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Mardi
24 juillet 2018

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Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 24 July 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 24 juillet 2018

The House met at 0900.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Todd Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 2, An Act respecting Hydro One Limited, the termination of the White Pines Wind Project and the labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903, when Bill 2 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour and seven minutes shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, with 30 minutes apportioned to each of the recognized parties, five minutes apportioned to one Liberal Party independent member and two minutes apportioned to the Green Party independent member. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That, except in the case of a recorded division arising from morning orders of the day, pursuant to standing order 9(c), no deferral of the second reading or third reading vote shall be permitted; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes, except that the division bell for the vote on the motion for third reading shall be 15 minutes.

That is the motion, Mr. Speaker, and these are the urgent priorities of the new government of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The government House leader has moved government notice of motion number 2.

The government House leader—would you like to say anything else to that?

Hon. Todd Smith: Nothing further, Speaker, except that you look fantastic.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Well, thank you, sir.

We'll have further debate.

The House leader from the official opposition.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and may I congratulate you on your ascendancy to the chair? I must say that you are looking rather dapper there, even though they don't have the uniform on there yet.

And just so you know, Speaker, in friendly jest: If you would have had to reread that motion, we would have let do you it in its entirety.

Interjection: We'll wait for the next one.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We'll wait for the next one.

I want to start this time allocation motion debate by saying, what happened? What happened on the way from the official opposition benches to the government side?

I remember distinctly being a member of the third party with you, Mr. Speaker, and listening to the official opposition of the day, the Conservatives. They would wax eloquent when it came to the evils of utilizing time allocation motions on the part of the Liberal government. I remember having these conversations with my colleagues—I won't say any names in particular—who were on the opposition side.

It was always my view, and you've heard me speak to this before, that time allocation is a tool that should be used hardly ever. There are enough rules in the rule book in order to allow the government to get what it wants. As you know, after so many hours of debate, the question can be put. Somewhere around eight or nine hours, which is kind of the norm, you can have the question put.

The point is, it's extremely important to understand what Parliament is all about. The Legislature, as the mother of all Parliaments, is about members of the assembly expressing their thoughts, their ideas, their suggestions, their support or their opposition, to whatever the policy is that the House is dealing with that day. How can you do that if you utilize time allocation? It means it's a truncation not only of the legislative process, it also means it's a diminishment of the role of individual members within the House on the government side as well as on the opposition side. Because good debate creates better legislation. I won't get into committee just yet—I'll talk about that in a minute—but good debate creates good legislation.

I was just reading a book recently that was given to me by the Speaker. I thought I'd read everything about Winston Churchill. I'd read most of the biographies that were written about him and I've seen, obviously, a number of documentaries, along with everybody else. This particular book looks at his parliamentary time in the House of Commons, which spans about 60 years—the

point being, Mr. Churchill understood and was a champion of the individual rights of members within Parliament.

One of the things that he talked about is that members of the House, including government members, have to have the ability at times to put forward ideas that may be different than what the government benches want, so that you can have good debate on issues in order to create stronger legislation. But it also is the institution by which we practise what we call democracy in the free world, and within our country and within other countries that are so blessed to have a parliamentary system.

For the government to all of a sudden switch its position from being opposed to time allocation to say, “Okay, now we’re on the government side. We are going to do time allocation,” I think doesn’t bode well for what’s about to come. I don’t think it speaks well in regard to what degree they really meant it when they were on this side of the House.

I remember some of the famous speeches given by some of the members of the now-government when they were in opposition. My favourite was—I don’t know the riding for Mr. Yakabuski, if somebody can help me.

Hon. Laurie Scott: Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke: “The guillotine.” Holy jeez, I used to jump out of my seat every time he did that, and I sat right next to him. I heard so many speeches by Mr. Yakabuski, the member from—where?

Interjection: Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Renfrew–Nipissing—I’m terrible. That’s why I should never be voted as Chair of the House. Never mind names, riding names are even more difficult.

The point is, all of these members would get up in the House and would wax eloquently on the evils of time allocation. And I agreed with them. I’ve been—

Mr. John Vanthof: We thought they meant it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, I really did think they meant it to a degree. I didn’t kid myself in understanding that, at times, a government is trying to pass its agenda, and if the opposition is completely trying to slow things down without good cause or good debate, yes, maybe there’s an argument for time allocation. I still have a problem with it, but I understand it. But the fact that there’s nobody on this side of the House who’s been trying to do anything deleterious when it comes to the legislation—we have been putting our points forward and having a debate about what is good and not good in Bill 2.

Let me turn to the bill just for a second. The government is doing three things in its legislation, of which I really want to focus on schedule 1 and schedule 2. The back-to-work legislation—we’ve heard from our caucus. I think it’s the wrong way to go, and of course we will vote against the whole idea of back-to-work legislation.

I want to talk to schedules 1 and 2. The thing that those two schedules have in common, which I think is highly ironic for the government, is that they’re saying, “We’re doing this because we are for the people. We are

for the people, and we’re going to make sure that the six-million-dollar man is fired and that it doesn’t cost the ratepayers any money.” When you look at it, what they’ve actually done, as my leader Andrea Horwath has said, is they’ve converted the six-million-dollar man to the nine-million-dollar man. They say, “Yes, but it’s not going to come out of the hydro rates.” Well, the only thing the government is doing is shifting where it’s going to be paid. So I pay my hydro bill out of my right pocket, and I’m going to be paying for the nine-million-dollar man now out of my left pocket, because all you’ve done in the legislation is say that it will be the taxpayer who is on the hook. We are going to pay for what they do with the board as far as the firing of the CEO and various other people at Hydro One and other subsidiaries. We’re going to be paying that out of the tax base.

0910

So when the Premier stands in this House and says, “Promise made, promise kept”—well, first of all, there’s a promise, but it’s not being kept. What you’re actually doing is you’re saying, “I’m going to pay more in severance than what the Liberals had obligated themselves to by making the decision that I’ve made.” So we go from \$6 million to \$9 million, and then you take the cost and you say, “Well, it won’t come out of the hydro bill. Don’t worry about it.” You’re saying in the legislation that it’s going to come out of the taxes of Ontario; in other words, it’s going to be general revenue that pays for it. So all it is, is a shift. I want to quote my good friend Mike Harris—not the current member, but the former member from Nipissing, who was the Premier. He used to have this saying: “There’s only one taxpayer.” I agree, there is only one taxpayer. All you’re doing is shifting it from the ratepayer to the taxpayer, and I want to point out that it’s the same person.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My esteemed colleague across the way says, “No, no.” Read your legislation; I expect that members take the time. It’s not a very thick bill. There are only three schedules. I read it the first day that I got it. It clearly says in schedule 1 and schedule 2 that any decision that ends up costing money as a result of those sections will be paid out of the taxes of Ontario; it will be paid by the province of Ontario by an amount appropriated through this bill by way of legislation.

So let’s not kid each other. At the end, it’s us who are paying for it. If it comes out of my hydro bill or it comes out of my tax bill, it’s the same thing. At the end of the day, I’m the same person paying the bill. I don’t care if it’s my hydro bill, and I don’t care if it’s my tax bill; the point is, I’m going to have to pay for it. So don’t say, “Promise made, promise kept,” because that is not a promise that has been kept in any kind of way.

The other thing this legislation does which I think is rather interesting for a Conservative government to do is that it’s saying, in the case of schedule 1 and schedule 2, when it comes to the compensation of those people who are going to be displaced as a result of firing Mayo Schmidt, the CEO of Hydro One, and the second sched-

ule, which is the cancellation of the wind farms in the government House leader's riding—I forget your riding—

Hon. Todd Smith: Prince Edward county.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Prince Edward county—that you're not going to be able to sue either those entities, being Hydro One, OPG, IESO, or any subsidiary of the government. You will not be able to sue. That's an interesting one coming from the Conservatives when you stop and think about it. When a company or investors, either from within Ontario, within Canada or from abroad, says, "I want to invest in Ontario"—one of the attractions that we've always had is that we are a stable place to do business. People know what the rules are, and the rules are that once you've made a deal and once you have a contract, a contract is a contract. You don't break them.

Well, what the government is doing in this bill is they're saying, "We can break contracts." What does that do for the confidence of those who are thinking of investing money in our province? I'll tell you, if I was an investor about to invest in some sort of business opportunity that may be somewhat controversial—the investors say to themselves, "The government is creating a precedent here that I may be, at the behest of either this government or a future government, in a position where they cancel my contract and then they essentially eliminate the ability for me to sue." I think that's a very, very dangerous precedent, and I just want to, in this time allocation motion, point out what it does. It makes a mockery of contract law in this province. I think Randy Hillier—I don't remember his riding name—is spinning, because he believes in property rights. What this does is it tramples all over property rights, because it says the government has the authority, in the end—the government has always had the authority to do this. Let me not leave people with the illusion that the Parliament never had the authority. But we never used it, because we understood that contract law and property rights are something that you don't play around with.

Again, to my good member, the member from—Mr. Hillier's riding; I can't remember.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: She said it. There we go. It's a good thing I've got a Deputy Speaker over here.

He must be spinning and just saying, "How can I even vote for something like that?" Because, at the end, it runs counter to everything that he stands for and the Lanark-Renfrew land association that he represented for so many years. I know he's broken with them, but he's still got to believe in some of that.

And the other thing I've got to say is—this is the part that really bothers me. Imagine that we gave that right to a private company. Imagine that I'm company X, and I have a big multinational doing whatever it is that I do, and I give company X that kind of right, to be able to break contract law. Who would ever want to do business with me? We don't give that right—and neither should we, and neither will we—to the private sector. But the

fact that the government is prepared by way of its majority in the House to allow themselves to essentially break contracts, to me, is just unbelievable.

The second thing is that if you think that the windmill cancellation ain't gonna cost us money, read the legislation, because the legislation actually says that the government will set the compensation paid to the company that had the contract, and it will come out of general revenues. So the \$110 million in cancelling this contract—which it's about worth, if we believe the press reports; I don't know exactly how much it is, but I'll just go by the press reports right now. If it ends up costing \$110 million as reported, it ain't gonna be the ratepayer or hydro that's going to pay; it's going to be the same taxpayer. There is only one taxpayer, and it's going to be the taxpayer who pays the \$110 million.

This is just a sleight of hand by the Doug Ford administration, the Premier of this province and the Conservatives, to make it look as if they're doing something that's populist in that riding. I understand the politics of windmills. Tories are opposed to it, and there are a number of residents who are opposed to it. I understand that, but don't think for one second that there's not a cost associated to this, because the government has transferred the cost from the ratepayer to the taxpayer, and that, at the end, again, is a kind of an anti-Conservative thing to do.

I look at my friends in the Conservative Party, and I wonder, and I say, "To what degree do you actually stand for your principles?" Because it would be akin to New Democrats doing something that would be against their principles. I think we'd have a lot of people in this caucus who would have a hard time voting with the party if we did something like that.

So where are those free-spirited, independent-thinking Conservatives who believe in certain principles allowing something like that to stand? You're going to give the government the right to take away a person's right to sue when it comes to the breaking of contract law, and you're going to make the taxpayer pay for it, not the ratepayer.

And the last point—not the last point but the other one that takes the cake: And I'm not making this word up, Mr. Speaker; it's not unparliamentary because it's in the legislation. The government is giving themselves the right to misrepresent the facts when it comes to settlement with the windmill constructor, whoever that is. If you look at section 6 in, I believe, schedule 2, and you look at section 6 of the bill, it clearly says, in layman's terms, that should the government misrepresent or has misrepresented the facts, that's okay when it comes to the settlement.

Holy jeez, Mr. Speaker. One of the basic things in this Legislature is that we have to be truthful. In this Legislature, no member of the House is allowed to knowingly mislead the House, and should that action result in some kind of controversy or something negative happening, a member could be held in contempt. That's just the way it is. That's how Parliament works. You're not allowed to mislead the House. Well, why do we have

legislation that allows the government to mislead the private sector or the investors or the citizens?

0920

Now, I know that my good friend the Clerk is looking at me, saying, “You’re walking borderline to what’s parliamentary,” but I want to make the point.

I’m not making this up; it’s in the legislation. If I’m not allowed to debate what’s in the legislation, what’s the point of this place? The legislation clearly says, in section 6, that the government gives itself the right to misrepresent the facts when it comes to contracts with those windmills—ah, I knew this was going to happen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I have been informed by the Clerk that you’re on the border, and you’re straddling that fence. You cannot impugn the motive of the government. You have read the act, and you have clearly stated what you have read in that act as giving the government the right to misrepresent the facts. According to the Clerk, you stating that in the House impugns the motive of the government. I would ask you, on a go-forward basis, to steer away from that language, if you could, please.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, Mr. Speaker, I hear what you’re saying. However, if I was making this up and I was just willy-nilly saying the government is giving itself the right to misrepresent, I would be obviously out of order, but that’s not what I’m saying. What I’m saying is the legislation, as written, gives the government the ability to—it says in the legislation that if the government has misrepresented or will misrepresent, they have the right to do so.

I’m just looking for somebody to give me a copy of the bill to read the actual copy. John has got it, but he’s too busy talking to somebody else—thank you. Okay, here we go. As I was saying, let me just read this out of section 6.

Under section 6(d), it says that “any alleged misrepresentation within the meaning of applicable securities laws in any prospectus, document or other public statement related in any way to the involvement of the government of Ontario in compensation matters at Hydro One Limited or any of its subsidiaries” is allowed. I’m not making this up. It’s in black and white. It’s written in the legislation.

The point that I make is, how can this House even be contemplating this? Actually, I agree with you and I agree with the Clerk: You can’t knowingly misrepresent, and you can’t allege that somebody’s misrepresenting, but we’re doing it in the legislation. It’s written. It’s in black and white. I ain’t making it up.

My point is, this is really cutting ground, this is like—in all my years here, I don’t think I’ve ever seen that in legislation. I may stand to be corrected, but I don’t remember that ever being in legislation, that the government gives itself the right, if they knowingly or unwillingly misrepresented the facts and it ends up costing them money as a result of anything breaking securities law—that they have the right to do so.

Well, why do we have the law? Everybody else has to pass the test. If you’re company X in Ontario and you’re

doing business here, you don’t have the right to misrepresent the facts knowingly—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I’ve been informed by the Clerk that, according to the legislation, the words that are written are within the strict meaning of the act, the securities legislation. There’s a definition within security law that falls here. What you are saying—you don’t make reference to the wording in the act, the securities legislation. You’re talking about the motives of the government, as opposed to the definition within the securities regulations.

I know we’re on a fence. I’ve asked you to move on. I think you’ve made your point, and I would ask you, as debate continues, to steer off in another direction, if you could. Thank you.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, when a member of the House is not allowed to speak to a section of the bill—and I’ll read it again; I’m not making this up: “Any alleged misrepresentation within the meaning of applicable securities laws in any prospectus, document or other public statement related in any way to the involvement of the government of Ontario in compensation matters at Hydro One Limited or any of its subsidiaries” can’t be debated. We can’t debate what’s in legislation?

The point that I was trying to make is this: Imagine if we were to give that right to an individual or collective or all of the firms that operate in Ontario. Now, imagine if we had a law on the books that said Inco—or no, no longer Inco. Let’s say Glencore or Resolute or Bombardier or any of those companies had the right to have such a clause applied to them. It would make a mockery of our securities laws.

There’s a reason we have securities laws, and I can speak to that because it’s in the bill. The reason we have securities laws that protect the integrity of the system is exactly for that reason, so that when people do business in Ontario, they understand that there are strict laws when it comes to what you can and can’t do when it comes to your prospectus before the securities commission.

Imagine if Goldcorp or any other company were to fudge the books when it came to what they filed with the securities commission. What would happen? First of all, it would be chaos. Nobody would want to invest in Ontario if companies were allowed to misrepresent the facts when it came to the prospectus that they gave to the securities commission. That is directly related to this legislation, and that’s the point that I’m making. We would never do that. It’s just not something that would stand.

Can you imagine if all of these companies could say, “Oh, I’m just going to file a fake prospectus with the securities commission, and my company that I say is worth so much a share—I’m going to play around. I’m going to do a Bre-X”? Do you remember the Bre-X scandal in gold mining, where the guy salted the core up in Indonesia and the market went crazy, and everybody was buying Bre-X because he had falsified the information? The guy became a multi-billionaire as a result of his cheating the system, and a whole bunch of people in my

community and in communities across Ontario lost money because the guy did not follow the law.

So what I'm saying here is that this is a very dangerous precedent for a government to take, and the fact that it's a Conservative government that does it is beyond the pale. Can you imagine if they were in opposition to an NDP government, and we were to have section 6(d) in our legislation? They would say, "Oh, look at this. They don't know what they're doing. You can't do that. It's—"

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Anti-business.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Anti-business.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Anti, anti, anti.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Anti, anti, anti. It should have been "Aussie, Aussie, Aussie."

But the point—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: See? The government admits it. The government says it's well meaning. Come on. How can it be? How can giving a company the ability to falsify, knowingly or by mistake, its submissions prospectus to the securities commission be a good thing in any kind of scenario?

The fact that the government is doing so in this particular settlement under section 2 with the firm that built the windmills is like saying, "We can fudge the numbers. It's not a problem. We gave ourselves the right to do so." And I come back to the point—

Mr. John Vanthof: But it's well meaning.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: But it's well meaning, I just found out from the government. I notice he's being talked to. That is funny. "Don't do that."

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, I won't say that. I'm not allowed to say that.

Anyway, I'll just say two things to it. One is that the fact that the government is doing this is problematic from a business perspective, and it takes a New Democrat and a New Democratic caucus to point out that the government is anti-business here, anti-investment and anti-everything else, which makes it "anti, anti, anti."

You can't do this kind of thing in a society like ours, in an economy like ours. Ontario is known for having a stable business climate where everybody knows the rules. Why is Ontario one of the best places to invest in mining? Because we have one of the best systems when it comes to the securities commission, when it comes to stocks, when it comes to the whole idea of how you file claims. The whole system is very transparent, and people know what the rules are. So they come to Ontario and they invest millions and millions of dollars, billions of dollars, to find ore in the province of Ontario and open up mines because they know that when they come here they're not going to have the rules changed on them.

0930

But when you've got a piece of legislation, from the very government that claims to be the government that represents business people and common sense, and they say, "We give ourselves, the government, the right to

misrepresent the facts, knowingly or unknowingly, when it comes to securities, when it comes to the prospectus that we give to the securities commission," there's a real problem. I say to the second part of that: Imagine if the private sector had that. That was the point that I wanted to make on that.

The other part I just want to get back to—I'm looking at my good friend. Do you want—

Interjection: No, no.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay. All right. So I'll go on.

Laughter.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, it's the way I communicate when I speak. There's nothing wrong with saying, "Hey, do you want more time?" It's all good.

So I made the point, and I just find it interesting to see who is actually going to stand with the government and vote for this. Those of you out there who are—oh, they're putting up hands. My God, it's amazing, the power. The lure of trying to get into cabinet is so amazing.

To me, the fact that a Conservative government and Conservative members would vote for something that's so anti-business and so anti-securities commission and investment rules is just beyond the pale. It's just like, my God, if somebody would have told me that the Conservatives would do this, I would have never believed it. But they're doing it nonetheless.

The other thing I just want to say is that this whole shell game that the government is doing in regard to the hydro situation—both with Mayo Schmidt, the CEO, and with the windmills—is, in the end, all about shifting who's paying: from me to me. It's just that you're taking it out of a different pocket. You're saying that the settlement with the CEO and other executives that you fire from Hydro One and the cost of winding down and shutting down the windmill construction in Prince Edward-Lennox—I think I got it right—is going to be paid by the taxpayer. I just say that for the government to say that they're somehow doing something that's not going to cost us money and not going to affect our rates is a bit of a—what's the word I'm looking for? It's a little bit of a stretch goal that they have, because all you're doing is reaching into the other pocket of the taxpayer and saying that they're going to pay for it. I wanted to get that on the record, Speaker, because it's a part of the bill that I thought needed to be spoken to.

As for the time allocation motion, let me just—some of these new members obviously wouldn't have heard myself and their Conservative counterparts speak to time allocation. There was a time when I was first elected—and Mr. Wilson, the minister of international trade, and the current Speaker, when we were elected in 1990, there was no time allocation. The way that this place worked was that the government decided what it wanted to pass as its agenda. They would sit down with the opposition—back then, there were two opposition parties; now only one. They would sit down and say, "Okay, here's what we want to pass within the fall or the spring session. What do you guys want in exchange for us to get there as

a government?" The opposition in that system would say, "Okay, we'd like to have two weeks of debate on this bill. We'd like to have three weeks of public hearings on that bill and to travel across Ontario." You would negotiate those things. The government would get its agenda passed.

The opposition, in the way this House works—the government has the right to introduce legislation, but they also have a responsibility to pass it. Our job in the opposition is either to support that legislation and try to make it better, or, if we're not able to make it better and we're opposed, to vote against it and point out its failings. That's how this place works.

When we first got here, there was no time allocation. And you know what? This place worked rather well. I was here, and we passed legislation probably no differently, as far as the total amount of bills passed today, than were passed back then, except some bills went very fast. For example, we very seldom had any debate of bills at third reading. Why? Because we used to have a more lengthy debate at second reading or in committee. It was understood that the government needed to make up time in the House, so we said, "Okay. As opposition, we'll allow you to do this in three weeks in exchange for some committee hearings, and we won't debate at third reading." So most bills when they were called into the House at third reading, it was merely a formality.

It was the member from St. Catharines who pointed out when time allocation was brought here that in fact by making time allocation, bills at third reading now would be debated ad infinitum, as long as possible, because it's the only thing the opposition is going to have, because they're going to lose the ability to negotiate time in committee and the amount of time that you have for debate at second.

Here's the bottom line, Mr. Speaker: The parliamentary system was designed in such a way to give members the ability to do their job.

I will give you a good example. The Mike Harris government introduced a bill in regard to snowmobile trails. They wanted to have a snowmobile trail system that was a unified system across Ontario, so that it wasn't that Timiskaming had one standard and Algoma had a second standard. We needed to have interprovincial trails in Ontario that were somewhat standard as far as signage, how they worked, all that kind of stuff, and the revenue to pay for it. So the government introduced legislation. Generally, people were in support; I don't think anybody in opposition was opposed to it. We travelled the bill, and we actually listened to the public. What a novel idea. Remember when we went out and campaigned for 27 days and said to people, "If you vote for me, I'm going to do my best to do my job, and I'll always make sure to come back and consult my constituents"? We used to consult with them by way of committee. That bill travelled probably for only about three weeks, but we went to places where snowmobiles are relevant—the Parry Sound area, northern Ontario, all of those places—and we got some really good information from constituents who were in-

terested in this issue and landowners who were impacted. Often, snowmobile trails go across farms—

Mr. John Vanthof: Farm fields.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Farm fields.

The whole issue of liability—there were all kinds of issues the government had not envisioned when drafting the legislation.

As a result of the public hearings, the legislation was amended. That bill still stands today unamended so many years later. Why? Because we took the time to do it right.

Imagine if the government of the day had time-allocated that bill after second reading with no committee time. We'd have a bill that would have infringed on people's property rights, that would have done all kinds of things that would have been problematic, and the government would have had to reintroduce legislation later to fix it.

Let me give you the opposite example. The government under Mike Harris, when elected, came in and did legislation with regard to the Planning Act. There was a large exercise that was undertaken by the NDP government previously in order to modernize the Planning Act. There was a lot of good work done by way of committee and consultation with experts and the public to change the Planning Act. Well, the government did with the Planning Act what they're doing now with the whole idea of cap-and-trade. Oh, they were opposed to it—it was one of those things. When they came in, they willy-nilly changed the legislation and made a comprehensive bill where they tried to turn the clock back. Does that sound kind of familiar? They tried to turn the clock back, and they didn't allow proper consultation. The bill went out for a week. I remember, because I was on that committee. It had one week of hearings—that was it—and only in southern Ontario because, God knows, you didn't have planning in northern Ontario, that's for sure. It didn't even exist as far as they were concerned. The government passed that legislation because they used time allocation tools. Guess what happened. Four or five times they came back with legislation—I'm just looking at the Clerk; I can't remember the exact number. Four or five times, in the time that Harris was there, the government had to come back with legislation to re-amend the Planning Act to fix the errors they had in the original drafting.

So there is a reason why Parliament has the ability to consult by way of committee and why time allocation is not a good idea when it comes to us doing our jobs. Government members, especially, are hurt by time allocation, and I mean that. I sat in government; I remember well. When time allocation is used, you've got 76 members on the other side of the House who can't do their job to represent their constituencies when it comes to the particular bill at hand that, maybe in committee, constituents are concerned about.

For example, with this bill, Bill 2, if you went to committee there would probably be a number of amendments that would be recommended by the public and experts when it comes to what you're doing; for example, the

changing of securities law so that you're able to misrepresent the facts to the securities commissions. I think you would probably get a little bit of feedback on that one. I would love to see what the securities commission would have to say if they came before the committee.

The fact that the government doesn't want to allow that type of consultation by way of committee means it gives short shrift to the comments that the Premier makes in the House when he says, "We are going to consult. We're going to be the government of the people, and we will consult, consult, consult." Well, this is anti-anti-anti-consultation. Thank you, that was a good line. This is not a government for the people; this is a government for some people. It's backroom deals and their social conservatives and others that they're trying to help.

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For example, the cap-and-trade: What does the cancellation of cap-and-trade have to do with people? It means it's going to cost me more money. I can't get my windows changed and get the subsidy that I would have gotten if cap-and-trade would have stayed in place.

I'll tell you what it's all about. Cancelling cap-and-trade is saying the polluters don't have to pay. That's what this means, because cap-and-trade is simply those who pollute, who are unable or unwilling to change their manufacturing process in order to reduce emissions, have to pay. You take the money from there and you put it in green programs that allow people to reduce emissions in other areas. In other words, it could be another manufacturer who invests in technology to reduce their emissions. It could be a person who wants to change the windows in their house. It could be a person who wants to buy an electric car. My good friend the member from Algoma-Manitoulin raised a question in the House about this just yesterday.

So don't say this is for the people. This is for your people. This is for your backroom people. This is for large polluters so they can continue polluting and not paying, and we, the little guys—we, the people—get stuck with the bill and we get stuck with the pollution.

When I hear the government go on and on with regard to "promise made, promise kept," it's a promise made, but I'll tell you, this is not something for the people in the end.

I would just say this: I don't want you guys to be surprised when it comes to the vote. We're going to vote against this. I don't want the government to be too surprised. When the vote comes later on this morning after question period, I just don't want you for one minute to think that we're somehow going to vote for time allocation, because it is not a thing that I think should be taken lightly. Are there occasions where you may use time allocation? You can make an argument that sometimes that may be necessary, but I think those are very minuscule. You have other tools that you could use. You can use calling the question. Allowing the bill to go into committee and actually doing the job that has to be done is an important process by which we bring the public into it.

With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you for the time. I know that our good friend the whip for the New Democratic official opposition has a few things that he would like to say.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand up in this Legislature and, today, talk about time allocation and the bill that's being time-allocated.

I just listened to my House leader, my colleague from Timmins. It used to be Timmins-James Bay; now it's Timmins. Timmins is going to be very well represented. He did a very good job of explaining time allocation and what the problems are with time allocation.

I'm sure that the members across the way think, "Oh, yeah, well, of course the NDP would be against time allocation," because according to them, we are anti-everything. But I thought maybe we'd get a few quotes from when the government was on this side of the House a few short months ago. They also understood that time allocation isn't good for the legislative process.

I have to hearken back to a quote, I believe, from Premier Ford, that this wasn't going to be a government for government; it was going to be a government for the people—best ever, first ever. Well, actually, democracy and the legislative process is government for the people. By creating this time allocation on your very first bill—

Interjection: Number 1.

Mr. John Vanthof: Number 1.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Well, number 2.

Mr. John Vanthof: Number 2, but the number one—but actually, for us, and I'm going to give these quotes in a second, when I got the first inkling after the campaign was over that this government wasn't really going to take democracy seriously—do you remember the day of the throne speech? I always like the band. With the last government, we talked about the band because their last throne speech was pretty fluffy, so we spent a lot of time talking about the band. As we walked in, it was the theme song from Game of Thrones. I walked in and I thought, "Oh, that's very appropriate."

I don't know how many of you people watch Game of Thrones, but it was very appropriate, because over there is King's Landing and we're north of the Wall. In northern Ontario, we're very used to being north of the Wall. We're still north of the Wall, and you guys don't get it, but you used to. You used to. When you were sitting here, when you gave these eloquent speeches, I actually believed you.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, that's your inner Conservative, John.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm still a progressive; I'm still a progressive.

Some quotes from the government House leader: "Sometimes what happens here—my friend from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke describes it as the guillotine coming down and slicing off debate. He makes a very effective sound effect every time the House leader"—I'll put in brackets "Liberal House leader"—"or

deputy House leader moves a closure motion. We've seen that time and time again. They should not be using a blunt instrument—and a guillotine is not a blunt instrument—to pass legislation in this House.”

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What was that sound?

Mr. John Vanthof: Whoosh!

“We're all here as elected members from our municipalities taking our marching orders from our constituents to come here and represent them at Queen's Park. We should have the opportunity to express our concerns with this system.”

From the Minister of Transportation—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh? Did he say anything?

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

How can the government that claims to be the best-ever, first-ever government for the people, in their very first actual, substantive bill, ignore those very same people? That's what the legislative process is about. There's first reading, second reading, and then if it passes—that's when we get to do our talking, second reading, and most of us are pretty good at it.

But the big, important part is when it goes to committee. That's when people who actually have deeper knowledge of the bill get to make their comments. Hopefully those comments are taken into consideration and the bill is moulded to actually represent the people who are being impacted. But you guys are ignoring that from day one. The former government was, I would say, by the end of 15 years, a bit arrogant. You guys are starting where they left off. I can't fathom that. All of the things that when you were on this side you talked about—all gone.

Let's talk about the bill. The part about the wind farms—again, when you guys were on this side, both of our parties fought about the gas plant scandal, right? The cost started at \$40 million, and then it went up to \$1.1 billion. Why that was is because when the government of the day decided to shut those two gas plants, the companies were going to sue them. To keep the companies whole, to honour the contracts, the taxpayers ended up paying \$1-point-whatever billion. That's it in a nutshell. That's it in a nutshell.

The current government has decided, “Ah, we're going to solve that problem, because you know what? We see a lot of lawsuits coming down. We see all these wind farms that we're”—and do you remember this? It wasn't a comment by the Premier, but do you remember the comment in one of the debates that one of the leadership candidates was going to rip them out of the ground? Guess what? These folks are going to rip them out of the ground.

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We all said, “Do you know what? They're going to have a hard time doing that because the companies are going to sue,” and rightfully so, because they entered into contracts in good faith with the democratically elected government—in good faith. And now these guys, this current PC government—the PCs wouldn't do that—this current Ford government has decided to look at laws on an issue-by-issue basis: “We're going to do it with wind farms, but we're going to follow the rules with the rest of the business community.” It doesn't work like that. Business won't trust that.

But they're afraid of getting sued, so they've decided, “We'll fix that. We'll make it illegal for them to sue us.” That's basically what this act is. You're basically saying that companies, because you don't like the contract that the previous government signed—we might not like some of them either. But you're saying, “Even though you entered into the contract in good faith with a previous democratically elected government, we're going to scrap it and we're going to remove your right to sue for just damages.” That's what you're saying.

But do you know what else hasn't been mentioned here? Do you know what else they're doing? They're actually downloading or uploading that problem to another level of government. Because if you're an international company, you're going to sue under NAFTA.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Or the GATT.

Mr. John Vanthof: Or the GATT. This has happened before. I have a little bit of personal experience with this one. When the provincial government of the day passed the Adams Mine Lake Act—and that was, at the time, going to be the biggest landfill in North America. The government of the day, the Liberal government, passed the Adams Mine Lake Act prohibiting that from being a landfill. But it was fully licensed, so the investors in Adams Mine were fully paid by the taxpayers of Ontario. Because they had a fully licensed landfill, the government said—except one. One American decided that he didn't accept remuneration. He sued the Canadian government under NAFTA, and it cost the Canadian government millions and millions and millions of dollars to defend the Ontario government's law. The same thing is going to happen here.

So what you're doing is basically uploading your problems—and I know you guys don't like the federal government. But again, and it's one of your mantras, there's only one taxpayer. Pushing your problem up to somebody else isn't helping the taxpayer and isn't helping the people. It just isn't, despite what you claim.

The first-ever government for the people: Even when I hear myself say that, it just—you guys claim to be the first-ever government for the people.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What about the rest?

Mr. John Vanthof: What about Bill Davis? Oh, he wasn't for the people. What about Mike Harris? Yes, what about Mike Harris? I disagree with a lot of things that Mike Harris did, but I assume that Mike Harris thought he was representing the people, but no, not ac-

cording to the current Premier. This is the first-ever government for the people? Come on.

But when you start at that point—so do you really want to make this work? Do you know what I think the government is afraid of?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's the public hearings.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's the public hearings with the securities commission, with the companies, with some of the municipalities that are going to have their contracts cancelled. That is what they're afraid of.

But if this is the model you're setting for yourselves, oh, we're in for a rough, rough time, and so are you. Everyone remembers the Big Blue Machine. I remember it, too; I used to believe back then. But one of the hallmarks of the long-reigning Tory government—and Tory governments have done some good things: the college system—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Pushed by the NDP.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, pushed by the NDP, of course. But one of their hallmarks was stability, right? That's why they lasted so long: It was stability. If my memory serves me correctly—you guys can disagree, but even when they had majorities, they kind of governed like a minority, because the way to create good legislation is to actually work with people, and you guys recognized that.

The minister of—oh, yes, this is a good one. The minister—she's got a long one—from Nepean. And I quote, again, from the minister: "The beauty of talking about a time allocation motion is I'm actually allowed to talk about time allocation. I would really like to talk about matters that are important for the day, but I find, increasingly in this assembly, we're starting to see this rush just to dump the bill and rubber-stamp it and then move on to something else. I think it's eroding the confidence of this assembly when they do that, and I think it's unfortunate."

I don't think it's unfortunate; I think it's tragic. I think it's frightening that these folks, the current, new Ford government, are starting there, because a lot of these current, new members on the government side think that this is going to be how it's done, and it very well may be how it's done under their regime. But you're going to be very surprised, because four years from now, you might not be sitting there, because people will recognize it. Those of us north of the wall know that the rules don't seem to apply to everybody.

You guys, on this wind farm one, are making specific rules for one sector because you don't like it, and all the other sectors are going to wonder: "Now, what's this?" And you'll be able to reassure: "Oh, no, no. We only did this because we don't like these ones." But you're going to run into other issues. You're setting an incredibly dangerous precedent.

What's even more dangerous is that you know it. You know it, because on your side and our side, you have business people, you have investment advisers, and in their former lives they would not advise their clients to invest in unstable environments, where the rules can

change at the drop of the hat. It's not that the rules can change going forward—that's part of the democratic process—but that the rules for contracts signed previously in good faith can change at the drop of a hat.

I know in my private life—maybe farming is a bit different—I have done lots of deals with a handshake. Some of those deals have gone bad, but I never shook those hands again. The same thing is happening on a bigger scale here. There are people in my personal life—we weren't a multinational corporation, but we did some pretty big things on a handshake, and I would do it over and over again with those people. But I've had people who shake your hand and then walk away thinking they've beat you for \$15 or \$20. In the big picture of government, that's all you're really doing here, but you're building a reputation as a bad-faith administration.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Right out of the gate.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you: right out of the gate, a bad-faith administration. It takes years to build a reputation; it takes seconds on a personal level to destroy it. Oh, yes: "promise made." I say: "promise maybe." And you guys don't seem to be worried about that.

I was telling you the same thing on Thursday afternoon. The people on Thursday afternoon were a bit more—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Lively.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes. They heckled a bit more. I don't mind people heckling. A few of them on your side, on the government side, started heckling, "We're doing this because we want to get 'er done. We want to get 'er done." I'm thinking, "Okay, so the democratic process has been replaced by Larry the Cable Guy."

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Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, really—things go wrong when you want to get 'er done. I know that from the farm. You can do it right or you can get 'er done, and sometimes when you want to get 'er done it goes wrong. You don't create legislation that affects the people who elected you with a get 'er done attitude.

You've got time to do it right. You have a mandate, but you have the responsibility to do it right. If this is the responsibility you're taking—first, taking three bills that are substantive on their own and mashing them into one, something that everyone is also opposed to; secondly, to run this with a time allocation without letting any outside voices talk to this legislation. You claim to want consultation on—

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, you have a mandate to govern, but you don't have a mandate to govern irresponsibly. And what you're doing here is irresponsible.

In the Legislature yesterday, on a different issue, I heard the Premier talk about how the consultation for the sex ed curriculum wasn't nearly big enough and how it was only a small percentage of Ontarians.

Well, the percentage of Ontarians who got to speak on this legislation—it was basically 20 people in your backroom. Twenty people in one of your backrooms is the full

consultation process on this legislation. That is such a small percentage that you can't even count it.

So you can't have it both ways. You said, "Full consultation; the biggest consultation ever," but on a bill that is fooling around with securities law, where it says "alleged misrepresentation"—I don't have a PhD in English, so I checked the dictionary. "Misrepresentation" is not a good word. And to protect yourself from that in the legislation? Take the time. This is very dangerous stuff you're dealing with.

You guys like to say that the NDP knows nothing about business. That's totally incorrect. Whoever is writing this legislation does not know anything about maintaining confidence in the investor sector, in the business sector. The one thing that we have in this province, that we've always had, is a stable legislative environment where, once you are in the system, once you've signed a contract, you can be confident that that contract will be honoured, and if it isn't honoured, that you have ways and means to defend yourself. What you are doing is taking away those ways and means. That is no longer a stable business environment.

Oh, yes, you're going to get 'er done, but it's going to cause huge problems. That's why we are so opposed to this motion and so opposed to portions of this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate? Further debate.

Mr. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 2, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 2, An Act respecting Hydro One Limited, the termination of the White Pines Wind Project and the labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903.

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

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Orders of the day?

Hon. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your appointment. No further business today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1005 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. David Piccini: I'd like to introduce my executive assistant, who has come out today from my constituency of Cobourg, who is visiting and who has just joined my

office—really excited to have him and excited to have him in Toronto: Ralph Kerr.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm happy to welcome and introduce today a couple of people who organized the March for Our Education that took place on Saturday on the lawns of Queen's Park. With us are Frank Hong and Rayne Fisher-Quann, two of the three organizers, along with Gerd Bizi, who organized that march. We're happy to have you here today. Welcome.

Ms. Lindsey Park: I'd just like to introduce my friend Kristen Cusan.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to introduce in the House two former staff who were very helpful and also became quite good friends of mine over the last year: Bryan Leblanc and Dorijan Najdovski. Welcome to our Legislature this morning.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd like to recognize Manish Sawhney in the members' gallery. He was my campaign manager and led our amazing team to a great victory on June 7.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'd like to introduce a guest here this morning. He was very helpful in my campaign and is with CN, works in corporate services as a manager for public affairs Ontario: Mr. Daniel Salvatore.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I would like to introduce Patrick Magarelli. I offer him congratulations and condolences because he starts to work for me today. Congratulations, Patrick, and welcome aboard.

ANNUAL REPORT, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that the following document has been tabled: the 2017-18 annual report of the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

ORAL QUESTIONS

CURRICULUM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my first question is for the Premier. We have two students today, as I mentioned in the introductions, who organized this weekend's rally against the repeal of the updated sexual health and education curriculum, and I wanted to commend them for showing the incredible leadership that they showed on the weekend.

Last week, the education minister said that students need to learn about consent, cyberbullying and gender identity and appreciation. A few hours later, she backpedalled and left students, teachers and school boards more confused than ever. Will the Premier confirm that all information about consent, cyberbullying and gender identity from the updated health curriculum will be taught in Ontario's classrooms this September?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. As I've said day after day after day—I said it very clearly—we're

going to consult with the people of Ontario. There are 14 million people in Ontario and less than 0.001% of the public school system and the separate school system was consulted. That's not consulting people. When you have 1,600 people—online, by the way; the curriculum was already done, and then they decided to go out and get 1,600 people and get their opinions.

I know the Leader of the Opposition doesn't believe in consulting with parents. We believe in consulting with parents. Once we do the largest consultation in the history of Ontario, then we'll be able to answer your question.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yesterday, the Deputy Premier said that issues related to self-identity and self-expression will be included in the curriculum this fall. Will the Premier confirm that all information about sexual orientation, gender identity and LGBTQ families from the updated health curriculum will be taught in Ontario schools this coming September?

Hon. Doug Ford: That's not up to us to decide in this chamber; it's up to the people—

Interjections.

Hon. Doug Ford: I know you don't believe in consulting with the people. It's up to the people of this great province to give us the direction to make that decision.

We ran a campaign for the people. It's not for the government or for the opposition or for the special interest groups; it's for the people.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, it looks like it's just for the Premier's favourite special interest groups. That's the problem. It's not for the safety of our kids; it's for the Premier's favourite special interest groups.

The Premier's backroom deal to scrap the updated health curriculum is causing nothing but confusion for students, for school boards and for teachers, and we all know why. The Premier made that backroom deal with social conservatives to help him get elected, and now he's repaying his political debt to those radical activists—doing it at the expense of Ontario students and in apparent opposition to his Deputy Premier and education minister.

Why is the Premier putting his own political interests first and putting the safety of our kids in jeopardy?

Hon. Doug Ford: Leader of the Opposition, I have the greatest Deputy Premier I could ever ask for in Christine Elliott.

We ran, again, on a message: for the people. When the people speak, we listen. We don't believe in big government. We don't believe in the nanny state. We don't believe in politicians dictating to the people. We believe in empowering the people and letting them make the decisions.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is again for the Premier. The Premier's decisions are being driven by backroom insiders, not by what's best for all Ontarians.

The Premier said that his backroom deal with Hydro One would cost “zero ... absolutely zero,” but now we know that Mayo Schmidt will walk out the door with at least \$9 million. If Hydro One's deal with Avista falls through, Hydro One ratepayers could be on the hook to pay over \$100 million to a dirty-coal-burning American power plant.

When will the Premier release the full details and full cost of his backroom deal with Hydro One?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, through you: We ran on getting rid of the CEO of Hydro One. We ran on getting rid of the entire board. We did exactly what we promised. Promises made, promises kept.

We also ran on a promise that we were going to reduce hydro rates by 12%, and that is exactly what we're going to do. We're going to put money back into the people's pocket instead of the government's pocket.

We're going to help small businesses. We're going to help families that are struggling to put food on the table, when they have a choice between paying the highest hydro rates in North America or putting food on their table.

What we won't do is lay 7,000 people off—

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

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Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I guess the pledge not to waste precious public dollars has gone by the wayside: \$9 million, plus \$103 million, plus who knows how many billions with cap-and-trade cancellations? It's going to cost the people of Ontario a hell of a lot of wasted money for his political purposes.

The people of Ontario deserve to know the full cost of the Premier's backroom deal at Hydro One, but the Premier has refused to come clean on that deal. That's why New Democrats were trying to bring forward an amendment to Bill 2 to require Hydro One to publish the full details of payments made to the departing CEO and the board of directors. But the government has decided instead to ram the bill through with little debate, no committee hearings and no chance for the people to have a say.

Why is the Premier shutting down an opportunity for the people of Ontario to have their say on this bill?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, when we talk about hydro, my friend across the aisle, the Leader of the Opposition, had her members go out during the election and lobby for the highest hydro rates in North America, the largest carbon tax—

Interjections.

Hon. Doug Ford:—the largest carbon tax—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. I have to be able to hear the Premier.

Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: You had one of your candidates bragging that we should have the highest carbon tax in North America, in the entire world.

We're taking a different approach. We're actually going to reduce gas prices by 10 cents a litre, making people more competitive, businesses more competitive—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What wasn't true during the election campaign is still not true today.

But, look, what a start. What a start for this for-the-people Premier: the very first piece of legislation to be tabled in this Legislature and he's shutting out the people in terms of committee hearings and opportunity for public debate and scrutiny of his first piece of legislation. That's not very transparent. That's not gathering the voices of the people. It's shutting out the voices of the people.

He needs to tell us what the full costs are, Speaker, what the payment to Mayo Schmidt and the board of directors is going to cost. He needs to tell the government how he's going to protect Ontarians from \$103 million in charges and fines if the Avista deal falls through. He has to come clean about any further costs as a result of this backroom deal.

Will the Premier release the full costs?

Hon. Doug Ford: Leader of the Opposition, I'll tell you what transparency is: Transparency is when you make promises during the election, you keep your promises. That's what transparency is.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock.

Hon. Doug Ford: As we promised, and we delivered on our promise, the CEO of Hydro One had zero severance, absolutely zero.

We promised we were going to get rid of the cap-and-trade and carbon tax, the worst tax anyone could put on the backs of the taxpayers and businesses. We're doing that. It's done; it's gone. We're putting money back into the people's pockets instead of the government's.

Leader of the Opposition, I appreciate your question. Thank you.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. Today, the Financial Accountability Officer tabled his annual report. He specifically highlighted two of his office's most important reports: the real cost of selling off Hydro One and the real cost of the Liberal hydro plan, which is now the Ford hydro plan.

The FAO's non-partisan expert report showed that privatizing Hydro One increases the deficit by billions. Privatization of Hydro One is a waste. It was a bad Liberal plan, and now it's a bad Ford plan. It's a deal that helps backroom insiders and big banks and hurts people. It's not a plan for the people; it's a plan for the rich.

How can the Premier justify the Hydro One privatization that adds billions to the deficit?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I thank the member from the new deficit party—oh, the New Democratic Party—for his question.

For 28 days, the most important standing committee that could ever be convened met, and on June 7 they made their decision, Mr. Speaker. They supported this leader and our government to reduce their hydro rates by 12%. In the past couple of weeks we have moved quickly to renew the leadership for Hydro One, to get rid of projects that communities not only did not need but didn't want.

We're on track to reduce those hydro rates. Promises—plural—made; promises kept—plural.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Please sit down. Restart the clock.

Supplementary?

Mr. John Vanthof: The FAO also highlighted the report into the Liberal hydro plan. Last week the energy minister said he wasn't that familiar with the Liberal plan. The only thing is, the Liberal plan is now the Conservative plan. The FAO's report shows that the Ford hydro plan will cost Ontario more than \$45 billion. The FAO's non-partisan expert report shows that bills will increase permanently and people will soon see annual increases of nearly 7%.

The Premier says he's for the people, so why is his plan increasing their hydro bills by billions?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Once again, through you, Mr. Speaker, I'll just turn to my colleagues and ask for forgiveness that I don't pay attention to Liberal energy policy—Liberal energy policy that the NDP supported time and time again, that saw their hydro rates either go up or be subsidized for the next generation, which would be my little girls Abigail Mae and Poppy Kate. We don't stand for that on this side of the House.

We're saving taxpayers \$790 million in today's dollars by terminating contracts Ontarians don't want and don't need. We're renewing the leadership for Hydro One and we're meeting our commitment to reduce hydro rates for all ratepayers.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Members, take your seats.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Deepak Anand: Mr. Speaker, as I rise for the first time in the House, I would like to congratulate you on your election and I'd like to say you're doing a wonderful job. Thank you so much. I'd like to congratulate the rest of the 122 MPPs on their elections, as well.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. First, I would like to congratulate the minister for being tasked with this

very important responsibility. I know the minister will serve his constituents and the people of Ontario with honesty and integrity.

With the recent brazen and indiscriminate act of violence seen in the city of Toronto, I'm proud to know that our government for the people will ensure that our police and first responders will have the resources and tools required to perform the job safely and effectively. Our first responders perform their duties selflessly and with incredible professionalism, and they deserve to have the proper resources to perform their duties.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is: Could the minister please explain to the members of this Legislature—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Community Safety.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Firstly, I'd like to congratulate the honourable member for Mississauga-Malton on his recent election as an MPP.

Mr. Speaker, our thoughts are with the victims and their families who experienced this senseless violence. I want to also thank the first responders who acted so quickly to help the victims bring this incident to an end.

Public safety is our primary concern and we're committed to examining current community funding programs and their effectiveness in reducing gun violence and gang-related activity in Ontario. This government has remained clear on the issue of gun violence and organized crime in Ontario. We will remain committed to providing our front-line officers with the tools and resources they require to perform their duties.

We are going to get resources to our police services. It means boots on the ground. It means more resources on the front line so they can do their job. That's what we committed to in the last election: more tools, more resources, more supports.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Back to the minister: Minister, over the past 15 years, we have repeatedly seen our police being unable to acquire the proper tools and resources they need to keep Ontario communities safe. This has placed our front-line officers at risk, which is simply unacceptable. Under the previous government, our first responders were denied the ability to perform their job safely and effectively. With the rise in gun violence on our streets, our first responders deserve better and deserve to perform their jobs safely.

With the rise in gun violence on our streets, can the minister please explain how this ministry will help keep Ontario's communities safe?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you once again for that question. Gun violence destroys lives and is a menace to our communities. It has no place in Ontario, and these attacks need to stop. The Premier had directed my ministry to work across government lines and with key stakeholders, including police, municipalities and community organizations.

We'll also want to work with the federal government to ensure their sentencing is tougher for people who have committed violent acts and that the bail system is keeping our communities safe.

The status quo is failing, so I'll remain committed to working with all members of this House and everyone in this province to find solutions that will keep our communities safe and protect Ontarians from being the victims of senseless violence.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Suze Morrison: My question is to the Premier.

Earlier this month, educators, elders and knowledge keepers, including survivors of residential schools, were to travel to Toronto to participate in the curriculum writing session for the truth and reconciliation curriculum, one of the recommendations of the TRC commission.

This was cancelled on the Friday before people were set to travel and, in fact, some already had travelled into the city. Ministry staff have said that the move was taken in order to meet the directive by this government to find savings across the public service.

Speaker, will the Premier tell us when the truth and reconciliation curriculum writing will resume?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Greg Rickford: We look forward to the opportunity for these young Indigenous people to have access to these important developments in the curriculum and for them to be a part of it, and we intend to see those meetings go on, moving forward. We put this on pause to be a little cost-conscious about how we intend to proceed with this. But we will move forward with this in short order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Suze Morrison: The minister has said that the curriculum was postponed—not “paused,” as he said—not cancelled and would resume. Summer was the ideal time for this curriculum writing to take place. In the fall, educators will have to be replaced in their classrooms by substitute teachers. This curriculum was to involve language and cultural learning as early as kindergarten, which is vitally important to preserving and passing on things like languages.

Will the Premier tell educators, elders and students when the truth and reconciliation curriculum writing will resume? “Paused” is not good enough.

Hon. Greg Rickford: One of the most important things we can do is to honour the principles of truth and reconciliation and ensure—as I think all colleagues from both sides could say and share, there wasn't enough of that in our own curriculums, growing up as children in our public school education system.

We intend to remain committed to this opportunity, and we'll have more to say about that in the very near future.

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

M^{me} Amanda Simard: Merci, monsieur le Président. Ma question s'adresse au ministre de l'Infrastructure.

I represent many small communities that have felt neglected in the last 15 years. During the election, Premier Doug Ford and our Ontario PC team campaigned on the promise to make life easier for families, businesses, seniors and students, and to send a message that Ontario is open for business. A key part of that promise is providing modern, reliable infrastructure to communities in every corner of this province. That includes expanding broadband access.

Can the minister tell this House about how his ministry will be supporting our government's mandate to deliver relief for the people of rural Ontario?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: It's an honour to rise during question period for the first time as Minister of Infrastructure. I want to begin, like many others have, by thanking the people of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex for returning me to Queen's Park, and to thank my wife, Kate, and daughter, Annie, for all their support.

Also, I want to thank the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell for this very tough but fair question this morning.

Mr. Speaker, providing modern, reliable infrastructure to both our biggest cities and small towns is critical if we want to make Ontario open for business again. Access to broadband Internet is a key part of supporting economic growth in all of our communities and is an important focus of the Doug Ford government.

I'm excited to work with our municipal partners, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the private sector to deliver on the expansion of this vital infrastructure.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Amanda Simard: Back to the minister: Thank you, Minister. I'm pleased to hear that the Ministry of Infrastructure is committed to supporting our government's resounding mandate. The expansion of broadband is an important part of allowing our local communities to continue to grow and supporting the people who want to build their careers and raise their families in rural Ontario.

I know there's a hodgepodge of programs and partnerships already under way between the different levels of government and the private sector to expand access to broadband and cellular services.

Can the minister tell us more about the role that our government will be playing in modernizing this critical infrastructure?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I understand, as do my colleagues on this side of the House, the value of reliable, high-speed Internet to our communities right across the province. It is not just a matter of convenience or supporting business growth. Broadband access can also improve access and create cost savings in health care, transportation and the delivery of community services.

In a few weeks, I will be sitting down with hundreds of municipal representatives at AMO in Ottawa to discuss their priorities and how we can work with our municipal partners to deliver the modern, reliable infrastructure that families and businesses rely on.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Sandy Shaw: My question is for the Premier.

Scrapping the cap-and-trade program does more harm than good; case in point is my riding of Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas, the latest victim of these Conservative cuts. Mohawk College has now fallen victim to these cuts and they have had the \$2 million promised clawed back—\$2 million that was promised to open the new centre for climate change management. This centre was the first of its kind in Ontario, and it would have helped fast-track our region to a low-carbon economy. Now this innovative centre is scrambling to ensure that we can keep it alive.

So I ask: How many more green initiatives will end up on the Conservative chopping block while it dismantles cap-and-trade?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you, I thank the member for her question.

Our government was elected on a promise that puts people first and makes life more affordable for Ontarians. As I've said before in this House, we do understand the importance of tackling climate change, but we disagree fundamentally with the solution of a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade program. The programs that the member speaks of were programs that were being funded by that regressive, unfair tax.

This government has been clear: It will cancel cap-and-trade, it will not support a carbon tax, and it cannot support the programs that were supported by that regressive tax.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Mr. Speaker, cancelling cap-and-trade only hurts Ontario business, with small business suffering the most. And as we know, small business is the backbone of Ontario's economy.

The federal government's Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act will apply to businesses located in provinces that don't have a cap-and-trade program. This means that the price of pollution ultimately falls on the rest of Ontario residents, those who are already struggling to make ends meet.

Why is the Premier ignoring the financial burdens that come along with scrapping cap-and-trade? Will the Conservative Premier be honest and tell us where this axe is going to fall next?

1100

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: This government has been very clear from the very beginning about our position on cap-and-trade. It is a little bit rich to think that a tax is how we are going to

make business competitive. To talk about competitiveness and a tax is, I guess, the NDP way.

To talk about competitiveness for our Ontario businesses, our job creators, we are not going to have a tax. We are not going to have the highest carbon tax in the world. We are going to cut that tax. In doing that, we are going to create jobs for Ontarians and we are going to create a better environment, a more affordable environment for our province.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

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

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: Merci, monsieur le Président. Premièrement, je veux vous féliciter pour votre élection comme Président de la 42^e législature.

My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Last week, the minister claimed that Doug Ford will be remembered as the Premier who brought transit to Ontario. Apparently, the ministerial script has been delivered from the PC Party. You know that as of last June, there were more transit projects under way in Ontario than ever before, including the Ottawa LRT phase I, which is scheduled to carry its first passengers in November.

The previous government committed to funding the LRT phase II. I know during the campaign, the then-leader, now Premier, did commit to funding not only the LRT phase II, but other projects all across our great province.

Can the minister clarify for this House his remarks from last week about the funding of ongoing transit projects, and can he tell me today—can he tell us today, actually—if phase II of the LRT will be part of the funding?

Hon. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much to the honourable member from Orléans for the question, and congratulations on your re-election.

Yes, I did say that Doug Ford would be the Premier who brought transit to Ontario. I didn't talk about the history, absolutely, but he will be remembered as the Premier who expanded the transit system in Ontario beyond the work of anyone before him.

Our commitment to expanding transit in the province of Ontario is ironclad. It's as ironclad as the steel rails that move trains across this country. I can say on the LRT that we are continuously in negotiations with the city of Ottawa, in discussions with the city of Ottawa. Phase II is absolutely a project that this province, under Doug Ford, will be partnering with the city of Ottawa on. There is no question.

I can expand on that in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you, Minister. You know, there is another Tory Premier who is remembered for transit, and they're not fond memories. Mike Harris cancelled the Eglinton subway. He didn't just cancel it, actually; he filled in the tunnels that had already been dug.

Uncertainty hurts Ontario's economy and its business community. The \$4.2 billion in corporate assets that are in limbo because this government cancelled carbon permits has caused enough uncertainty. They don't need more on the transit file.

We know that this government has already cut funding for schools, businesses, homeowners and hospitals. Are transit projects next? Will the minister commit to this House today that this government will not cancel any planned or ongoing transit projects and that this government won't fill in any more tunnels?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I thank the member for the question. The members of the Liberal Party are going to have to get new scripts. That's the same script that they were using when they were in government. It didn't work then and it's not going to work now.

If they want to talk about previous governments, let's talk about the failures of the last government, the Liberal government that has now been reduced to seven seats across the province of Ontario because the people said that they want change. Doug Ford and the PC Party have brought that change.

Speaker, let's be very, very clear. Make no mistake about it: Transit under this government will get all the due attention it deserves because we understand that if you can't move people and if you can't move goods, your economy will suffer.

We've seen what neglect has done under the previous government. That won't happen under Doug Ford—

Interjections.

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

Next question.

FIREFIGHTING IN NORTHERN ONTARIO

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Ontario continues to face a particularly challenging forest fire season. Conditions this year have resulted in significantly more fires in the province and a large area affected.

I commend the minister and his ministry for their swift action in Temagami and the efforts undertaken to help get the situation under control. But there's still more work to be done.

Can the minister please inform the House of what steps his ministry has taken to ensure the ongoing safety of our communities?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thank you very much for the question, the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you on being appointed the chief government whip of the Doug Ford government.

I would like to reassure Ontarians that we're doing all we can to fight these fires, attacking both from the air and on the ground. We've brought in over 450 skilled crews and aircraft from across Canada, the United States and Mexico to fight these fires alongside our fire rangers.

As wildland fires continue to burn across Ontario, I want to thank everyone who has been impacted for their co-operation and patience. I'd like to thank our brave fire rangers who are working tirelessly to fight these fires, protecting people and property. I would also like to acknowledge the support of law enforcement, municipalities, Indigenous communities and our emergency management staff during this time.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the minister: Minister, I want to thank you for your service and your appointment. I know you're going to be a great member and lead on this file.

I, too, would like to thank all the firefighters, fire rangers and other individuals working to get these fires under control. Their tireless efforts are beyond appreciated.

Can the minister please provide this House with more details on what actions and additional supports were taken to battle these fires in order to keep the residents of our northern communities safe?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thank you very much for the question. With this government, public safety remains our priority at all times. I know this is a challenging time for people who have been evacuated from their homes or impacted by smoke from these fires. I'd like to thank them again for their co-operation and patience.

Our government has continued to monitor the situation closely and will continue to provide information and updates as soon as they become available.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Ma question est pour le premier ministre.

Attawapiskat First Nation has seen a flood of illicit drugs and alcohol in their community. The Mushkegowuk Council has also declared an emergency due to drugs.

It takes the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service a week to get a warrant from a justice of the peace. It is so bad that the Chief and other community leaders have had to seize the contraband themselves.

Is it acceptable that access to the law is different depending on where you live? What does the Premier say to Attawapiskat and the Mushkegowuk tribal council?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Greg Rickford: We appreciate the challenges and the opportunities that Indigenous communities in the remote and isolated parts of this great province have, and we're very sensitive to them. We also acknowledge that the Trudeau government made it their priority to legalize marijuana without considering some of the consequences. In the view of many Indigenous leaders, it was brought along too fast and too hard without appropriate consultation.

Unlike the Liberal government, we're going to listen carefully to the concerns that Indigenous communities have raised regarding the legalization of recreational ma-

rijuana, including the Mushkegowuk Council. I invite the member to put those to us in writing or through the Chief, and I look forward to those conversations in the not-too-distant future.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Again, the Nishnawbe police have been clear that they don't have the resources to properly patrol their vast territory, let alone tackle the crisis.

The federal government has allocated \$15 million to the First Nations police in the province. New Democrats committed to \$30 million a year. How much is this government prepared to commit to First Nations police in the province?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Minister of the Attorney General.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I thank you for your question.

Our government will always work to ensure that our province's justice system is fair and equitable to everyone living in the province of Ontario. We are aware that the process may not always include all people. We will be looking forward to working with people in your community and across communities around this province to make sure that we can identify initiatives to help ensure that all Ontarians who need to be properly represented are able to be represented.

1110

If the member opposite would like to work together on ways that we can do that, I look forward to the opportunity to sit down with him.

TRUCKING SAFETY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next question: the member for Chatham-Kent-Leamington.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to congratulate you on being elected from this assembly as the Speaker of the Ontario Legislature. Congratulations. I look forward to working with you.

My question is to the Minister of Transportation. With an increasing number of vehicles on our roads and more goods being moved across our province, truck safety becomes ever more important. I know the OPP and other law enforcement agencies have been on our Ontario roads conducting safety blitzes to crack down on unsafe trucks and get the message out about safety.

Can the Minister of Transportation tell this House what is being done to help improve truck safety on our highways?

Hon. John Yakabuski: Thank you to the member for Chatham-Kent-Leamington for the question. I want to congratulate him on his re-election, but also thank him for the ongoing commitment to truck safety that he has been a champion of ever since being elected into this House.

Speaker, I've had the opportunity in the last few weeks as the new Minister of Transportation—and I'm

honoured to have that role—to speak with members of the Ontario Trucking Association as well as the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada about the commitments that we both share and the importance of truck safety.

In this government, the safety of our people is our number one priority—on our roads, in our transit systems and wherever they may be. Many measures have already been done, and we're going to ensure that we do everything we can to make our roads as safe as possible. They are among the safest in the province, and I can expand on that in the supplementary as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Back to the minister, Mr. Speaker: I want to thank the minister for outlining how important truck safety is to him and to this government.

The trucking sector is important to our economy, and of course there are many good operators with good safety records, but it's an issue we must always stay on top of.

Can the minister outline what other steps he and his ministry are taking to ensure that Ontario continues to be a national leader in truck safety?

Hon. John Yakabuski: In addition to speaking to the members of the trucking associations, I also had the opportunity to have a lengthy conversation with Vince Hawkes, the commissioner of the OPP. We share a lot of common ground with regard to what we should do and can do to make our roads as safe as possible.

Recently enacted on July 1, there's a zero-tolerance policy for commercial truckers with regard to the use of alcohol or drugs—absolute zero tolerance. You cannot drink or use any drugs when you're—you can have your prescriptions, but you can't be smoking marijuana and driving a truck in Ontario, for sure.

Those kinds of issues, Speaker, are ones that we are absolutely committed to working on with the OPP, working on with the trucking associations. We have mandatory training now for someone to become a commercial truck driver.

There are many, many things that have been done and that we are going to do. But any time that anybody out there has a good suggestion for making our roads safer, we're ready to listen.

LAND USE PLANNING

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next question? The member for York South–Weston.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your election.

My question is to the Premier. Community members of the Rockcliffe neighbourhood in my riding of York South–Weston are angry. They are angry because St. Helen's Meat Packers Limited will be building a factory in their community. They are also hurt because their concerns have been ignored in the process. Instead of a long-awaited park being constructed in the community, the lot was sold through a closed-door bidding process. Now there will be no chance to modernize the area. That means no stores, no small businesses or even a park.

The Conservative government prides itself on being transparent. So my question is, will this government stand beside the Rockcliffe community and ensure that this backdoor deal is stopped, or will it side with big businesses?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Jim Wilson: To the honourable member: Certainly we'd be very interested in learning more details about this case. I'm not sure whether any government ministry is actually involved at this time. Perhaps you could let us know during the supplementary.

I will certainly work with you and get back to you and answer your questions fully to the satisfaction hopefully of yourselves and your constituents. Please send us more information.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: The construction of the St. Helen's Meat Packers Ltd. factory will compromise the Rockcliffe community. To be clear, the meat-packing factory is expected to be built across the street from not one but two schools, Rockcliffe Middle School and Frank Oke public school. It not only puts the health of young kids at risk, but the land also has a history of flooding and there are concerns that paving it over increases that risk.

Mr. Speaker, Rockcliffe residents deserve better. They should not have factory trucks driving past their homes and their schools on a constant basis and risking contamination of our community's air, water and soil. So I ask again, will this government review its environmental assessment and stop this backroom deal so the children and families of Rockcliffe can live and thrive in a healthy community?

Hon. Jim Wilson: The Premier has indicated that he's very familiar with this issue so he will bring us up to speed, and we'll get back to the honourable member and take the question on notice.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

Ms. Lindsey Park: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the President of the Treasury Board.

We know that Ontario has one of the largest debts of all subnational jurisdictions in the world, and our debt is almost equal to that of BC, Alberta and Quebec combined. This is the true legacy of the mismanagement of the previous Liberal government. For people, for families in the riding of Durham, the state of the province's finances is deeply concerning.

Would the President of the Treasury Board please inform us of the steps our government is taking to clean up the mess left by the previous Liberal government and restore respect for taxpayers in Durham and province-wide?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member from the great riding of Durham for that question.

Mr. Speaker, this government is motivated by a deep desire to set our province and our economy on a more

efficient and sustainable path. That is why we have embarked on a line-by-line audit of the province's books. In the 15 years that the previous Liberal government was in power, the average per capita debt increased by—and you won't believe this—\$10,614. What kind of legacy is that for future generations?

The people of Ontario deserve answers. A comprehensive line-by-line audit of government spending will fulfill that commitment. The era of obfuscation is over. The era of accountability is back. My colleagues: promise made, promise kept.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Lindsey Park: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and please extend my thanks to the minister for his response.

We know that immediate action must be taken to open up the books in this province. Under the previous government, our debt ballooned to \$311 billion and our credit rating was downgraded multiple times. Families in Durham are working hard and paying more than ever. They tell me that they want a change from the previous government, which wasted hard-earned money and spent our tax dollars on schemes that benefited political elites.

Would the President of the Treasury Board please give us more details on how the line-by-line audit will bring this change?

1120

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you again to the member for that question. Mr. Speaker, our government is taking immediate steps to restore public trust. That is why the line-by-line review is first and foremost an efficiency exercise. We're looking at all ways we're spending money. The results of the line-by-line review will be used to develop a responsible plan to achieve efficiencies and deliver results for taxpayers. The entire point of this exercise is to ensure the sustainability of government services.

The legacy on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, is one of indebtedness for the next generation. On this side of the House, our desire is to leave a legacy of hope and prosperity for the future of Ontario.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Next question.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: My question is to the Premier. Since April, 65 workers at the Port Arthur Health Centre—all of them women—have been on strike. They need a fair wage and health benefits so they can continue to provide great health care to the people of Thunder Bay, but the employer has refused to sit down. They've refused three requests for mediation from the Ontario Labour Relations Board and have refused to give these women a fair offer.

Every day that the employer refuses to bargain, the people of Thunder Bay, who rely on this clinic, are struggling to get appointments, are struggling to get their

medical information. They are forced into overcrowded clinics. They are forced to go to the overcrowded emergency rooms at our already beleaguered hospital, and use the ambulatory care at our hospital as well.

What will the Premier do to make sure that these health care workers get the respect they deserve and the people of Thunder Bay get the health care they need?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Laurie Scott: I thank the member for the question and congratulate her on her election to the Legislature.

We are certainly aware of the situation and we're monitoring it at the Ministry of Labour. In this situation, both sides are encouraged to work together to resolve the differences at the bargaining table. Ministry of Labour mediators are available to assist the parties in the process.

I agree with the member. We hope that there is a resolution coming soon for the many reasons that she has mentioned. We look forward to that resolution hopefully coming soon between the two parties. To the member: We will continue to monitor it.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: There are women at the Port Arthur Health Clinic who have worked there for 30 years. They have devoted their working lives to providing care to the families of Thunder Bay. I have received calls and emails supporting those workers.

People are shocked to learn that they are making \$14.71 an hour. Many of these women have been working casual for years even though they work full-time hours. They are supported by public health care dollars. And even though they work at a medical clinic, the employer has refused to pay them basic health benefits or WSIB.

The employer has refused to come to the table. They have refused the help of the Ministry of Labour. I ask the Premier again, what will the government do to help these front-line workers and ensure that Thunder Bay can rely on the quality health care it needs?

Hon. Laurie Scott: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much for the question. I do appreciate that this is a serious situation. We want to make sure that everyone in Ontario has access to the health care services that they need.

Having said that, as the member knows, the ministry is not a party to these negotiations, but we do encourage both sides to get together to try and resolve this in the interests of the people of the Thunder Bay area to make sure they receive the care services that they need. I know that everyone is concentrating on the best interests of the people in the community and we look forward, hopefully, to a quick resolution.

FIRST RESPONDERS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Cambridge.

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: May I offer you my congratulations on your election to the chair.

My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Mental health is an issue that affects many of those within this province, including many of the province's first responders. I was proud to see that our government for the people has taken the initiative to put forward the necessary funding for improving access to mental health supports throughout the province. With our government's commitment, we will be able to help those affected by mental health, including many of our first responders.

Mr. Speaker, could the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services please update the members of this Legislature on what the ministry will do to offer more support for our province's first responders?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'd first like to thank the member from Cambridge for her question in the Legislature here today and congratulate her on her election as the MPP for Cambridge. I know the member is an excellent representative for her constituents, and I wish her continued success here in the Legislature.

Addressing better access to mental health supports is an important issue that I have advocated for for more than 15 years before serving as minister. We know our front-line officers deserve more, and our government will remain committed to providing the men and women of our police services with the resources and tools they require to keep communities throughout the province safe.

One of the issues discussed recently in a meeting between the Premier, Minister Bill Blair, Mayor Tory and Chief Saunders was mental health and the need for supports. It's why our government is investing \$1.9 billion, matched by the federal government, into mental health care. We are committed to helping our front-line officers, and we will remain committed to helping them.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: Again, my question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Thank you for your kind remarks. I am proud of the trust that the people of Cambridge have placed in me.

Thank you very much for your update on the mental health supports for our first responders. It is great to see the government for the people respecting our first responders and acknowledging the incredible job they perform day in and day out to ensure that Ontario's many communities are safe.

Over the past 15 years, we witnessed the previous government fail to address the mental health of our first responders. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services please explain what tools and resources will be required to keep our front-line officers safe?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you for the supplementary question. Our party has not only committed to providing our front-line officers with the tools and resources they require but will also continue to remain

true to our commitment of improving access to mental health supports throughout this province.

Mental health is an issue that affects many Ontarians, and this government acknowledges that something must be done, and done soon. Our government has been clear on this issue and will continue to support the many men and women who perform their duties to keep our streets safe.

We will review the pilot projects across the province and see which are working. Through our mental health commitment for our front-line officers, we'll make sure that they get the help that they need and are able to provide the services we need them to provide.

ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is for the Premier. The Middlesex-London Health Unit has requested a six-month extension for London's temporary overdose prevention site, or TOPS, to keep the site operating until the permanent supervised consumption facility is in place. The temporary site was approved in February for a six-month period and has already made a huge impact in reducing the number of overdose deaths in London. Not only has the site saved lives by reversing overdoses, it has also referred almost 100 clients to other services, such as addictions treatment, mental health counselling and supportive housing.

Speaker, will the Premier approve the extension of the temporary site and allow TOPS to continue providing life-saving care to some of London's most vulnerable and marginalized populations?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you to the member for the question. We are committed to fighting the ongoing opioid and other drug crisis and get people struggling with addiction the help that they need. We are currently reviewing the latest data, evidence and current supervised consumption sites and overdose prevention site models.

Premier Ford was clear during the election that he will listen to the experts and committed \$1.9 billion to mental health and addictions programs, services and housing to match the \$1.9 billion committed by the federal government, and we are doing that right now. We are listening. We want to make sure that we get this right. We are listening to the evidence and a decision will be made in the near future.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I think Premier Ford was clear during the election that he was dead against overdose prevention sites, even as the number of opioid-related deaths in Ontario continues to rise.

Last year across the country, 4,000 people died because of opioid poisoning compared to 3,000 the year before. In my community of London, we have the third-highest rate of hospitalizations due to opioid poisoning in Canada and the second-highest in Ontario.

Not only will keeping the temporary site open save lives, it will also help reduce some of the pressure on our hospital emergency room. Speaker, will the Premier make a decision based on solid research and evidence of harm reduction, or will he ignore the recommendations of public health experts and reject the request to keep this site open?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I would like to clarify Premier Ford's position on this issue and the position of our party. Subsequent to the announcement that you referenced in your question, Premier Ford did say that he wants to listen to the evidence, learn about the evidence and make a decision based on the evidence. That is what we are doing right now. As part of our overall mental health and addictions process in developing a comprehensive strategy, we are taking a look at the supervised injection sites and overdose prevention site models. We want to make sure that we get it right. This is a big decision to make, to continue and to open more if we need to have more.

We are listening to the experts. We're listening to the Canadian Mental Health Association, Children's Mental Health Ontario and Addictions and Mental Health Ontario to finally develop a comprehensive strategy for mental health and addiction in this province, including the supervised injection site and overdose prevention site models.

Interjections.

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

GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Speaker, this question is for the Minister of Finance. After 15 long years of economic stagnation, the people of this province in their judgment chose change. They chose change for working families, they chose change for our industry and small business and they chose change for the people of this province. While I know that change irks the members of the third party, they should come to appreciate the humility of being given seven seats in this Legislature.

After a decade of economic darkness in this province, the people want government to restore public trust. Minister, could you explain why it is so important that we end the party with the taxpayer and get this commission of inquiry done?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much to the member for the question. This commission of financial inquiry is all about restoring trust with the people of Ontario. These are very, very important steps that Premier Ford is taking to clean up Ontario's finances.

Speaker, I want to refer to some specific language from both the Financial Accountability Officer and the Auditor General in both our public accounts and the FAO reports. He's referring to the former Liberal government's books. They are called "unreliable." The word "distort" is there, and "conceal," "deceptive," "obstructive," "unlikely assumptions," "significantly

understated," and "inappropriate." They ended with, "This accounting is bogus." That is why we're doing a commission of financial—

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

Interjections.

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Thank you to the Minister of Finance for explaining why we need to move forward with this level of accountability.

Mr. Speaker, the province needs trust in government. After 15 years of lying and duplicity by the former Liberal government—

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

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Withdraw.

After 15 years of duplicity by the former government, it is so clear that we need—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You can't utter unparliamentary comments. The member will withdraw again.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

Interjection: They cooked the books.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Speaker, we know they've cooked the books. Every—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. That's enough.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 2, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 2, An Act respecting Hydro One Limited, the termination of the White Pines Wind Project and the labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1136 to 1141.

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

On July 24, 2018, Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, moved government notice of motion number 2, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 2, An Act respecting Hydro One Limited, the termination of the White Pines Wind Project and the labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903.

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

Ayes

Anand, Deepak
Baber, Roman
Babikian, Aris
Bailey, Robert

Harris, Mike
Hogarth, Christine
Jones, Sylvia
Kanapathi, Logan

Phillips, Rod
Piccini, David
Rasheed, Kaleed
Rickford, Greg

Barrett, Toby	Karahalios, Belinda	Romano, Ross
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Ke, Vincent	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Khanjin, Andrea	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Kramp, Daryl	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
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
Crawford, Stephen	McDonell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McKenna, Jane	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	McNaughton, Monte	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dunlop, Jill	Miller, Norman	Tibollo, Michael A.
Elliott, Christine	Mitas, Christina	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Wai, Daisy
Fee, Amy	Nicholls, Rick	Walker, Bill
Ford, Doug	Oosterhoff, Sam	Wilson, Jim
Fullerton, Merrilee	Pang, Billy	Yakabuski, John
Gill, Parm	Park, Lindsey	Yurek, Jeff
Hardeman, Ernie	Parsa, Michael	

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harden, Joel	Rakocevic, Tom
Arthur, Ian	Hassan, Faisal	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Hatfield, Percy	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Horwath, Andrea	Shaw, Sandy
Berns-McGown, Rima	Hunter, Mitzie	Singh, Gurratan
Bisson, Gilles	Karpoche, Bhutula	Singh, Sara
Bourgouin, Guy	Kernaghan, Terence	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Burch, Jeff	Lalonde, Marie-France	Stiles, Marit
Coteau, Michael	Lindo, Laura Mae	Tabuns, Peter
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
Fraser, John	Mantha, Michael	Vanhof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Morrison, Suze	Yarde, Kevin
Glover, Chris	Natyshak, Taras	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 68; the nays are 41.

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

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business this morning, this House is in recess until this afternoon at 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1145 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

RIDING OF YORK SOUTH–WESTON

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I would like to start by taking a moment to thank the residents of York South–Weston for the trust and confidence they have put by electing me as their representative at the Ontario Legislature. It is an honour and a privilege to serve you.

It is also an honour to stand in this House for the first time as the first-ever member of the Somali community elected to provincial office in the country.

It truly makes me proud to be part of a team that truly represents the incredible diversity of this great province. Our New Democrat team, under Andrea Horwath's leadership, is one that values and celebrates our diversity, but more importantly, it is a team that recognizes the importance of every single Ontarian deserving to see themselves represented in government.

My being here would not be possible if it was not for the incredible work of our campaign team. Thank you to the dedicated staff, the committed volunteers, everyone who dedicated selfless hours to making sure we connected with thousands of residents in every corner of our riding. I share this moment with each of you, and to you I extend my enormous thanks.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Brampton West on a point of order.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce my very good friend, a candidate of record from Mississauga–Brampton South and a great businessman, Mr. Amarjeet Gill.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members' statements.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Lorne Coe: I rise this afternoon to speak about human trafficking and the work of the Durham Regional Police Service. It's an ongoing struggle, and the Durham Regional Police Service is hitting back hard against those who would solicit sex from young women and girls. So far, the Durham Regional Police Service's work has resulted in charges including sexual exploitation, child luring, and obtaining sexual services from a minor against several people across the region of Durham who responded to online ads placed by undercover officers.

Speaker, Durham police have focused their fight against human trafficking primarily in two ways: by arresting and charging the pimps who control sex slaves, and by reaching out to the girls and women and offering them support should they choose to escape the exploitation to which they've been subjected.

I hope that the excellent work of the Durham Regional Police Service will have the net effect of putting a definite dent in a sordid industry that has harmed too many young women in the region of Durham.

PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILLS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I had three private bills on the table when the Liberals called the last election, but I am still determined to press the new Conservative government to consider the ideas I had proposed.

I had wide support for the suggestion that Ontario would benefit from having a poet laureate. We wouldn't be the first province to create the position. Canada has a poet laureate, as do many Ontario municipalities, including my city of Windsor. I believe we could honour

the late Gord Downie of the Tragically Hip by creating the poet laureate position in his memory.

I had another bill to honour the memory of the brave Canadian military personnel from Ontario who lost their lives in combat while serving our country. Other provinces—BC and Saskatchewan, for example—have created a Silver Cross or Memorial Cross licence plate. These are made available to the immediate family members whose sons, daughters or spouses paid the supreme sacrifice while serving in the Canadian Armed Forces.

My third bill would strip away the red tape and allow Ontario distillers, for example, to sell our whisky where it's distilled and bottled. This would allow Windsor to reopen the doors of the historic Canadian Club Brand Centre in Old Walkerville. Some 15,000 visitors a day used to take the public tours that were once offered in this historic, magnificent architectural gem.

So, Speaker, a new government, but I will still be pressing for these and other ideas in the coming weeks as the proud member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

GRAND RIVER CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS POWWOW

Mr. Will Bouma: I rise today to bring attention to an important event in my riding of Brantford–Brant. The Grand River Powwow has a history that started in 1977 when a few people from the Six Nations community began to dance in powwows throughout Ontario.

One night in 1979, sitting around the campfire at a powwow, the discussion turned to, “Why don't we host a powwow at home?” The wheels started turning and the work began. The Grand River Champion of Champions Powwow Committee was formed, and it was decided to have the first powwow in 1980.

The term “Champion of Champions” was introduced as an added incentive to attract dancers. The dancer that would accumulate the most points throughout the weekend would be deemed the Champion of Champions and receive a trophy, as well as have their name engraved on a large trophy that is displayed by the powwow committee. A date was picked and it was decided that the powwow would be held annually on the fourth weekend in July.

This annual event takes place this Friday, July 27, through Sunday, July 29, and promotes Aboriginal multi-cultural arts heritage by showcasing their pride in music, dance, arts and crafts. It takes place in the open air during the afternoon and on into the evening. It's held at the Chiefswood Tent and Trailer Park on the grounds of the former estate to the Mohawk poetess E. Pauline Johnson at the Six Nations of the Grand River community.

I encourage all who are interested to come and learn, watch and take part.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I rise in the House today to speak about the affordable housing crisis that we've been

experiencing in Parkdale–High Park and Toronto for years.

Too many working-class families, immigrant families and seniors are being pushed out of their units, out of their neighbourhoods, places they have called home for 10, 15, even 20 years.

Skyrocketing rents, an inflated housing market driven by speculation and the lack of government investment in co-ops and subsidized housing have created this crisis. Successive governments, both Conservative and Liberal, have chosen not to take action even though it is a priority issue.

Speaker, in the last two years, we have had two rent strikes in Parkdale–High Park. Tenants organized and fought back because the system currently is designed not to protect tenants, but to benefit corporate landlords.

We know exactly what needs to be done, Speaker. First and foremost, we need to bring in rent control—real rent control. That means tying the rent to the unit, not to the person, so that the affordable rental stock remains affordable over time regardless of whether the tenant moves out or not; stopping the use of above-guideline rent increases, because corporate landlords already get a provincial tax deduction for capital repairs; and thirdly, creating a rent registry so tenants know what rents are and they are not put in a bidding war against each other to increase the profit of landlords.

Speaker, I want to hear from this government what their plan of action is on affordable housing, because everyone should be able to call Toronto home, not just the rich.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Today I would like to share a story of a former business owner that I had the honour to work for during my undergraduate years in my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville, a well-respected business owner that contributed to the local economy for over 20 years, as well as employing numerous employees.

Today my former boss, whom I have stayed in touch with, came to me and said that despite his best efforts to keep the company afloat, he had decided to sell his business. He simply could not withstand the elevated hydro costs that his business was incurring. Plain and simple, he was forced out of business.

It is always a sad day when hard-working small independent business owners—the backbone of the Ontario economy—are forced out of business due to terrible, short-sighted governance policies that were brought in and implemented by the previous government.

The people of Ontario are ready and in dire need for the positive changes our current government is proposing. The promise to reduce hydro rates by 12% will bring much-needed relief to businesses and homeowners and ensure that no other small businesses need to shut their doors.

1510

ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: This morning, my caucus mate the member from London West asked the Premier whether he will extend the temporary overdose prevention site in London.

Dr. Chris Mackie estimates that the London location has had 1,500 unique visits and further estimates that there are 6,000 injection drug users in the London area. Staff have thus made meaningful connections with 25% of that community, and each connection has the potential to put someone on the road to recovery. Seven potentially deadly overdoses have been prevented, and over a hundred people have been helped with housing, addiction and mental health supports.

I rise today as I am disappointed in the government's answer. While the Minister of Health said that the government would look at evidence, it's already available. She stated that they would listen to the experts. Well, they're already there as well. I would also highly recommend that she speak to those with lived experience. They're available too.

The minister stated that the government would make a decision in the near future. I'm rising today because I want to strongly remind this government that the deadline is fast approaching. On August 15, 2018, the exemption will expire.

I am disappointed in the answer we heard today, and I hope this government will do the right thing and keep the temporary overdose prevention site open so that staff may continue to save and improve lives.

MADONNA ROBOTICS TEAM

Mr. Roman Baber: Located at Wilson and Keele in North York, Madonna all-girls Catholic secondary school has been a staple of the Downsview community since 1963.

The Madonna robotics club, led by Ms. Ferreira, Mr. Kullman and Mr. MacDonnell, engages and fosters students' interest in science, electronics and robotics.

In May of this year, the Madonna robotics club competed and won a gold medal in the provincial Skills Ontario Competition and qualified to represent Ontario in the Skills Canada National Competition.

Taking place last month in Edmonton, Alberta, the national robotics competition is a two-day event where students are tested on both pre-programmed and remote-controlled robots. The robots were tested on their ability to pick up pipes and chase ball bearings.

I'm pleased to announce that the Madonna robotics club won the silver medal at the national competition, making many York Centre teachers, parents and this MPP extremely proud.

Robotics and automation are evolving and rapidly growing segments of Ontario's high-tech industry. This

achievement underscores the importance of additional investment in math and science in Ontario schools.

I'm proud of the girls at Madonna and offer them my sincere congratulations.

EVENTS IN STORMONT-DUNDAS-SOUTH GLENGARRY

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm proud to rise today to speak to the many terrific summer festivals held in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry.

Of course, it all started with the many July 1 celebrations, where almost every community in my riding marked the birthday of our great country with breakfasts, children's activities, concerts and, of course, fireworks.

Our rural communities are again pulling together thousands of volunteers to host our famous agricultural country fairs. Last week, I experienced the rural local hospitality at the Avonmore Fair. It will be followed by Canada's oldest fair, the Williamstown Fair, and fairs in Chesterville, South Mountain and Newington.

This Thursday night, I hope to attend the opening of our very popular Ribfest in Cornwall, where thousands of visitors experience great food and terrific entertainment over the four-day festival.

During the month of July, people gather on Tuesday nights in Williamstown for the traditional Scottish ceilidh hosted by the Glengarry Celtic Music Hall of Fame.

In North Dundas every Wednesday night, hundreds gather at village centres for local food, entertainment and company for the very successful Meet Me on Main Street.

And our largest summer festival, the Glengarry Highland Games, brings together over 30,000 people to celebrate the Scottish heritage of Glengarry county. The Friday and Saturday of the Civic Holiday weekend are filled with traditional Scottish food and competitions in highland sports, dance and music, which include up to 70 bands competing in the North American Pipe Band Championships.

Speaker, these are just some of the many events that are held in Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. That concludes our members' statements for this afternoon.

PETITIONS

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Suze Morrison: I would like to submit a petition related to the cuts to the TRC curriculum. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario is situated on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples, many who 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 act to:

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

"—reinstate the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation;

"—work with First Nations leaders to sign co-operative, government-to-government accords;

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

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

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

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

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

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

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

"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;

"Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario's consumer price index;

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

"Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

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

"Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

"—three hours' pay when workers are expected to be on call but are not called into work;

"—three hours' pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days' notice; and

"—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days' notice;

"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 Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure that no worker is left without protection."

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

1520

CURRICULUM

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm pleased to introduce and table in this House another set of petitions, entitled "Protecting Children: Forward, Not Backward, on Sex Ed." It was presented to me by my constituent Miranda Hassell.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition. I’m happy to affix my signature, and I’ll be giving it to page Annabelle to deliver to the Clerks.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Suze Morrison: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition and will be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Adam.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

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

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;

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

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

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

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

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call but are not called into work;

“—three hours’ pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days’ notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“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 Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure that no worker is left without protection.”

I support this petition and will be adding my name.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Marit Stiles: I am happy to table a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fair 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;

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

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

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

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

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call but are not called into work;

“—three hours’ pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days’ notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“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 Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure that no worker is left without protection.”

This was provided to me by my constituent, Susana Albuquerque. I’m pleased to affix my signature as I support this petition and I’ll be handing it to page Emmanuel to deliver.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Chris Glover: I respectfully submit this petition entitled “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fair 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;

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

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

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

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“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“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 Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure that no worker is left without protection.”

I support this petition. I will affix my signature and pass it to page Bavan.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Suze Morrison: I would like to present a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

“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;

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

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

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

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

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“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“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 Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure that no worker is left without protection.”

I fully support this petition. I will be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Michael to deliver to the Clerks.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Hon. Todd Smith: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the current government is a government for the people, with a clear mandate to pursue policies that put more money in people's pockets; create and protect jobs; address the hydro crisis; reduce hospital wait times; and restore accountability and trust in government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the minister to lead off the debate, if he chooses.

Hon. Todd Smith: While I agree wholeheartedly with this motion here this afternoon, I would like to mention that I am going to share my one-hour lead-off time with the members from Kitchener–Conestoga, Mississauga–Erin Mills and Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill for their inaugural speeches.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: I am truly humbled by this opportunity given to me by the constituents of Kitchener–Conestoga to address this Legislature and speak in favour of motion 1, introduced by my colleague the honourable member for Bay of Quinte.

This motion affirms our government's commitments made during the campaign to put more money in people's pockets, create and protect jobs, address the hydro crisis, reduce hospital wait times and restore accountability and trust in government. These priorities, which talk to the common sense of the people of Ontario, set out an ambitious agenda to bring back affordability, promote economic growth and enhance our front-line services by ensuring that every tax dollar is respected.

In my time allotted, I will express my wholehearted support for our government's priorities for the people and then conclude on why this plan adheres closely to my own reasons for entering politics and becoming a public servant.

Before I begin, I wish to congratulate my friend and neighbour in Wellington–Halton Hills, MPP Ted Arnott, on becoming our Speaker. As one of the 73 new members of this Legislature, I appreciate that we all have at our disposal an individual who personifies integrity and fairness. I have no doubt that he will serve us well and perform up to and above the standards set by his predecessors. I think members on both sides of the House will agree with my sentiments.

More importantly, I would like to thank my wife, Kim, and our five children—Jaxon, Maverick, Ryder, Emeric and Gemma—for their loving sacrifice and support. They joined a large group of dedicated campaign volunteers and community advocates, including my campaign manager, Jon Olinski, and friends Ron and Suma George. To all my campaign volunteers who might be watching me speak today, or who find themselves reading a transcript of my inaugural speech: I don't have the space to thank every single one of you individually here today, but you know who you are and you know how valuable you were to my campaign. So thank you.

I had such a tremendous team around me for my campaign and by my side. They knocked on thousands of doors, hammered in signs, made phone calls, licked the envelopes and spent hundreds of hours to ensure that I had the honour to stand here today. They sent me here to fulfill our government's five key priorities expressed in this motion.

I would like to next acknowledge my fellow Waterloo region MPPs—not only Amy Fee from Kitchener South–Hespeler and Belinda Karahalios from Cambridge, but also Laura Mae Lindo and, of course, Catherine Fife from Waterloo—for joining me in this assembly. Regardless of party affiliation, I sincerely hope that we can work together to improve people's lives from our region. I also wish to extend congratulations to the other 119 members as well. We are all here in this chamber to work for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I again want to acknowledge and thank the people of Kitchener–Conestoga for electing me as their member of provincial Parliament. To the best of my ability, I shall serve the diverse riding of over 100,000 individuals which spans nearly 1,000 square kilometres. This diversity is demonstrated in its distinct yet complementary urban and rural communities which extol the best features of Waterloo region. It encompasses the southwest and most western suburb communities of the city of Kitchener and the surrounding rural townships of Wilmot, Wellesley and Woolwich.

In the last month, I have been to community events, talking to constituents across the city and in the townships, including recent Canada Day festivities in the communities of Maryhill, New Hamburg and Elmira, to thank them and discuss how we can move forward on shared priorities. I'm looking forward to continuing this discussion at the upcoming Baden Corn Festival in August and the 42nd annual Wellesley Apple Butter and Cheese Festival in September. I will continue to meet with regional stakeholders and other levels of government.

Mr. Speaker, I must tell you that the people I talk to are excited about the return of affordability and the possibilities for economic growth under Doug Ford's Conservative government. The people of Waterloo region have always been pioneers and, today, have built a local economy that is a world leader in important economic sectors, including food production and agriculture, tourism and technology. Kitchener–Conestoga can proudly boast about Martin's Family Fruit Farm, whose products are sold in major supermarkets across North America, St. Jacobs' bustling farmers' market and Huron Digital Pathology, which is providing local and international medical facilities the advanced technologies needed to improve lives. These are just a few examples that illustrate the dynamism of my riding and Waterloo region.

This pioneering and entrepreneurial spirit has made my constituents excited for our new government. They appreciate the resolve communicated in the throne speech to fulfill our campaign promises and to move proactively to address their pressing concerns relating to affordability

and economic competitiveness. They approve of our immediate program for this legislative session to abolish a disastrous cap-and-trade system and carbon tax, to get students finally back to the classroom by ending the York University strike, and by stopping the White Pines wind energy project. These early initiatives send a clear message to Ontarians, whether they voted PC, NDP, Liberal or Green Party, that we intend to honour our commitments to make life more affordable and promote economic opportunity for all. They are counting on our government to reverse 15 years of unaccountability and mismanagement, which led to disastrous policies that raised taxes, hiked energy rates and heaped regulatory burden on our small and mid-sized businesses.

In Waterloo region, we have had first-hand experience of how these policies damaged our proud manufacturing sector. Like many of my colleagues in this assembly, I have a long list of factories that have closed and businesses that have relocated out of the province over the last 15 years.

I think it's important to give a few examples, because real, hard-working men and women were impacted. These policies led to the closure of BFGoodrich's Kitchener tire plant, which moved its operations to Alabama, causing 1,100 jobs lost in 2006. In 2007, MTD Products Canada's Kitchener plant, which made snow blowers, closed and shifted operations to Cleveland. The next year, Kitchener Frame Ltd.—more commonly known as Budd Canada—which provided parts for GM, closed after 45 years in operation. During its peak, it had over 3,500 employees.

In these and most other cases, operations were forced to move to more competitive jurisdictions south of the border or overseas because of rising costs, whether due to escalating hydro prices or the mounting regulatory burden of doing business in this province. All in all, Waterloo region has lost nearly 12,000 manufacturing jobs in the last decade. It's about time we reverse course and ensure that manufacturing is a viable, growing sector of Ontario's economy.

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From my own experience as a small business owner and entrepreneur in the private sector, I know how hard it can be for business to succeed and get ahead in Ontario. Eliminating cap-and-trade and cancelling 758 energy contracts which, if allowed to proceed, would only increase the burden on business shows a clear change of direction to promote economic prosperity.

I am excited to participate with my colleagues to fulfill our government's firm commitments outlined in this motion. These five priorities are well known to the people of Ontario because they are exactly—and I'll say it again, exactly—what we promised during the election. I'm glad to say, Mr. Speaker, that we are moving quickly on these priorities. We are putting money back in people's pockets, creating and protecting jobs, and addressing the hydro crisis by scrapping cap-and-trade and cancelling those 758 energy contracts. To repeat: Cap-and-trade and these contracts will only raise taxes and energy prices on families and businesses.

On health care, I am glad our government has brought on board Dr. Rueben Devlin, who has a wealth of experience as the former CEO of Humber River Hospital, Ontario's first digital hospital. I've actually had an opportunity to tour that hospital, and it's quite remarkable what they were able to achieve there. I know he'll be able to help us reduce wait times and end hallway health care.

Lastly, I know my constituents are elated that we have begun restoring accountability and trust in government by establishing an independent financial commission. This body will examine Ontario's public finances and government accounting practices and will get to the bottom of 15 years of mismanagement and unaccountability. Alongside, we will do a line-by-line audit of the province's \$150-billion annual budget to find efficiencies and get back to respecting the taxpayer and enhancing front-line services that we all depend on.

Acting on these five key priorities demonstrates that our government is here for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I have to address another issue of primary importance to my constituents and the people of Waterloo region, an issue that has largely been ignored by the previous government: transit and infrastructure. Our region needs two-way, all-day GO service to and from Toronto—period. For over a decade, we have increasingly been frustrated by unfulfilled promises and repeated postponements to finally build this essential transportation artery, which would connect people and businesses across the growing Toronto-Waterloo region corridor. This is a head-scratcher considering the Toronto-Waterloo region corridor is among the top 20 technology clusters in the world, and global companies such as Google and tech incubator Communitech are expanding operations in our region.

We have also seen endless delays in providing proper maintenance and timely expansion of our provincial highways, particularly the expansion of Highway 7 between Kitchener and Guelph. I will be a strong advocate for the timely completion of these two long-overdue projects.

Mr. Speaker, being a champion of these projects as well as ensuring that affordability and economic prosperity return to Ontario while protecting front-line services are my objectives as a public servant. These objectives are based on deeper personal motivations for entering politics. As a relatively young man, I feel it's incumbent upon me to encourage our political institutions to inspire my generation and also the next to get more involved in politics and advocate for initiatives important to them.

Also, a central motivation for me putting my name on the ballot was the long-term consequences of an increasing public debt burden on not only my five young children but all of the young children in Ontario. Therefore, I am glad to be part of a strong PC majority government led by our Premier, Doug Ford, elected from a turnout not seen since 1999. Gratefully, Ontarians elected a government that will reduce public debt and the burden of taxation on our children while protecting and enhancing those front-line services we all rely on.

My mention of 1999 is not purely coincidental. I cannot complete my inaugural address in this assembly without attributing my objectives and motivations as a public servant to my father, Mike Harris, the 22nd Premier of Ontario and the member for Nipissing for 21 years. Through him, I was immersed in political life from a young age. I remember walking the halls of Queen's Park as a young child, as we spoke about earlier, and being amazed by this building's history and the work being done, and I am happy to see that many staff members and employees are still around doing that great work.

Above all, my dad taught me that serving the public was a worthwhile and rewarding endeavour. Indeed, when I was a kid, I walked the halls of Queen's Park with my father, and I now speak to you today as the member of provincial Parliament for Kitchener–Conestoga. This is no coincidence. Politics is in my blood. In my family, growing up, politics was always top of mind. The principles and values that form the bedrock of our democracy were ingrained in my mind from a young age.

It is our government and our party who most clearly align with the democratic ideals and wills of Ontarians. The people of Ontario want a government that is fair and accountable. The Doug Ford Ontario Progressive Conservative government's mandate provides the people of Ontario with the transparent policy direction that they desire in government. Our PC government is a government for the people.

I know from many years of experience as an entrepreneur just how hard it can be for a business to succeed and get ahead in Ontario under bad government policies. The people of Ontario need a government that really cares about advancing economic freedom and protecting Ontario's entrepreneurial spirit. This is the only path to economic prosperity. The policy mandate that our government is advancing is clearly one that serves all Ontarians. It is one that is focused on creating and protecting jobs.

I know from many years as a parent just how burdensome basic costs associated with living such as hydro rates have become for the average family in Ontario. Ontarians long for a government that is ethical and accountable to the people—one that is willing to address the hydro crisis that the previous government left behind. Ontarians long for a government that is committed to putting more money back into the pockets of the average Ontario family.

An ethical government is one that is committed to making sure that government services such as health care are delivered in the most efficient and effective ways possible. Our health care system suffered under the previous government, and I heard this message loud and clear in my discussions with Ontarians throughout the campaign. Fixing this province's health care system, then, begins with reducing wait times, and that is exactly what our government is committed to doing.

My dad taught me and others lucky enough to still be in this assembly, or those since retired, that if this Legis-

lature wishes to effect positive change, it must find inspiration from the common sense of Ontarians.

This motion confirms our government's agenda towards affordability, economic opportunity and enhancing our front-line services while respecting the ratepayer and taxpayer. It demonstrates a firm commitment to put aside failed ideology and past compromises, and to return to a government for the people.

I stand here as a voice for the average Ontarian and the average Ontario family. I stand here for those who want a government that respects their tax dollars and values transparency. I stand here to speak in favour of motion 1 because it supports our government's mandate to serve the interests of average Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the time today, and I also want to thank the people of Kitchener–Conestoga for their support. I'm here for them, and I will not forget it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Mr. Speaker, it's my honour and privilege to rise and address this House for the first time. I would like to congratulate Premier Ford on his win and what that represents for the province. Change has finally come to Ontario.

I would also like to congratulate our government leaders and ministers on their appointments, as well as all of my fellow MPPs on their elections and re-elections. I look forward to working with all members of the Legislature and the government for the benefit of the people of Ontario. We have a job to do, and I know we will do it well.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the people of Mississauga–Erin Mills for giving me the privilege to serve them as the first MPP for the newly created riding of Mississauga–Erin Mills; my wife, Dr. Mary, my two sons, David and Christopher, my mother, my in-laws, my friends and relatives for their unwavering love and support; and all of the volunteers and staff who gave so much during the 2018 election to secure this victory, not for me, but for the people of Ontario.

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As public servants, we have been given the awesome responsibility of making decisions that have an impact on the lives of our fellow citizens. I know this is a responsibility my colleagues in this House take very seriously.

This is a special day for other reasons as well. Today I celebrate my birthday. Mr. Speaker, when I first came to Canada 23 years ago, I would never have imagined that on one of my birthdays, I would be addressing you in this House, the people's House.

Since my first moments in Canada, I was determined to rebuild my career. I remember that the first minute after finishing our immigration paperwork, my wife and I stood in Terminal 1 of Pearson airport with our luggage, thinking, "So where do we go from here?"

As a young family in a new land, my wife and I faced all of the challenges that come with starting life in an unfamiliar place: no friends, no extended family, no

community. Like many newcomers, we began building our new life on our own.

I was working my first job in Canada, like so many of our youth now, serving customers at my local Tim Hortons. I am grateful for that first job. I learned the value of hard work from those early days, and I gained life lessons that I still hold dear to this very day.

I recently had the chance to relive some of those old memories at that very same Timmy's where my journey began, when the manager of the store allowed me to serve some coffee for a few of my colleagues—MPPs Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto, Mr. Deepak Anand and Mr. Kaleed Rasheed—following an event, in the same exact branch where I used to work 23 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I am also grateful that ours is a country, a province and a party where opportunities for success exist for people of all backgrounds and walks of life. This is the Canadian dream: to work hard, provide for family, and give the next generation a better life with more opportunities than we had for ourselves growing up. I can say that I am living this dream.

I graduated with my bachelor's degree in engineering from Alexandria University in Egypt. I undertook my post-grad studies after that. I started working, leading to my becoming the regional IT manager for Egypt and the Middle East for a major petroleum company.

Moving to Canada and starting from ground zero, after spending some time struggling to keep my family afloat, I finally managed to get a job in my field, then managing the network of a major bank in Toronto. My professional journey had begun.

I had the opportunity to work for some of the other major banks, tech companies and national telecom providers.

After 32 years of IT experience serving in different capacities, including building and managing networks and systems on a national scale, I focused on transferring those skills to the next generation by becoming an IT professor for multiple technology colleges and institutes.

Mr. Speaker, my life experience has connected me to people and communities of all backgrounds, and those are the bridges that I continue to build in my life as a public servant.

I have been fortunate to reach out and build strong relations with many of the communities in my city of Mississauga, with Arab, Polish, Ukrainian, Pakistani, Indian and African friends, as well as many communities who have never been represented or visible politically: Egyptians; Copts; Iraqis from the Syriac, Assyrian, Chaldean, ancient Orthodox traditions, as well as Shias, Kurdish and Yazidis; Lebanese Maronites, Antiochians, Melkites, Druze and Shias; Syrian Catholics and Orthodox Christians, as well as Syrian Muslims; Goans, Ahmadiyya, and South Asian churches; Indonesian and Chinese Christians. Those communities share the same experiences as my own Coptic community: We have no voice; we have no representation.

This is the Ontario we have come to love: an Ontario that welcomes all people and provides opportunities to successfully integrate and fulfill their dreams.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to give voice to those communities and all of the citizens who have placed their trust in me. The people of Mississauga–Erin Mills and citizens all across our great province spoke loudly and clearly on June 7. They said that they wanted a government that works for them, a government that listens and respects their hard-earned money, a government for the people.

Our province and country are built and sustained on enduring values of freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. As the first Canadian of Egyptian heritage and first Copt elected in any Legislature in Canada's history, and as an Arab and Middle East Christian elected this term, today is a memorable moment that we can all take pride in.

After several months, thousands of doors knocked and a hard-fought campaign, the real work now begins, the work of delivering change, positive results and a government that works for the people.

Our government outlined an ambitious plan to bring relief to Ontario families and get our province back on track. From relief at the pumps and a reduction in hydro rates to bringing accountability back to public spending and getting our young people back to class, these are the priorities of the government for the people. The citizens of Mississauga–Erin Mills expect that this PC government will treat their hard-earned money with the respect it deserves. We have some of the hardest-working constituents anywhere in our province, and on June 7, they spoke loud and clear: Enough with the waste. Enough with the reckless spending. It's time to get to work fixing what 15 years of mismanagement has broken.

I am proud of this young government's track record of making promises and keeping them. This morning, I rose to support the advance of Bill 2, the Urgent Priorities Act. This bill brings much-needed accountability to Hydro One, terminates wasteful green energy schemes like the White Pines Wind project that only serve to make energy more expensive for ratepayers, and takes action to ensure that our students remain in the classroom where they can learn and grow.

Ontarians have grown sick and tired of watching life get better for Hydro One executives while they continue to suffer under increasing hydro rates. We have set about returning accountability to public utilities that have gotten out of control. This government is introducing measures to change the compensation framework for the Hydro One board. The days of overly generous compensation on the backs of Ontario ratepayers have come to an end.

Our government promised action on Hydro One, and we are keeping our promise. In addition to bringing accountability to Hydro One, we are scrapping wasteful green energy plans that have been hurting Ontario families for far too long.

Bill 2 proposes the termination of the White Pines Wind project that was snuck through during an election campaign when the previous government assumed nobody would notice. No longer will Ontario ratepayers

be on the hook for overpriced wind power, and we are one step closer to bringing our energy costs under control.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, I am a proud educator who loves to engage with students and prepare them for their successful careers after college. How can they do that when they are not even in the classroom? As an IT college professor with more than a decade of teaching experience, I have seen first-hand the devastating impact the Liberals' college strike had on too many of my young students. I saw my own students struggling to cope with the disruption that a strike puts on their lives: financial setbacks, delayed graduations and untold stress placed on students and their families. That's why I am encouraged that Bill 2 addresses labour disputes between York University and CUPE Local 3903.

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Our young people must not be held hostage by the disagreement of special interest groups. They must remain in class where they belong. We have listened to the concerns of parents all across the province on education and we'll always put the priorities of our youth above the demands of special interests.

We are scrapping wasteful green energy schemes that drive up hydro costs. We have put a leash on Hydro One to finally close a troubling chapter in the public books.

We have implemented government spending measures that demonstrate that the days of runaway spending have come to an end.

This is just the beginning. I am proud of this young government's track record of making promises and keeping them. We will never lose sight of the reason we are here, who sent us and why.

Over the weeks, months and years ahead we will continue to fulfill the promises outlined during our campaign: to deliver a government that the people of Ontario can truly be proud of.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Parsa: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to acknowledge two very special people who have come to watch me here today: my executive assistant and my special assistant Kai and Shaida, who are watching from up there.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for this opportunity to rise and speak in this chamber, as it is my very first time. And may I say, you look great in that chair, by the way. I would like to congratulate you, Speaker, on your election and congratulate all my fellow MPPs in this chamber on their election or their re-election to this beautiful place.

I feel truly humbled and privileged to have been given the opportunity to wake up every morning and come to this beautiful place and serve my constituents. I say this to myself every single day, as we all should: Never forget our duties and obligations to the people of this great province. We are here to serve and we should never lose sight of that.

When we came here initially we had an orientation. The staff have been so great. I think everybody can attest

to this. They were telling us and they gave us one fact—to be honest with you, for the first portions of the fact I missed half of it because I was so dazed with a smile from ear to ear as I was looking around this chamber, shocked that I'm sitting here. Once I got myself back together and paid attention to what the Clerk was teaching us, I heard him give us a fact: Out of the millions who have lived in our beautiful province, only about 1,800 people have had the opportunity to serve here. So it is an incredible honour for every single one of us and that should be reminded every single day when we come to work.

I also want to take this time to thank and congratulate Dr. Reza Moridi. He was the member of provincial Parliament for the riding of Richmond Hill; of course, the ridings were redistributed. Dr. Moridi was the first Iranian Canadian to be elected in this chamber, or anywhere outside Iran, for that matter. He represented the riding with honour, integrity and hard work. He was a class act. I'm proud to have called Dr. Moridi my friend and I will remain his friend and look to him from time to time for his leadership. Thank you, Dr. Moridi.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay homage to my family. As many members in this chamber know, putting your name forward to stand in an election and taking up the call to serve would not be possible if it were not for the love and unwavering support of your family and loved ones.

I would like to recognize and acknowledge my mother, Zari. Before doing that, I also would like to pass on my condolences to my mother, because on Sunday we lost my grandfather. So my family, who were supposed to be here today, unfortunately are making funeral arrangements and are not here to join me. But I'd like to pass on my condolences to my mom and my entire family: my mother, Zari; my dad, Houshang; my sisters, Maryam and Mo; my brother, Matt, my best friend and the troublemaker in our house; my sisters-in-law, Patty and Melanie; my brothers-in-law, Bob and Mezi; and last but not least, my beautiful wife, Valerie. Without her love, her unconditional support and her patience, there is no way I would have been able to accomplish half the things that I've been able to do. It's all because of her.

As often as many of us have gone through this, Mr. Speaker, whether it's at work—I was a small business owner. You come home, especially during the campaign—I got nominated in November 2016. It was a long, long campaign for us. There were some very tough days, some difficult days. We ran into, as I campaigned and canvassed the riding, some really, really nice people. They were really kind. They opened their doors to us. Even though at times we disagreed, they were just wonderful people. And then there were the odd ones who were just a little bit not as nice.

During those times, when I went back home, it was always Valerie and our two chihuahuas, Dora and Diego—you would not think it, but they would comfort you in those nights. I can't thank Valerie enough for that.

Speaker, with your permission, I would like to also recognize the people and volunteers who tirelessly

worked to make my election dream to this place possible: my 84-year-old campaign chair, Derek Murray, who at 84 had more energy than any one of us or all of us combined. As I always used to say, “He has forgotten more than I will ever learn.” So, Derek Murray, thank you so much for everything that you’ve done for me.

Dr. Rod, who is a very, very successful medical doctor, took the time out of his busy schedule to help me and help my campaign. I can’t thank you enough, Doctor.

Cliff McDowell, who is a movie producer—in so many ways, my election was almost like a movie, sir, and I will tell you that as we go along. Cliff McDowell and his family. D.J. would often come to our campaign office—when I say “often,” Mr. Speaker, I mean every day—and would bring in homemade meals for the campaign. I remember at one point, a regional organizer came to my campaign and said, “Michael, every other riding—when I go to them, with all the canvassing and walking, they’re losing weight. Every time I come here, your volunteers are gaining weight.” That had a lot to do with D.J. McDowell and her cooking, so, D.J., thank you so much for that.

Mr. James Drover was our official agent, and he’s the guy who made sure that we did everything right and we paid our bills when we were supposed to.

Dr. Moore, a busy chiropractor in our riding, left his practice to be my sign chair for the duration of the campaign, with his daughter, Melissa. Every time I’d see this man come into my campaign office and remove his suit and tie to go put up signs for me for hours, I didn’t know how to thank him, Mr. Speaker. It was beyond humbling, but all I could do was just walk up to him and say, “Doctor, thank you.” That was really all I could say. So once again, Dr. Moore and Melissa, thank you so much for everything that you’ve done for me.

As you can see from the list of my people—I just realized as I wrote it down that I have a lot of doctors who helped me out. There were some funny things behind that. Dr. Zohouri, a famous dentist, the same thing: He and his family never stopped helping me. In fact, at one of the events, he saw me holding my face, and the doctor said, “Do you have problems with your tooth?” I said, “Yes, I think I broke one of my fillings.” At 12:30, we went back to his practice to fix my filling. So to all my friends from all over the House: If you don’t have a dentist in your campaign, get one. It really does help.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Or go to him.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Yes, or go to him.

Same as my other friends: Mrs. Ahmadi, who is heavily involved in the media and was a great supporter of mine, helped me a lot, taught me a lot and helped me with a lot of media training, and I’m very grateful for that.

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Our former member of Parliament, Costas Menegakis, and I have become very close friends over time. He also was a great help and was a mentor to me on so many fronts. He had, obviously, the experience. He knew the

riding very well. I appreciate everything that Costas did for me.

My campaign manager was a very young campaign manager. Most people look for men or women with a lot of experience when it comes to managing a campaign. After having a conversation with George, I was so comfortable with him, because he talked about things that matter to me, and one was to respect the opposition. I talked to George and I said, “George, my thing is, I want to be different in politics. I want to go in there and talk about positive issues. I want to respect the opposition. I don’t want to say negative things about the opposition. I want to run that kind of campaign. Are you up for it?” Because, often, people that are involved behind the scenes have a job to do, and they make sure the candidate is like sandpaper—and get on. But George was able to allow me to be me throughout the campaign.

As I started the campaign, I made a promise to my mom and dad. I said, “I know that you see politics, and everybody has a view when it comes to politics, but I’m going to make you a promise that I will finish this campaign and you’ll be able to hold your head up, because I won’t embarrass you and I won’t let you down.”

So when I finished my campaign, I asked my mom, because my mom is often very blunt. I said, “Mom, did I embarrass you?” and she said, “No one’s perfect.”

We also had a lot of help from out of town. There is Marisa Maslink, my dear friend from Ottawa, who I can never thank enough. Thank you so much, Marisa, for coming down and staying here for 30 days and sleeping on a sofa bed. It meant a lot to me.

Kristine Miller has helped me out in the campaigns that I’ve been a part of. She has five autistic kids, and she still manages to call. I’ve done that often; I’ve called her and, honestly, sometimes I just feel like she’s going to hang up the phone on me this time, because in every campaign that I took part in, the first phone call I made was to Kristine: “Kristine, come and become my GOTV chair.” She never let me down. So thank you, Kristine.

The one good thing about Kristine is, I knew that whenever I would hire Kristine, I would also have five really, really good volunteers for free as well. Thanks to all her family.

Jennifer Day, Shelley Wisser-Smith, and my friends who did all my graphics, Dion, Shaida Maleki, Deniz, Sevda Maleki, Melani Vilenchik, James Prowse and Shayan Noor—these were all youth, Mr. Speaker, because I really wanted to have the involvement of youth in my campaign. It was very important to me. We made sure that they were given executive roles and were allowed to make decisions, which I thought was really helpful for them and their future. I congratulate them for their achievement and thank them as well.

Simon Wang, Christine Chen and Allan Wang came to me and said to me that they were going to meet with me, and after meeting with me, they were going to decide if they were going to support me or not. It was a very, very tough meeting, but after about two and a half hours, they said they would support me. Thank you, Allan, thank you, Christine, and thank you, Simon.

Braeden Miller and Jordan Angus were also great in my campaign—both are young volunteers. I'm really, really grateful to both of you.

There was Ted Leider, who has had some setbacks with his son, who was recently in the hospital. Again, he was terrific. Even though his son was in the hospital, he would often come to my campaign and canvass with me until about 8 or 9 o'clock every single night.

Also, Kai Nademi, who was actually sitting here, is probably going to be the last person I would like to thank, but I've done that for a reason. Kai Nademi was a very successful individual prior to joining my campaign. He came on, and I think Kai has been working for about 15 to 20 hours a day on my campaign. Thank you very much, Kai.

I guess I also have to apologize about the fact that I'm going to be missing some people. I apologize to them if I do that, but obviously, with the limited time, I won't be able to name every single person, even though we've done our very best. But if I do, through you, I apologize to them.

I would also like to thank the great people of the riding of Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill who elected me as their member of provincial Parliament, their representative and their voice in this chamber. I'm truly humbled by your faith and trust in me, and vow that I will tirelessly work to be your voice every single day that I come to Queen's Park.

Mr. Speaker, I was elected by the great people of Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill. This riding is composed of two vibrant and unique towns, with proud histories dating back to the 1800s. The town of Richmond Hill and the town of Aurora are in many ways the beating heart of Ontario's York region. They both symbolize some of the greatest qualities that we, as Ontarians and Canadians, stand for. Of course, as an unbiased judge, I would say that. I would also like to take a moment to tell you a little bit about these two magnificent towns.

The town of Richmond Hill cannot be described in any way that does not acknowledge the richness of its multicultural background. It is estimated that over 60% of the population of Richmond Hill identify as visible minorities. All you have to do is just sit down at a local Tim Hortons and you will quickly realize and appreciate the rich tapestry and multiculturalism as you listen to the diversity of languages being spoken at any one moment. Richmond Hill is truly a multicultural marvel and a proud symbol of inclusiveness and pluralism.

Some fun facts, if you don't mind, Mr. Speaker: Richmond Hill is home to Canada's largest reflecting telescope. The first original Harvey's restaurant was opened in Richmond Hill. And for those of you who enjoy a burger, like me, I thought that would get your attention. Shockingly, my campaign was their number one customer there. Also, wrestling legend Trish Stratus is from Richmond Hill; NHL great Michael Cammalleri, the hockey player, lives in and is from Richmond Hill; and, finally, Richmond Hill is home to legendary figure

skater Elvis Stojko, four-time world champion Elvis Stojko.

Many of you have seen me limp the last few days; I took part in some activities, and when people ask me, I say, "The opposition was great the last few days."

I challenge any member of this great House to attempt to top some of that, and I know that the people of both towns are very excited about all of the things that we have to offer.

Now to Aurora: From its humble beginnings as a settler community north of Toronto, the town of Aurora has always punched above its weight in terms of significance. I would be remiss if I did not tell you how. Aurora is a town that I would describe as vibrant and beautiful. From the moment you arrive, you will be hit by a feeling of warmth, nostalgia and a great sense of community. The people of Aurora are kind, humble and unwavering in their love of their community.

If you were to look around and take in all that Aurora had to offer, you would quickly know why it's such a great town. Firstly, you would quickly notice that there is no turn that you can take that won't lead you into marsh-like surroundings, like Nokiidaa Trail or that of Willow Farm, Lakeview and Wimpey Trail. In total, there are 46 parks in Aurora, not to mention that the great Oak Ridges moraine borders on its south boundary line. Green spaces abound in Aurora; just watch out for the geese and snapping turtles, which, I can tell you, are never in short supply. Both animals are equally as menacing, I assure you.

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However, the town of Aurora is not made up of just green space, geese or snapping turtles. The town is what it is because of its great people and the lasting legacies they seem to create.

Aurora was the childhood home of Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, a Prime Minister and a Canadian who is known to all of us and, of course, all over the world.

Aurora is also home to Frank Stronach, the founder of Magna International.

Lastly, Aurora is also home to the great Frank Klees. Frank was first elected to this chamber in 1995, held multiple cabinet positions and ran for the leadership of our party twice.

Thank you for everything that you've done for us, Frank, in the town of Aurora and for me, personally, as you have been a great mentor to me for the last 20 years or so.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to tell you about my personal journey to this place. My family left Iran in the mid-1980s in search of a better and brighter future, making Ottawa home. It was here that, as a young child, I witnessed first-hand the hard work and sacrifices that my parents made to be able to provide for their young family.

As any new immigrant will attest, beginning life in a new country is not without its challenges. However, my parents met those challenges head-on and instilled in

their children the guiding principles of hard work, perseverance and public service.

It was during this stage of my life that I began my path toward serving others, by first volunteering, at age 15, for the then-Progressive Conservative Party of Canada.

My parents had to work hard to be able to overcome the challenges that came their way. They had to work to establish a small business to support our family, and they had to make sacrifices to make sure that what other children in Canada, Ontario and Toronto, in particular, were able to achieve and obtain, so could we.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few moments to talk about why I decided to run. As I indicated earlier, my parents came to this country and province to provide their children with a better life and to provide us with the opportunity to pursue our dreams. I ran not only because I was given the opportunity to serve and to pursue my dreams; I ran because I truly believe that this government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, will work to serve the people—as you’ve heard us say multiple times, “for the people”—and to provide young families, like that of immigrant parents, a chance to create a better life for their children.

As I’ve said many, many times in my speeches, I’m proud of our Premier, I’m proud of our party, I’m proud of our government, because we have put policies in place that will help everyone, in my opinion. Reducing hydro and eliminating cap-and-trade is good for small businesses, manufacturers and families alike. Getting rid of hallway health care is something that must be a priority for every single government, every time you’re in power. Opening Ontario for business is something all of us should be excited about. As a member of a small family business, I’m honoured to be a member of this government that talks about bringing businesses, jobs and opportunities for families and small businesses to Ontario.

I ask you, what other country in the world would provide the opportunity to an immigrant to run for public office? This was a privilege and an opportunity that was granted to me by this great country and its founding fathers, and I will be thankful for it the next four years and the rest of my life. As I’ve said multiple times, Mr. Speaker, I am eternally grateful to not just the people of this province, but the great people of this country and every single Canadian who has made this dream available to the rest of us.

I want to acknowledge a couple of service clubs in our town that have been doing some great work. One in particular is the Aurora Optimist Club. The Optimist Club deals with a lot of initiatives with kids and youth in particular, mostly at-risk youth. Our club was a very, very small club. As you know, service clubs are difficult because you have to draw many volunteers to come, and today, with everyone’s busy life, it’s difficult to get volunteers. But as the club was having its challenges, two champions came, took the club and allowed us to rebuild, come back and be a force again, helped us to be able to help the rest of the town. Now we’re not only helping Richmond Hill; this club is big enough and large enough

that we are now helping many other people around town and the GTA. I’m beyond thankful to Jennifer Krizel and Peter Krizel for that.

Mr. Speaker, if you don’t mind I would like to close with one very touching story that happened to me during the campaign.

As we were talking about policies and going door to door, as every member in this House did, on a very warm afternoon I approached a door and saw a lady sitting down. She was probably in her mid-eighties. As I approached her, she said first, “Are you selling anything?” I said, “No, just myself, possibly.” She said, “Well, that’s kind of selling, but you may come forward.” So she allowed me to go forward and she said, “While I’m working, you can talk. I’m listening.”

I gave her my two cents. I told her who and I was and that I was the candidate for the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario and that I had put my name forward, and that I’d be the representative for the party in the upcoming election. Mary paused for a second and she told me about her family life and her story. She was an executive assistant to a former CEO—a very successful individual in the past.

The reason I share this story with you is because all of us have in some shape or form experienced this, when we were out canvassing and talking to the people.

She was cutting wood, sitting on the ground on her driveway, cutting wood in the middle of summer in 30-plus degrees. At first, I didn’t recognize it, but as we got closer and I spent a lot of time talking to her—because she was just fascinating and filled with knowledge—she actually told me what happened. I said, “Mary, can I ask you something? Why are you cutting wood now, for the winter? I mean, it’s the middle of summer”—May at that time. She said, “I’m on a fixed income. I have a pension. I’m using this in my basement for my wood stove because I can no longer afford my hydro rates, because I have an electric stove.”

These stories, and this one in particular, really, really hit home for me. As I walked away from her—and my campaign manager had made it very clear that we talk and we move on and we talk, so that this way, we have a chance to meet and talk to everybody, as many people as we can. But I broke that that day and I stayed with Mary for probably an hour and a half, because I think there are a lot of Marys in this town. There are a lot of Marys in this province that many could have encountered.

Mary was kind enough to share her story with me, but when we talk about the need to lower hydro rates for people—this is impacting people. It has a tangible impact on people. These are policies that, when we talked about them during the campaign, I proudly stood by them and continue to do so—policies that resonate and assist and help everyday people like Mary.

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Mary is just one. When I walked in and saw small business owners with tears talk about either relocating or shutting their business because they can no longer afford it—that’s very serious, and you have to take that into

consideration and you have to come into this chamber every day to represent those people. We talk about small business owners being the backbone of our economy. By the definition of the ministry, 98% of small businesses that qualify are under 100 employees. Ninety-eight per cent of our economy is dependent on small business owners. Yet when we talk about having a voice for them, having a voice for ordinary people, this is what we are. We're their voice, so we can't let them down.

I won't let them down. I will be here every single day with the help of my colleagues here and everywhere in this chamber to make sure that their messages and their voices are heard, so that we can deliver their messages to the people responsible and so that we can help them every single day that we're here.

Mr. Speaker, it has been truly an honour for me. This is beyond exciting. As I said when I started this, in no way did I even dream of having this opportunity to stand here. I came as a very, very young immigrant, sir. When I toured this facility for my school, never did I imagine that one day I would be able to stand up here and to speak to you and my other colleagues as a member of provincial Parliament. It's something that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity. I thank all my friends and colleagues for having helped me in the process, and I look forward to learning from each and every one of you here, from all sides of the House. I will do my best to serve my constituents as best as I can and to help them along the way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate? The member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's great to see you in the chair, so congratulations on that.

It is a real honour for me to rise today on behalf of my leader, Andrea Horwath, and my colleagues in the Ontario NDP caucus to participate in this debate on the motion that is before us this afternoon. I want to say that I will be sharing my time with the member for Beaches–East York.

As I rise today to join the debate, I am, of course, also speaking on behalf of the people that I represent in London West. I want to take this opportunity to express my profound thanks to all those from my community who put their trust in me to represent their concerns at Queen's Park. It is an incredible privilege. It's a privilege that very few Ontarians have the opportunity to participate in: to serve as the voice for the residents of our communities. MPPs are entrusted with the task of working hard on behalf of the people that we represent, to raise their concerns and to advocate for changes that will make their lives better.

In addition to the people I represent in London West, I want to thank the young, energetic and enthusiastic members of my amazing campaign team who dedicated, in some cases, more than five weeks of their lives to working 12-hour or longer days on my campaign. They were fully committed to do what it took to get our party's

message of hope and optimism for the future out to the people of London West.

Of course, I also want to thank the hundreds of volunteers who gave up their time to knock on doors, to put up signs, to make phone calls, to help out in the office—basically, to do whatever we asked them to do—and the many, many donors who contributed so generously to my re-election.

Most of all, I want to thank my family—my husband, Neil; my children, Jon and Emily—for their patience, their love and their support, not just over this election but over the five years that I have been an MPP. Certainly, those of us who have served before know that politics demands a lot from our families. We are indeed fortunate when we have partners and children and others who are there when we need them, and for the many new members who were elected in June, I can tell you that we are going to need those people a lot.

Speaker, I'm very proud of the fact that there were three New Democrats elected in my community. I was elected in London West, the member for London–Fanshawe was elected, and I'm really excited that the member for London North Centre was elected to be part of this NDP caucus here at Queen's Park. I think what this shows is that Londoners understood that the solution to Liberal cuts and mismanagement was not more Conservative cuts and mismanagement. They wanted to see changes that were actually going to make a concrete and positive difference in the lives of people in London and people across this province.

There are a lot of issues in London that people are looking to government to address. Those of you who have been here before know that I have stood in this House on multiple occasions to talk about the crisis in health care in my community, to talk about the lack of affordable housing, the lack of supportive housing for people with mental challenges.

I've talked about the high cost of child care, and this again was an issue that I heard repeatedly at the doors.

I've talked about the crushing debt load for post-secondary students, with young people graduating from college or university with an impossible debt that they feel in despair about ever being able to pay off.

I've raised concerns about systemic issues in our long-term-care system. Certainly London is the location right now of the Wettlaufer inquiry and we are hearing on a daily basis more and more evidence of a system that is in complete disarray, of a system that does nothing to provide the kind of oversight that is necessary to ensure that seniors and the most frail elderly in our province get the kind of care that they deserve.

Certainly, like all members of the NDP caucus, I have also talked about the problem of skyrocketing hydro bills and people's uncertainty about how they're going to manage their budget from month to month when they don't know how much they're going to be paying in hydro.

So there are some real issues facing the people of London and the people of Ontario, and instead of action

to actually start to move forward and fix those issues, what we are doing here this afternoon, Speaker, is discussing a motion which is really nothing more than self-congratulatory fluff. It is nothing substantive. It does nothing to address the real concerns that people are dealing with in Ontario.

We didn't have to be discussing this motion. Just a couple of hours ago, the Conservatives this morning brought forward a motion to shut off debate on an actual, substantive piece of legislation. Regardless of our difference of opinion about the content of that legislation, at least there was something to it, some meat to those bones that we could actually debate. But the Conservatives decided to move time allocation on that bill, not only to shut down debate among the members of this chamber but also to deny the public, to deny the stakeholders who are going to be affected by that legislation, any opportunity to come forward to share their concerns and to suggest amendments to strengthen the bill and improve the bill so that we can do our job as legislators and bring forth legislation—amended legislation—that actually responds to the real issues in this province.

But, you know, in their wisdom and despite the many times that Conservatives stood up when they were on this side of the House and argued against time allocation, on their very first bill, on their very first opportunity to show that they were going to govern differently, this government decided to take this anti-democratic move and to shut down debate on their very first piece of legislation. So instead of continuing that important debate on Bill 2, we are looking at a motion that says—and I'm going to read it to you, Speaker, because there's a lot to unpack in this motion despite the fact that it is so much fluff.

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The motion reads: "That, in the opinion of this House, the current government is a government for the people, with a clear mandate to pursue policies that put more money in people's pockets; create and protect jobs; address the hydro crisis; reduce hospital wait times; and restore accountability and trust in government." As I said, there's a lot to unpack in this motion and I'm going to start doing that.

The first words that come to our attention are that this is "a government for the people." When political parties talk about being for the people, what this effectively says is that any critics of the policies that are espoused by that party are not for the people. That kind of language is an attempt to delegitimize debate, to shut down criticism. In fact, when this government declares that it is Ontario's first government for the people, not only is it delegitimizing anyone who questions what this government is doing, it is also delegitimizing all previous governments in this province, including previous PC governments. But, you know, that's okay. I guess this government is trying to disassociate itself from everything Mike Harris did in the past.

As we try to interpret what this "for the people" means, we had a pretty clear sense of that when we read the throne speech. The throne speech indicated pretty

clearly who the people are who this government is governing for. Certainly they're not governing for Franco-Ontarians. We didn't hear a word of French in that throne speech; no reference to ensuring French-language services throughout the province; no mention about the commitments that have been made by the previous government to a stand-alone francophone university, which is a long-sought goal of Ontario's francophone community.

If you read the throne speech, it's pretty clear they're not governing for people who are marginalized, for people with disabilities, for people who face persistent and ongoing barriers to workforce participation.

In fact, the throne speech talks about the working poor, as if there are two categories of poor Ontarians. Those who deserve our recognition, those who are juggling multiple minimum wage jobs, struggling to get by—yes, the working poor certainly need our support. We need to do something about precarious minimum wage jobs that are the reality for so many people in this province. But we also need to understand that there are many people in this province who do not work because they can't work. Somehow this government is signalling that those people are less worthy of government support.

There are thousands of persons with disabilities in this province who have tried for years to get into the labour market, who are unable to get any kind of employment. There are older workers who have been completely shut out of the labour market, through no fault of their own, because of a hiring bias, frankly, of employers for older workers.

There are manufacturing sector workers, especially, in my community—your community too, Speaker—who have really borne the brunt of the collapse of the manufacturing sector. There are manufacturing workers who don't have the kind of skills and training that would be necessary to just transition into those high-tech jobs that are part of the new economy. The reality is that those workers may never be able to gain those skills. These are workers who are also shut out of the labour market, who are dealing with poverty on a daily basis but don't fall into the government's deserving category of "working poor."

Speaker, this notion of "working poor" also excludes women who are not working because they can't get access to affordable child care. We know that the lack of access to child care is a huge barrier for women to get into the labour market. In many cases, it means that women end up working part-time when they would rather be working full-time, but also it means that women can't make the business case to work at all because they would end up paying all of their salary, or more than their salary, on child care.

Most of all, Speaker, what we heard—or didn't hear—in the throne speech was an absolute abrogation of this government's responsibility to show any kind of leadership on reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. I want to recognize my colleagues the member for Toronto Centre and the member for Kiiwetinoong who, in their inaugural

speeches, spoke from the heart about their reality as an Indigenous person in this province and in this country and the need to move forward in a meaningful way on reconciliation.

Not only did we not hear a land acknowledgement in the throne speech; we didn't hear any mention of Indigenous people in Canada. I guess the government had already signalled this when it decided to eliminate the ministry of indigenous affairs and reconciliation, so maybe we shouldn't have been that surprised. We also saw, in that same kind of decision-making, the Ministry of Education decide that it was no longer important to update the curriculum and incorporate content on truth and reconciliation so that we could really move forward in a meaningful way with raising young people's awareness of our legacy, of the harm that we have created through colonialism, through residential schools, through the Sixties Scoop, and the legacy of how this has disadvantaged First Nations communities in this province.

That is the first wording of this motion that really needs to be unpacked, the "for the people." Now, Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the clear mandate that the government claims to have had in this recent election.

Who are the people who have given this so-called clear mandate to the government to move ahead in the way that it is proceeding? At best, it is 40% of the 58% of the electorate who voted in the election, which means about 2.3 million Ontarians out of approximately 10 million eligible voters. It's important to remember that significantly more people did not vote PC. More than three million did not vote PC. So 60% did not vote PC, compared to the 40% that did. By the way that I look at numbers, I would say the clear mandate is more on the side of the 60% who did not vote PC than the 40% who did.

That is the best-case scenario, because of those 40% who actually voted PC, we have to wonder whether they actually agree with every single thing the Conservatives said during the election, whether they actually endorsed every single platform position that the Conservatives took.

Speaker, yes, I fully suspect that there were some PC supporters who were concerned about the cost of cap-and-trade, but there is also a majority of Ontarians, including those 40% of the 58% who voted PC, who believe in climate change. They did not vote to get rid of cap-and-trade without replacing it with anything that is going to help to reduce our carbon emissions, that is going to help to deal with the crisis in our climate right now.

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I have heard, as I'm sure all MPPs have heard, from a lot of people in our ridings who are concerned about the unintended consequences—or maybe they were the intended consequences; I don't know—of the elimination of cap-and-trade, particularly as it relates to school maintenance and repairs. When the PCs left office back in 2003, there was a \$5-billion backlog in maintenance

and repairs in Ontario's schools that had been left and not taken care of. Then, under the Liberals, 15 years later, that backlog had ballooned to \$16 billion. The Auditor General has said very clearly that the province needs to invest a minimum of \$1.4 billion a year into school repairs if we're going to stop the backlog from getting worse. That's not even to start to chip away and whittle down the backlog; that's just to maintain the current state of disrepair in Ontario's schools.

So what does this government do? By cancelling cap-and-trade, they have actually removed \$100 million from school maintenance and repair budgets. It's reducing the \$1.4-billion minimum investment that's required to \$1.3 billion.

They haven't talked about how they're going to manage what this means to school boards. We know, in London, the Thames Valley District School Board is losing \$750,000. They're not going to be able to move forward with some of the HVAC and lighting projects that they had identified. We know that the Toronto District School Board is losing \$25 million in school maintenance budgets. They're not going to be able to move forward with some of the repairs to windows, lighting and some of the mechanical work. The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board is losing \$5 million. The Ottawa Catholic School Board is losing \$1.5 million. The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is losing \$2.15 million.

This was money that these boards were counting on to do things like replace lighting, fix boilers and repair windows. School boards are now being forced into making difficult decisions: whether to fix the leaky roof or repair the boiler so that the classrooms are heated in the wintertime.

I don't think that those people who had concerns about cap-and-trade knew what they were voting for when they voted for the PC government. If they had been asked, "Do you support cutting school maintenance and repair budgets?", I suspect they would have said no.

I want to move on. Another piece in the motion talks about putting more money in people's pocket. Well, Doug Ford has made clear that he intends to stop—

Hon. Todd Smith: Premier Ford.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Premier Ford has made clear that he intends not to move forward with the \$15 minimum wage. I don't think that's putting more money in people's pockets. That is actually taking money out of people's pockets. We know that the tax plan that was talked about during the election is actually going to leave these workers worse off when they're only earning \$14 an hour, compared to where they would have been if they were earning \$15 an hour and paying tax.

In fact, the people who are going to benefit most from Premier Ford's tax plan are those who earn more than \$100,000. We shouldn't be surprised about that, Speaker, because certainly this government has shown that it cares more about business insiders and people who are already doing well than people who are struggling.

Another part of the motion talks about creating and protecting jobs. I don't know who here today read the

clippings this morning, but certainly some of the media clippings that we had in our offices today provided some really useful insights into the impact of some of the Ford government decisions on creating and protecting jobs. Business has made very clear that the actions that are set out in Bill 2 are going to destabilize the business climate in this province. They're going to signal to the investor community that contracts aren't worth the paper that they're written on in this province.

That is not the way to create and protect jobs, to signal to business investors—people who want to create companies in this province—that you can come to Ontario, you can sign an agreement with us, but don't count on that agreement being in place, because when we want to, we'll just bring in legislation and rip those contracts up.

I urge anybody who hasn't read the clippings today to really take a look at those clippings, because there are a lot of, as I said, useful insights.

The other piece of creating and protecting jobs is around who is coming into our labour market. We know that post-secondary students and immigrants are the two biggest sources of labour market growth in this province. This is our talent pipeline; these are the people who we are expecting to fill all of these new positions that will be created as the economy grows.

What we have seen from this government is virtually nothing on post-secondary education. During the election campaign, the only mention of post-secondary was about tying funding to freedom of speech. In a province that for almost a decade has had the highest tuition fees of any province in Canada and has had the lowest per-student funding of any province in Canada, I don't think that freedom of speech is the biggest issue on our post-secondary campuses.

I think quality of education is the biggest issue on our post-secondary campuses, when we have a precarious workforce of academic workers who are basically working minimum wage jobs where they don't have any job security and they don't know from one 16-week semester to another whether they're going to be rehired, when students don't know how to reach their faculty member because the faculty member has gotten in their car and raced down the highway to another campus where they're also stringing together a series of jobs. We need to look at the quality of our post-secondary education, and we need to look at the overreliance on precarious academic workers.

Instead, in Bill 2, we saw this government make the decision to introduce back-to-work legislation at York, which they said was in line with the recommendation of the industrial inquiry commissioner. Yes, it was, but they ignored the other recommendation of the industrial inquiry commissioner, and that is to create a task force for the post-secondary sector to look at some of those underlying issues that led to the strike at York in the first place.

I'm actually not surprised that the government decided not to move forward on that recommendation, because what we saw earlier this month, very quietly, was a

decision by this government to dismantle the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Task Force. That was a task force that was created in the wake of the college strike to look specifically at some of those issues that were raised during the strike about precarious faculty, about the explosion of precarious faculty across the college sector. The arbitrator who dealt with the college strike said you need to create this task force. The stakeholders involved—the College Student Alliance, college faculty who are represented by OPSEU—welcomed this opportunity to have a table where they could actually start to dig in and look at those root causes and try to figure out how to restore stability and ensure quality within the post-secondary sector. But this government was not interested in proceeding with that task force. As of a couple of weeks ago, that task force is gone.

1700

The other thing connected to creating and protecting jobs: I mentioned that immigrants are a big source of our talent pool for Ontario's labour market. What is this government doing? This government is demonizing asylum seekers. They are demonizing asylum seekers as "illegal border crossers." That is creating a climate that is empowering people who have not felt safe expressing anti-immigrant sentiment. But they see that the government is basically doing it, so it must be okay then.

Last week in my community, in a grocery store, in a Sobeys, this is what we saw happen. We saw a shopper who was accosted by another shopper and who was accused of being an immigrant and was shouted at to get out of the store and get out of the province.

Speaker, I want to move on to some of the other language in the motion. We see that the motion commits the government to addressing the hydro crisis. I was interested in the fact that they didn't say "fix the hydro crisis", they said "address the hydro crisis." I'm sure that was a deliberate choice of words, because what this government has done is embraced the Liberal hydro scheme that was developed by Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government. They have embraced that and are carrying it wholesale into their own hydro scheme.

We know that there have been numerous reports from the Auditor General and the Financial Accountability Officer about what that hydro scheme is going to cost the people of this province. Just today, the Financial Accountability Officer tabled an annual report that highlighted the real cost of selling off Hydro One and the real cost of the Liberal hydro plan, which is now the Ford hydro plan. The Financial Accountability Officer said that the cost of privatizing Hydro One is going to be \$45 billion to Ontarians, which is going to increase the deficit and add billions to hydro bills.

Oh, I'm running out of time. I wanted to talk quickly about hospital wait times. My community knows something about hospital wait times. The London Health Sciences Centre was the first and perhaps only hospital in the province to have a written hallway transfer protocol, so that when people are waiting in the hallway for one, two, three days, a week or more, there is a protocol for

how they are going to be paid for. In my community of London, there have been numerous stories of people waiting up to two years for hip and knee replacements. They've had their brain surgery or heart surgery cancelled multiple times.

We had Stuart Cline, a constituent that I've spoken about in this place, who was in Mexico, who suffered a debilitating fall and could not be flown back to Ontario because there was no hospital bed available to receive him. Five days later, when he finally was brought back to Ontario, to St. Catharines—not to his home community of London—he unfortunately passed away. The Cline family will never know if Stuart's life could have been saved if he had been able to return to Ontario at the time that he was stabilized for transfer.

My community also knows something about mental health and wait lists for mental health services. Last night, we heard the Premier talk about the fact that the \$1.9 billion that the PC government has allocated for mental health is now going to be diverted. A portion of it is going to be diverted to the police. What portion? We don't know. We haven't heard the details. But this is a concern.

In my community, the London Police Service has been clear that police officers are now the front-line mental health workers. But they don't want to be front-line mental health workers. They would prefer that there were community mental health services in place to address the crisis of mental health. That's why my chief of police, John Pare, is on the board of WAYS Mental Health Support, a children and youth mental health agency, and that's why he has been very vocal in advocating for services for the 12,000 children and youth who are waiting for mental health services in this province.

Speaker, I just want to take two more minutes to talk about the last couple of words in this motion, around restoring accountability and trust in government. In the past week and a half, we have had an ongoing debate in this place about the health and physical education curriculum in this province. I don't think that making good on a backroom deal that was made with a very small circle of social conservatives, a promise that is risking the health and safety of thousands of children across this province, is a good way to restore accountability and trust in government. People see what this Ford government is doing when they make a decision like that, a decision that is going to jeopardize the lives and the health and safety and well-being of students across this province.

Speaker, I wish I could talk longer, but I can't. I'm going to wrap up and say to the members on the opposite side, if it hasn't been clear until this point, that we will absolutely not be supporting this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: It is my enormous honour to rise to give my inaugural address to the Legislature. I'd like to welcome my father, Marcus Berns, and my partner, David McGown, here. Thank you for coming.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin I would like to acknowledge that the land on which we gather today is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat, the Anishinaabe and the Mississaugas of the New Credit.

I also want to take a moment to pay tribute to Reese Fallon, whose life was taken on the Danforth on Sunday night. Reese was one of my constituents and yesterday I was able to spend some time with some of those who loved her. They describe her as a brilliant and passionate young woman with a keen interest in helping others. Reese was an excellent student at Malvern Collegiate Institute and had just been accepted into the nursing program at McMaster. She was looking forward to her studies and excited about pursuing her dream of becoming a nurse. I know that the prayers of everyone in this chamber today are with Reese's family and loved ones as they deal with this unimaginable loss.

I want to thank again the people of Beaches–East York for their confidence and trust in me. It is a profound privilege to represent them here at Queen's Park.

This government says over and over and over again that it governs “for the people.” I want to take my time with you today to think through what it means to truly govern for the people. It's important to govern for the people, of course. That is presumably why we are all here. But there is an enormous difference between governing for all of the people and governing for just some of the people, and in that gap lies everything, for the arc of the universe bends towards justice—eventually. In that gap lies the difference between a government that will be remembered for its generosity of spirit and the grandeur of its vision, and a government that will eventually be viewed with contempt for its misguided and self-serving narrowness.

Like many other Ontarians, I was distressed on the first day of this Parliament to hear that the throne speech that laid out this government's intentions and its framework for governing contained not so much as a land acknowledgement, never mind a commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action or to reconciliation. Reconciliation has, in fact, disappeared from the government's vocabulary.

Very early in its mandate and, in fact, on the eve of the writing sessions that would have built curriculum to teach respectful and accurate history of Indigenous peoples in this province, as per the TRC's calls to action, this government cancelled the contracts to Indigenous elders who were to participate in that exercise and cancelled the exercise itself.

1710

Let us be clear here: That cancellation amounts to a loud announcement that the government does not believe that teaching accurate Indigenous history is of value to Ontario's students. Nowhere in the throne speech is there a commitment to right historical wrongs or to fix the destruction wrought by residential schools and the attitudes that created them.

Meanwhile, the government has sown confusion about carding. The Premier and the Minister of Correctional

Services have said they don't intend to bring carding back but that they are in favour of street checks and of giving police "all the tools." They don't seem to want to be clear, so I will be.

In the first place, carding and street checks are two different terms for the identical harmful, profoundly racist practice. The government is playing semantic games.

Carding has been discredited across North America as an effective tool for lowering crime, but it has been demonstrated to result in increased police harassment, violence and the over-incarceration of Black, brown and Indigenous people.

Let me say this again: There is zero evidence that carding saves lives, but there are mountains of evidence that it results in the further marginalization and over-incarceration of Black, Indigenous and Muslim people.

Second, and equally importantly, you can't bring back something that has never stopped. The previous government placed regulations upon carding but did not end it, and the communities that experience it know full well that it has never ceased. As with any other inherently racist practice, no amount of carding is acceptable in any society that is truly governed for all its people. Carding needs to be completely ended and its data, which continue to harm those who have been its victims, destroyed.

What this government has done unequivocally is to halt the Ontario Special Investigations Unit Act, which would have provided a desperately needed level of oversight and transparency to the SIU.

Police work to protect all communities and all the people, and because of that, I know that they welcome an open, transparent oversight process that would contribute to increased trust and which would in fact make their work more effective. Because the goal is to keep us all safe, I know officers from every community welcome an end to the harmful racist practice of carding that does the opposite.

In fact, by increasing street checks and treating the police as though they have special powers to behave without oversight, the government sets them up in an unnecessarily adversarial position to racialized communities.

In other ways as well, the government has played semantic games with the well-being of Ontarians by repealing the revised 2015 sex ed curriculum, the one that teaches consent and respect for gender diversity and LGBT-two-spirited youth. The government claims it is using the 2014 curriculum, which is, in fact, the 1998 curriculum, because that is when it was written—a curriculum that did not teach consent and that was written before same-sex marriage was legal in Canada.

I would like to know why the #MeToo movement has had no effect on this government that claims to govern in the name of all the people.

Like every woman in this chamber, my life would have been very different had the boys and men with whom I went to school, and with whom I worked, learned the value of consent at school.

We have already lived the experiment of what happens when consent isn't properly taught. I am sure we all wish the boys and men in our lives had been clearer on that concept, had taken it to heart and had acted upon it.

The government has been unequivocal in its refusal to contribute financially to the resettlement of asylum seekers who are desperate to make new lives in Ontario, despite mountains of evidence that whatever money government spends in helping asylum seekers to settle, they more than repay when they get on their feet and their children become your doctors, your lawyers, your rocket scientists, your nurses, your social workers, the artists who inspire us and the entrepreneurs who create our jobs.

So let us be clear about this as well. Because this government won't end carding, Black and brown and Indigenous and Muslim people will be at risk—at risk of harassment, of violence, of limited job options—because they are known to police and at risk of being unable to do something as simple as walk or drive in their own neighbourhoods with their families.

Because this government is repealing the 2015 sex ed curriculum that allows queer youth to feel safe and affirmed in their understanding of themselves, they will be at risk—because the research has been done, and we know that youth are at greater risk of bullying in these circumstances. We know that they are at greater risk of self-harm when they experience this kind of hateful bullying.

We know that more boys will grow into men who have not been taught the fundamental importance of consent, and more girls and women, and especially Indigenous girls and women, will have to deal with the consequences.

Because of delays in teaching a TRC-informed curriculum, ignorance and prejudice will continue to persist in that vacuum. This government will demonstrate to Indigenous people, by ignoring the TRC and calls to action, that where they are concerned, reconciliation is nothing more than a fancy word.

Because of this government's short-sightedness, asylum seekers who are trying to make Ontario their new home will be met with fewer supports and more roadblocks.

The people of Ontario are Indigenous, Black, brown and Muslim. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, why these issues matter so very much to me.

I was born in South Africa of a mixed background. My parents left because of apartheid when I was a few months shy of my fifth birthday. We moved to Montreal. As light as my skin is, it was significantly darker than that of my peers, and I encountered constant anti-Black racism as well as anti-Semitism while I was growing up. Those experiences made me think a great deal about the ways in which racism is constructed, especially institutional and structural racism.

Every year at school, teachers were suspicious of my ability to perform well. I had to prove myself in ways that my peers did not. I was accused of theft at the local

shopping mall. I was told over and over again, in so many words and indirectly, that I did not belong, that I would be tolerated only so long as I knew my place. I was meant to understand that I was inferior to my white Christian classmates, that I would always matter less.

You may not be surprised to hear that this constant barrage of violent messages had a significant impact on my self-esteem. I became shy, withdrawn, unsure of how to make a place for myself in the world. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, I went on to do a PhD in international politics and to do work on questions of belonging. Specifically, I was interested in how we go about creating societies that are diverse but also socially just. How do we disrupt power structures and recreate them in ways that really work for everyone? What does meaningful inclusion mean? How do we create societies that are the political opposite of the one into which I was born?

My research over the years has included thousands of interviews with racialized Canadians. I learned many things, but one is particularly relevant here. As much as we do many things relatively well in this country, the darker the colour of your skin and the more you perform faith or back-home culture or indigeneity on your person, the more likely you are to experience institutional, structural racism.

Racism is not just people using a list of problematic words; it is a series of barriers that make it harder for some of us to get through school, feel good about ourselves, get and keep good jobs and rise in organizations. The classifications that people in power make can result in other groups of people being targeted as suspicious or inherently problematic, and that in turn results in their overrepresentation in the criminal justice system and their underrepresentation in law firms or places like this Legislature.

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Systemic racism is not a fairy tale that overeducated elites make up for their own amusement. It underlies the way most of our societies are organized. It is morally repugnant and deeply wrong. It is also expensive and self-defeating. It costs way more money to jail disproportionate numbers of Black and Indigenous men for one year than it does to fix the curriculum that dehumanizes them or to eliminate the barriers that lie in the way of their ability to reach their full potential. Systemic racism and barriers thwart individual lives but also our institutions. They make no sense to any society that truly cares about the welfare of all its community, of all of its people.

Here's the thing: We in Canada face a conundrum. It is important to our international reputation and our national sense of self to be seen to be good at managing diversity. We like to say things like, "Diversity is our strength," and boast about our multiculturalism. It's true that we do manage our diversity better than lots of other countries. My research shows, for instance, that people feel a freedom in Canada to be themselves and to find ways to blend their complex identities that make them feel more Canadian, not less so. It shows that our politic-

al culture has nurtured respect for difference, which ultimately has helped us to make a deeply rich, peaceful country.

But that also means that it's hard for us to look in the mirror and be honest about the crucial things we're getting very, very wrong. The thing is, we don't get to say we're good at it when we're not; when we refuse to understand that settlers committed genocide for centuries in this country; when we don't see or won't see or take responsibility for the mess we created, the mental health disaster in Indigenous communities and the violence of the poverty that is the legacy of federal and provincial policies; when we refuse to do the healing and take on the hard work; when we refuse to understand the ways in which Indigenous and Black people experience state systems, including education, child welfare and criminal justice, including poverty, inadequate social services and transportation; when we tell everyone to get over themselves and just be Ontarians, as this government's throne speech did, but we won't admit that Ontario's systems work for some but not all of us.

Which brings me to why it matters how we define "the people." Residential schools are the direct result of colonialism that held that Indigenous people did not matter and that their lives were worth less. We continue to live with its residue. Carding too—the idea that certain people need to be watched, surveilled and kept track of—is the direct result of these long colonial histories, perpetuated by Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and other European settler nations, the idea that the people who mattered were some of, but not all of, the actual living human beings in any geographical space. That, too, of course was South Africa's fatal flaw, the one from which my parents fled, the reason I live in Canada today.

So when I hear a throne speech and its government refer to "the people" while the actions they promote consistently, determinedly and harmfully serve some of us more than others, I will stand up and speak against it with every ounce of breath in my body. Because the only way Ontario works for all of us is if we work to make it so: through a determination to seriously engage with the TRC's calls to action and, in that way, the achievement of reconciliation; through the complete elimination of carding and other systemic racist practices, including the destruction of the data thus far collected via street checks; through systemic changes to our criminal justice, health, transportation, education and child services; through work to ensure that every Ontarian has access to safe, dignified housing and clean drinking water, and that all of us, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, race, faith or ability, are the people to whom our throne speeches refer.

My very dear friend Michael Redhead Champagne, who visited from the North End of Winnipeg over the weekend, gifted me with an Ininew—or Swampy Cree—word on Saturday: *mino-bima-ta-sawin*. It means "the good life." The good life is what we all seek in Ontario and across this country. The good life is what we ought to govern to create. We cannot live the good life until we

work to create its conditions for each and every one of us. Mino-bima-ta-sawin can only be achieved if we work to make it happen for all the people, not just some of the people. Ontario doesn't actually work for any of us if it doesn't work for all of us. Mino-bima-ta-sawin is only achievable when all of us can partake in it.

I think it behooves this government to remember that while a first-past-the-post system delivered it an electoral victory, a majority of the people who voted did not vote for these regressive shifts in policy or for change to legislation that will result in the deaths of family and community members.

So far, this government has focused on destroying things: the cap-and-trade system that would have moved us forward on climate change; a consent-based sex ed curriculum; a TRC-informed curriculum with regard to the history and lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada; contracts with Indigenous elders and with businesses.

Make no mistake, that destruction will be expensive in terms of impact on people's lives, but also in dollars.

So far, it is not the people, but the lawyers, who will benefit from its actions and the taxpayers who will pay for them. We could be spending those tax dollars on creating mino-bima-ta-sawin.

This government may play semantic games, but it will be remembered for doing so. Governments should indeed be for the people. The objective is absolutely admirable, but thus far, this government has demonstrated a very narrow idea of who those people are. So I ask the government: demonstrate that you will work to create mino-bima-ta-sawin for all the people. And if you cannot, understand that the people will find a government who can.

Thank you. Merci beaucoup. Meegwetch.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Paul Calandra: I congratulate all the members who have given their inaugural addresses today. It's nice to be up again to talk about the motion that has been put before us. I'm grateful for that opportunity.

One of the members from London started her discourse at one point about one of our former Premiers, Premier Mike Harris. I thought that really opened the door for me to talk about some of the great successes of Mike Harris, because it also has an opportunity to guide us to where we are a little bit today.

You will probably recall, Mr. Speaker, that the Mike Harris government of 1995 came on the heels of probably the most disastrous government that this province has ever had the misfortune of living through. Now, we are 151 years old.

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I should mention, too, before I go any further, that I'll be splitting my time with the member from Peterborough-Kawartha.

This province has been in existence for 151 years—151 years—and the NDP have had that opportunity to govern the province, have been given the trust of the people of this province one time—one time in 151 years. They've never been given that trust federally.

But let's go back and talk a little bit about the Bob Rae government, if we can. Now, Bob Rae was the Premier, obviously, from 1990 to 1995. He came after what was then another disastrous Liberal government. But Bob Rae was so embarrassed to be a New Democratic Premier after his disastrous reign of five years that he actually quit the party. He quit the party—the only NDP Premier quit the party—and he became a Liberal. Then he spoke against his own government, the time in office and the people he surrounded himself with and talked often about just how backwards-thinking the NDP party had become and how irrelevant the party had become.

Now, if you look at the Bob Rae government, he did a lot of what the current opposition is talking about. He raised taxes. He increased spending to an extent that, of course, we had never seen ever before in this province. He almost bankrupted the province. The people of Ontario had had enough. They'd had enough. They were looking for a common-sense alternative.

Along came Mike Harris, then the third party leader, and he spoke to Ontarians much like Premier Ford did in the last campaign. He spoke to Ontarians and said: "Look, we can do better. We can do things differently. We can listen to you, and we can start by putting more money back into the pockets of people, of the taxpayers." We were an overtaxed province. We were one of the most indebted provinces, or the most indebted province. Millions of people were out of work. Things started to change when Mike Harris was elected.

Now, everybody said, "He can't do it. He can't cut taxes by 30%." They said it was impossible. Well, Mike Harris cut taxes by 30%. Mike Harris balanced the budget in his first term in office. He got rid of the disastrous legacy of the NDP. He put people to work. I remember because I was a staff member here at the time. Every month, you would see the jobs report come from StatsCanada. There was Ontario, month after month after month, under the leadership of former Premier Harris, gaining jobs. Month after month, we cut taxes.

Lo and behold, we got more revenue. Because you know what happened, Mr. Speaker? People who had no money left at the end of the month, after their paycheques had been taken away by the NDP and Liberal policies, they had more money in their pockets. You know what they did? They started to invest. They started to spend. That's what they did. The economy started to move.

Then along came a Liberal government in Ottawa. Now, the NDP and Liberals, both here and in Ottawa, they often work together. We saw that here, because it really, honestly, was the NDP who first put the Liberals in power with the coalition back in 1985, which started the decline of Ontario. They did the same thing in Ottawa towards the tail end of the Martin-Chrétien years. But we wanted to do something differently.

So along came the Liberal government. What did the Liberals do under Jean Chrétien? Well, those who were here—I know Minister Wilson was here at the time, and I think he might have been the health minister at the time; I could be wrong—unilaterally, they decided in one of

their budgets to cut funding to health care. The Liberal Party of Canada—

Hon. Jim Wilson: It was \$2.5 billion.

Mr. Paul Calandra: It was \$2.5 billion. I remember sitting in my office and receiving this, thinking, “How the heck is the province of Ontario supposed to survive a cut of \$2.5 billion, a unilateral cut of \$2.5 billion by the federal government?” Given the fact that Premier Harris committed not to cut health care, but to increase health care funding, it was Premier Harris who said, “We’ll find a different way. We’ll increase funding to health care.” That’s exactly what then-Premier Harris did.

What else did Premier Harris do? He brought in the SuperBuild fund. He was the first Premier in ages to really put an emphasis on infrastructure. We built roads. We built highways. We transferred funds to our partners so that they could repair bridges. That’s what Premier Mike Harris started to do at a time when the federal government had completely withdrawn from infrastructure spending. At a time when they had completely withdrawn, it was Mike Harris who fought the federal government on their health care cuts.

It was Mike Harris who said that we need to get back into infrastructure. It was Mike Harris who said that we can build an economy, grow an economy, create jobs if we cut taxes, and he proved it because when he left office, he left a balanced budget. He left millions more working. More people were paying taxes. The economy was growing. You know why he did that? Because he understood that when you invest in people—there are different ways of investing in people. The NDP believe in a socialist way of doing it. They believe that you take the money out of the pockets of people and then the government will figure it out. Bob Rae tried that; he almost bankrupted the country. It didn’t work. Conservative governments have done it differently and said, “Hey, you know what? I trust you to do what’s right for you, to do what’s right for your family, to do what’s right for your small business. I trust you to make those decisions.”

Yes, of course, the government has responsibilities. It is Conservatives who have constantly been there for the people of Ontario. It’s Conservatives who built the college system in this province. It was a Conservative government that did that. It was a federal Conservative government that protected people’s rights. We’ve talked about carding. It was a Conservative government that brought in the Bill of Rights. The first time people’s rights were protected, it was a Conservative government under John Diefenbaker that brought that protection in. The first Black cabinet minister: a Conservative. The first woman in cabinet: a Conservative. That’s what Conservatives do.

When we were talking about the Constitution of 1982, it was then-Premier Bill Davis who showed the leadership that allowed us to patriate the Constitution. When you look at growing an economy, it’s Conservatives who have led the way. When you look at being responsible for communities, it’s Conservatives who have led the way. That’s what this last election was all about. After 15

disastrous years of Liberal government propped up by the NDP for a good many years—decisions that the Liberals made that the NDP were in support of. They were in support of many of these decisions. They’re speaking now, today, in support of all of the decisions that the people of Ontario have turned against.

Premier Ford, this government and this caucus believe, like Conservative governments have always believed, that people are the best stewards of their money. They work very, very hard. I get up every morning like hundreds of other people do from my riding. They get on the GO train. At 5:30, the first train comes. They get downtown, they take the subway, they go to work. They get back at 7 or 8 o’clock at night in some instances. They work very hard and they don’t ask for a lot. They know that if there is a health care crisis in their family, they want it taken care of. They want their kids to have the best education—absolutely. But they also want to have a little something left in their pocket at the end of the month so that they can invest in their future.

We, as government, have constantly said that you’ve got to prepare for your future. Government can’t be there for you all the time. But it’s impossible to do when Liberal and NDP policies take all of your money out of your pocket.

That’s what this last election was about. It was about respecting taxpayers. It was about turning our backs on those failed policies of the Liberals, supported by the NDP. It’s about restoring faith in government. It’s about reducing hydro rates. It’s about reducing hydro rates for small businesses and for people so they don’t have to choose between heating and eating. It’s about restoring an education system and doing better on curricula such as, yes, sex ed, listening to parents. The math curriculum: It’s failing our students and they’re not prepared for the future. That’s why we’re making changes to that. It’s about telling parents there are other options when it comes to child care, and that you can make that decision and your government will support you in that decision. It’s about looking at mental health issues and saying there is money there for mental health issues. Why is there money there? Because the government will not be bankrupt, because we will have the resources that are needed to do it.

This motion is all about hope, it’s all about prosperity, it’s all about opportunity. That’s what Premier Ford is all about. And there are decades and generations of successful Conservative governments that prove that when you listen to the people, when you make the people your priority, you will succeed, this province will succeed, just like Canada has always succeeded under the leadership of Conservative governments. That’s why we’re here and that’s why I can’t tell you how excited I am to be a member of the Legislature at this time. Thank you very much for your indulgence.

1740

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Dave Smith: I’d like to thank the member from Markham–Stouffville for sharing his time with me. He

made some excellent points in there. I agree with him wholeheartedly. Our government needs to do things to get people back to work, to make life easier for us.

Let me share one of my own experiences. I once worked for somebody who was a fabulous employer. We were talking about training the people who worked there. One person in particular said, "If we invest in these employees, if we spend all of this money training these people, what happens if they leave?" And my employer stood up in that meeting and he said, "Let's take a look at it in a different way. What if we don't invest in these employees and they stay?" What we're doing is we're investing in the people of Ontario. We're making sure that people have a better life. We're doing things to make life easier for everyone.

When we look at what's happened at York University, we have a number of students—45,000 of them—who want to have a better life, who are doing what they need to do to advance themselves. Through no fault of their own, they're being denied the ability to go to school. We need to get those students back into class. They're the future. They're the ones who will be in this Legislative Assembly at some point. They're the ones who are going to be directing Ontario. They're the ones who will be looking after all of us. If we don't invest in them now, then there is no future for us.

We have to get those students back in the classroom. We have to give them the ability to better themselves because they've taken the steps to do it. It's incumbent upon us as a government, it's incumbent upon us as the people who are representing those who elected us, to make sure that we're doing things to make life easier in Ontario.

Every time I was out canvassing, knocking on doors, I heard from so many people who had difficulty paying their hydro bills. I had one in particular; he wanted to know why the electrical cost for his bill was \$1,200 but the global adjustment fee was \$8,000. It's ridiculous that you would use \$1,200 worth of electricity and have to pay \$8,000 to cover the cost of a foolish policy that was put in place by another government. We're changing that. We're making sure that those people in Ontario aren't paying that price. By cancelling those projects, projects like the White Pines Wind Project, it's going to make life easier for people in Ontario. It has to make life easier for people in Ontario because they're not going to be paying an outrageous cost for electricity that we just don't need.

So many times when we come to this room, we come in here and we debate different things. We talk about pie-in-the-sky things at times and we forget that it's the average person in Ontario who has to foot that bill.

Speaking from my own experiences, I was a small business owner at one time. I stepped up. I invested. I tried to make my community better. I tried to make sure that my life was going to be better. Unfortunately, I made the wrong decision of being a small business owner in 1994 under an NDP government, and I struggled, as did so many others. You cannot legislate wealth through taxation. The best way to make sure that people have

money in their pocket is to stop taking it away from them. That's what we intend to do.

By reducing hydro rates, people will have more money and choose how they want to spend it. By cutting cap-and-trade, we're putting more money back into people's pockets, and they get to decide how they're going to spend it.

It's an interesting study by Texas A&M—and forgive me, I don't have the specifics right in front of me at the moment. They determined there was a multiplier effect on discretionary spending, and I believe it was 4.3 times. Every dollar spent on discretionary spending equated to \$4.30 in actual economic impact.

I've had the great pleasure of being the founder and chair of a hockey event in Peterborough, and we know that that put back about \$20 million into the community over the life of that event. It's because it was all discretionary spending. It's money that people wouldn't have had otherwise. People came in from out of town to spend it.

But if you don't have that money in your pocket, you can't go out and buy those things. You can't spend it on discretionary things. You can't take the family for a trip. You can't have your kids play sports. You can't buy the groceries you need to buy. Because you're paying for electricity, you're making that choice between heating your home and buying food.

The rural part of this province has suffered the most from it, with the delivery charge being put on there, with the cost of the global adjustment fee being put on there. These are all things that need to be changed. We need to recognize that this is a vast province that has a large number of people who need to be supported by the government, not a government that is going to make life harder for them.

When we look at Hydro One, we've said repeatedly that we needed to have changes at the executive level; we needed to get rid of the CEO; we needed to have that board change so that we had a culture change. And that's what we've done. It was the right thing to do.

At the end of the day, we, as people who are elected to represent our communities, have to look at what's in the best interests of our communities. Back in 2000, I was at a speech by the great Jim Flaherty, and he made a comment there that has stuck with me; it has resonated ever since. He said that when issues get brought forward to him, he looks at what's in the best interests of his city, what's in the best interests of his region, his community, his province and his country, and that directs his decisions. He never looks at something to say: Will this get votes for me? Will this make headlines for me? Will this lose votes for me? He looked at what was in the best interests of the people in his community.

That's what we need to do as a government. We need to step forward and look at what's in the best interests of the people of this province. Reducing their hydro costs is in the best interests of the people of this province. Getting 45,000 students back into the classroom is in the best interests of the people in this province. Changing the

culture at Hydro One is in the best interests of the people in this province. That's what we intend to do. We made that promise; we're keeping that promise.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition has stood up numerous times and spoken against this. I have to question why. Why are they against educating students? On one hand, they're saying something about the Ministry of Education, and yet on the other hand they're saying, "Students shouldn't go back for post-secondary education. We don't want them in the classroom." I don't understand that logic. It's in their best interests for those 45,000 students to get back to the classroom.

In my riding, I have one student at York, in particular, who has come to me. She is affected by this. She's in her third year. Her roommates aren't able to graduate. That seriously affects future earnings for those students. She was lucky; she didn't lose any of her courses. Yet her three roommates aren't able to graduate. What she did say was that with the uncertainty—she had arranged to have her apartment subletted to someone, but because they could be called back at any point, she wasn't able to do that. There is a financial impact to her.

It's not right that we're not taking those students into account. We have to think about those students. We have to make sure that what we do now is going to make life easier for them. Those students want to be back in the classroom. We need to let those students get back to the classroom because they're going to be the leaders of this province moving forward. They're the ones who will be looking after us. They're the ones who will be making the decisions on what's in the best interests of this province. Let's get them back in the classroom so they can do just that: so that they can learn, they can better themselves, and they can make Ontario a better place as well.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Todd Smith: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The Chair recognizes the government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Todd Smith: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion regarding private members' public business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 1 through 6, inclusive.

1750

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The government House leader has moved that, notwithstanding standing order—96(g), is it?

Hon. Todd Smith: Sorry about the print, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Yes, I know; it's small—98(g), the requirement for notice be

waived with respect to ballot items 1 through 6, inclusive.

Do we agree? All those in favour? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's a pleasure to join the debate and to listen to many of our new colleagues' inaugural speeches in the House. I think this was your first opportunity to speak to the chamber, and I want to welcome you. Thanks for sharing your stories. I was touched by some and intrigued by others. It is, indeed, a nice thing to see new members getting their feet in this House. I want to congratulate all of you, especially my colleague from Beaches—East York, who put together just a wonderful collaboration of her thoughts and her principles and values and focus for her tenure in this House. It is inspiring. Thank you so much.

I am proud to be a part of a caucus that brings those types of ideals forward, those types of progressive values that reflect what we know, in an electoral sense, as the majority of the values of the people of this province. The member from Beaches—East York was accurate in stating that, under our first-past-the-post system, although the government may have won a majority of the seats, they do not have a majority of the mandate of the votes that were cast. Let's always remember that. Let's walk into this chamber with that in our mindset: that in the spirit of collaboration and collegiality, we can work together. But you don't have a full mandate. You might have the votes. You might try to ram every ideological pursuit through this House, but you're going to be stopped not only by members of this official opposition, but by those who will rally outside at Queen's Park and in each individual community across this province. We're already seeing it. We're already seeing it in the first two and a half weeks of your tenure as a government here.

It's interesting that this bill that we're debating—I woke up this morning, Speaker, with full intentions to come here and do the people's work, as I believe each and every one of my colleagues do. I think it's inherent in the job. You're here to do the people's work, on behalf of the people, as a servant of the people. But now we see a bill to clarify that, to clarify the intent of the government, just to make sure that people know that they're for the people. We're hearing it all over the place: "We're for the people." I think the Premier put it in every one of his answers this morning: "We're doing it for the people." It's almost as many times as you hear Donald Trump say, "No collusion, no collusion, no collusion." Well, sometimes you start to wonder: Is there really collusion? Why do they have to remind us so many times that they're for the people?

But you know what, Speaker? I think it's indicative of this government coming to this House without a real focus, because during the election we saw them run a campaign without a platform. These are the business

elites, these are the corporate minds of the Conservative Party. They couldn't put a budget together. They couldn't tell us the numbers and if they even added up. It was deplorable. Some of your candidates were even embarrassed to attend debates because you had no math, you had no focus.

Speaker, I've spent seven years in this House, and I'll tell you, one thing that I hoped and I thought I could count on in terms of the Progressive Conservatives was that they were going to be sharp with their pencils. They were going to tell us whether the numbers added up. But they're coming to this place without any tangible economic vision for this province.

What we've seen so far are massive rounds of cuts. They've cut roughly \$2 billion a year from the cap-and-trade system, from the Western Climate Initiative. That's money that they have not told us where they're going to find it. They haven't told us how they're going to make that up. That's a source of revenue that the government relies on—and our municipalities, through transfers to the municipalities. You're short-changing a lot of communities across this province, and a lot of people are going to be hurt.

What's interesting, also, Speaker, about the title of this bill—let me just read it: “That, in the opinion of this House, the current government is a government for the people”—I said it already: It's for the people. You're really offending some of those prior Conservative governments, the governments of John Sandfield Macdonald, Sir James Whitney—the block that many of the ministers are now housed in—Sir William Hearst, Howard Ferguson, George Stewart Henry, George A. Drew, Thomas Laird Kennedy, Leslie Frost, John Robarts, Bill Davis and Mike Harris—

Mr. Mike Harris: You were supposed to wait until I got back.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: There he is, my colleague Mike Harris from—

Interjection: Kitchener—Conestoga.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Kitchener—Conestoga. I want to welcome you.

I've certainly studied the tenure and the government of your father. We are still feeling some of the effects. I wish you well—

Applause.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, some of the detrimental effects.

Let me tell you what the Conservative caucus is clapping about.

They're clapping about the still 20 billion dollars' worth of stranded debt that the Harris government left us when they broke up Hydro One. Do you remember the stranded debt?

When they talk about cancelling green energy products—

Interjections.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My goodness, Speaker, they're fired up this late in the afternoon. This is a good debate.

When they talk about cancelling green energy products—I believe over 700 now that you've cut—we're going to see a massive legal bill for that. But we know where that originated.

The member from Markham—Stouffville, who has a less-than-pristine legacy in his tenure as a federal member—we'll go through that at a later date—reminded us of Liberal policy, which his government is now owning. They are the stewards of Liberal policy when it comes to energy policy, and we only have to look as far as the Financial Accountability Officer, who said today that it's going to cost ratepayers \$40 billion. That isn't the economic stewardship that we would expect from the Conservative caucus and the Conservative government. We want to see your real plan. Bring us your own plan, a made-in-Ontario, for-the-people PC plan. Don't borrow it from the Liberal government. Don't borrow it from the Liberal Party. Why would you come in here and carbon-copy Kathleen Wynne's plan? It's almost embarrassing.

Finally, Speaker, do you know what's interesting? They're going to do a line-by-line audit. These, again, are the fiscal conservatives of Ontario, the ones who have been trusted as stewards of the taxpayer dollar. They're going to clean this place up financially. Who do they contract to do the work? Gordon Campbell, the former Premier of British Columbia, another person who has a less than stellar record in terms of his tenure—

Interjection.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Absolutely.

You couldn't find a good Conservative to clean up your mess; you had to hire a Liberal. Look at this government, borrowing not only policies but actually old Liberals.

Speaker, despite that, I have great optimism that in the next four years we can accomplish some good things. I think the people of this province won't let us get away with not supporting and fixing some of the issues. But they're also going to make sure that this government is held accountable. No matter what bumper sticker rhetoric you put out there, they're going to hold you accountable and under a microscope.

I am proud to be part of a caucus that will continue to do that on behalf of the people—to make sure that our education system is bolstered; to make sure that our health care system is fixed; to make sure that students have a chance; to make sure that fair, free collective bargaining rights are upheld; to make sure that the rule of law is upheld. Those are our virtues. Those are our values. That's my commitment to the members of this House. This is what you will expect for the next four years. As hard as you bring it, expect an effective opposition to make sure that you're on the right path.

I thank you very much, Speaker, for your time.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): It is now approaching the appointed hour of 6 o'clock. This House will stand adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1759.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioic Lim, William Short
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Downey, Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	
Dunlop, Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	

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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda (PC)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
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	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Orléans	
Lecce, Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre délégué à la Condition féminine
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 (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Government and Consumer Services Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
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	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakabuski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry