaker, I've heard fantastic private members' bills on both sides of the House in our short few months here.

This amendment would allow enough time for the approval and passage of important pieces of legislation, as previously referenced in the private members'.

Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservative Party was elected with a clear mandate, and we need to have the procedural tools in order to deliver on that mandate in a timely manner. We want to do more for all Ontarians. These proposed amendments would allow us to do more. Quite frankly, some Ontarians cannot wait for extensive bureaucracy to take its course, and urgency is required.

Our second proposed amendment would amend section 35(e) of the standing orders. It would allow more opportunity for independent members to contribute during ministerial statements. It's simple. That's exactly what we're doing—no buts, no ifs, no beating around the bush. We're giving more time to contribute during ministerial statements. We want to hear from all the members—members of the independent Liberal persuasion, member of the Green Party. This would be a win for our democratic process, a promotion of all voices—voices that, as of today, are not allowed to participate when ministerial statements are given. Just think about it: The eight members opposite of independent Liberal and Green persuasion aren't allowed to contribute. They're not given that time. It would be a win to ensure that all the voices in this Legislative Assembly are heard, regardless of their party status.

The third and fourth amendments are minor changes to opposition day debates. To be clear, these changes would not impact the amount of debate during opposition days or the number of opposition days that would occur. They would merely give all members an additional two hours to debate government legislation, to hold this government's feet to the fire. Again, this is a minor change which further fosters democratic debate and ensures that all voices are heard.

Mr. Speaker, we should also talk briefly about the changes to standing order 98(e). The motivation for this amendment is to stop suspending the House's proceedings in the middle of Thursday afternoons. Again, the amendment to the amendment would just kind of wipe out and

strike a committee, as per standing order 98(e). Let me remind members that this standing order envisioned a three-party system, not the official party makeup that we currently have today. Having the standing order as it is now without further amendments results in shortened time for debate on important private members' business. This amendment being proposed is merely an administrative amendment that fixes two standing orders that currently contradict each other.

I repeat that the very tangible outcome of all these amendments is that, added together, 40 hours of debate per session would be added. That's significant. That's important. That's efficient. That's democratic.

As the Legislative Assembly representing the people of Ontario, let's show honour to those who elected us to this place and make them proud by how we respect and improve the functioning of the day-to-day proceedings of this chamber. Let's do more for everyday Ontarians.

The last amendment pertains to standing order 47(b). For our viewers at home, standing order 47(b) relates to the time allocation motion provisions. It essentially brings the time allocation motion provisions into alignment with several of the other standing orders which already apply to private members' business and the morning routine proceedings. Basically, the members opposite would still be able to ring the bells, but this would change it so that any division bells that occurred during time allocation debate would be only 10 minutes. To reiterate, these changes are substantively procedural and administrative in nature. However, the members opposite have criticized this proposed amendment. They have called it undemocratic.

Mr. Speaker, in this House, the member from Timmins stated that standing order changes should be made by the assembly; in other words, in a way that allows everybody to participate. What we are doing is enabling these members to present in the House, in this place. In fact, ingrained in the walls of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario is "Hear the other side," as the members opposite have often said. This is the purpose of the proposed amendments to the standing orders: to hear more from the other side.

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To make the debate more efficient and to make the debate more effective, we want everyone to have the ability to participate—all members. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I am moving this amendment, which will illustrate that our Progressive Conservative government has taken the opposition's concerns to heart. We are moving this motion:

That government order 4 be amended by striking the sixth paragraph that begins "That standing order 47(b) be amended..." etc.

Mr. Speaker, we are a government for the people. All of these proposed amendments would give certainty to the members of this Legislature. When a request is made for them to show up in the Legislature for a vote, they would have certainty that it's not going to get derailed, which would allow members to plan their days better. We all

have such busy days in this place, a number of meetings to uphold—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I've been instructed that if you have just moved an amendment, then I have to repeat it and it has to be handed to one of our pages.

Mr. David Piccini: I hand this to page Rongbin, and there are copies, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Piccini has moved that government order 4 be amended by striking the sixth paragraph that begins "That standing order 47(b) be amended...."

Seeking clarification from the member, I'm asking if, in "government order 4 be amended by striking," the word "out"—

Mr. David Piccini: Yes, Mr. Speaker, that's correct: "striking out."

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. It wasn't in the original motion. Shall I repeat it again? Okay.

Again, Mr. Piccini has moved that government order number 4 be amended by striking out the sixth paragraph that begins "That standing order 47(b) be amended...."

Now we are debating the amendment that Mr. Piccini has brought forward. I return it back to Mr. Piccini. Again, you are debating your amendment.

Mr. David Piccini: Mr. Speaker, each and every member of this House, from experienced cabinet ministers to new members, Conservatives, New Democrats, Liberals and Greens, all have busy schedules in the week that they work to represent their home ridings, their constituents in those ridings. A little bit of certainty would be wonderful for all of us and it would allow us to have more meetings in our day. Not only would members appreciate that bit of certainty, but I'm sure our hard-working staff would really appreciate not having to scramble to reschedule meetings or make sure their members get back to the House for some unforeseen matter.

While it may seem like a small change to some, this added certainty would go a long way to reducing the stress of members and staff in a place where, frankly, our collective blood pressure is probably on the high side. If we are less stressed and more organized, we can certainly be more effective and efficient for Ontarians. Mr. Speaker, that's a commitment we've made: to be a government, to be a place, that's more effective and efficient for the people of Ontario.

This change will help ensure that members can take stakeholder meetings and constituency meetings and attend different events and know that they will be able to attend them. Most members in this House have on many occasions had to suddenly cancel meetings and/or reschedule. I, for one, do not like cancelling meetings because I want to meet with my constituents and the different stakeholders. What is wrong with making government a little more efficient, a little more accountable?

The people of this province want ultimately to save more of their money. They want an economy that is growing, that yields and grows in private sector jobs, well-

paying jobs, and that create jobs for our future generations. That's what we did when we got the students back in class at York University. That's what we've been doing by holding the round tables with our small businesses around and across this great province, listening to them—the regulatory burdens, the red tape that is stifling growth and innovation. We're listening, and we're moving in an efficient manner. We are getting things done for the people of this province.

We believe that these changes to the standing orders will be technical to some but that they will actually allow the Progressive Conservative government to get more done, more debate in this place, and to deliver on our mandate to Ontarians. This is about fairness. Again, it's about ensuring the maximum amount of debate on important legislation put forward by all members of this House. It's about debating the important issues. It's about going back and forth on changes and amendments. It's about going back and forth on the legislation that we're bringing forward to this place.

We were elected on a clear mandate to deliver for the people of Ontario, to get government off their backs, to put a little more money in their pockets. That's what we've been doing each and every day: putting more money back in the pockets of Ontarians. I know it's been bemoaned by members opposite of the New Democratic Party, who want to see bigger government and bigger spending, but ultimately, they want to make the decisions for Ontarians. We want to do the opposite: put more money back in their pockets and empower the people of this great province.

The proposed amendments benefit members across all parties. As such, I urge everyone to join us in vote in favour of them.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to rise today to address this important issue and speak on this important matter.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It is always a pleasure to rise in this House and represent the people of Timiskaming—Cochrane and my colleagues in the NDP, today discussing a motion to change the standing orders.

I've got a few admissions to make. When I was elected in 2011, I had never heard of the standing orders. I'm assuming that many of the people who got elected this year had never heard of the standing orders. I've been elected since 2011, and I have another admission to make, Speaker: I don't pretend to understand them all. That's why we have the Clerks' table. So I find it really interesting when I hear the members who have been here for 100-some days and are experts on the standing orders.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: And democracy.

Mr. John Vanthof: And on democracy, and urging us all to vote to change the standing orders.

What I've learned since 2011, since I was humbly elected here from my dairy farm in Timiskaming—Cochrane, is that the standing orders are basically the rule book for how this place runs; how our modern democracy, which has been developed over hundreds of years, is

supposed to run. The Legislature is a tool, and the standing orders are the way that the tool functions. It's the rules of how long a debate can go—those types of things.

This government is in such a hurry to change the standing orders because they really don't know—and I think I can prove this—how the Legislature is actually supposed to function. We have had emergency debates. We have had emergency summer debates. We've sat from midnight till 6 o'clock, in their words, "for the people." But there's actually a way to get legislation through this place without using something called time allocation. Every time in your first 100 days of government, except for one bill, every other bill has been—you know, legislators like to use the words "ram through the Legislature."

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Basically, what you do when you ram through the Legislature is, oh, sure, you allow a few hours of debate, perhaps a committee—not very often. You guys aren't great on committees. But what you're showing is, you're only making legislation for your people, not the people. And what happens when you do that? You end up in big problems, the same problems that the former government ended up in after 15 years because, at the end, they started making political decisions for themselves. That's how we ended up with the Fair Hydro Plan. They rammed that through the Legislature when, looking back, everybody knew that was a bad idea. You're doing the same thing. You're doing the same thing. You're not actually using the Legislature for what it's designed for.

The hours of debate isn't really the point. The point is allowing the opposition the opportunity to actually work with the government and, once in a while, hold up the government, because when you hold up the government on certain bills, when you work with the House leaders, you actually have meetings and say, "You know what? This bill and this bill and this bill, we don't like them, but you won the election. We can live with them. But this one's got some serious problems and we are going to do everything we can to alert you to those problems." That's what the Legislature is supposed to do, and that's why the opposition has to have the tools to hold the government up sometimes.

You won the election. You tell us that all the time. I think you're trying to tell yourselves that. News flash: You won. It's time to be a government. You can no longer blame the former government; it's time to be a government. You're campaigning to yourselves. You don't like listening to the opposition, so you change the rules. They say they're giving us more time. They're taking away the actual tools; each time, they chip away at the tools where the opposition can actually hold up the government.

You know where this stems from? During the emergency debate when this careful government for the people was willing to use the "notwithstanding" clause to meddle in the Toronto election and we were trying to hold them back, trying to protect themselves from themselves, we employed a procedural tactic, and we employed that procedural tactic—

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's a tool.

Mr. John Vanthof: A tool. It's a tactic, a tool. And we specifically chose one that a former Conservative leader, later Premier, used because, at that time, with the standing orders, as long as you kept introducing bills, you could hold up the whole Legislature. You could use that tool. The government would come to you and say, "Okay. You know what? We need you to stop doing that. What do we have to do to get that done?" At that time, I believe it was to hold budget hearings. It wasn't something—and you know who did that, that tactic, that tool? Former Premier Mike Harris. So the standing orders were changed so that you could no longer introduce bills ad infinitum, but there is a certain period of time where you could introduce bills.

So, we used the tools that we had at our disposal, and my colleague from Timmins introduced a lot of bills about checking for zebra mussels in lakes. We took that verbatim from former Premier Mike Harris—verbatim. We held the government up with the tools at our disposal for a whole day—a day, Speaker. They were incensed. They were absolutely incensed, and they decided that this was never going to happen to those folks again. They changed the standing orders.

They're missing the point. The point of having an opposition is that the opposition represents—in this case, I believe the opposition combined got more votes than the government. So while they got a mandate because of our system—and I'm not disagreeing that they got the mandate to govern—they didn't get the majority of the vote. So the opposition has the right to express the votes, to express their people's voices. In places where we feel that the people we represent truly believe that the government is making a mistake, we should have the ability to hold the government up. Not all the time—if the opposition was doing it all the time, then I think eventually the people would recognize that and the opposition would pay for it. But the opposition needs the ability to, on occasion, hold the government up. It's not about hours of debate; it's about effectively having the ability to put the brakes on once in a while. What they're doing with their changes is that each time, they take a little bit of that brake away.

Do you know what happens when the car slowly loses all its brakes? It crashes. That's the problem with a government that wants to take away all the checks and balances: You're going to crash. For those of you who just got elected and are thinking that we're just trying to slow you down: Yes, we are trying to slow you down, because you need a wider perspective, and you're not using that wider perspective. You need to use the opposition, not just go, "Oh, we've given you six hours more debate. You should be so very happy. But no, we're not going to ever allow an amendment. We're actually not even going to use the system, because we're going to time-allocate everything."

If you're going to time-allocate everything—really, many of the older members or more senior members who used to sit on this side would be just as frustrated as I am. If you're going to not bother listening to the debate, you're kind of wasting everybody's time.

Our system has been developed over centuries. People have died for our system. There's a reason why we sit this far apart and why there's only one person, the Sergeant-at-Arms, who's allowed to have a sword here anymore. That reason is that so we can actually, through a democratic process, solve the issues of the day. But you're no longer using them, because when the issues of the day are decided by one person, without any criticism, things end badly. That's why we have the process we do.

Each time you take the rules and you rejig them to make it more for show and less for substance, we end up with a weaker system. If you keep weakening the system, bit by bit, day by day, we are going to crash. News flash: Just because you got a mandate doesn't mean that you're the only one with good ideas. It doesn't mean that all of your ideas are good. We are all human. You will have some very bad ideas, and because you're taking away any criticism of your ideas, there's a good chance that some of your bad ideas are going to be implemented. People are going to pay, and it seems that you're not really concerned about the people paying. You are going to pay, electorally, and you should be worried about that. I've said this before: I am one of the few people who really cares about you guys. I have family on your side.

Mr. Bill Walker: Uncle Ernie.

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Mr. John Vanthof: Uncle Ernie. I do. But more importantly, I care about this Legislature. I'm very proud to be from Ontario, and I'm very proud to be elected, as I'm sure all of you are. I'm humbled that people in my riding actually sent me here and asked me to represent them. But I'm very concerned that this is becoming more of a show than an actual place of legitimate debate, and these changes make it more concerning.

You have a mandate for four years. You make some promises, and you want to get promises out of the gate fast. I understand that. But that you have to change the rules because you were made to feel foolish one day because you didn't understand the rules, so now you're going to change them—is that really for the people, or is that for yourselves? It's for yourselves. You can put all the little plaques on the wall that you want and all the little plaques on your desks saying that you're for the people, but when you do things that are for yourselves, those plaques ring very hollow.

If you really think about it, it's a great election tagline, "for the people." I'm not discounting that. But if you really think that the only way in a democratic system that you can convince people that you are for the people is with a brass plaque, you've got bigger problems than you know. Because the brass plaque, while you're changing the rules, making it tougher for the people, all the people, to actually have their opinions heard—the biggest waste so far is that you're wasting money on brass plaques. You're wasting time and you're wasting your own values by deluding yourselves. This is a serious issue.

Do you know what? If anybody is watching us—I don't expect anyone to understand or really care about the standing orders. But we should, because we have been

elected to not only represent our people but stand up for democracy, and for the continuation of our democracy, and to make sure the rules work, instead of trying to change the rules so they work for your side. But just because they work for one side doesn't mean they work better for democracy. Some day, if you're lucky—or unlucky—some of you are going to end up on this side, and you're going to wonder: "Oh, wait a second. That didn't work." You have to have a system that works regardless of the side you're on.

I've been here since 2011. A few of my class of 2011 are here. We don't pretend to be experts. We're not—that's kind of a good thing—but we do understand that the rules are important. The rules have been developed over a long, long period. One of this government's accomplishments within the first 100 or 110 days now is going to be, "We had to change the rules because democracy just wasn't working for us." That's not going to be their tagline, but that's what they're doing. That's exactly what they're doing.

The fact that they have to time-allocate every bill, minus one: That is the worst record in House leader history, every bill.

And not only that—that's not quick enough for you—but you have to change the rules, because the opposition held you back by one day. That's what this is all about, and that is a shame, and that is dangerous. It really is.

This is a partisan place. We do to-and-fro. But at the end of the day, I hope that we all believe in the sanctity of this place and the sanctity of the rules. If we don't, and if you don't, we are in for a heap of hurt.

People say, "Oh, this can never happen. This can never happen." Don't kid yourselves, folks. This has happened, and it has happened—there are people still alive—when Western democracies went from being a democracy to—I don't know what to call it—a fascist state. And millions of people died, because of little things, because they changed the rules, slowly, bit by bit, and they started picking off different types of people, bit by bit. If we don't stand up against it—and this is exactly the same thing. You're taking a little bit of our rules.

Speaker, I urge the government to rethink this. I urge the government to actually stand up for democracy and to withdraw this, to reconsider and withdraw it, and reconsider their whole principle of ramming through as opposed to using the Legislature as a tool.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to speak to this today. I have a lot of ground to cover. My colleague and friend from Timiskaming-Cochrane has given me lots of stuff for my speech, which is always good, because we have 20 minutes to finish the day in here. We'll bring it close to the end of the day for you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not certain where I'm going to start with some of his comments, but I'm going to just start, I think, at the very start by saying that the Liberal member from Ottawa-Vanier brought some amendments, and that was defeated. But during that speech, the member from Scarborough—

Guildwood used a term a couple of times, and I'm going to quote, saying "throwing caution to the wind."

It made me kind of hearken back—and a little bit of this, to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane: I've been here, the same as him, since 2011. Many of his colleagues and my colleagues came in in that great year. When you throw caution to the wind, under that Liberal government for 15 years, 600 schools were closed. So it's interesting when she used a term like "throwing caution to the wind." I wonder what she was thinking about closing 600 schools across our great province.

The Green Energy Act, which has decimated a lot of our rural communities, brought wind turbines and put them into communities that didn't want them, and they were bowled over. So a lot of those tools in that legislation were used by that government.

The Fair Hydro Act, at the end of the day, that they brought in was certainly something that—when they talk about throwing caution to the wind, you can kind of parallel this back to the amendments and why people make changes to the standing orders. They threw caution to the wind by bringing in the Fair Hydro Act, which is going to cost our pages and the next generation between \$43 billion and \$93 billion to do.

Selling Hydro One, and all of those things—the party opposite, the official opposition now, enabled a lot of that legislation.

We have been elected. The member, I believe, from Timiskaming–Cochrane said, "You do have a mandate to govern. The people spoke." Frankly, he used a term—and I get along quite well with the member, so this isn't personal to him. I just want to refute some of the comments he made.

At the end of the day, we were elected in a democracy. We are elected to govern. And we are here to govern for all people. So when he says it's only about "our people," our Conservative members, I'm sure there are going to be NDP supporters out there who are going to benefit from lower gas prices. They're going to benefit from \$264 back in their pockets from the regressive carbon tax that was repealed—\$758 million that they're actually going to have back in their pockets.

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So I take offence when he says we're only governing for PCs. Liberals are going to benefit from that. The Green members are going to benefit from that. All of the individual parties who ran against me—I think there were nine in total who ran against me—every single person out there, when you put money back in their pocket, is going to benefit. So I do take offence when he says those types of things.

He said that it's not about hours, but he used an example of losing one full day. Well, why weren't we debating something that they could have brought a productive, substantive piece of information on? I've challenged them, particularly their leader, numerous times, about when she's going to step out and actually come across and say, "We want to work with you. We want to bring ideas to the

table to work," rather than always, "No, no, no and more no."

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Walker: Some people are going to heckle even though they're not in their seat. They're going to try to heckle me on some of this, but I think you can get them fired up pretty easily because they know their leader is only saying, "No, no and more no." The "no" democratic party over there—they don't want to want to help out. They don't want to help all people. Because at the end of the day, they want it to be partisan. They want me to say, "We're defending your rights and we're doing this."

But as I go back and say, lower gas prices, better jobs—we're trying to turn this economy around so everybody has a good job. There's no better way to get people out of poverty than giving them a good job and enabling them to have a good job and helping our businesses out there.

The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane talked about rules from a long time ago, that they've been here for a long, long time. But one of the amendments in here is recognizing that there are only two official parties and that there are now two independent groups over there that sit on the opposite side. I give credit to Speaker Ted Arnott and also to our colleagues. And the House leader—who he kind of said is one of the worst House leaders. I don't think he really meant that to the individual. But at the end of the day, we actually reached out and said that they deserve to have an allotment and an apportionment of time, so the standing orders are being changed to reflect that.

There was a 31-minute delay in private members' business because of the old rules and regulations that have been around for a long time, but the reality of the election is that we did change the structure in this House, so that will get rid of that 31 minutes. I will challenge him that 31 minutes a week is very valuable time. If we're able to pass another piece of important legislation that might save the life of a child, then that 31 minutes—one minute is important if we can do that to debate and ensure that we bring all the thoughts to this House.

One of the amendments is going to add 40 hours, approximately three more weeks of debate time. If they were willing to bring across five or six good bills that were productive and were actually thinking of everybody at the end of the day, in a positive manner, we could perhaps get two or three more bills about things like those expensive drugs, which we debated in this House before. We could be talking about lowering hydro rates. We could be talking about how to create better-paying jobs and ensure that our youth of the future have a huge opportunity.

At the end of the day, we need to always be bringing our thought processes. Democracy is about debate and having time in this House to go through the thrust and throw of live debate, to ensure we bring the thoughts from our representatives, from members from our great ridings and their great ridings, so that we actually bring it all to the table.

He talked about show versus substance. At the end of the day, talking about zebra mussels for 10 hours—I'm not certain whether that was substance or show, but I think

he'll probably come back and tell me at some point. Maybe outside of this chamber he'll share with me whether that was show or substance.

When they all stormed out of here, Mr. Speaker, was that show or was that substance? Was that for the cameras and the media and to be able to say, "We did this"? Or should they have stayed in their seats and said, "We want to debate"?

My good friend from Algoma-Manitoulin talks to me all the time—and again, we're good friends. We talk about raising the bar in this place, and the only way we can do that—I'm going to offer a comment on my friend from Peterborough—

Mr. David Piccini: Peterborough South.

Mr. Bill Walker: —Northumberland-Peterborough South. The member—and I don't think he did this in a mean-spirited way—used words "fascist state," alleging our government is operating that way. His family, at some point, came through that, and he takes significant offence. So just by using the mere term "fascist state" in an allegatory manner is actually lowering the bar. We need to all, collectively, raise the bar in this place, and those things aren't helping to do that, Mr. Speaker.

At the end of the day, I keep suggesting that what we want to do is ensure—and I'm actually going to praise my colleague, my seatmate, the House leader, the Minister of Government and Consumer Services and a proud member for three terms, now serving the people of Bay of Quinte, who brought these standing order changes to the table in a motion. He worked with the Clerks' table—and I want to applaud them, because they do a fabulous job, and the support they provide to this Legislature and the people of Ontario is outstanding.

We recognized that there were changes where we could actually have additional debate. We could have more time to sit in this revered chamber and do what we were sent here to do, as we have been doing for hundreds of years. At the end of the day, we want to ensure that there's more time to debate. We don't want more bureaucracy, more administration and more study, which the Liberals were famous for over their 15 years. Their amendments—which were defeated, by the way, as I know you know, Mr. Speaker—were putting more of that back in the system.

I've had so many people coming up to me at home saying, "It's so refreshing to see a government that's actually moving forward." The Premier brought us back—we were supposed to be on summer recess—because he knew that we needed—

Mr. David Piccini: To get to work.

Mr. Bill Walker: Absolutely—to get to work, to turn this province around after 15 years of Liberal mismanagement.

It's \$335 billion, a billion dollars a month, that that government accumulated, and was enabled, frankly, by the official opposition, the NDP, in many cases. The budgets that they voted for enabled that Liberal government to create that hole that we have to stop digging, Mr. Speaker. The only way to get out of that before it collapses is to stop

digging and get to work and roll up our sleeves and start turning this great province around.

I'm pleased that our House leader has brought these. He recognized them; he worked with the Clerks' table and said that there are a number of things that we want to do right away, to get back to putting more money in people's pockets, to ensure that they have a say, and to bring the issues of their concerns to this House to be debated.

I can't imagine why the official opposition would ever suggest that adding 40 more hours—three more weeks—of debate is a bad thing, particularly when they've used—and I sat in those chairs. The member from Timiskaming-Cochrane is right: I was one of the official opposition for the first seven years. I'll tell you, it was a humbling experience to sit in opposition and to understand the rules and the standing orders.

I'm like him: I didn't understand them all. I don't know them all still, even though in my role now, I'm getting up to speed pretty quickly, like my good colleague from Nickel Belt, France Gélinas, is getting up to speed on all these standing orders. She has been here a lot longer than me. Now people turn to us, looking to us for all that detail of these games we can play and the tools we have at our disposal.

At the end of the day, what people really want is for us to come here and bring our earnest thought process. They want to trust us to bring their messages to this House, and to have debate and to create laws that are going to be a benefit for all Ontarians. It's not about the PC supporters. It's not about the Liberal supporters. It's not about the NDP or the Green or, as they say, those many, many other parties that come out at election time, and the people who believe in those. That's democracy, and that's what it's about. But our job is to bring those voices of all the people and say that the collective good has to be better at the end of the day.

Frankly, again, I can't really understand when they say we're not listening to the people. Some 2.3 million people put their faith in our party, in democracy. They signed the X on the ballot. As he said, whether you like it or not, we have a mandate to govern. We need to ensure, when we set policy in this place, that we have the official opposition working with us when we can. Certainly, it's their job to oppose if they don't agree with all things. But surely to goodness, as he said in his remarks, we don't own every good idea but neither do they. Not all ideas we bring to this table are negative or bad or are not going to be helpful to the people of Ontario as we go forward.

I want to just again talk a little bit about not representing all of the people. Again, that's playing this partisan thing. There are certainly people in my riding who are New Democrats and Liberals and Greens who come up to me and say, "Bill, I like what your government is doing. I like that there's going to be more money. I like that you're actually going to tackle that debt, so that my kids and grandkids are going to have a future that they're hopeful for, that they're proud of, and they understand that there's an ability to have prosperity."

I have two young sons, 21 and 24, Zach and Ben, and at the end of the day, I want them to have a life that's better than mine. When I come here every day, as all of my colleagues do—they're thinking about their family, their friends, cousins, sisters, brothers, nephews, nieces, some grandchildren—I know many of our colleagues have grandchildren—so that we have a better place.

When we clean up these standing orders that allow more time for debate, then we're going to actually be moving down that path.

The House leader, again, made a couple of key points: 31 minutes a week in private members' business, just because of how the standing orders are structured for the old structure, that we were wasting. We had to sit here and not be allowed to debate, because that's in the standing orders. So I would hope that the members opposite would certainly see that there's value in doing that.

We're going to add another 40 hours, or three weeks, of debate so we can actually bring more bills to this House to get them done. We wouldn't have to time-allocate if the official opposition would actually work with us.

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I hope, as we go through this debate, that we're going to have fulsome discussion, that they can come across and say, "I like those five points, so we're going to support you on those. We want to talk about a couple of other ones." But just saying, "We don't like anything you do because you happen to be PCs and because you don't represent my people," is wrong. At the end of the day, we all should come to this House looking at the big picture, looking to all Ontarians and what the future is going to be down the road.

I can't understand that anyone would not support getting rid of bureaucracy and administration and talk about talk. We need to be doing action, Mr. Speaker—

Interruption.

Mr. Bill Walker: Just for clarity, that was not a prop of any sort, Mr. Speaker, but we have gotten rid of that now. I'm glad that Bruno is always on top of his game. I want to salute him, as well as his new assistant, Kathryn, who is just going to be a crackerjack down there. Her eagle eyes caught that from way down there.

I want to just say that that's like changing a standing order. She noticed something. She came and said, "I'm not going to wait and go to committee. I'm going to go down there and I'm going to pick that up and get it out of here." That's what we're all here to do: to have action and to make sure that we're doing things that are actually improving the lot in life of all Ontarians.

We've already acknowledged, as I said earlier, the Clerks' table. I want to just really say thank you to them, because I am in a learning curve here, being the chief government whip. That certainly wasn't something that I had ever thought of or intended. The skills that they bring, the understanding they bring and the patience they show many days with just me alone, let alone all of us—I know there are a few on the opposite side who I'm sure they have to have some patience with at times now. I won't name

any names, except the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane.

But at the end of the day, I'm sure—

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Walker: You are correct, Madame Gélinas from Nickel Belt.

We want to always come to the table and debate the issues of the day. It should be substantive debate, and it needs to lower the partisanship. We all need to do that, but that starts with all members of this House making sure that we do that.

We want to be here to set up a province that we're all proud of. We're bringing change to the province of Ontario. There was a big change back in the election, on June 8. The people said, "We've had enough of that Liberal government. We want a new government. We want a new opposition." They increased their seats significantly, Mr. Speaker. We came in very quickly and saw that those standing orders had some challenges. We brought them to this House and, again, we're extending the olive branch to the opposition to say, "Work with us to improve the standing orders to allow more wholesome debate," which is eventually going to ripple out and help the people of Ontario. It's going to provide benefit to the people of Ontario.

We got to action, Mr. Speaker, to lower hydro rates, putting more money back in people's pockets, looking to create more jobs, sustainable jobs, good-paying jobs—again, playing the nitpicky stuff all the time in here in question period rather than saying, "How do we actually help you get to do those things?"—why would they not want more better-paying jobs for all people across this province, Mr. Speaker?

The environment: At the end of the day, no one has a corner on the environment. I think the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks is putting a plan together. I've said to them and I've said to many people in my riding who want to see improvement that we've been in office for 100 days. The previous government was there for 15 years. They created a lot of dire messes that we have to clean up. We have to come up with a practical plan. We have to ensure that we have the ability to do what we say, that we make a promise that we can actually deliver on. Many times in here, we hear "promise made, promise kept." We want to ensure that we do that planning and that we use things like the standing orders to ensure that we're efficient, that we actually bring legislation in here and move it through as quickly as we possibly can, but that we have open, fulsome, wholesome debate from all members on all sides of this House.

At the end of the day, I always hoped, when I came in to get elected and when I stepped forward to be elected, to be a person who can come here with balance, to come here with reason and to reach across. Many of the colleagues across the way and I—we actually get along quite well. It may not seem apparent sometimes when we're here, particularly in question period with the cut and thrust—

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Walker: The member for Algoma–Manitoulin and I, we hug it out, absolutely; we're okay. And the new deputy House leader: I think we're going to get along just fine at some point, yes. Part of that is because we're actually reaching across the aisle, having the conversations that aren't always on the camera and making sure that we are for all people and forgetting our partisan sides.

This is what I believe the change to the standing orders can do if they would support us. It would be a good symbolic gesture to say that we want better standards. We want better rules. We want more ability to actually participate openly in democracy and debate fulsomely. We want to ensure that we actually have more hours.

I'm going to use another term. The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane—and I'm going to quote—used the word “news flash.” Well, “news flash” to him is, “We actually want to work with you. We want to work with you as a government and ensure—”

Mr. John Vanthof: You could maybe show it by giving us a weekly schedule. A weekly schedule would be great.

Mr. Bill Walker: I will promise to do that and work on that for you, the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. David Piccini: Look at the agreement there.

Mr. Bill Walker: Did you see that spirit of cooperation happening there? You asked, and I just said I will work with you to try and make sure that happens. Now, hopefully, you'll return that favour in the near future by saying, “We're going to come up with some ideas.” And your leader, rather than spewing vitriol in most of the questions, will actually come in here and say, “How do we work with you?”—or at least “raise the bar,” as my friend from Algoma–Manitoulin has said, so that it's always at the highest level. We all should respect each other and stay at the highest bar that we possibly can. I believe we all have the ability to do that. If we all come with the idea to offer suggestions—substantive suggestions—and ensure that we're actually debating openly, that we're actually having good discussion, that we're bringing substantive issues to this floor, then we actually can have it.

I'm going to repeat again, Mr. Speaker: Why would you not want to get rid of 31 minutes of wasted time per week of PMBs when you could bring more legislation forward, you could debate the merits of drugs for kids that are needed, the less fortunate, long-term-care beds? We just put 6,000 new long-term-care beds out there, which I believe is a great thing, considering where the Liberal government was going before.

We've actually come out and we're going to save \$758 million. We're going to lower gas prices. We're going to put more money in people's pockets. By putting more opportunity in these standing orders to have more debate, we can actually get more business done. We can actually open up the opportunity for all Ontarians. We can open our doors for business. Like our minister of economic development, industry and trade says, he wants Ontario to be open for business.

Our Minister of Transportation, I know, is working every day to try to improve our transportation system. So

at the end of the day, if we can find 40 more hours of debate, maybe he can get two or three more bills through that are actually going to help people get out of the congestion down here. We could lower gas prices. He has, I think, put seven times a private member's bill to share the gas tax around. I believe, at the end of the day, he is out there working every day to ensure that everybody has better transportation systems across this great province because he is working hard, as all of our ministers, and all of my colleagues, and all of you, frankly, are working.

More debate, three weeks, 40 hours more debate, getting rid of 31 minutes that are wasted, cleaning up some of the opportunity and allowing our independent members to also have a voice in this House—I don't know how they couldn't vote to support that, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much.

Debate deemed adjourned.

VISITOR

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Ottawa West–Nepean on a point of order.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg the indulgence of the House to introduce another special guest. I have with me here in the gallery one of my friends from all the way back in elementary school: Stefane Trudel. Stefane helped me when I ran for student council president in grade 8, student council president in grade 12 and then when I ran to be the member of provincial Parliament for Ottawa West–Nepean—a winning record, three for three. It's wonderful to have him here with me.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): As we know, that's not a point of order, but welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in her office.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim): The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to enact a new Act and make amendments to various other Acts respecting the use and sale of cannabis and vapour products in Ontario / Loi édictant une nouvelle loi et modifiant diverses autres lois en ce qui concerne l'utilisation et la vente de cannabis et de produits de vapotage en Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It is now 6 o'clock. This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
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Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
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Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
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Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
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Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
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Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
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Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
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Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
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West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
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John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Stephen Lecce, Gila Martow
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Lindsey Park, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Stephen Crawford, Doug Downey
Sol Mamakwa, David Piccini
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**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Présidente: Catherine Fife
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Peggy Sattler
Catherine Fife, Goldie Ghamari
Jim McDonnell, Norman Miller
Suze Morrison, Michael Parsa
Peggy Sattler, Kinga Surma
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Randy Hillier
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kaleed Rasheed
Toby Barrett, Will Bouma
Mike Harris, Randy Hillier
Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Présidente: Nina Tangri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Deepak Anand
Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden
Belinda Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Select Committee on Financial Transparency / Comité spécial
sur la transparence financière**

Chair / Président: Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Doug Downey
Roman Baber, Doug Downey
Catherine Fife, Robin Martin
Lindsey Park, Ross Romano
Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria, Sandy Shaw
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim