

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 42

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 42

1st Session
42nd Parliament
Monday
29 October 2018

1^{re} session
42^e législature
Lundi
29 octobre 2018

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Todd Decker

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 29 October 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 29 octobre 2018

The House met at 1030.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Suze Morrison: I'd like to warmly welcome to the Legislature today members from the co-op housing federation, including Scott Parry, the government relations coordinator for CHF; Denise McGahan, the program manager for southwestern Ontario; Denese Gascho from Grace MacInnis Co-op; Mitch Reiss, who is a board member with CHF; as well as any other of your members that you've brought with you today. I'm really looking forward to meeting with you. I know you're meeting with several of our members today. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to welcome Céline Carrière, the executive director of the co-operative housing association. They're having a reception tonight here at Queen's Park.

Hon. Steve Clark: Well, we'll keep the streak going. I too would like to welcome all of the members of the co-op housing federation of Canada here today. Specifically, I want to highlight Harvey Cooper, Simone Swail, Allison Chase, Mary Ann Hannant and Denese Gascho. Again, as has been said earlier, I encourage all members to participate in their reception tonight. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's my pleasure to introduce Tina Stevens from the Native Inter-Tribal Housing Co-op and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada's director representing aboriginal communities, as well as Zuleyma Vasquez, the Westminster Housing Co-op president. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Today marks the 95th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey. There will be a flag-raising ceremony right after the Q&A session this morning in front of QP. All members are requested to join.

I would like to welcome Erdeniz Sen, the Turkish consul general in Toronto, and members of the Turkish community to Queen's Park this morning. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Welcome.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Today I would like to welcome Willy Noiles to the Legislature. Willie is a board member of the Golden Horseshoe Co-operative Housing Federation. Welcome.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I too would like to welcome the members from the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, specifically Naomi Cho, who is the executive

director of the Central Ontario Co-operative Housing Federation and one of my constituents in Guelph. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I have the honour of introducing a gentleman who may be known to many members of the Legislature. He's a current cast member of ABC's Shark Tank and a former member of CBC's Dragons' Den, a commentator on CNBC and BNN and a former business partner of mine: a good friend, Mr. Kevin O'Leary.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: A little later today, we are joined by students in my riding from Weston Memorial Junior Public School. I want to welcome them to Queen's Park.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I am really happy to welcome to Queen's Park Wade Poziomka, who is the chair of the Ontario Bar Association, human rights section, with Jennifer Zdriluk and Daniela Da Silva. They were here for a press conference this morning on my private member's bill.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Today I would like to introduce Sophie Taylor, the executive director of the Peel/Halton Co-operative Housing Federation; David McFarlane, the vice-president of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, Ontario region; Diana Campbell, president of Mimico Co-op, and from Etobicoke-Lakeshore; Davin Thornborrow, a member of Homestarts Inc.; and a few co-op housing federation members: Nancy Jacobs, Chris Murray and Sarah Burnett Murray. Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: I would like to welcome the association of naturopathic doctors, who are at Queen's Park today, including Dr. Mélanie Jacobson from Parkdale-High Park.

Mr. Billy Pang: I would like to welcome 64 grade 10 students from St. Augustine Catholic High School, who are touring the Legislature this morning. They are all up there.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: The doctors of naturopathic medicine are up there, and I see my friend Brock McGregor. He's a councillor in Chatham-Kent. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Speaker, I would like to introduce the family of today's page captain, Armita Bhatti from my riding of Richmond Hill. Armita is joined today by her father, Gurbrindar Bhatti; her mother, Mahasti Bhatti; and her sister, Anaheeta Bhatti. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: All the way from Timmins, we have two constituency assistants from my Timmins office: Leah Cartan and Courtney Laforest. I could have called her "Fay," but I'll keep it at Leah.

I also would like to welcome somebody whom I know Minister Mulroney and the Minister of Economic Development and Trade met with in regard to—not economic development and trade; infrastructure. Excuse me. McNaughton; we'll get it straight. Ludger Cloutier is here today representing Centre culturel La Ronde.

Mr. Stan Cho: Happy Monday to everybody in the House today. This morning, I would like to welcome two constituents and two special friends, Adrian Miedema and Magid Girgis. Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Good morning, everyone. This morning I would like to welcome a colleague of mine, Dr. Bhal, who is one of our hard-working front-line physicians and my colleague from Etobicoke General Hospital, in their emergency room. Welcome.

1040

Hon. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome Monica Alyea, who is visiting us from Prince Edward county today. She is the chair of the Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital Foundation. Sitting next to her is Scott Allinson, from the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario. We welcome them both to question period this morning.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature my legislative assistant, Pranav Bakaraju, who is starting his job today.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'd like to welcome the grades 4 and 5 classes from Saint Michael the Archangel Catholic Elementary School. There are 108 of them. They are in the building; I'm not sure they're in the gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today the consul general of Greece to Toronto, Mr. Victor Maligoudis. I enjoyed our meeting earlier this morning. Please join me in welcoming him to the Ontario Legislature.

Point of order: the member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek unanimous consent to ask a question on behalf of my colleague the member from Thunder Bay—Superior North.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South is seeking unanimous consent of the House to be allowed to ask a question. Agreed? Agreed.

ATTACK IN PITTSBURGH

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I believe you'll find that we have unanimous consent to have a moment of silence prior to question period to honour the victims of this weekend's anti-Semitic attack in Pittsburgh.

I just want to add, Mr. Speaker, if I may, that there is a tribute tonight. Everybody in the House and in communities across Ontario is invited for a vigil at Mel Lastman Square, up in North York. There will be a lot of organizations participating in this.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Thornhill is seeking unanimous consent of the House to have a moment of silence in recognition of the victims of the tragic shooting in Pittsburgh. Agreed? Agreed.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE FUNDING

Mr. Chris Glover: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. During this year's election campaign, the Conservatives promised that, if elected, they would honour commitments to fund post-secondary expansion in Brampton, Markham and Milton. Will the minister depart from her talking points today and justify the government's decision to break this promise?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Our government has had to make tough decisions about projects across Ontario. However, I want to share a quote from a letter sent to me by Danny Chang, the president of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, which represents 150,000 students. He says, "At OUSA, we believe in responsible investment that will effectively improve the lives of students and the future of our society. That is why our students wanted to communicate alignment with your decision on October 23. We believe that the Ontario university sector should ensure that any new or growing university institutions and campuses are financially sustainable."

Speaker, Ontario students know the importance of fiscal sustainability. It is time for the NDP to recognize that as well.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: Three months ago, the Conservatives knew that these campuses were sustainable. I quote a member of the Conservative Party during the election campaign. He said, "We will do everything we can to make this project a reality ... whether it takes \$90 million or there's more we need to do."

When the Conservatives needed votes in these communities, they promised everything to everyone. Now they're in a position to deliver and it's another promise broken. Why is the government taking these 905 communities for granted?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Our government, again, has had to make tough decisions about projects across Ontario.

I want to share the perspective of Leo Groarke, president and vice-chancellor of Trent University. He says, "In a situation in which the system is characterized by a lack of students, creating entirely new campuses takes students away from existing campuses at a time when they are

scrambling to find students they need to fill the spaces they already have available.”

He goes on to say that we cannot “expect a provincial government that is trying to wrestle with its deficit to pay for” new campuses “at a time when there is no pressing need to establish them...”

“The Ford government has made the right decision.”

Speaker, the people of Ontario expect us to make the tough—

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

Mr. Chris Glover: The government has not provided any numbers to justify their decision. These campuses were to create educational opportunities and economic growth in some of the fastest-growing communities in Canada. Hundreds of people invested countless hours and millions of dollars. And then, without providing a cost-benefit analysis or without providing an opportunity cost analysis, the government has made this decision.

Later today, all members of this House will have a chance to reconfirm their support for these projects, including members of the Conservative Party who promised to keep these campuses going when they were on the campaign trail. We’re calling on all members from both sides to stand up for students and parents in these communities.

Will the minister stand and vote against these cuts?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. We are standing up for students. We have been clear that only this government is committed to enhancing financial accountability and transparency. The previous Liberal government—propped up by the NDP, who supported them on 97% of their votes—made empty promises in an election year for programs and projects that they knew they could not afford, leading to a \$15-billion deficit while hiding costs from the public. The Liberals shattered the trust of Ontarians. Our focus is on restoring trust and accountability in Ontario’s finances.

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE FUNDING

Mr. Chris Glover: The member opposite talks about empty promises, when her member said, “We will do everything we can to make this project a reality ... whether it takes \$90 million or more” that’s needed to be done.

The other question that Ontario students and parents have—because they’ve seen the broken promise to the parents in Brampton, Milton and Markham, they worry about more cuts coming. Last week, the minister was evasive when asked whether she would be maintaining grants that cover the cost of tuition for thousands of students. Can the minister provide an answer now? Will she be maintaining—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Which minister are you referring the question to?

Mr. Chris Glover: The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister?

1050

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I want to remind the member opposite about the state of Ontario’s finances and the importance of returning Ontario to sound financial footing.

We know, thanks to the independent commission of inquiry, that our government needs to take action. The inquiry found that the Liberals made empty promises to Ontarians for programs and projects they knew they could not afford, creating a \$15-billion deficit. To make matters worse, we know, from the Select Committee on Financial Transparency, that senior public servants warned the government that their plan “could put pressure on the province’s credit rating and overall borrowing capacity.”

Speaker, Ontarians know they can’t trust the Liberals to manage the province’s finances and they cannot count on the NDP to make the tough decisions to get Ontario back on sound financial footing. We—

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

Mr. Chris Glover: Students and their parents are worried, and for good reason. They have already seen this government break their promise to the students in Brampton, Milton and Markham, and instead of providing answers, the minister is repeating the same talking points.

She owes the students of Ontario an answer. What is she planning to cut next?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Speaker, the people of Ontario know that we need to bring Ontario back to sound financial footing. We were elected to restore accountability and trust in Ontario’s finances, and that’s exactly what we’re doing.

Our government received a clear mandate from the people to fix Ontario’s dire financial situation. That is in clear juxtaposition to the NDP. The NDP showed during the campaign that Ontarians cannot trust them to manage Ontario’s economy. In fact, they had a \$7-billion hole in their platform’s budget.

Meanwhile, the previous Liberal government and a few members who are sitting in this Legislature sat at the cabinet table, created a \$15-billion deficit and made empty promises to the people of Ontario.

Ontarians know that our government for the people is the only—

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

Mr. Chris Glover: Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities wasn’t aware that the Liberals were not telling the truth about the deficit, then she was the only member in the House—

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

Mr. Chris Glover: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Put your question.

Mr. Chris Glover: The government promised to build these new campuses during the election campaign, knowing full well that our deficit was what it is now, \$15 billion. The government broke that promise without warning, and instead

of giving parents and students in Ontario honest answers, she repeats the same talking points over and over. Now, the minister is refusing to say what else she plans to cut.

The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities has a responsibility to the students and parents of Ontario, and it goes beyond simply reading talking points from the Premier's office. Will the minister be maintaining the grants for students in Ontario?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: We promised the people of Ontario to restore accountability and trust in Ontario's finances. Part of that process means making tough decisions about projects across Ontario.

Our government is being forced to clean up the irresponsible and reckless financial decisions of the previous Liberal government. We now know, thanks to the independent commission of inquiry, the depths of the waste and mismanagement of the previous Liberal government. To describe the previous government's actions, the Auditor General used words like "conceal," "bogus," "deceptive" and "unreliable." In an election year, they made empty promises to Ontarians for programs and projects they knew they could not afford, leading to a \$15-billion deficit while hiding the cost from the public.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Minister of Labour.

Last week, we learned that the Ministry of Labour's proactive workplace inspections were scrapped back in August. Will the minister please tell us:

(1) What is the cost to businesses to have proactive inspections of employment standards of temp agencies, for example?

(2) What consultation or data was used to arrive at the decision to scrap these inspections?

(3) What cost was this measured against?

Hon. Laurie Scott: Thanks to the member opposite for the many questions in the question.

This memo in question was a bureaucratic memo from August—the decision made by the ministry when employment standards claims backlogs do occur. The decision was actually made to ensure that those affected by employment standards claims are provided the service that they need and deserve. If monies are owed to workers in the province through employment standards violations, we need to ensure that they're being provided the service they need and deserve. I think that answers some of the questions of the member opposite.

In just over 100 days in the province of Ontario, the Ford government is making a better business climate. We're open for business in the province of Ontario so we have better-paying jobs for the people and the workers—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order. The opposition benches will come to order so that an opposition member can ask his question.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Timmins, come to order. Government side, come to order.

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Back to the minister: Let's be clear, Minister. Inspections save lives—period.

Last Thursday, there was another workplace death of a temporary worker at Fiera Foods. This is the fourth—the fourth—death of a worker at Fiera Foods businesses. A workplace death is a terrible cost. Four deaths, and someone should be in jail.

Patrick Harris, a long-time Conservative strategist who is running to become a member of the Ontario PC executive, registered as a lobbyist representing Fiera Foods around the same time the memo ending proactive workplace safety inspections was written. What does the minister plan to say the next time she's lobbied by Mr. Harris?

Hon. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, we are all saddened to hear about this incident. Our thoughts, and I'm sure all of our colleagues' in the Legislature, are with the family and colleagues of the person who passed away.

But I think the member opposite is a little confused. Their employment standards before are unrelated to health and safety inspections. He's politicizing a very serious tragedy that occurred last week. The official opposition is doing that. I will not be part of it. I'm very proud of the legislation that we brought in last week. I won't allow the opposition to attempt to politicize this tragedy. Our thoughts are with the family. The Ministry of Labour is doing their inspections. Health and safety inspections continue to go on—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Next question.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Stephen Lecce: To the minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade: After hosting a series of round tables and meetings with small and medium-sized businesses and their workers, it is clear that Ontario has lost its competitive advantage. Unaffordable electricity rates, labour rates, tax rates, job-killing red tape and a lack of access to skilled labour are having the aggregate effect of driving investment outbound and killing jobs for the next generation of workers.

Since 2015, Canadian investment in the United States has increased by 66%, while US investment in Canada has plummeted by 52%. We are determined to reverse this trend, to confidently and boldly put our province on a pathway to prosperity.

1100

Can the minister outline how he plans to create in Ontario an advantage for these young workers exiting school and aspiring to work with the dignity of a good-paying job?

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you to my colleague for the question. The Making Ontario Open for Business Act is a piece of legislation that is a huge step towards restoring Ontario's competitiveness and returning our province to

its rightful place as the economic engine of Canada. We've slipped badly over the years, as the honourable member has mentioned. This legislation will get government out of the way of our job creators and let them do what they do best—and that's create jobs and hire our young people.

Let's listen to one of those job creators. From Power-Tek Electrical Services: "Restrictive ratios are the number one barrier to hiring young apprentices at my company, and we are so glad the government has taken this important step. This will lead to increased employment and opportunities for youth right across the province."

From the Ontario Hospital Association: "The announcement signals an understanding from government of the enormous pressures facing hospitals and will help ensure that hospital resources are directed to front line patient care." They support this legislation.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Back to the minister: In the binary choice before this Parliament, on this side of the House we choose to put prosperity ahead of blind ideology. Conservatives will stand up for our workers, for higher incomes and for the jobs that their families depend on every single day, without exception.

We believe that if you are prepared to do the work then you deserve a shot at the job, because we know that if we do not take decisive action to protect jobs and to create an advantage for our job creators, investment will flow south. As economist Jack Mintz said—and I wish the members of the New Democrats took note of this quote: "If politicians sit on their hands, the private sector won't: Canadians will see investment, jobs and profits flowing to the States."

Minister, can you confirm today to simply not make this happen?

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you to my colleague. Absolutely right: If you want to work in this province, you deserve a shot at the job, and that's thanks to this legislation.

In referring to the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, from the president of the Canadian Elevator Contractors Association: "The new legislation will allow elevator mechanics to continue having high service standards and allow the industry to grow and hire more Ontarians in the highest-paid trade in the province."

From the Ontario Forest Industries Association: "The changes announced show that this government is committed to building a more prosperous and competitive province. This government clearly understands the significant risks that were outlined in the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis economic impact analysis and concerns raised by the OCC. Today's announcement represents a positive, evidence-based policy decision."

I would think the NDP would like that—

Interjections.

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

Start the clock again. Member for Waterloo.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Minister of Labour. This government's choice to scrap the two paid days of personal emergency leave is going to hurt people across this province. Take, for example, my constituent Carolyn, who used one of the two paid days to attend her mother-in-law's funeral just this past August. Without the paid day off, Carolyn would have had to make some, as she has described, "tough choices." In her case, a day's pay equals a week's worth of groceries.

What does the minister have to say to Carolyn in my riding?

Hon. Laurie Scott: Look, for the first time in Ontario, every worker will have job-protected sick, family responsibility and bereavement leave. It was not clear in the previous legislation. And businesses that we've spoken to over and over again are good employers. They want to keep their employees.

When we talk about making Ontario open for business, we truly mean it. We are going to create better-paying jobs. We're going to let businesses expand—attract businesses, so there are better-paying jobs out there for everyone in the province of Ontario. That's what we committed to, that's what we were elected on and that's what we're going to do.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock again. Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Those days are unpaid, and that means those employees have no choices. In January, Carolyn lost a good job she had been at for 25 years. She quickly obtained a temporary job so that she could provide for her family, but it didn't come with the same pay, benefits or stability as her old job. But when she needed the time off, she was able to rely on a paid leave day to help her keep food on the table. That's what we're talking about here. In Carolyn's view, if the government really wants to help hard-working Ontario taxpayers, then they will reverse this decision.

Will the minister commit today to keeping the two paid leave days for people like Carolyn and millions of other Ontarians?

Hon. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, we have seen job losses; in August, 80,000 job losses. When the previous government's bill first came in in January, there were 50-some-thousand job losses. People are losing their jobs—especially part-time workers, especially youth workers—with those burdensome rules and regulations. We are going to be creating better-paying jobs in the province of Ontario because we want to partner with business, not like the previous government that was supported by you that took businesses as enemies. That's how businesses felt in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we are providing eight job-protected days for every worker every year in the province of Ontario. They're going to have better paying jobs in the province of Ontario because of what we're doing.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. I will remind all the members that heckling is always out of order. I'm going to ask the members again and remind them to make your comments through the Chair.

Next question. Start the clock.

RED TAPE REDUCTION

Mr. David Piccini: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Police, mayors and many constituents across my community voiced serious concern over a redundant regulation in Bill 113 that would have driven third-party criminal record check providers out of this province, driven jobs out of my community, and disproportionately hit small-town police forces excessively hard. We know, Mr. Speaker, that our government is committed to reducing red tape, tackling the over 380,000 regulatory burdens that cripple this economy, and opening Ontario for business.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain how this regulatory change to the Police Record Checks Reform Act will help protect and create jobs while safeguarding the privacy of Ontarians?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I want to thank the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South for that question. Mr. Speaker, our government has been sending a message that Ontario is open for business, and it's finally bringing quality jobs back to Ontario. As of November 1, a new amendment under the Police Record Checks Reform Act will come into effect. This new amendment will safeguard the privacy of the people of Ontario while also protecting jobs throughout many smaller municipalities within the province.

Mr. Speaker, the previous Liberal government passed their job-killing police record checks legislation that forced businesses to choose between continuing their operations in Ontario or relocating their businesses to other jurisdictions with less restrictive red tape. That's simply unacceptable. Our government for the people will continue working hard to ensure that good jobs continue to be created here in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. David Piccini: I thank the minister for that answer and, Minister, thank you for joining me this past weekend to make this important announcement in my community. I'm proud to be part of a government that is tackling the regulatory burdens, that is taking the time to get this right: a minister of the Treasury Board doing a line-by-line review, examining these job-killing regulations.

Mr. Speaker, the police chief in Cobourg indeed said that this province is open for business. To the minister: This is going to create an additional 17 jobs. This police business services unit is now open at midnight, starting January 1. We're creating jobs.

For the benefit of this House, because I know it's rich for the opposition—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: You know. You know so much.

Mr. David Piccini: Your criticisms—this is going to create revenue, Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Opposition, come to order.

Mr. David Piccini:—while not dipping into the tax base. For the benefit of the members opposite, can you explain to members of this House why this amendment to the records check reform act needed to be made—

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

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I thank the member for that important question.

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This weekend, I was proud to stand alongside the members from Northumberland–Peterborough South and Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to announce a new amendment to the Police Record Checks Reform Act. Our government was elected on a mandate to put the people of this province first and to cut red tape, grow our economy and create new jobs for our people. This amendment will create consistency with respect to how police record checks are conducted, which will ultimately result in shorter processing times and faster screening decisions.

We are sending a clear message that Ontario is open for business. We will continue to remove job-killing red tape to make it easier for businesses to hire and for workers—

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

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you, Speaker. Through you to the Minister of Health: During the last election campaign, the Conservatives insisted that history wouldn't repeat itself. But the people of Niagara remember the 28 hospitals closed under previous Conservative governments, and it looks like closures are set to start again with the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, who learned that they are losing their obstetrics and surgical programs.

The Minister of Health provided no information Friday about the status of the plan to rebuild this hospital. Will she provide an update now?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member very much for the question because I know this has been an item of great turmoil in the region, for the people of Grimsby and for the people who are strong proponents of the hospital.

I can tell you that, first of all, patient safety is always our primary concern—it has to be. I can also assure you that hospital services will continue to be provided at West Lincoln hospital. We are working right now with the LHIN, with Hamilton Health Sciences and with the administration at West Lincoln to make sure that services can continue to be provided with the least disruption possible to patients. Services will continue in this location.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Speaker, through you: The minister seems unwilling or unable to answer some basic questions, but the situation is dire. Last week, the hospital's chief of staff, Dr. Gary Benson, resigned in response to plans to move obstetrics and surgery out of the hospital. Benson

wrote that he was “totally blindsided” by the decision; no one consulted him. The interim site lead at the hospital says that, unless they receive confirmation of funding to rebuild the hospital, “none of the rest of the pieces make sense.”

The government member from Niagara West says that he’s fighting for the hospital. Who is he fighting with? Does the minister have a plan? Will the minister consult with the hospital and the people of Niagara before making a decision to close this hospital?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I can certainly assure you that the member from Niagara West has been doing a terrific job at both informing me with respect to what’s going on as well as advocating for his community. He’s made it very clear to me that the people in Grimsby and surrounding area are not happy with some of the decisions that have been made. We are working through it right now to find the best solution that balances patient safety with the needs of the people in the community to receive health care services.

As I indicated before, we are speaking directly with Hamilton Health Sciences, with the West Lincoln hospital and with the LHIN, through my ministry, to find a satisfactory resolution to this situation. As I said before, hospital services are going to continue to remain open at West Lincoln.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Deputy Premier. In response to Bill 47 and the scrapping of workers’ protections, the Minister of Labour has said that these changes are “good for workers.” I need to get this straight: The government is freezing minimum wage at \$14 an hour, eliminating two paid sick days, cancelling equal pay for equal work, requiring doctor’s notes—something that you know is a burden on the health care system—limiting bereavement leave to two unpaid days and allowing employers to cancel people’s shifts with virtually no notice.

Through you, Speaker: Can the Deputy Premier explain in any way how this is good for the lowest-paid workers here in Ontario?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Jim Wilson: To the honourable member, who was part of a team over there that brought in probably the greatest job-killing legislation we’ve seen during the 15 years that the Liberals were in office, you should be ashamed of what you did to business, our job creators, in this province: 52,000 people lost their jobs in January, the first month that Bill 148 was in—and many of those were students; in fact, the majority were students—and over 80,000 in August. And for the first time in my 28 years, most of them were part-time, and that had to do with equal-pay provisions, which meant you had to pay a part-timer, a new person, the same as you pay someone who has worked for you for 28 years. It didn’t make any sense. It killed jobs. Hundreds of thousands of jobs were lost—

320,000 jobs in manufacturing on your watch, sir. You should be ashamed of that.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. First of all, I have to say to the government side that there were times I was having trouble, believe it or not, hearing the Minister of Economic Development because of the heckling that was coming from this side—backbench members heckling their minister in his response.

Secondly, I would remind all members to address their comments through the Chair. This doesn’t have to be a personal debate; it needs to be a debate of ideas and policy.

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Mr. John Fraser: In the grocery business, we used to call that cherry-picking: You pick one month or the other month. You know that this economy has created over 170,000 jobs in the last year.

Premier Ford and the government can strip away workers’ protections from the lowest-paid workers in this province. But at the same time, he can find \$350,000 a year for a former PC Party president, another \$350,000 a year for a campaign adviser in Washington, and he can appoint the family lawyer at \$667,000 a year. So it’s—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Again, I ask the government side to please come to order so I can hear the member, who has every right to ask his question.

Start the clock. I apologize to the member for interrupting.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you, Speaker. So it’s like the gravy train has arrived here at Queen’s Park, and the Premier is shouting out, “All aboard! Next stop, Ottawa.”

I ask the minister: How is any of this in any way fair, both the stripping away of workers’ rights and this gravy train that’s here in front of us? I don’t know who else is on board. Minister, answer the question.

Hon. Jim Wilson: Speaker, through you, not only did we lose, between 2003 and 2009, over 320,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs—and it’s not like those jobs went to China and that. They went to Ohio, to Michigan and to Quebec, they went to other provinces—that’s what the stats show—and you did nothing. The Liberal government just ignored manufacturing. There were no plans to try and bring jobs back to make our economy competitive again.

They actually brought in a piece of legislation, Bill 148, that protected and nourished a minimum wage economy. What government in their right mind would aim for a policy like that? That’s a failed policy, and it’s giving up on our young people and our apprentices. It’s no way to treat the good working people of this province, who want good-paying jobs brought back to Ontario.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Daryl Kramp: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. I know that in my riding and in the north in general, Ontario’s forestry sector has been decimated and left out in the cold for a long time under

the previous government. We saw massive job losses in our north. Over-regulation and neglect simply forced all of our forest companies to just stop investing in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the people voted for a change in Ontario, and our government is committed to delivering that change. We need to open up Ontario for business and find ways to work more efficiently with the forestry sector, to help deregulate that. Today, could the minister provide an update to this House on our government's action to reverse the problems caused by the previous government and the actions that he is taking to open up this vital sector for business?

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Hon. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to thank the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington. He is absolutely right in his question. Under the previous Liberal government, we saw half the jobs in the forestry sector disappear: 51,000 jobs gone. What was their solution? More regulations to burden the industry.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud that our government for the people has taken action to open Ontario up for business. Just last month, I announced round tables that will be taking place throughout northern and eastern Ontario to find solutions in the forestry sector so we can unleash the great potential for the north. For years, these companies that employ thousands of Ontarians were ignored in favour of special interest groups and policies that were more focused on sounding good and less focused on actually helping anyone.

I look forward to these meetings with these companies over the next three to six months and hearing their ideas on how we can open Ontario up for business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Daryl Kramp: I would like to thank the minister for that response. It is certainly reassuring to hear that our government is tackling the inefficient situation left behind by the previous Liberal government, because it's been a long time coming for Ontario and northern Ontarians. For too long, these citizens who worked so hard for our north have been neglected, and they've been burdened with more and more regulations, literally due to the Liberal red-tape bonanza that seemed to be non-ending.

Now we finally have a government for the people that is committed to listening to the forestry sector and finding smart and innovative new ways to unleash the economic strengths of Ontario's north. Can the minister provide any concrete examples of how the forestry industry is responding to our initiative, to our government's commitment to reduce regulations and to finally open up Ontario for business?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I'm happy to report that the forestry sector is already responding to our government's actions and commitments to reduce regulation and open Ontario up for business. Just last week, I attended an announcement with Resolute where they announced an investment of \$53.5 million in their Thunder Bay mill.

I'd like to share with the House some quotes from Yves Laflamme, the president and chief executive officer of Resolute:

"Let me be clear, today's investment builds on the momentum of Premier Ford's policies that have declared Ontario open for business."

Premier Ford, you "have made it clear that you will make it easier to grow and invest in businesses in Ontario—and to build an economy that allows more workers to find jobs. We are pleased that Ontario is 'open for business.' This gives us an improved level of confidence for the future."

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to announce to this House that Ontario is open for business.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Good morning, Minister.

The government has been making secret deals with racetrack operators. The movers and shakers are being looked after, but the little guys, the people who breed, train and race at the smaller tracks, are forgotten. Take Leamington, for example: Tracks in London and Hamilton can offer a purse of \$6,000 a race, but Leamington only gets \$3,500. Speaker, when will the minister insist that the little guys in horse racing get a fair deal from the racing industry?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, and good morning to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, as well.

Ontario Lottery and Gaming continues to provide funding to the track in Leamington to support live racing under their current agreements. Our government has kept its commitment to bolster the horse racing industry and repair the damage done by the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP.

Agreements in principle have been reached at other racetracks. Speaker, I want you to know that we understand how important live racing is in Ontario. It helps so many sectors, from farmers, breeders, groomers, trainers and all of the support workers. This is a very important sector, and we continue to provide this support funding.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Every sport needs a farm system, a training ground. You play at the junior level, or the minor system, before bursting into the NHL.

A healthy horse racing industry needs the smaller tracks to be successful. Patrons support the 13 racing dates in Leamington. Why won't the minister tell those pulling the racing strings to negotiate a fair deal for Leamington so the local racing industry can survive?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, I think it's important that we review how we got to where we are today. If you recall 2012, a bombshell hit the racing sector when the Liberals decimated the entire system, and it could only happen because the NDP stood up and voted with them to destroy the horse racing sector. That's just a fact that can't be changed from back in 2012.

Only the PC members who were in opposition at the time stood up for Ontario, stood up for the farmers, stood up for the breeders, stood up for the groomers. We stood up for the

trainers. We stood up for the support workers. It was only the PC members who stood up for the horse racing sector.

Again, we continue to provide funding to the track in Leamington to support live racing.

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICY

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: My question is to the honourable Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. According to new numbers provided by the RCMP, there were more than 1,600 interceptions of illegal border crossers in September. Ontarians from across the province consider this a border crisis, while the federal government considers this a non-issue. Mr. Speaker, can the minister please bring some rational thought to this issue?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the question from the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville. He has been on top of this issue and has been a very strong advocate for a stronger, more confident immigration system in the province of Ontario. Unfortunately, given the lack of control at the border and the lack of respect that the Liberal government federally is providing to the public, we have seen that this has escalated in costs for the province of Ontario. I highlighted this summer that it's a cost of \$200 million and growing on the public purse here in the province of Ontario.

All Premiers in all political parties agree with our stand that the federal government should be fully compensating the province of Ontario and other provinces for the breakdown in our border security. I'll continue to press the federal government; I'll have more to say on that in the supplementary. But I think it's really important that there is increasing frustration with the federal government on this issue, and we're going to continue to hold their feet to the fire.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you, Minister, and happy birthday.

While I understand that this is a federal responsibility, we will stand up for Ontario taxpayers. As it is getting cold outside, Ontario's most vulnerable will be looking for shelter as the winter approaches. I checked the city of Toronto's Daily Shelter and Overnight Service Usage online tracker this morning. Occupancy rates are either nearing or are at capacity. These capacity rates already include 2,000 more beds than were available when this border crisis began in November 2017. This isn't an issue that is unique to the city of Toronto. Minister, how will Ontario's municipalities cope under this added strain?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the member's well wishes for my birthday. What I'd really like is for the federal government to provide me with a \$200-million gift to pay for the illegal-border-crossing issue and the sustainability issue that we have in the province of Ontario.

I'm going to outline those costs one more time: \$90 million in social assistance costs and growing; \$20 million in education costs and growing; and shelter costs in the city of Ottawa and the city of Toronto well over \$84 million. It's time that the federal government stands up, pays its bills and makes Ontario whole, as every single

Premier in every single political party stated when they stood side by side with our Premier Ford.

I just want to point out that it's not just us who are concerned about this matter. Liberal MP John McKay said of his own government, "People have come to the conclusion that these people are not refugees and they should be returned, sooner rather than later. The only fair thing for everybody is to process them quickly and I think that's where the government's weakness is."

We're going to continue—

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

Interjections.

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

1130

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

St. Catharines is in the midst of a mental health crisis. Whether it be those struggling with mental illness or with addiction, people across St. Catharines are not being given the care they need.

Just a few weeks ago, hundreds of citizens participated in a vigil to remember those who have lost their lives to mental illness and to call for comprehensive action to improve mental health care in St. Catharines.

Will the minister tell me what she is doing to improve access to mental health care in St. Catharines?

Hon. Christine Elliott: As the member will know, it was one of our primary campaign promises that we would introduce a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions program for Ontario. Some \$3.8 billion is going to be put into this over 10 years. It's a lot of money, more than other governments have put into this, and we are going to concentrate on it in a holistic way. We're not going to look at one, two or three sections of it; we're going to look at it across the spectrum, from when a person is a child to their senior years.

This is something that's involving almost every ministry on this side. We are going to be speaking to people who are in the ministries, we're going to be speaking to people in communities, and we're going to be speaking to people with lived experience so we make sure that we finally get this right. We've talked about this for so many years in this House, from the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions—it was almost 10 years ago that that report came out. We need to start acting on it, and that's what we're going to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: People who need mental health care are being turned away or discharged from hospitals in St. Catharines at this very moment. Families in St. Catharines often have to wait over a year for their loved ones to access mental health care, and demand is only going up.

For the first time in their history, the Canadian Mental Health Association chapter of Niagara has had to take a

loan to fund a new expansion to help the people in need in St. Catharines. The previous government left our mental health service organizations scrambling for adequate funding, and this government looks no different.

Will the minister tell the people of St. Catharines that the government of Ontario will help fund this desperately needed project in our city?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I think one thing that the member and I can agree on is that the previous government did not do anything to improve our mental health services here in Ontario and that action needs to be taken.

We have made an announcement in the last several weeks on consumption and rehabilitation services sites, and the St. Catharines site is going to be opening as they apply to become accredited under the new plan. We know that mental health and addiction issues are interconnected, so you can't deal with one without dealing with the other.

Is there more to be done? Absolutely, yes. We know that we need to expand our treatment services across the province. We need to expand detox beds and mental health and addictions services. We need to make sure that people get the wraparound services and access to primary care that they need. Housing is a huge issue.

We are approaching all of those issues for the people not just in St. Catharines—they're important—but the people across Ontario. We are looking at it for the people and we are going to come up with a solution that is going to benefit the people of Ontario.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: My question is for the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines. Mr. Speaker, it comes as no surprise that it's been a very long time since Ontario was the economic engine of Canada. In fact, it's been 15 long years, which is certainly no coincidence.

The mismanagement and fiscal recklessness of the previous government led to valuable investment dollars leaving our province in search of more friendly jurisdictions. These investment dollars would have brought good jobs to Ontario and helped our economy thrive. Instead, Liberals shut Ontario's doors to businesses, entrepreneurs and investment.

I am proud to be a member of this government, which is working tirelessly to reverse that trend. Can the minister please tell the members of this House about developments this last week that demonstrate that our province is now truly open for business?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I want to thank the member from Mississauga Centre for her interest in what is going on in northern Ontario.

I was joined by the Premier to go up into beautiful Algoma Country. We joined folks from Pic River First Nation, Pic Mobert First Nation, White River and Hornepayne and folks from Wawa. We were all celebrating the opening of the Harte Gold mine expansion in the Sugar Zone—and how sweet it is, Mr. Speaker. More than 200 direct jobs and 1.5 million ounces of gold are anticipated

for the next 10 or 11 years. This represents another key opportunity for that region that has been hit hard over the past decade and a half of darkness.

We worked with Harte Gold to make sure that that mine was able to open up on time. To see the smile on the faces of those workers and those people who have built those roads, cut those trees and are now making gold bricks, well, I ain't got the words.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Thank you to the minister for that sweet answer and for his leadership in bringing good jobs back to northern Ontario.

Our government is ensuring that businesses and investors all over the world know that Ontario is finally open for business and open for investment. We are cutting unnecessary red tape that was putting a burden on companies looking to invest in our province.

High costs and red tape have created an economic climate that makes it difficult to start mining and logging operations. These critical sectors are economic drivers, especially in northern communities. In fact, two thirds of Ontario's mining jobs are located in northern Ontario. Additionally, mining is a large employer for our Indigenous communities, with over 11% of Ontario's mining force being Indigenous.

Can the minister advise us how these recent announcements will unlock the economic potential of this important sector and get our people working?

Hon. Greg Rickford: It's true; it was a great day in the Sugar Zone, but there were a few sour notes we heard. Despite the previous Liberal government, this Harte Gold team set up that mine in three years, but it took seven years to wade through the regulatory burdens—seven long years—and 97% of the time those regulatory burdens were supported by who? The official opposition. Now this no-digging party has got to take it from us and the people in northern Ontario: We're going to stand up for the 26,000 people directly employed in the mining sector, 56,000 indirectly, and the highest employer of Indigenous people. If they don't want to build mines over there, we will.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Niagara is being shaken to its core by a shocking number of people who need mental health support. They can't get the support, so instead they're taking their own lives. I've been to the funerals. I've spoken to the families, time and time again. It's clear to all of us in Niagara that the need for expanded mental health services is critical. People are struggling to get the services they need, and they need more support from this Conservative government.

Will the Conservative government reverse its decision to cut mental health funding and instead ensure resources are there in the communities when they are needed?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I know the member is talking about a very serious subject. We are losing too many people to suicide in communities all across our province. This has to stop. That is why we made our commitment during the campaign, and we are continuing with that commitment, to spend \$3.8 billion over the next 10 years to increase our mental health and addiction services. This is an increase in services, contrary to what the member indicated.

This is important across the board. We know we need to have more addiction services. We talked about that several weeks ago. The two situations are commingled. Very often someone with a mental health problem also has an addiction problem. We have to deal with both issues to make sure that people can be truly rehabilitated.

1140

We are working on that. I am working with my colleagues on this side of the House. If any of the members of the official opposition or the other parties have any thoughts on what we should do, I would be more than happy to—

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: Back to the minister: \$330 million. That is how much the government has cut from mental health services across the province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Government side, come to order.

Mr. Wayne Gates: They have cut funding while waitlists for young people to access mental health—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Sorry to interrupt again. I ask the government to come to order. The member has the right to put his question. I have to hear it.

I apologize to the member for St. Catharines.

Mr. Wayne Gates: They have cut funding while waitlists for young people to access mental health services are as high as 18 months. That's 18 months of waiting for our young people struggling to get the services they need, not to mention the stress and the heartache for those caring for them and our front-line workers.

We can all do better. It's our responsibility to do better for these people. Again, Minister, will you reverse the cuts to mental health funding by restoring the \$330 million in funding and take measures to ensure that front-line services are there when people need them?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say, through you to the members of this House and to anyone watching these proceedings, that the numbers quoted by the member asking the question are absolutely incorrect. We are adding to our mental health and addictions funding here in Ontario; \$3.8 billion is a lot of money, and we're going to do it in a holistic way across all the areas that need help, from housing, to services for mental health and addictions, to primary care, to addiction services. All of those services are going to be enhanced for the people of Ontario. That's what we got elected to do and that is what we are going to do.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr. Ross Romano: My question is for the Minister of Finance. I know the honourable minister is a member of a northern city, like myself, and as such has a deep understanding of the challenges that face our northern communities. I'm sure over the last number of months, all of the northern members of this House have heard from their constituents about how important it is that we protect our jobs in the north.

I'm proud to say that help is on the way and, in fact, help is here. Protecting good-paying jobs all across Ontario has been one of the key priorities of our government in order to demonstrate that we are open for business. This includes in communities like my own riding of Sault Ste. Marie, which is home to one of the most important industries in all of Ontario.

I was very pleased to join the Premier last week for an important announcement at Algoma Steel. Can the Minister of Finance please tell the members of this House how this announcement will help protect steelworkers in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Sault Ste. Marie for his great work.

When we say Ontario is open for business, we mean all of Ontario. Last Tuesday, the Premier made a significant announcement while visiting the Algoma Steel mill. Our government's proposed initiative ensures the Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund is in place to support the pensions of Algoma Steel's 2,100 current and 6,300 former or retired employees. Our government is committed to protecting jobs and ensuring Algoma remains competitive in a tough market.

This proposed initiative protects workers and pensioners at Algoma, supports our steel industry and contributes to economic growth and development all throughout the north. Our government for the people is committed to making Ontario open for business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary. The member for Simcoe North.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the minister for his answer. I am proud to be part of a government that keeps the promises it makes. This includes protecting good jobs and encouraging employers to set up shop in Ontario.

After 15 long years, we want the world to know Ontario is open for business. We take great pride in making sure these pensions are protected, but our government is not stopping there. Our steel industry is experiencing a difficult time right now. New tariffs are making it harder for the Canadian steel industry, but our government stands with our northern businesses and partners in these tough times.

My question is for the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines. How is our government working to support Algoma Steel with so much uncertainty in the steel market?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member from Simcoe North for her question. There are no better words than those of the CEO of Algoma Steel, Kalyan Ghosh. He said of our government's commitment that we're providing a big benefit to retirees who have a secure retirement going forward, protecting jobs, giving those workers the assurances they need today and the ones who've already done their time in that steel mill a secure future for tomorrow.

All these questions about horse racing this morning got me thinking about a northern Ontario trifecta: Algoma Steel on Tuesday, Sugar Zone on Wednesday and Resolute on Thursday. We call that a northern Ontario trifecta, and we're proud to stand up for the jobs that make the difference for families in northern Ontario: forestry, mining, tapping into our resources and ensuring that our workers have a secure job today and a great future when they retire tomorrow.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. Faisal Hassan: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Freezing the minimum wage hurts the lowest-paid workers in our society. These are the people this government should be looking out for. Instead, a growing number of Ontarians are working full-time or juggling multiple jobs but still struggling to feed their families.

One of my constituents, Paul M. Taylor, who is the executive director of FoodShare Toronto, works every day to address the problem of food insecurity. He recently wrote an open letter to the Premier with a simple challenge, and I put this challenge to the minister today: If the minister believes that \$14 per hour is an adequate minimum wage, will she live on \$14 per hour for the remainder of her term?

Hon. Laurie Scott: We campaigned on maintaining the minimum wage at \$14 an hour. We said that businesses deserve to have time to catch up to the 21% increase in minimum wage that occurred just this year.

We recognize that lower-income families do deserve a break. That's why we're committed to ensuring that minimum wage earners pay no provincial income tax. We're also decreasing their hydro bills, decreasing their gas bills. The people of Ontario spoke. They said they want Ontario to be a more affordable place to live, and that is exactly what we're doing on this side of the House. Ontario is open for business—

Interjections.

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

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order: the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: In addition to Scott Allinson, VP of public affairs with the Human Resources Professionals Association, I'd also like to welcome Louise Taylor Green, chief executive officer; Karen Stone, chair of the

board; and Claude Balthazard, VP of regulatory affairs and registrar, and to remind everyone in the House that there is a Human Resources Professionals Association luncheon in room 228 from 11:30 to 1 p.m.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

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

Hon. Todd Smith: It was mentioned earlier, but this is the day every year that the member from Nepean, our minister of children, youth and other things, celebrates her 29th birthday. She does this every year at this time, so happy birthday to Lisa MacLeod.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Niagara Falls has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Labour concerning proactive workplace inspections. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

There being no deferred votes, this House is in recess until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1149 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING

Ms. Suze Morrison: Today, it is my pleasure to welcome members and staff from the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada to the Legislature.

Co-op housing is certainly near and dear to my heart and to the hearts of many of the constituents in Toronto Centre. In my riding, the urban core of Toronto's downtown east, we are proudly home to the largest per capita distribution of co-op housing in all of Canada.

As many families in Toronto and across Ontario are faced with the increasing precarity of housing, and with a lack of affordable housing options, co-ops present a real alternative for low- and middle-income families.

It is no wonder that the wait-lists for most co-ops are years and sometimes decades long. In my riding, most of the wait-lists for co-ops are closed to new applicants because the wait-lists are too long to accommodate the growing need.

Co-ops offer a real choice for families looking for affordable housing. With a non-profit model and a mix of market-rate and rent-geared-to-income units, they create truly vibrant and connected neighbourhoods.

Our province is in the midst of a housing crisis, the likes of which we have never seen before. Ontarians deserve better and not just band-aid solutions when it comes to housing.

I am proud to stand today to celebrate the great work of co-ops in my riding, across Ontario and across Canada.

ATTACK IN PITTSBURGH

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I rise today with a heavy heart to offer my sincere condolences to the victims of the shooting of innocent worshippers in Pittsburgh on Saturday. We send our love to the families, friends and loved ones who now bear the heavy burden of sorrow in the aftermath of this unimaginable violence and hatred.

I also want to commend those first responders who ran into harm's way to face this evil head-on and, without question, saved lives, ensuring that the shooter would face justice. Police officers from across Ontario undoubtedly stand in solidarity with their fellow officers in Pittsburgh.

Whether it's a mosque in Montreal or a synagogue in Pittsburgh, the rise in the level of hate, fear and ignorance has resulted in the loss of innocent lives, and a deep division in our social fabric. As elected officials in this House, we have an obligation to call out the spreading of hate. We must lead by example in bringing people of goodwill across all faiths together in peace, love and mutual respect for one another.

We need only to look at our own communities, where local leaders are coming together to forge interfaith partnerships, for examples of people reaching across the religious divide and connecting with others in the spirit of fellowship to tackle social issues.

In Windsor-Essex, one such initiative is the Inter-Faith Group of Windsor and Essex County, led by Dr. Norman King. This inspirational group seeks to foster a deeper understanding and respect for our various faith traditions and world views, and for the fundamental values of humanity they proclaim, such as human dignity and human rights.

Speaker, it is necessary that when we see hatred being spread, we name it. But that's not enough. We must also lead, acknowledge and foster within our circles a deep and abiding respect for all of humanity.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I rise again in this chamber to share the frustrations of drivers in my home community of Humber River-Black Creek who are sick of paying sky-high auto insurance premiums just because of where they live.

For the fourth consecutive quarter, auto insurance companies have raised rates. Most recently, this government has approved a rate increase as high as 11.6%.

Auto insurance premiums in my community are as high as double the rates of other neighbourhoods within the GTA. Drivers in my community with clean records pay astounding rates. In fact, I've met local residents unable to drive because they can't afford car insurance.

On Tuesday, November 13, I'm hosting an important auto insurance town hall meeting to give residents in my community and across the GTA an important opportunity to share their frustrations and help the official opposition push this government to do the right thing and end auto

insurance postal code discrimination. The town hall meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 13, at 7:30 p.m., at St. Basil-the-Great College School, located at 20 Starview Lane in the Weston and Sheppard area.

I've been fighting this postal code discrimination for many years, and this will be the third auto insurance town hall meeting I have hosted for my community. Residents will also have the opportunity to hear details on a current NDP private member's bill that seeks to finally end postal code discrimination here in the GTA and add their name to an important petition demanding a better system. I look forward to seeing you there.

WEARING OF POPPIES

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: This past weekend, I had the opportunity to participate in the poppy campaign kickoff of one of our four local Legions in St. Catharines. Royal Canadian Legion Branch 138, the Thorold pipe band and local cadets paraded through our local mall, the Pen Centre. I was honoured to parade with Ernie Adams, one of our local heroes from St. Catharines from the Second World War, who is from the community of Merriton.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the armistice that ended the conflict in World War I. It is important for everyone across this province to show their support for our veterans by proudly wearing a poppy. Poppy boxes will be distributed in our local Legions, variety stores and supermarkets. Our gracious support to poppy campaigns and local Legions should not be for one day or one month in November; it should be every day of the year that we help and provide assistance to our veterans, whether it be for housing, medical care or just basic care.

Wear a poppy and wear it proud. Lest we forget.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CHARTER RIGHTS
TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2018LOI DE 2018 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE
RELATIVE AUX DROITS GARANTIS
PAR LA CHARTE

Mme Des Rosiers moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 49, An Act to amend the Ministry of the Attorney General Act / Projet de loi 49, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère du Procureur général.

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

Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for Ottawa-Vanier care to explain her bill?

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Yes. This bill amends the Ministry of the Attorney General Act to require the Attorney General to examine whether government bills and regulations may violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and to report to the House the opinion of her ministry. The Attorney General has to table a statement that sets out the effects of a government bill on the rights and freedoms that are guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

PETITIONS

CURRICULUM

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I am reading the petition “Protecting Children: Forward, Not Backward, on Sex Ed.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“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;

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“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; and

“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 and give it to page Marcel to deliver to the table.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I table this petition on behalf of my constituents in Parkdale–High Park. The petition is titled, “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.”

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

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

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

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

“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 sectors;

“Protect workers’ employment status, pay and benefits when contracts are flipped or businesses are sold in the 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; and

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

“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, 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 assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

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

ACCIDENT BENEFITS

Mr. John Fraser: I have a petition here, “Petitioning the Removal of the Minor Injury Guideline, Sections 18(1) and 18(2) of the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule and Incorporate Rebuttal Examination Reports Back into the System.”

“Whereas Ontario Regulation 347/13 has made four changes to the Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule (SABS), also known as Ontario Regulation 34/10 effective Feb. 1, 2014. These regulations have considerably reduced the dollar amounts allocated for patients receiving assessments and treatment following a motor vehicle accident;

“Whereas the \$3,500 minor injury guideline cap is an insufficient amount of funds provided, since assessments on all patients are required to ensure their safe ability in performing tasks associated with attendant care, house-keeping and caregiving. Furthermore, repetitive muscular strain as a result of performing household tasks daily can lead to chronic long-term impairment. Accidental slips/falls due to dizziness/vertigo can result in further injuries involving fractures;

“Whereas this petition is to validate that the \$3,500 minor injury guideline monetary fund is an insufficient amount to enable auto accident patients with soft tissue injury ... to reach optimal recovery to their pre-accident status. Removing sections 18(1) and 18(2) from the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule will enable the right efforts for accident victims with soft tissue injury to receive the adequate assessment and treatment required. In addition it will minimize the patient’s risks for further injury (chronic impairment, slips/falls, fractures) that are associated with performing attendant care, housekeeping/home maintenance, caregiving and functional tasks in their respective homes;

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

“To remove the minor injury guideline, sections 18(1) and 18(2) of the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule and incorporate rebuttal examination reports back into the system.”

I’m affixing my signature and giving it to page Rongbin.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Suzanne Botts, who is from Azilda in my riding, for collecting the names on this petition. It reads as follows:

“Save the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.

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

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

“Whereas cuts to the Sudbury Breast Screening and Assessment Service will result in longer wait times, which is very stressful for women diagnosed with breast cancer; and

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: This is a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly for a meaningful climate action plan.

“Whereas our planet is undergoing significant warming with adverse consequences for health, for agriculture, for infrastructure and for our children’s future;

“Whereas the costs of inaction are severe, such as extreme weather events causing flooding and drought;

“Whereas Canada has signed the Paris accord which commits us to acting to keep temperature rise under ... 2 degrees Celsius;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the government of Ontario to design a climate action plan with science-based targets that meet our Paris commitment, an action plan to meet those targets, an annual reporting on progress on meeting the targets. We call on the government to commit to providing funding through carbon pricing mechanisms for actions that must be taken to meet these targets.”

I agree with this petition. It’s from my daughter, who just finished her sustainability master’s. I’m giving it to page Taya.

ACCIDENT BENEFITS

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It’s my pleasure to introduce this petition today. It reads as follows:

“Petitioning the Removal of the Minor Injury Guideline, Sections 18(1) and 18(2) of the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule and Incorporate Rebuttal Examination Reports Back into the System.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario Regulation 347/13 has made four changes to the Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule (SABS), also known as Ontario Regulation 34/10 effective Feb. 1, 2014. These regulations have considerably reduced the dollar amounts allocated for patients receiving assessments and treatment following a motor vehicle accident;

“Whereas the \$3,500 minor injury guideline cap is an insufficient amount of funds provided, since assessments on all patients are required to ensure their safe ability in performing tasks associated with attendant care, housekeeping and caregiving. Furthermore, repetitive muscular strain as a result of performing household tasks daily can lead to chronic long-term impairment. Accidental slips/falls due to dizziness/vertigo can result in further injuries involving fractures;

“Whereas this petition is to validate that the \$3,500 minor injury guideline monetary fund is an insufficient amount to enable auto accident patients with soft tissue injury (WAD I/WAD II) to reach optimal recovery to their pre-accident status. Removing sections 18(1) and 18(2) from the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule will enable the right efforts for accident victims with soft tissue injury to receive the adequate assessment and treatment required. In addition, it will minimize the patient’s risks for further injury (chronic impairment, slips/falls, fractures) that are associated with performing attendant care, housekeeping/home maintenance, caregiving and functional tasks in their respective homes;

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

“To remove the minor injury guideline, sections 18(1) and 18(2) of the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule and incorporate rebuttal examination reports back into the system.”

I am pleased to support this petition and will be affixing my signature and giving it to page Marcel.

INJURED WORKERS

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Workers’ Comp Is a Right.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I’m signing this petition and giving it to page Sophia to present to the Clerk.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Suze Morrison: I have a petition here today that is entitled, “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.” It reads:

“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” counterparts;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further” to \$15 an hour;

“Make it easier to join unions...;

“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; and

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours...;

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

I fully endorse this petition and I will be affixing my signature to it. I’d like to note that I have more than 1,300 signatures on this petition here with me today.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: This petition is entitled, “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.”

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

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

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

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

“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 sectors;

“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...;

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

I support this petition, will affix my signature to it, and give it to page Taya.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Jamie West: This petition is from Ms. Carmel Convery from the riding of Sudbury.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“Whereas cuts to the Sudbury Breast Screening and Assessment Service will result in longer wait times, which is very stressful for women diagnosed with breast cancer; and

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

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

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

I'll affix my signature and I'll give it to page Marcel.

OPPOSITION DAY

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I move the following motion:

Whereas existing commitments were in place for post-secondary expansion in Brampton, Markham and Milton; and

Whereas this investment would have brought hundreds of jobs to each city and encouraged broader economic growth in these communities; and

Whereas the municipalities of Brampton, Markham and Milton have already spent significant amounts of money, time and effort related to the already-approved projects;

Therefore the Legislative Assembly calls on the government to honour established commitments to fund post-secondary expansion in Brampton, Markham and Milton.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day motion number 2.

Ms. Horwath.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Before I begin my remarks about this important topic—I was unable to be at question period this morning because I was in Brampton, which I'll be speaking about in a moment. I know there was a moment of silence for the 11 people who lost their lives in that horrifying situation in Pittsburgh at the Tree of Life synagogue. As leader of the official opposition and as a representative of New Democrats in our House and around the province, I just want to lend my voice of sympathy and concern to all the people affected.

On the motion that is before us in the House, I'm very happy to rise to speak to this motion, because I did have the opportunity to return to the community of Brampton this morning to talk to folks in Brampton about this issue. I was joined by a number of colleagues from the opposition bench who are representatives of that great community, including Sara Singh, who is the member for Brampton Centre; the member for Brampton East, Gurratan Singh; and the member for Brampton North, Kevin Yarde. These folks, as well as a couple of newly elected city councillors in Brampton, joined us with a number of everyday folks who are very, very concerned about the announcement that this government made.

Along with people who are reeling as well in the communities of Markham and Milton, the announcement is one that is affecting some of the fastest-growing cities in our province, as well as some of the cities that count amongst them some of our youngest citizens. These growing and tight-knit communities are fuelled by young families and young students and are filled with energy. They are great places to build a life. They are just spectacular communities that need to have a government in place that understands that with that growing population and that growing energy, they need a partner that helps them to ensure that their communities are able to thrive.

The people of Brampton, Markham and Milton have spent years and years and years working hard to spur growth in their communities and to create vibrant, resilient places that provide opportunity for the next generation. But for too long, these communities have been forced to go it alone.

As Canada's ninth-largest city, Brampton has had the unfortunate distinction of being the only one of Canada's 10 largest cities without a university campus.

The people of Brampton, Milton and Markham know how important a university can be to the growth of a municipality, so they did the work. On many occasions I've visited these communities. Most recently, a couple of summers ago—maybe it was last summer, in fact—I was in Brampton, and really excited by the excitement I felt there. The concern coming from everywhere that there weren't enough job opportunities in Brampton, and that too many people from Brampton had to leave their city to get a job; the opportunity that this Brampton campus was bringing to that city; and the expectation that parents and young people had about the many, many spinoff effects that that campus would have were palpable. And then to be there today and see people so disappointed and so upset by this government's callous decision—it was a pretty challenging morning, I have to say.

Each of these cities did the work that they needed to do to try to create a difference in their communities. Each of them partnered with post-secondary institutions to bring those campuses to their communities, and each of them got the government of Ontario to commit the funds.

York University, in partnership with Seneca College, was to set up and open a campus in Markham. In fact, that campus was literally weeks away from turning sod; in other words, they were literally shovel-ready. The province committed \$127 million to that campus in June 2017.

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Wilfrid Laurier University, in partnership with Conestoga College, was to establish a Milton campus. The province committed \$90 million in April 2018.

Ryerson University, in partnership with Sheridan, was set to open a campus in Brampton. The province committed \$90 million to that project in April 2018.

Notwithstanding the fact that it was April 2018, the fact of the matter is that these projects have been in the works for years. They weren't suddenly announced without any background work having been done. People had had their nose to the grindstone; people were working hard behind

the scenes. In fact, in Brampton, the previous mayor had tried to get something happening with a university and wasn't successful. That was prior to 2014, Speaker. So to see that these folks got so disappointed by this government was really an awful thing to see.

It seemed like these campuses were something that everyone could get behind. The business communities got behind them; the universities and colleges got behind them; the entrepreneurs in communities got behind them; families got behind them; students got behind them. They were something that everybody could get behind, because we all know that university campuses are a chance for communities to broaden access to educational opportunities.

We all know that post-secondary is expensive. I talked to a young person this morning who has to commute in to Ryerson each and every day from Brampton. She spends three hours a day on transit, and that's on a good day: an hour and a half in, and an hour and a half out of the city. When she had heard that this campus was coming, she was excited—not just for herself; she might be finished by then—but certainly for her younger sisters and brothers and cousins and other folks in the family who wouldn't have to commute and get home literally after 11 o'clock at night in pitch darkness, because a course ends at 9 and, by the time she got home by transit, it was that late.

We also know that these campuses create economic growth. We know that having a chance to go to university in their own communities goes a long way for young people, and it makes it easier for their families to support them. It's an important way for us to give young people more opportunity and fewer burdens.

That's why, when presented with a chance to bring these campuses to Brampton, Milton and Markham, members of every political stripe got on board. The importance of these projects and the value that they would bring to these communities was obvious.

Back in April—just a few months ago—the member from Milton, who was then the PC candidate for Milton, said, “We will do everything we can to make this project a reality, whether it takes \$90 million or there's more we need to do.” I'd say that the government decided to do less, not more. They took away the \$90 million. They pulled the carpet right out from under the people of Milton.

In June, the member from Brampton South noted, after a meeting with the mayor of the day, Linda Jeffrey, that the university was one of the key issues facing the city of Brampton and was something he looked forward to working on with all levels of government.

The member for Markham–Unionville has long been in favour of bringing a university campus to Markham. In July, he noted, in this very House, the crucial economic impact that York University's Markham campus would have on the region: \$500 million in economic benefits from the construction—\$500 million for the construction—and \$37 million in annual impact once the campus is fully operational—\$37 million. So \$500 million during construction, then \$37 million on an annual basis; more than 400 on-campus jobs being created. By 2024, 4,200

students would have access to teaching, learning and research, “allowing them to gain the skills and knowledge ... to be part of the 21st-century economy of Ontario.”

Now Doug Ford has ripped that opportunity out of the hands of those communities. Mr. Ford has told moms and dads in Brampton, Milton and Markham that if they want their kids to get a university education, they will have to move out and that the 905 is not a place where young people are able to learn or pursue their goals and dreams. Instead of doing the right thing and supporting the people who live in the 905, in these burgeoning communities, instead of ensuring opportunity and growth for these fantastic parts of the GTA, Doug Ford, the Premier of this province, has cancelled funding to these campuses.

Premier Ford's agenda of more cuts and more neglect has put these important projects and the communities and families who are counting on them in jeopardy. Sadly, the PC members of the government who, just a few short months ago, were very, very clear about the importance of these universities and the benefits that these investments would bring to their communities—well, unfortunately, they didn't stand up for the people in their communities. They didn't stand up for the very people they had promised that they would do everything they could to make sure these universities got built. The moment push came to shove, the moment they should have stood up in their spots and said, “No, I am supporting the people of my community because that's what I promised them,” instead, they decided a promise made is a promise broken in Milton and in Markham and in Brampton. They did not stand up to Premier Ford. They did not stand up for what they know will be good for their communities and the families who live in them. Instead, they broke their many, many promises to make these campuses and the dreams of young people a reality. They supported the Premier's reckless, short-sighted cuts to these campuses in Brampton, Milton and Markham.

These members know better, or they should have known better, Speaker. I think they do know better. They know that callous cuts won't bring opportunity to their communities. They know that more neglect of the 905 will only hurt this region as it tries to grow and prosper.

We all know on this side of the bench that the Liberals didn't do any great favours to these communities, that they ignored these fast-growing communities and allowed them to fall behind when it came to post-secondary institutions, when it came to health care. We watched things get very, very, very bad under the Liberals. And then the Conservatives come to town and they make things go from bad to worse. That is no way to bring hope back to communities that had already been neglected by a government—the next government in town is going to neglect them even more.

People who work in these communities, who live in these communities know it too. That's why Brampton Board of Trade president Todd Letts said last Wednesday:

“Cancelling the Ryerson-Brampton project seems to have come out of the blue”—the Tory blue that would be—“and does not inspire confidence in the government's decision-making....”

“Universities are economic drivers. This campus is the catalyst for many complementary economic investments in our city.

“Downtown businesses were counting on increased foot traffic and customers for their stores. Teenagers and their parents were looking forward to having more choice for learning.”

Again, that was the president of the Brampton Board of Trade, Todd Letts—wholesale condemnation of the Ford government in regard to this decision.

Similarly, Milton mayor Gord Krantz said this: “To say that I am disappointed with the provincial announcement is an understatement.... We have invested 10 years of hard work into making post-secondary education in Milton a reality.”

York chancellor Greg Sorbara noted on Thursday, “There have been millions of dollars invested in preparing for this campus. Everything from designing courses to recruiting staff to hiring architects to being ready to put the shovel in the ground....

“That means young people in Markham, almost all of them the children of immigrant families, would have a place to go to university ... at home and not have to go away to school. If this isn’t built then I don’t know how you replace that capacity elsewhere in the GTA.”

Madam Speaker, this is absolutely unacceptable, but it does not have to be this way. Communities should not have to go it alone. There is far too much at stake to let Premier Ford take families in the 905 from bad to worse, to let another generation of young people in these rapidly growing communities grow up without access to the opportunities that they need to build a better life close to home.

But it’s not all bad news, Speaker, because it’s not too late to fix this. I’ve listened to people in Brampton, Milton and Markham. I’ve listened to families, to businesses, business owners, university representatives and city leaders. I got the chance to speak to each one of the mayors impacted. I know that with this motion, we can do right by the young people and families who need the opportunities that will come with these university campuses. The people of Brampton, Milton and Markham have been clear. Their city councils have been clear. Experts in education, city planning and the economy have all been clear. All we have to do is listen to them. We can make life better for people in Brampton, Milton and Markham. We can finally turn back the tide on generations of cuts and neglect that have made it harder for these growing 905 communities to grow and succeed. We can give people in these communities hope for the future—a future in a region with a healthy, growing economy, where more students have access to education and more people have good-paying jobs right in their community.

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I’m urging all members to support this motion, and then I’m going to call on the government to take action. We can still get these universities built. From there, we can take that political will and spread it across the province by

making real, concrete investments in the 905 and in communities across Ontario—investments that will make people’s lives better today. That’s what they’ve been waiting for. They have been waiting for a government that will actually pay attention to them and not treat them like second-class citizens, the way they were treated by the previous government.

It doesn’t have to be that way. Everybody in this House can vote for this motion and make sure that the Premier of this province, Premier Ford, tells the people of the 905 and his MPPs who represent those people that he’s figured it out, that he got it, that he understands that these folks deserve the investment, they deserve the opportunity, they deserve the universities, and they deserve to be treated equally with every other region of our province when it comes to making sure that there are post-secondary opportunities available.

This will help build a stronger, more prosperous Ontario with more opportunity, not only for today but for the next generation. It is visionary. It is what’s supposed to happen with government. You don’t just drag things backward to the last century. You don’t just tear things down. You’re supposed to build things up. You’re supposed to give people hope for the future. You’re supposed to have a vision that makes life easier and better for everyone—not, in a very ugly moment, turn around with a stroke of a pen overnight and dash the hopes and dreams of millions of people. That’s not what a forward-looking government would do.

It looks like if we don’t see this motion passed today, we see the Ford government, once again, admitting that it’s actually a backwards-looking government—too bad for the people of Ontario, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Sara Singh: It’s a pleasure to rise here today. I wish it was under different circumstances. I’m going to be speaking about this announcement to cancel funding to a very critical investment in our community.

I want to start off by expressing to this House how far-reaching the disappointment is in this reckless cut. This reckless cut is within our community of Brampton and across this province. It is really, really unfortunate today, being in the community and over the weekend hearing comments from everyone from young people to senior citizens expressing their frustration and disappointment in this government not creating the investments that our community needs to move us forward.

Young people obviously are upset and rightly disappointed in this government’s decision. But it’s not just Brampton’s youth that are impacted by this cut. Parents and grandparents were looking forward to more opportunities for their kids closer to home. Children were looking at more options in their hometowns for the future. My office is even getting calls from Brampton senior citizens saying how thrilled they were at the thought of a new campus in their neighbourhood and how these cuts have them worried about their grandchildren’s futures.

I think all members of this House who are lucky enough to have a college or a university campus in their riding know how invigorating post-secondary educational institutions are in our communities. To have this government rip them away overnight is beyond disappointing and frustrating. Young people have been sending me direct messages on Twitter and Instagram saying that they're outraged, disappointed and disgusted in this government's decision to cancel the funding to a much-needed post-secondary educational institution in our community. This is a cruel and callous cut and it lets an entire city down.

The president of the Brampton Board of Trade, a dear friend of mine, actually, is quoted, as our leader, Andrea Horwath, said earlier: this "decision seems myopic. With so much waste in other parts of government, it seems silly that the target is put on stifling innovation. Universities are economic drivers. This campus is the catalyst for many complementary economic investments in our city," like a centre for innovation that was also going to be constructed in conjunction with the new Ryerson-Sheridan university campus.

To hear these cuts categorized by the minister as "collateral damage" is just simply wrong. The Conservatives point to the previous Liberal government's mismanagement of funds as a justification for these cuts, but the fact is, these cuts were a choice. At some point, this Premier and his cabinet sat down and had a conversation about "what we are going to cut next," and unfortunately, they identified these university campuses as their targets.

The Conservatives have made a choice to stifle education in the name of their bottom line, when in fact we should actually be doing the opposite and investing in these communities and these institutions to ensure that that return on investment is seen in communities for years to come, not cutting vital investments that are needed now to drive economic growth for the future.

My community of Brampton, along with Milton and Markham, is growing very rapidly. Our communities in the 905 are vibrant, and we were ready for these projects well before their announcement in April.

I can remember, having lived there my entire life, groups and groups of people coming together to work with our previous mayor to advocate for a university campus. For years, we had those discussions about where this campus should be. What would be the right location? Should it be a downtown campus? Should it be out in the westerly quadrant of our city? These were debates that were ongoing. This wasn't something that was decided overnight. It took years and years and years of planning. In addition to that planning, there were plans around transit and infrastructure construction that was also supposed to happen. But it does not seem as though this government cares.

Our communities deserve better. I know that many of my colleagues on the government benches actually agree with me, because they were in support of these projects. They were in our communities, campaigning to make sure that we would get a university in Brampton. They campaigned and said that if we did, they would continue to

work with the government of the day to ensure its expansion and continued growth within our communities. Unfortunately, those members are not here today to continue that advocacy and have not—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): A reminder to all members that we do not point out who is or is not here. You may return to your remarks, please.

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

From a financial perspective, the Brampton school would have been a massive investment in our community, as a partnership between Sheridan and Ryerson was going to drive investment in our community.

Investing in a campus in Canada's second-fastest-growing city, with an average age of only 36 years and where approximately 38 new residents settle every single day—investing in a community that is growing that rapidly, and bringing people from around the world into that community, seems like a smart choice. But unfortunately, to this government, cutting those investments seemed like a smarter decision to make.

Breaking ground on a project that would inject 1,800 new construction jobs, 1,500 maintenance jobs and another 1,500 ongoing jobs into our local economy seems like a smart choice, not to mention that the Ryerson-Sheridan campus had plans to focus on educational programming that would rapidly expand highly demanded fields, including a national centre for cyber security. Surely we could all agree that cyber security and investments around that are a smart choice.

Interjection.

Ms. Sara Singh: But apparently, as our minister says, no, we don't agree on that. So, I apologize for that.

In addition to all of that, the increased foot traffic through the city would act as a nice little boost for our local small businesses, restaurants, coffee shops and stores—

Interjection.

Ms. Sara Singh: In the downtown core of Brampton. It would have been great.

We all know that university and college kids basically run on takeout and caffeine, and we do contribute to the local economy wherever we've gone to school—not so different from many of us here in the House today.

You'll forgive me, Speaker, for finding it a bit difficult to point to the waste or mismanagement involved in these projects, and for finding it frankly tragic that this government and the minister categorize sound investments in education as a waste of money.

But it really does not have to be this way. This government can decide to support our motion today. We can finally work together. They can decide to honour a commitment that is well earned and long overdue for my community of Brampton, for those in Markham and for those in Milton. This government can stand with us and say that investments in education are worth it. Our young people are worth it. Brampton is worth it.

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I will finish by asking my colleagues—and I'll maybe not say the last comment because I was going to ask specific colleagues to stand with us today—to help us

ensure that we invest in the future of our city, and to help move our city of Brampton forward, but more importantly, this entire province forward. Thank you. I sincerely do look forward to working together, hopefully, on this.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak today about the tough decisions our government has taken recently. To quote from the Premier at his swearing in: “We must always—always—keep people first. This commitment underpins everything our government does.” We have “an obligation to respect taxpayers and deliver services efficiently and effectively.” We intend to do that.

We made a promise to the people of Ontario to restore accountability and trust in Ontario’s finances, and part of that process means making tough decisions about projects across Ontario. Tough decisions—because the previous Liberal government left us \$15 billion in deficit. Irresponsible spending has left Ontario in a dire economic situation. We are forced to make tough decisions—disappointing decisions for some, but thoughtful decisions. Our government has begun and will continue to do the heavy lifting needed to achieve our goal of sustainable economic prosperity.

Last week, our government delivered a package of fiscal restraint decisions that will put Ontario back on the right track. I announced that the government would not go forward with the funding of proposed plans for three new post-secondary education sites in Markham, Brampton and Milton. Cumulatively, these three projects would have cost the Ontario taxpayer \$320 million in capital expenditures plus ongoing operating expenses. I am not here to debate the value or worthiness of these projects; it’s a question of fiscal responsibility.

If the institutions can come up with the required funding to build these campuses on their own, we would be happy to consider their business cases. However, I’m here to tell you that at this time, in Ontario, they are not financially viable and we are not able to fund them.

The Liberals knew there was no funding for these projects, yet they promised the money anyway. In this instance, we were forced to make a tough—and, yes, for some a disappointing—decision.

We need to act responsibly given the fiscal constraints facing this province. We made the decision, and we took immediate action to notify the affected parties to let them know that the ministry was no longer in a position to provide funds to continue project planning, purchase of land, or begin construction. We made the telephone calls to the institutions. We followed that with letters of confirmation. We have done our due diligence and we will continue to do so.

Everyone here knows post-secondary education is critical to the future of Ontario, to our economy, and to the prosperity for our people. But it needs to be done in a responsible manner.

Danny Chang, president of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance agrees: “At OUSA we believe in responsible investment that will effectively improve the lives of

students and the future of our society. That is why our students wanted to communicate alignment with your decision on October 23. We believe that the Ontario university sector should ensure that any new or growing university institutions and campuses are financially sustainable.”

As the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, I’m committed to our post-secondary and training systems and the responsible investment in these systems. My focus is on helping people get the training and education they need to get good-paying, quality jobs. Equally important is my focus on doing this in a way that is fiscally prudent and sustainable for both today’s students and students in the future. It can be done.

Leo Groarke, president and vice-chancellor of Trent University, agrees. “In a situation in which the system is characterized by a lack of students, creating entirely new campuses takes students away from existing campuses at a time when they are scrambling to find students they need to fill the spaces they already have available.” We cannot “expect a provincial government that is trying to wrestle with its deficit to pay for” new campuses “at a time when there is no pressing need to establish them.”

We need to look at post-secondary education and training in the broader context of what is best for Ontario’s economy. That means making sure it is efficient, cost-effective, financially sustainable and is providing the skilled workforce we need to restore Ontario to its rightful place as the economic engine of Canada.

We have a plan. We have begun work on a system that will support jobs and trades where there is also a demand for higher skills and where there is tremendous opportunity for jobs that offer good pay and a bright future. One in five jobs in Ontario is expected to be in the trades-related occupations until 2021, and likely beyond. Business owners and employers are telling us there are not enough people on the skilled trades path and that there is a mismatch of skills and employment opportunities. Solving the skills mismatch is not just a priority for me; it’s essential to our province’s prosperity.

Let me tell you a story about why I feel passionate about ensuring we have the right skilled trades mix, with a modernized apprenticeship system being a crucial part of that mix. I can personally attest to the value of the skilled trades, because it is part of the foundation of my own family. My father-in-law grew up in Poland during the Second World War. He arrived in Canada in 1950, and began to train as a plumber. He worked hard to develop the skills he needed to thrive in his profession and founded what eventually became one of the largest HVAC companies in Canada. My father-in-law was an excellent example of how hard work, dedication and opportunity for all can allow anyone to prosper in Ontario.

We are so fortunate to have a strong tradition of skills training and apprenticeship in this province. Look around. You can see the influence of our apprentices and skilled tradespeople everywhere: in the building we are in today; in the vehicles that got us here; on the roads we travel on. Skilled trades play such an essential role in our economy, our society and our everyday life, and they will continue to do so as part of the backbone of our economy.

With almost one in five new jobs in Ontario expected to be in trades-related occupations, with an aging workforce, particularly in the skilled trades, we need to ensure we have the workforce on hand to meet this growing demand. But what business owners and employers are telling us is that these days, not enough people are on that path.

I heard from Shawn Lamarche, president of Lamarche Electric: “The labour shortage is the number one issue facing our company and lowering ratios will help us find and keep young apprentices.”

Yet despite this labour shortage, we have young people who want careers in the skilled trades who are actually forced to leave the province to find work. They deserve a shot at a job here in Ontario. We can’t let good jobs and other opportunities pass by Ontarians. If we want to get Ontarians back on track, we need to make sure Ontario businesses can easily find the skilled workers they need, and they need to find them right here at home.

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Unfortunately, Ontario has a broken apprenticeship system—the path to those skilled trades. Too many barriers exist that hold people back from entering the trades. The regulatory burden on employers is limiting growth. We have heard time and time again how the regulatory burden on employers is limiting growth. From Domenic Mattina of Mattina Mechanical: “We often turn away young apprentices seeking employment, as restrictive ratios mean we are not allowed to hire them.”

It is apparent that we cannot afford to wait any longer. With our modern economy, we need an apprenticeship system built for today—one that makes Ontario open for business. I have heard first-hand about the difficulties in the skilled trades, the inability to find jobs, the barriers to entering the trades and the burdens placed on employers. In Ontario, our ratios are amongst the highest in the country and are a major deterrent for employers looking to hire apprentices.

The current ratio regime limits the number of apprentices an employer can train. This makes no sense, especially when employers need apprentices and apprentices need employers. This ultimately limits our growth and the number of jobs available in Ontario. We need to prepare Ontarians for the jobs—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I apologize for interrupting the minister, but the crosstalk of the leader and the member—please continue.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Another critical issue is our trade classification system. The current system is complicated and outdated. The classification review process has a direct impact on the labour market and should be used as a tool to strengthen Ontario’s economic prosperity and create opportunity for all.

Since the Ontario College of Trades began accepting members in 2013, we have continued to hear concerns regarding numerous membership fees, inefficiencies and red tape—obstacles to addressing the skills gap. That is why, last week, I stood up with my colleagues—the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and

Trade and the Minister of Labour—to speak to the people of Ontario. We announced that Ontario’s government would introduce legislation that, if passed, would reduce stifling regulatory burdens.

The proposed Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018, will cut burdensome red tape and pave the way for job creation. If passed, the proposed act will also mean immediate changes to begin modernizing and transforming the skilled trades and apprenticeship system.

In response to the issues raised, our government intends to transform and modernize the apprenticeship system, starting by proposing amendments to the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009. If passed, amendments would immediately lower journeyman-to-apprenticeship ratios to a simple 1-to-1 ratio, making us more competitive with other provinces. We will also establish a moratorium on trades reclassification and de-prescribe 24 low-volume trades where apprenticeships are not in demand.

Further, if the legislation is passed, we would move toward the repeal of the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009, have a mechanism for interim governance structure and provide for an orderly transition to be completed in 2019.

We are making big changes. They are necessary in order to respond to the needs of apprentices, employers and to address the skills gap and help people reach their full potential.

Sean Reid, vice-president and regional director, Ontario, for the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada, believes these measures will help the future of the province: “This is a great day for Ontario’s skilled trades workers and employers.

“We’re pleased the government has taken these bold steps to reduce journeyman-to-apprentice ratios and bring down bureaucratic barriers to the skilled trades.

“This will put thousands to work throughout our industry and will lead to the development of the next generation of Ontario’s skilled trades workforce.”

We want the world to know that Ontario is open for business. We want businesses and industry to know we are cutting red tape and regulatory burdens. We want post-secondary institutions to know that their training is creating skilled workers who are needed and desired in their trades. We want current and potential skilled trades workers to know that we are working to make their system better and stronger. We want to make sure that the tax dollars we invest in post-secondary education and training get the people in our province a good return, and I’m excited to be part of this vital work as we reconsider and rebalance our post-secondary offerings to best suit the current and future needs of the province.

I entered politics with a desire to give back, a fundamental principle that has guided me throughout the course of my career. In my prior career as a family physician, I learned that the key to finding solutions to issues is listening and considering different perspectives when working towards the best possible outcomes. The key is to listen to our constituents, to our partners and to our colleagues.

Moreover, we need to listen to a variety of opinions. I believe in the importance of robust and open dialogue because every opinion adds value to a debate.

In my role as the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, I am listening.

I've heard the following from Erin Pearson, president, Tyfar Electric: "As a small business owner I welcome these changes to the ratio system in Ontario as they will lead to increased employment and encourage more young people to enter into the skilled trades. This is a very welcomed move by the government.

From Dave Beevor, president, Enertron Electric: "The hiring of apprentices is important to train the next generation of workers. This step to reform the ratio system will lead to increased training and encourage more people to join the skilled trades."

From Walter Pamic, Power-Tek Electrical Services: "Restrictive ratios are the number one barrier to hiring young apprentices at my company, and we are so glad the government have taken this important step. This will lead to increased employment and opportunities for youth right across the province."

From Barry Pretty, Barry's Electric: "As a small electrical company, we welcome the opportunity to hire more apprentices and make the electrical trade stronger."

From Cam Besseling, Besseling Mechanical: "These changes to Ontario's apprenticeship ratios will allow our company to immediately start recruiting and hiring more young people. These changes will help to create more job opportunities throughout southwestern Ontario. We fully support this move by the government."

From Bernie Melloul, Melloul-Blamey Construction: "The hiring of apprentices is important to train the next generation of workers. This step to reform the ratio system will lead to increased training and encourage more people to join the skilled trades."

From Gord Sproule, Sproule Specialty Roofing: "We have waited years for these changes, and they are welcomed by the construction industry and workers in southern and central Ontario"—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Point of order? I recognize the member.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: On a point of order: I'm here this afternoon to listen to the debate on cancelling universities at three campuses. I'm hearing a lot about apprentices, and I'd rather hear about universities.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I will remind the minister to keep her remarks germane to the motion.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I would just make sure that the member opposite understands: This is about our youth.

What I am consistently hearing is that we need to deliver high-quality education and employment programs that benefit students and job-seekers. We must not wait any longer. I support, and Ontario needs, education and employment programs that make the best use of every taxpayer dollar invested, leading to sustainable economic prosperity. We need all Ontarians to reach their highest

potential, and post-secondary education is critical to our collective prosperity.

I will work with all our colleges and universities to create the conditions that make it easier for people to access high-quality education and training. Our post-secondary institutions are the incubators and launching pads for Ontario's future economic endeavours and successes, and this is why we need to strengthen the links between employers, businesses and our post-secondary institutions. We need to prepare students so they are ready for qualified jobs in an increasingly competitive and global market, and we will do this by reviewing and curbing unnecessary investments, by reducing the regulatory burden on businesses, apprentices and journey-persons, and by bringing accountability back to government spending, by making the responsible, financially sound decisions that the people of Ontario elected us with a strong mandate to make.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity, colleagues, to get up and speak to this motion today. Obviously, the decision that was made will have an impact on my community. That goes without saying. I think I would be lying if I didn't say that in our community, of course we were disappointed that this decision had to be made. We obviously had hoped that we could go ahead with this. The community made some investments, and we know that we couldn't proceed.

But what makes me angry, more so than the fact that that decision was made, is that we actually had to make this decision. We had to make this decision. This decision was forced upon the people of Ontario by 15 years of horrifyingly bad Liberal government. For many of those years, that was supported by the NDP opposition. We were left with a \$15-billion deficit.

Now, I know the opposition at some point are going to holler across that we're not talking about the closures or the suspending of the construction of these closures. But you have to put into context the situation that the people of Ontario are in right now. You cannot talk about this in isolation. We are left with a \$15-billion deficit. It doesn't matter when you knew about it or how you knew about it, the fact of the matter is that we have this deficit—\$15 billion.

Madam Speaker, colleagues, do you know what that means? That means that almost \$12 billion a year is spent on interest—\$12 billion a year is spent on interest. It is one of the highest spending categories that we have in this province. The Auditor General characterized the previous Liberal government's spending—supported by the NDP—as a culture of waste and mismanagement. It will result in even more difficult decisions going forward.

The opposition had an opportunity to put a stop to this. When the Liberals were in a minority, they had the opportunity. They could have said, "Enough is enough." They could have put the kids that they're talking about fighting for today first. They could have taken them down,

and we could have stopped what has now become one of the most catastrophic spending orgies in history.

We have a debt that is the highest sub-sovereign debt of any government in the world—the highest. It is unsustainable. It is absolutely unsustainable, and the only people that will suffer as a result of that are future generations.

Now, there are other ways. I was part of a federal government that made massive investments in health and education. We made those massive investments in infrastructure. We didn't know, of course, that the great recession of 2008 was going to come upon us, but we prepared for it. We prepared for it by paying down \$40 billion worth of debt in advance, so that we had the resources to fight the great recession.

That's not what happened here. I'll give credit, not to the previous Liberal government, but to the one before it: They were partners with us in fighting the great recession. The difference was that a federal Conservative government decided to come out of that recession without a structural deficit.

Why did we do that? Why did we want to return to balance so quickly? Why did we want to cut taxes for individuals, for families, for small, medium and large job creators? Because we knew it would grow the economy. We didn't want to leave the people of Canada in the same situation that the previous Liberal government has left us in right now. They've left us in a situation here in the province of Ontario where we are going to have to make very difficult decisions going forward.

It's not just this side of the House that has to make these difficult decisions; it's all of us. We all have to make these decisions. Now, we can choose one of two things: We can continue to spend and spend and spend until we can spend no more and then cuts are forced upon us, or we can take action now, as we have done.

The minister highlighted very well in her discourse the students' associations that are supporting this. She referenced our small, medium and large job creators who are in support of this. She referenced the universities that are in support of this, because they understand that what we have to do is make investments in the current facilities. We just spent billions of dollars building a subway to York University so the people of York region, my region, could get to that campus. We need more resources and funding for the existing campus. We don't need to spend money in infrastructure building another campus in another area; that's not what we need. So we've made a difficult decision, but that's a decision that is made for future generations.

Now, we could all sit back after our time in here, four, five or 10 years from now, and say, "Okay, we've built a campus", but then we could look back and say, "At what cost?" "Oh, it doesn't matter for us, because somebody else is going to pay the bill." It's always somebody else who has to pay the bill, which is what led us to the situation that we're in today. So at some point in time, we have to step up and say, "We've got to bring ourselves back into balance." That's what this is about.

I can guarantee you that nobody wants to make cuts; it's the hard thing to do. In 2008, I can tell you, as a newly

elected federal member of Parliament, I didn't think I was going to be buying an auto company on behalf of the people of Canada. I didn't think that decision was going to have to be made. But we did it. And when we did that, we said to the people of Canada that we would come back to balance as soon as possible, and that's what we did. That's not what happened here, and now we're faced with these decisions that none of us like but that we have to make.

I suppose when you take the decision in isolation, like the opposition have, it's easy to criticize. I get that part of their job is to be critical of decisions that are being made by the government. It's not just about the York campus in my riding or in Brampton; they're also trying to set a marker for what they know will have to be difficult decisions coming forward. I get that, because we know that these decisions are going to have to be made if we're going to continue to invest in the people of the province of Ontario.

But we can do this. I've talked to the mayor of Markham, I've talked to my councillors and I've talked to a number of the residents in my community; and while they're disappointed, they understand. They understand that this had to be made. That's, in part, why they elected us: to make challenging decisions, to make decisions for future generations. That's what we're going to do.

The minister highlighted in her remarks—and I know the member for Windsor took issue with it a little bit, but I know in his heart he understands why we talk about apprenticeship and the trades. I come from an area of the province that has seen a massive increase in house prices. You can't get somebody to come and do work at your home; there are no tradespeople to do that. Part of the reason why house prices have skyrocketed is not only because of the horrifying decisions made by the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP, but because there are no tradespeople to do the work.

So when you look at it in isolation, and don't think of everything else that had to be done to support a stronger economy—we're going to bring more tradespeople. That's part of what Bill 47 is about. It's opening and unleashing our trades so that we can have more tradespeople; it's about shifting from a university campus to on-the-ground, where people can learn a trade, which will help bring the costs of construction down for all of us, in the areas of the economy where we actually need jobs. I know when I was a federal member of Parliament, we had to source other countries to do the stonework on Parliament Hill because we didn't have the masons that were needed. But we're doing a better job of that, and the minister is right when she says that's part of unleashing the opportunity for the future.

We will be fine in Markham. I'm a member of provincial Parliament from Markham–Stouffville. I've been a federal member of Parliament. I've had the great fortune of representing the community for a long time and the great honour to do it now. We will be fine. We will be fine because we are making these investments now. We are putting money aside for transit and transportation. Our mayor and our regional chair highlighted that the number one impact on growing our economy is transit and transportation. You've heard me talk about it a million times:

driving 50 kilometres should not take two and a half hours every morning. I shouldn't have to get up at 5:30 to get here to work on time. That is a direct impact on all of the people in my riding, and the quality of life.

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That's why the mayor of Markham and regional councillors, including the new mayor of Stouffville, have suggested that building a Yonge Street subway line is vital to our growth.

That's why I'm glad to see that now we have an expansion along the 404—another lane of traffic along the 404. That was something that was approved by the federal government when I was a member of Parliament—but even then, colleagues, some of you will ask, “Why the delay?” Well, because the previous government wanted to make it a toll lane. Like the people of York region haven't suffered enough—they wanted to turn it into a toll lane, and we said no.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: We didn't do that.

Mr. Paul Calandra: We said no.

Great: The member for Don Valley West, the former Premier, is saying, “We didn't do that.” No, because the federal government refused to pay for a toll lane. That's why we said no—because we deserve better.

Colleagues, I implore you: This isn't about right now; it is about leaving our children, future generations and even existing—we have an aging population. We have a lot of work to do, and it's going to mean difficult decisions.

Let's look at the infrastructure that we have. Let's look at the system that we are building, and let's look at it in totality. As we move forward, we can balance the budget, we can grow the economy, and we can start to pay down debt. Balancing the budget, my friends, is only half of the battle. We have to pay down debt because I don't want to be here 40 years from now and my kids are telling me, “What the heck were you thinking? Why have you left a province where we can't afford health care? Why have you left a province where we can't afford to take care of?”—I'll be a senior at that point. “Why have you left a province where we can't afford quality education?”

We could choose to leave that type of province—or we could choose to make the difficult decisions together. I know, colleagues, that by working together we will do that. But I can guarantee you, Madam Speaker: My down-towns, my cities and my communities are excited about their future. They're going to be open for business.

I thank the minister for making a difficult decision, and I know that the future looks bright indeed.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Before we continue, I'll remind all members to keep the heckling to a minimum—especially from Kingston and the Islands.

The member from Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Thank you for the comments from the members opposite. They mentioned that there was a \$15-billion deficit. The member from Markham–Stouffville said that it doesn't matter when we knew. But actually it does matter

when you knew, because everybody who was reading the newspapers over the last six months knew that there was a major deficit and that the Liberals were not being truthful about it—I want to make sure I'm using parliamentary language there, Madam Speaker.

When they were campaigning, one of the Conservative members said about one of these campuses, “We will do everything we can to make this project a reality, whether it takes \$90 billion or there's more we need to do.” Knowing that there was a large deficit and knowing that it was probably about \$15 billion, the Conservatives campaigned on building these campuses. Now they're in power and they've changed the channel. Now they're saying, “Oh, surprise, there's a \$15-billion deficit, and we can't keep that campaign promise.”

It's like they think of an election platform like a train platform. The Conservatives think of an election platform as something you use to get on the train, but you don't take it with you. But actually, you're supposed to do these things. When you make a promise in a campaign, you're actually supposed to take it with you. You are supposed to fulfill those promises.

The other thing that the Conservatives say is—they try to present themselves as the business party. But any good business person, if they're making a decision, would present a rationale. They would present a cost-benefit analysis. We have not seen any cost-benefit analysis for cancelling these campuses. We don't know how much money was invested; we don't know the cost of the wind-down; and we don't know the opportunity cost in terms of economic development and jobs for those communities. Without that, this government may well be making a decision that's penny-wise and pound foolish.

We saw many, many decisions the last time the Conservatives were in power that were bad for business. I'll give you just a couple of examples—and not just bad for business, but also bad for us as a society.

The first one was that they cut social assistance from poverty levels to destitution. The breakdown in our social fabric that we see with the gun violence that's all around the GTA this year is partly a result of people living in destitution.

The other thing the Conservatives did, the bad-for-business decision the last time the Conservatives were in power, was, they broke up Ontario Hydro in order to sell off the pieces, and they started to sell off those pieces. The reason that we had a public hydro system was because, in the early 1900s, Adam Beck, who was a Conservative and a business owner and who had a company in Kitchener that I believe made cigar boxes, wanted cheap electricity. He wanted electricity at cost because it would be a competitive advantage, not just for his business but for all Ontario businesses, so that when companies were deciding where to locate, they could look at the United States or they could look at Ontario, and we would have public hydro and it would be cheaper, and that would give us a competitive advantage. But the Conservatives, the last time they were in, were being penny-wise and pound foolish, and they sold it off.

The other decision they made was, they cancelled the Eglinton subway. As a resident of Toronto who fights in the gridlock every day, that was a penny-wise, pound foolish move. They paid \$40 million just to fill in the subway hole, and yet every year it costs the people of Toronto, the businesses of Toronto, billions of dollars because of the gridlock. Again, the government was being penny-wise and pound foolish.

For all of those decisions, the Conservative government of that day did not make a business case. They did not present a cost-benefit analysis.

The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities mentioned trades. I'm a big supporter of trades, because my father was a tool-and-die maker. He's retired from General Motors. I worked at General Motors, and I understand the process of building something. I was at Niagara College last week, and the student who was there showed this 3-D image scanner that he had. They had an old water pump from a car, and he took a 3-D image scan of this, and with that 3-D image scan he could actually create, on a 3-D printer, any part that you needed to connect with. One of the jobs they did for a small auto manufacturer—this guy was restoring a 1930 Chrysler car, and he had the left door but he didn't have the right door. So this student created a 3-D image of the left door and he inverted it on their 3-D printer. They printed the right door and it fit.

When we're talking about trades and technology, we're talking about high technology. The next generation of manufacturing in this province is going to be high-tech. That's why these campuses need to have at least a cost-benefit analysis—because those campuses were going to be high-tech institutions. I'll just read you some of the statements about these campuses.

The York University-Seneca campus that was going to be in Markham: It was a partnership between York U and Seneca, and it was to open in 2021. The construction was to start by the end of 2018. The campus would include the IBM innovation centre. The description is, "The facility is a unique ecosystem that unites industry, entrepreneurs, funding agencies, and academic institutions in one space to help bolster research, development, and commercialization, and to help companies scale faster and drive economic growth."

This campus was going to be a centre of innovation that would drive economic growth in that community. The government's contribution was supposed to be half of the cost. It wasn't a government project; they were just supposed to be a partner in that project.

The Wilfrid Laurier campus in Milton was part of the Milton Education Village. This was to be a 400-acre site along the Niagara Escarpment. The goal was to tap into some of the Toronto-Waterloo innovation corridor. The Toronto-Waterloo innovation corridor is second in IT start-ups only to Silicon Valley in North America. This was an opportunity for Milton to get some of that action, to get some of those jobs and some of that innovation.

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Let's see. Phase 1 was supposed to open in the fall of 2019, so students have already been recruited to start

school on that Milton campus for 2019. Then the second stage was to start in 2021. The description of it is, "The Milton Education Village Innovation Centre is an ecosystem of emerging talent and home of HalTech, the region's tech accelerator. You'll study in an environment that has been purpose-built to help start-up companies thrive, turn innovations into growing ventures, and to facilitate networking and work-integrated learning opportunities with local entrepreneurs." So this, again, was supposed to be an economic engine—a modern, 21st-century economic engine—for that community.

It's the same with the Ryerson-Sheridan campus in Brampton: "In addition to delivering a mix of data-driven science, business programs and experiential learning opportunities, Ryerson's Brampton expansion will also include:

—"a centre for education, innovation and collaboration;

—"an innovation hub, connecting students with external organizations in the region;

—"a national centre for cyber security."

These are kinds of opportunities where this government is saying, "We're no longer interested in those." They haven't presented a business case for the decision that they've made. There's no decision. I'll just repeat, and this is what I'm asking from the opposition: How much money has been invested, what is the wind-down cost and what are the opportunity costs to these communities? If we don't have those answers, you cannot make a business case for the decision that you're making.

The government members opposite also made a case. They said, "We believe in listening and considering other perspectives." Well, as somebody sitting on the opposition side of this House, that has not been the practice of this government. On July 27, without consulting with anyone, even the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, they decided to change the number of council seats in the Toronto election. There has been no consultation on that issue whatsoever, and there was no consultation on this issue—none. Everybody who was involved in these projects, and some of these projects have been in the planning for 10 years—nobody knew that these decisions were going to be made. There was no business case. The government really should reconsider and support the opposition motion today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. David Piccini: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak today about this tough decision our government has made: a tough decision, Madam Speaker, to safeguard our future; a tough decision made by a very thoughtful minister who I think very eloquently outlined, just recently, why we made this decision. This boils down to a fundamental unwillingness that we made during the campaign, that we made to Ontarians—that we would not saddle them with unsustainable debt that would jeopardize their future and jeopardize their children's future.

We made a commitment to Ontarians to restore trust and accountability in government, to restore trust in public

finances and to get to the bottom of the fiscal mess that we are in. And we're on our way. We've led a line-by-line audit and we've made the results public. We've launched consultation to get feedback from the public on how we can better serve them. We've led important ways to create a more sustainable future for our next generation, and that is not saddling them with unsustainable debt.

To quote the Premier from his swearing-in:

"We must always—always—keep people first.

"This commitment underpins everything our government does...."

"We all share in an obligation to respect taxpayers and deliver services efficiently and effectively."

We intend to do just that, Madam Speaker. We promised the people of Ontario to restore trust and accountability in these finances. Part of that process means making tough decisions.

Our government is being forced to clean up years of irresponsible and reckless financial decisions made by the previous government. In the election year, they made empty promises to Ontarians for programs and projects that they knew we as a province could not afford. The Liberals played political games, making false promises to votes. This was not prudent fiscal planning; this was cynical vote buying.

Madam Speaker, this was simply irresponsible government. This led to a \$15-billion deficit that we all knew they hid from the public. This included roughly \$300 million for the three campus expansions—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I will remind the member that we don't impute motive, and just to tailor his remarks accordingly.

Mr. David Piccini: Withdrawn.

This included the roughly \$300-million campus expansion of York, Laurier and Ryerson.

We're working with the ministries and we're working with the institutions, to better understand what has been completed and the termination wind-down costs. Our government for the people will be willing, of course, to consider the business case, but as the president and vice chancellor of Trent said, "The question of whether this is a time when the government should be funding three new campuses ... deserves to be asked...." It's a very fair question.

There would be no issue if the expansion was done in the absence of provincial funding, but we have a moral obligation to the taxpayers of this province that when we spend their money, we do it in a responsible manner—responsible to the taxpayer of Ontario.

We hear all of these divisive, smart-aleck remarks, the loaded language intended to be a smokescreen, intended to draw—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Members will come to order.

Mr. David Piccini: The Leader of the Opposition—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Members come to order.

Mr. David Piccini:—because of course we know she will go to any length to draw attention away from the substantive matter at hand, and that is finances, because the opposition has no credibility when it comes to finances. Of course, that's not surprising, with the \$7-billion hole in your own platform.

Madam Speaker, the most important quote I would draw to your attention, the opposition and all members of this House—is to listen to the students. The Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance president said—

Interjection.

Mr. David Piccini: And I'd encourage you to listen—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member from Windsor–Tecumseh will come to order.

Mr. David Piccini: Listen, honourable member from Tecumseh: OUSA represents over 150,000 students across this province. "At OUSA, we believe in responsible investments that will effectively improve the lives of students and the future of our society," said Danny Chang, OUSA president.

"That is why our students wanted to communicate alignment with your decision on October 23. We believe that the Ontario university sector should ensure that any new or growing university institutions and campuses are financially sustainable."

Madam Speaker, that's from the students. I know that the opposition is so driven by rhetoric that they could care less what the students have to say, but it matters. The students get it; why can't the honourable members of the opposition? Of course, as I said—not surprising at all when it comes to matters of finances.

Ontarians elected this government with an understanding that when it comes to the finances of this province, they trust us to get them back on course. They trust us to harness the potential of our next generation. We have a moral obligation to ensure that we have the funds to support them, to not saddle them, not to take their credit card—none of the honourable members opposite would go on a spree with their children's credit card; why are they willing to do it with Ontario taxpayer dollars?

As the honourable minister said, we're committed to helping people get the training and education they need to get quality, good-paying jobs. That's, of course, why we introduced Bill 47, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act. We cannot divorce what we're talking about today from this act and the important measures we're taking to harness and empower our next generation.

The member opposite who's going to speak after this has been a champion for skilled trades in this place. The \$3.5-billion skilled trades gap: We've said to Ontarians that we're going to get this right. Again, just think of that \$3.5-billion skilled trades gap.

I have a good personal story of this. A local plumbing company wrote to me and said, "It is incredible, the decline we have seen in business due to the previous Liberal government's Bill 148. So many young people we employ and look to employ are ready for work, but the rules have prohibited them from getting a good start. We need to improve the ratios to give young people a future and the opportunity to learn the trade."

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Mr. Percy Hatfield: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member on a point of order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. I am here to listen, or trying to listen, to the member speak about the decision on the university campuses. He wants to talk about skilled trades. He accuses us of rhetoric. I'd like him to return to the topic at hand, please.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. I will return to the member and remind him that the text of the motion is on page 2 if he needs it. Go ahead.

Mr. David Piccini: Absolutely, Madam Speaker. I would draw the honourable member opposite to open up and think about the context that this is done in. Education—I know you disagree, but it involves skilled trades. Empowering skilled trades and investing in them is important in the context of the financial decisions this government is making, to ensure that we harness the potential of our next generation and to ensure that we respect the taxpayer dollars, cognizant of the limited situation we're in after years and years of reckless fiscal mismanagement. So investing in skilled trades is important. That's why we've reduced the ratios, to empower our next generation, to support that local business that I referenced—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Point of order, please: With all due respect, he says he's not going to talk about skilled trades and he goes right back to skilled trades. We're here to listen about universities. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I will encourage the member to speak to the motion. Context notwithstanding, please speak to the motion.

Mr. David Piccini: This motion involves empowering students with the necessary skill requirements they need to succeed in the future. You cannot divorce this from skilled trades. You cannot divorce this from the context at hand.

Unnecessary red tape and regulations are job killers. They discourage businesses from hiring the employees they need. We need an effective climate in this province to foster and to support our next generation.

The decision that we made regarding these three campuses ensures that we respect the taxpayer dollars—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Okay. I would ask the opposition members to wait just a moment.

The member has been asked a number of times on different points of order to speak to the motion. The motion is printed on page 2. It is opposition day motion number 2 and is about the cancellation of the universities. Please speak to the text of the motion. I have allowed members to have quite a bit of latitude today, but this has been raised four or five times. Please speak to the motion.

Mr. David Piccini: Yes, Madam Speaker. The cancellation of these three campuses, as I said, cannot be divorced from the fiscal framework we are in, the debt that this province is in and the unsustainable future. We have to make tough decisions. We were elected not to continue to snowball—the snowball effect, the snowball rolling

down the hill—and to punt this down to future generations. We were presented with a very difficult decision. As the member from Markham mentioned, nobody makes these decisions lightly. But as the minister has said, we have to look at the limited resources that we have, given the fiscal situation this province is in.

As Danny, the OUSA president, said, “We understand the fiscal framework you're operating in, and we support you. We're aligned with the decision that you're making”—investing resources in skilled trades, reducing the regulatory burden on our businesses to ensure that these young students, regardless of the campuses they go to around this province, are prepared and equipped with the competencies they need to succeed in the workforce.

I read a very interesting report by the institute for competitiveness, which wrote that 84% of educators feel they are empowering our next generation with the skill set that they need to succeed in the workforce; 44% of students felt that they had those core competencies they need to succeed in the workforce, yet only 34% of employers felt that the next generation was graduating with the competencies they needed to succeed in the workforce.

We are grappling with these tough decisions as we look down the road, so—and I'll get back to this—it is morally wrong and irresponsible of us to make a decision that would perpetuate and exacerbate the existing problems of the previous government. We have a moral obligation to Ontarians to ensure that we act, and act in a decisive manner. Yes, Ontarians recognize that. That's why they gave us seats on this side of the House and on that side of the House and sent such an overwhelming message that the direction the previous government was heading in, the unsustainable direction, had to be reversed. Difficult decisions had to be made, and that's why they elected this government and elected this minister, who has anguished over these decisions, who has made the tough decisions but is ensuring, through the introduction of Bill 47, that we are investing in the skill set so that we don't have troubling reports like that, so that students graduate with the skills and the competencies they need to succeed, to enter the workforce, to fill that \$3.5-billion skilled trades gap.

When we look at institutions like the three that were cancelled and when we look at whether it's the bricks and mortar or the educators who are preparing our next generation, we have an obligation to them, an obligation to the taxpayer, to ensure that we're equipping them. Whether it's from a capital investment standpoint, whether it's from working with our teachers, as we're also doing, we have a moral obligation to ensure we equip them with the tools to equip our next generation with the skills they need to succeed.

That's what this minister is doing. These are the difficult decisions we are making. That is why we are supported by presidents at Trent. That is why we are supported by students. That is why 150,000 students backed this decision and said it was the right decision to make. At a time when we are determined to get this province's fiscal

situation back on track, spending \$300 million is something we must grapple with. We have a moral obligation to make that tough decision, and the minister made the right decision on that.

As I've said, we've worked with students. I spoke to students in my riding, a number of students, who have said it's not about where they go; it's about what they learn and it's about ensuring that they have the competencies to enter the workforce. We're ensuring that we do just that. We're ensuring that our next generation is set to succeed. We're ensuring that we equip them with the skill set that they need, not perpetuating those decisions of the previous government.

As I said, amendments that we've introduced to limit the journey-person-to-apprenticeship ratio, to reduce the regulatory burden and red tape to get our job creators to create new jobs so that the students get jobs and enter the workforce—that's why they go to university; that's why they go to colleges: to ensure that they are trained for the jobs of tomorrow.

You cannot divorce the fact that the previous government hamstringed businesses, crippled them with unsustainable tax hikes, with regulatory burdens, with red tape, from the decision that this government is making to ensure that we reduce that, to ensure that we make strategic investments in our post-secondary education system, to ensure that our next generation are entering gainful employment—not the \$15 minimum-wage economy that the members opposite want us to perpetuate, but meaningful, gainful employment like that member from the plumbing company, like the president who wrote to me from my riding—good-paying jobs. That's what we're committed to.

The commitment is clear. We've made a commitment to reduce the regulatory burdens that have plagued businesses in this province. We've made a commitment to harness the potential and the future of our next generation, and we don't do that by saddling them with unsustainable debt. We don't do that by taking their credit card, pick-pocketing them and mortgaging their future. That's why we're making these difficult decisions. That's why I'm pleased to support the minister.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Kevin Yarde: Madam Speaker, I rise today in this House in favour of the motion by the member from Hamilton Centre, our leader. Let's start off by acknowledging that this cancellation of universities is going to have a huge impact on our communities. In my community of Brampton, it has been a hot issue for the last few days, as citizens of Brampton are angered by the decision of the government to cancel the university.

The people of Brampton again feel neglected. Brampton has one hospital for 600,000 residents, and that hospital has some of the highest wait times and among the busiest emergency wards in the province. Despite all of that, this government voted against our motion for a second full-fledged hospital in the community.

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Let's talk about auto insurance. Auto insurance rates in Brampton are among the highest in the country, yet this

government once again paved the way for premiums to increase, making life more unaffordable for Bramptonians.

Now this government has cancelled a university in Brampton which the people of Brampton had been lobbying for and wanting for well over a decade. Brampton is one of the largest and fastest-growing cities in Canada. It is among only a few large cities in Canada without a university. Bramptonians were elated to finally get a university, and this government scrapped it.

Can you sense a pattern that we have here?

For too long, Brampton has been taken for granted. These campuses were a chance to create educational opportunities and economic growth in one of the fastest-growing communities in Canada. Just like the previous government, this government has yet again let the people of Brampton down. Bramptonians have spent years working to create opportunity for the next generation, only to have the Conservatives break their promise and put these projects in jeopardy. This government promised these projects would go ahead, but that promise is broken with these reckless and short-sighted cuts.

Madam Speaker, Brampton needs this university. Brampton is Canada's second-fastest-growing city. In fact, of the 45 new residents who move to the region of Peel every day, 35 of them settle in Brampton—plus, the average age of a Brampton resident is 36.5 years. Brampton is one of the youngest communities in Canada. Some 27% of Brampton residents are under the age of 19, and 42% of the population is under the age of 29. All this goes to show that with a growing population, post-secondary education is needed in Brampton.

The proposed Ryerson-Sheridan campus in Brampton would create a great addition to our post-secondary education system in Ontario. Slated to open in 2022, this university's proposed plans include a centre for education, innovation and collaboration; an innovation hub, connecting students with external organizations in the region; and a national centre for cyber security. This institution can be a great hub for learning and for preparing students and citizens of Brampton and this province for the future. Beyond just the education, there would be a huge economic benefit—hear that? “economic benefit”—for all these regions through the addition of these university campuses.

The government is blaming the province's poor finances for the cancellation of these universities, but that is very short-sighted. This government is cancelling projects that will be economic drivers in their respective regions and that will create jobs today, tomorrow and for decades to come. It has been estimated that the university campus in Brampton would add more than 1,800 construction jobs. The ongoing operations of this campus alone would add more than 1,500 jobs. Estimates show that based on a medium-term enrolment of 5,000 students, there would be an ongoing economic impact of \$220 million annually, or 1,510 jobs. The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities says that being efficient and cost-effective is the only way for them to go; they have to be efficient and

cost-effective. But I would suggest that this is a cost-effective way.

The member from Northumberland said that he doesn't want us to be saddling future generations with debt. Well, when you look at the set-up here with the universities in Markham and Milton, as well as in Brampton, this is going to bring economic activity and economic growth to these communities. It won't saddle them with debt; it will actually improve the economies of these towns.

Not only is this a short-sighted decision; the government is going to rob the students of Brampton of the chance to access world-class post-secondary education in their own city. This decision of the government is going to cost the city and the region thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions in economic productivity annually. Brampton deserves better.

On top of that, Brampton, Milton and Markham have already spent significant amounts of money, time and effort related to the already-approved projects. In Brampton alone, citizens have been lobbying for this university for over a decade. In fact, the lack of a university was among the election issues during the municipal election. Now the plans for that university have been scrapped by the government. Again, Brampton deserves better.

Patrick Brown, the former PC leader who was elected on Monday as Brampton's mayor, said that the decision was a step backward for the city.

The president of the Brampton Board of Trade, Todd Letts, had this to say: "Cancelling the Ryerson Brampton project seems to have come out of the blue and does not inspire confidence in the government's decision-making...."

"With so much waste in other parts of the government, it seems silly that a target is put on stifling innovation. Universities are economic drivers. This campus is the catalyst for many complementary economic investments in our city...."

"Downtown businesses were counting on increased foot traffic and customers for their stores. Teenagers and parents were looking forward to having more choice for learning."

This is why we are pushing the government to honour their commitment. These are investments that make sense.

In fact, the members of the government side agreed with this sentiment. While on the campaign trail earlier this year in April, the member from Milton stated, "We will do everything we can to make this project a reality, whether it takes \$90 million or there's more we need to do."

The demand for post-secondary education is growing, and universities say that without these spaces, they will struggle to meet it. There are significant costs attached, but these campuses will generate economic activity.

We need these campuses, Madam Speaker. Therefore, I sincerely hope that the members here from all sides support this motion to provide funding for these campuses, especially the members from Markham, Milton and Brampton.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I'd first like to thank the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Minister Fullerton, and the PA, the member from Northumberland—Peterborough South, for your hard work and your dedication on this file.

Madam Speaker, we promised the people of Ontario to restore accountability and trust in Ontario's finances. Part of that process means making tough decisions about projects across Ontario.

Our government is being forced to clean up the irresponsible and reckless financial decisions of the previous Liberal government. In an election year, they made empty promises to Ontarians for programs and projects they knew they could not afford. This led to a \$15-billion deficit, while hiding the cost from the public.

This included roughly \$300 million for three campus expansions: York, Laurier and Ryerson. The ministry is working with the institutions to better understand what has been completed and if there are termination or reasonable wind-down costs. Our government for the people would be willing to consider a business case for how these projects may proceed in the absence of provincial capital funding.

Our government believes that colleges have an integral role to play in the post-secondary education sector moving forward. We expect that any partnership would only move ahead with willing partners. This has been a tried-and-true model. An example would be in my own riding of Simcoe North, with the Lakehead campus. In 2006, Lakehead came to the Orillia area, and not because of any provincial funding but because of federal funding, private funding, our local municipality and our local county. They saw the value in bringing the campus to our area, so they worked hard as a community and with private investors to put that money together. Now, 12 years later, Lakehead has been quite successful in our area.

We are committed as a government to helping people get the training and education they need to get good-paying, quality jobs, many of which can be found in the skilled trades sector. The previous government's legislation placed unnecessary regulatory burdens on skilled tradespeople and skilled trades business owners. The Liberals made it challenging for Ontario to keep up in training skilled tradespeople and to meet our economy's skilled trades demand. We are at an all-time shortage. Not only did they leave Ontario with a \$15-billion deficit, but they left us with a sizable skilled trades gap that contributed to our inability to compete in the world's economy. This is completely unacceptable.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member from Windsor—Tecumseh on a point of order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's interesting in the chamber this afternoon, where we're here to talk about the cancellation of universities—three different campuses. With all due respect to the member who is very involved in the skilled

trades file, we're here to talk about the cancellation of three university campuses—not skilled trades and not apprentice ratios. We want to hear her views on—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We're not going to have crosstalk across the Legislature, please and thank you to the members—and the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, who is standing.

To the member for Simcoe North: If she will direct her remarks to the motion.

Applause.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Excuse me. I'll ask the member to have a seat.

While I'm addressing the member, I don't expect to be clapped over. I should be able to hear myself, please.

The member from Simcoe North may continue, and direct her remarks to the motion, please.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: But while we are talking university, college is a form of post-secondary as well, and we're talking about the value of post-secondary, whether it's university or college, and skilled trades being part of that.

I have seen first-hand in my riding the value and the importance of our skilled trade workers and the professional work that they do. I grew up in a family of skilled trade labourers, and I was taught the value and the significance of the work that they do in our province.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order in the House. The member has the floor, but the floor right now is for debate on the opposition day number 2 motion. We have had a fair bit of latitude. I have said a number of times that the topic of conversation is indeed the motion. All members must speak to the motion if they are going to speak. So I would ask the member to find her way to the motion in short order, please, and stay there. Thank you.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have spoken to many colleges outside of the GTA, including colleges in my area who talk about the lack of students coming—all taking from that same pot of students that post-secondaries are all fighting for.

I will speak to an article in the *Globe and Mail* by Leo Groarke, who is the president and vice-chancellor of Trent University, who has some exceptional comments to make on our decision with cancelling the three campuses:

“But the question of whether this is a time when the government should be funding three new campuses (four if one includes the francophone campus promised by the last government) is legitimate. It deserves to be asked and reasonably considered.

“There would be no issue if institutions were funding expansions on their own”—exactly what I mentioned with Lakehead. “Expansions (and contractions) of that sort are a normal part of post-secondary development. At a time when the government is determined to cut spending, the question is whether it should spend \$300-million to make new spaces available for students.

“The short answer is ‘No.’

“The Ontario University Fair is the largest educational fair in North America. This year, attendance at the fair dropped. This should come as no surprise. Anyone watching developments in post-secondary education over the last decade knows that we have entered a period characterized by a decline in the numbers of Ontario high school students attending universities and colleges.

“The province's own University Sustainability data (2017), published by the Higher Education Quality Council, concludes that the Ontario population of 18- to 20-year-olds (the age at which the majority of students enter universities and colleges) will not ‘recover to 2015 levels until the year 2033.’ This is not a period in which one can plausibly claim a pressing need for new university and college campuses in Ontario.

“In a situation in which the system is characterized by a lack of students, creating entirely new campuses takes students away from existing campuses at a time when they are scrambling to find students they need to fill the spaces they already have available. Institutions in the north are especially vulnerable.”

That was from Leo Groarke, vice-chancellor and president of Trent University.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Member for Hamilton Mountain, come to order.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: So, as we said before, opportunities for private investors, for municipalities and for counties to come together and recognize the value of a campus in their area—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Niagara Falls.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: We should be looking at those opportunities and working in those areas. In a time where we have a \$15-billion deficit, looking at establishing three new campuses at this time is not right and does not make sense for Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Let me start my comments by stating that I am actually very disappointed with the government's response to today's debate, today's motion about the cancellation of three universities in Milton, Brampton and Markham. All I have heard today from the members opposite and from the minister are comments that do not speak to this issue. You have made a decision which is devastating to the communities in Milton, Markham and Brampton, and, at the least, you owe these communities a meaningful discussion and debate about this subject. I would like to remind the members opposite to engage in the discussion about the motion before us, because this is what those communities so desperately need and deserve.

Madam Speaker, I am from this community of Brampton. This is an amazing city and an amazing community. If anyone has never been to Brampton, I implore you to come check out our amazing community. It is a very unique community. It's diverse. It's full of new Canadians.

It's young. It's vibrant. It's one of the fastest-growing communities and cities in this country. It's the ninth-largest city.

When you look at our community of Brampton, and I have been speaking to members over the past 10 years, there is one issue that everyone has been on the same page about. There's one issue on which, irrespective of your political background, of who you are—whether you are a business person or a working person, whether you are a young person or an older person—everyone is on the same page: that Brampton needs a university.

Now, one of the most active groups on this issue was actually seniors. If you've never been to Brampton, you should know that seniors are some of the most vibrant and active members of our community in Brampton. Every summer, they hold amazing gatherings and a variety of different events. At any event you'd go to, they would have petitions lined up. They would be lobbying; they would be pushing to say that we need to bring a university to Brampton.

If you actually think about it, it's incredibly selfless. These seniors were not advocating for this university for their own benefit. They were not hoping to enroll in this university. They were not hoping to participate in this university as students. Instead, they were advocating for this university because, by doing so, they wanted to work to create a better city, because they were seeing and watching how their children and grandchildren, the parents and young people of Brampton, were struggling because of the lack of a university in Brampton.

And what were these struggles? Well, young people were struggling daily. They were struggling daily either to take the multiple-hours' commute outside of Brampton to other university campuses—and how that took away from their day, took away their ability to have a productive aspect of their day—or they also saw these same young people struggle in their ability to pay for living away from Brampton if they chose to study outside of the city and live in that city.

These seniors saw parents struggle who were grappling with this decision where they wanted so desperately to send their children to a higher institution of learning, to send them to university, but they were grappling with the reality that they may not be able to afford to do so. And when they were faced with the decision of how to pay extra amounts of money to get their kids either by way of having to spend more money commuting or paying for their children to go by transit to universities, or paying for altogether having to relocate them to a different city, this is something they struggled with.

This is an economic burden in Brampton. The economic burdens are increasing and increasing, and this is an additional one that many families couldn't actually afford. The result of it, in many circumstances, is that if you couldn't get approved for OSAP, for some young people, and if you couldn't afford to take two to three hours out of your day to commute because maybe you had a part-time job, maybe you were not able to go to university—and that access to education was something that was not possible

for you because of either financial constraints or because of your inability to take that time in the day because you were working at another job.

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The answer to these communities, to these young people, to these seniors, to these parents was to bring a university to Brampton. This was a dream to them, and it was a dream for a better city. To students, it represented this dream where you could live and you could learn in the same city. To parents, it represented this dream that they could actually fulfill an obligation and a want that they had, where they could send their children to university and not have to pay three to four to five times more because they have to shoulder the costs of living expenses and rent and all the things that are associated with moving to a new city.

But it was more than just that. The university was a dream for our entire city. It represented thousands of jobs, and economic growth. It represented the revitalization of our downtown core. It represented investment and energy and all of those things associated with that, that our city so desperately needs.

That's why, when I heard about these universities being cancelled, not just in Brampton, but in Milton and Markham, I was completely devastated. I was upset. But beyond any of that, I was outraged. I was outraged because, beyond anything, a government should not be working to kill the dreams of its citizens. A government should be working to fulfill the dreams of its citizens. That is what it is incumbent upon government to do.

Instead of doing this, the government has betrayed Brampton, Milton and Markham—young, growing cities. The Ford government, like the Liberals before them, has once again turned its back to the people of Brampton, and by doing so, they have joined in the legacy of the Liberals before them.

When we understand the context of a city like Brampton and the university, we have to understand that this university was already long overdue. Brampton is a city of 600,000 people. It is the only city amongst the 10 largest cities in this country that does not have a university within its boundaries. This is deplorable. This is something that was already far too late. At the eleventh hour, we see that a commitment was made by the previous regime to bring in a university, which was already a decision far too late. Once again, what we see happening is that the Conservatives are taking things from bad to worse, because they're deciding that, when the decision was already made too late, they're going to now cancel it altogether. They are once again falling and going along this legacy that Brampton is always getting the short end of the stick.

Need I remind the members opposite that, in regard to a campaign called Fair Share for Peel, Brampton receives not its fair share in regard to investment and services with respect to how much it contributes to the province; that we are underfunded and underserved across the board; that we have one hospital for 600,000 people, which has the busiest emergency room in the country; and that we pay the highest auto insurance rates in this country. And now,

on top of it all, we can add that it once again will continue to no longer have a university, because of this government's short-sighted decision to cancel it.

If we look at the decisions and the priorities of this government over the past 100 or so days since it has come into power, we see that they have increased auto insurance by 11%; they have voted already against our motion to increase funding for health care and bring in a third hospital to Brampton; and now they've cancelled our hopes and dreams of a university—a cancellation that is so short-sighted—

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Point of order, the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Madam Speaker, I believe we are discussing the cancellation of the universities, not auto insurance and different things. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I believe that he was making that point.

Mr. Gurratan Singh: I can reiterate, and remind the member opposite, that my previous words right now were “the cancellation of the university is short-sighted.” So if the members opposite would like to pay more attention to our comments, they are free to do so accordingly, because it is a short-sighted decision to cancel this university. It is one of the most short-sighted decisions. Out of the discussions in which the members opposite say, “We’re trying to save money; we’re trying to address the debt,” what they have actually done is, they have cut off their nose to spite their face.

They just need to look at any university across the board. Universities are economic engines for the cities that they are in. Universities bring in jobs to the cities they are in. Universities bring in businesses that want to work in a city that has an educated and employable workforce within that city. Universities are something that would have brought in money in regard to construction, in regard to running the university, and in regard to the 2,200 students that could have been living and studying in Brampton instead of having to go to a city outside of Brampton.

If we continue analyzing this impact—well, the studies are clear. This university campus in Brampton, it's estimated, could have brought in as much as \$220 million annually; and if you look at Markham, \$37 million annually. Well, I don't think these numbers add up. I think the members opposite are having an issue in regard to the numbers adding up in this respect, because investing in a university would have been an economic boon for Brampton, Milton and Markham. They would have seen their money back tenfold over the course of time if they had not a short-sighted vision but a long-sighted vision into how to build sustainable and strong communities.

Quite frankly, this is why people lose faith in government—because the members opposite promised and campaigned on these universities and then pulled the rug out from underneath these communities and cancelled these universities. This is why people lose faith in government. They lose faith in people like this, in these kinds of individuals who propose one thing and then cancel. They lose faith in politicians because it shows that they will say

one thing in regard to getting elected, but their actions will be something very, very different.

But it does not have to be this way. We can live in a more vibrant and more prosperous city. We can live in a city that has an amazing university which acts as a driver of economic change for Brampton. We can turn around the issues that face Brampton. When you campaign or speak or communicate to the issues of individuals in Brampton, they tell you that one of the biggest issues they face is that it's a sleeper city. People live in Brampton; they study elsewhere. They live in Brampton; they work elsewhere. They live in Brampton and their lives are elsewhere. This is a problem. This impacts the ability for cities to be vibrant.

It does not have to be this way. We can live in a city that is truly the dream that it should be. We can live in a city that provides for people in all aspects, including education and university.

I implore all members to come together to vote in support of this motion, to finally show the citizens of Brampton, the people of Brampton that they matter, that they should be a priority, that they should be put front and centre, and that, along with the cities of Milton and Markham, their people and their issues matter and that they are a priority across the board.

I implore all members: Please support this motion so we can finally turn these communities around and bring them the education that they need and deserve.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to add my name to this debate. I'm just going to start off by saying that if the NDP had not supported the Liberals, perhaps they would not be spending \$12 billion in debt. We would be building the three universities if they actually had stood up for the people—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Member from Waterloo will come to order.

Mr. Bill Walker: —and really done it. We would have scrapped the College of Trades, which we've been talking a little bit about here today, and we would actually have the ability to be building and creating more good jobs, which you would think the members of the loyal opposition would actually be in support of.

A couple of the members across—I believe Parkdale–High Park and Spadina–Fort York—made comments to the effect of “promises in the election that they kept.” Well, I'm not certain, particularly the one—I believe it was the member from Spadina–Fort York who said, “What does it matter when you knew how much the deficit was?” Well, if you were told it was \$6 billion and all of a sudden it became \$15 billion, that's a \$9 billion hole. So Madam Speaker—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The House will come to order.

Mr. Bill Walker: That's like the NDP, who left \$7 billion out of their election platform, saying, “What does that matter?”

Interjection: At least we had a platform.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): And now I have a platform, and I am inviting all members to come to order. In about two and a half minutes, the opposition will have their chance again to make remarks.

I return to the member.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That's like the NDP saying, "What does it matter that we left \$7 billion out of our platform?" That would be \$7 billion and \$9 billion—that's a \$16-billion deficit and hole that the people have to suffer with.

The member from Brampton East just said that the numbers don't add up. You're correct: If you leave \$7 billion out and there's another \$9 billion, the numbers don't add up to saying, "We're going to build three more universities every time we turn around." The people do lose faith.

At the end of the day, we need to ensure that what we're doing is for the people of Ontario and we're making good decisions. We promised the people of Ontario to restore accountability and trust in Ontario's finances, and that's what we're doing. Part of that process means making tough decisions, and I applaud the minister for doing that. I know the President of the Treasury Board every day sits through these numbers and says, "Holy smokes. Look at the hole that this government and the NDP, which propped them up, have left."

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But let's not just listen to me, Madam Speaker. I'm going to read from an article from this morning from the *Globe and Mail* by Leo Groarke: "Ford Was Right to Cancel Funding for New Ontario University Campuses." He basically says whether the time is when the government should be funding three new campuses is legitimate; it deserves to be asked and reasonably considered. I would suggest to you, Madam Speaker, that the people of Ontario would be expecting the loyal official opposition to actually ask those questions, whether they would think it was a good thing to say, "Is this a good, long-term benefit, or do we need to make these decisions today?"

Mr. Leo Groarke said that at the end of the day, "the Ontario university fair is the largest educational fair in North America. This year, attendance at the fair dropped. This should come as no surprise. Anyone watching developments in post-secondary education over the last decade knows that we have entered a period characterized by a decline in the numbers of Ontario high school students attending universities and colleges.

"The province's own university sustainability data (2017), published by the Higher Education Quality Council, concludes that the Ontario population of 18- to 20-year-olds (the age at which the majority of students enter universities and colleges) will not 'recover to 2015 levels until the year 2033'. This is not a period in which one can plausibly claim a pressing need for new university and college campuses in Ontario....

"They should not expect a provincial government that is trying to wrestle with its deficit"—a deficit that was supported by the NDP at every budget I've been in this

Legislature for—"to pay for them at a time when there is no pressing need to establish them.

"In this case, the Ford government has made the right decision."

Madam Speaker, at the end of the day, we would expect a loyal opposition to ask us challenging questions about the focus and the direction of our province, not just continue to look for speaking marks and to try to make people feel that it's going to be all good and the numbers and the money will just show up out of nowhere.

We need to get this province back on track. We need to open it up to jobs. And we need to be there, working for the people every single day.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? I return to the Leader of the Opposition for her right of reply.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I do have to say, I'm quite disappointed with the debate from the government side, starting with the minister who somehow couldn't find it in her repertoire to speak about the motion that was before us and instead spent most of her time talking about skilled trades and not about her decision to cancel these universities and throw these three communities into absolute chaos in terms of their planning for their futures.

But it ended with the member from the government side who just spoke, who talked about things that I think people need to know are not quite accurate. For example, of all of the times that votes occurred during the Liberal reign, 49% of the time the Conservatives voted with the government, with the Liberals. I think that when it comes to talking about when people lose faith in government or people lose faith in politicians, they lose faith when people are not being upfront about the truth and the reality of what happens around here.

Here's another example, Speaker: That party, the governing party, knew all along what the deficit number was going to be, but now they're spending tax dollars, public money, on a dog-and-pony show even though they knew exactly how much of a deficit the former government had run up because the Auditor General told us all. When their finance minister was, in fact, the critic for their party, he was just shocked at how the government of the day, the Liberal government, was not being upfront about the deficit. He was very, very clear about the fact that the deficit was much, much higher than the government had admitted to—

Mr. David Piccini: You are duplicitous in that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Sorry. I will remind the members to use parliamentary language. The member for Northumberland–Peterborough South will withdraw.

Mr. David Piccini: Withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'm sorry; the member will have to return to his seat. Stop the clock.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): No. That's not helpful, member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. David Piccini: I withdraw the use of the term “duplicious.”

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We don't repeat the word. We just withdraw.

Leader.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. All these members need to do is look up the Fedeli Focus on Finance and they'll find the answers right there. This is what makes people disappointed with government. This is what makes people lose faith in politicians, when they raise these kinds of issues and there is not a cent of accuracy in what they're raising.

Here's the other big piece of this—and I'm going to talk about the institutions themselves in a minute—but the bottom line is: This government just got rid of \$3 billion in revenues. How is that going to fix the deficit?

This government has over 700 contracts that they've broken with private companies, and they are going to get sued for that. How much is that going to increase the deficit?

This government is going to put signs up on the border and that's going to cost us money, but all these things are much more important than the future of our communities and the future of our students.

We also know that this government is going to decrease corporate taxes and decrease taxes for the richest Ontarians, and that's going to increase the deficit.

The bottom line is: It is all about choices. What we think is that the choices should be about making sure that everyday people and communities that are trying to build a future for themselves and their residents are able to thrive with the support and the partnership of a provincial government.

Instead, we're not going to see the jobs that are going to be created to help those skilled trades get their apprenticeships because all those projects have now been cancelled. We're not going to see, in Brampton, a cyber security centre of excellence that will take our communities—and our province, frankly—into the global economy. The minister talked about being competitive in the global economy and making sure we have an educated workforce. Well, hello, Minister: If you want that, you've got to be funding the institutions that are going to be able to get you there. That includes, for example, the education village in Milton, which was supposed to be the anchor of their contribution to the innovation corridor. In Markham, it was the IBM Innovation Space.

These are the very things that governments should be investing in to make sure that we are prepared as a province to have an educated workforce that helps us be globally competitive in innovation, in fintech, in all the kinds of cutting-edge changes that are coming rapidly down the pipe and that families and seniors and businesspeople and academics are all saying are important pieces to drive us forward.

At the end of the day, yes, this government wants to cut, cut, cut, cut, but they also want to cut taxes for their friends. They want to cut taxes for the rich. They want to cut cap-and-trade revenues. Right now, that \$15-billion deficit is \$18 billion because of cuts the Conservatives

have made, and probably closer to \$21 billion when you add everything up. That's why they're cutting health care and that's why they're cutting education: They are cutting, cutting, cutting to feather the nests of their friends.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order. Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day motion number 2. 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 to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1528 to 1538.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Members take their seats.

All members are in their seats? It appears so.

Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day motion number 2. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hassan, Faisal	Schreiner, Mike
Arthur, Ian	Hatfield, Percy	Shaw, Sandy
Begum, Doly	Horwath, Andrea	Singh, Gurratan
Bell, Jessica	Karpoche, Bhutila	Singh, Sara
Berns-McGown, Rima	Kernaghan, Terence	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bisson, Gilles	Mamakwa, Sol	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Miller, Paul	Taylor, Monique
Gates, Wayne	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Vanthof, John
Gélinas, France	Morrison, Suze	West, Jamie
Glover, Chris	Natyshak, Taras	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Harden, Joel	Rakocevic, Tom	Yarde, Kevin

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Baber, Roman	Harris, Mike	Rickford, Greg
Babikian, Aris	Hillier, Randy	Roberts, Jeremy
Bailey, Robert	Hogarth, Christine	Romano, Ross
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Khanjin, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Bouma, Will	Kramp, Daryl	Simard, Amanda
Calandra, Paul	Kusendova, Natalia	Skelly, Donna
Cho, Stan	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Dave
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Coe, Lorne	Martin, Robin	Tangri, Nina
Crawford, Stephen	Martow, Gila	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McDonell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Downey, Doug	McKenna, Jane	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dunlop, Jill	McNaughton, Monte	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Elliott, Christine	Mulroney, Caroline	Wai, Daisy
Fedeli, Victor	Park, Lindsey	Walker, Bill
Fee, Amy	Parsa, Michael	Wilson, Jim
Ford, Doug	Pettapiece, Randy	Yakubski, John
Fullerton, Merrilee	Phillips, Rod	Yurek, Jeff
Ghamari, Goldie	Piccini, David	
Hardeman, Ernie	Rasheed, Kaleed	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 36; the nays are 61.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ACCESS TO NATURAL GAS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L'ACCÈS AU GAZ NATUREL

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 24, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 32, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 32, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 25, 2018, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. McNaughton has moved second reading of Bill 32, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 25, 2018, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

MAKING ONTARIO OPEN FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 POUR UN ONTARIO OUVERT AUX AFFAIRES

Mr. Clark, on behalf of Mr. Wilson, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 47, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009 and make complementary amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 47, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi, la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail et la Loi de 2009 sur l'Ordre des métiers de l'Ontario et l'apprentissage et apportant des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member to begin the debate.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, I want you to know this afternoon that I'll be splitting my time with the member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill, and also the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Speaker, I refer to the member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order, please. If you're choosing to stay for the debate,

that's wonderful; if not, please leave quietly so that we can hear the debate.

I recognize the member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Thank you very much, Minister. I'm pleased to rise as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, who is also the minister responsible for red tape and regulatory burden reduction. I rise today to introduce second reading of the Making Ontario Open for Business Act. I will be sharing my time with the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Last week, the minister made a compelling case for the need to fix Ontario's problem with burdensome regulations. This act is the first step in our government's plan to make Ontario open for business. I would like to thank the House for this opportunity to go into more detail about how our government will reduce business costs and help Ontario companies become more competitive. Our government is working hard every day to make Ontario open for business. Through the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, our government is keeping our promise to the people.

Over the past number of months, I have been meeting directly with small businesses to discuss how our government can help them grow and create good jobs for Ontario workers. Through these round tables, our government heard a number of stories from business owners who had to lay off staff, pack up shop or stop investing in their operations due to the failed policies of the previous government. Additionally, a number of my colleagues and government cabinet ministers have been meeting with businesses, workers, the public sector and employees to review Bill 148 and have heard further feedback.

The Minister of Labour reviewed each section of the bill and asked three critical questions: What was the impact on Ontario's economy? Does this provide a real benefit to the people? How do we ensure that Ontario is open for business?

Last week, our government made a commitment to remove the onerous burdens on our job creators while preserving real benefits for Ontario workers. The Making Ontario Open for Business Act, if passed, will fulfill our commitment to keep Ontario's minimum wage at \$14. As of October 2020, annual increases to the minimum wage will be increased on an economically sound metric: inflation. Ontario's workers and businesses deserve a minimum wage determined by economics, not politics.

Our government for the people recognizes that lower-income workers and their families do deserve a break, which is why we committed to ensure that minimum-wage earners pay no provincial income tax. The Minister of Finance is actively working on that. If we want minimum-wage workers to have more money in their pockets, the answer is very simple: Stop taxing them. It is an answer you will never get from the previous government, or the opposition, for that matter.

The Minister of Labour used the same deliberate approach to assess each section of Bill 148.

The Making Ontario Open for Business Act will correct the previous government's disastrous personal emergency leave program, a piece of red tape so burdensome it discouraged employers from hiring new workers or creating new jobs. Instead, our government will introduce a consistent, simple system where every Ontario worker will now have a straightforward package of annual leave days: three sick days, three family responsibility days and two bereavement days every year for every worker. We know that time spent with family is important. Our government will protect three weeks of paid vacation after five years for every Ontario worker.

We will continue to support the domestic or sexual violence leave. Our government understands the importance of these provisions and is committed to job-protected domestic or sexual violence leave for all Ontario workers.

Bill 47 will reverse the needless scheduling restrictions and give back to employers the flexibility to have the right staff at the right time.

These reforms will protect Ontarians' privacy and personal information. Our government is also repealing the rules that gave unions access to employees' personal information even if only 20% showed interest in joining a union, and the rules that forced card-based certification on new sectors. Our reforms give back to those workers the right to a democratic secret ballot.

1550

Overall, making Ontario open for business will simplify, harmonize and reduce the regulatory burden for anyone willing to create jobs in Ontario.

The reforms we're introducing are deliberate, thoughtful, unlike the last-minute changes in polls on Ontarians through Bill 148 by the previous Liberal government. This package of reforms will help unlock the job-creating potential in Ontario's economy, and it will continue to protect and preserve important provisions for current workers, including domestic or sexual violence leave, a minimum of three weeks' vacation after five years of service, and one of the highest minimum wages in Canada with ongoing increases tied to inflation.

Our government's proposed legislation proves to the world that Ontario is open for business. Businesses should have confidence in reasonable and predictable regulations, and everyone who works should have the confidence of a good job and a safe workplace.

Now in addition to these parts of the bill, our government is working to improve access to the skilled trades. There are many tremendous and vibrant opportunities available in the skilled trades in Ontario. In fact, one in five new jobs in the next five years will be trades-related, but there's a problem. Employers can't find apprentices and apprentices can't find jobs. Despite this labour shortage, we have young people who want careers in the skilled trades. Many apprentices are actually forced to leave the province to find work. They deserve a shot at a job right here in Ontario, Speaker. If you're prepared to do the work, then you deserve a shot at a job right here in Ontario in your own home.

This is a clear sign that the current Ontario apprenticeship system is broken. With our modern economy, we need an apprenticeship system built for today, one that makes Ontario open for business.

In Ontario, our ratios are amongst the highest in the country and are a major deterrent for employers looking to hire apprentices. The current ratio regime limits the number of apprentices an employer can train. This makes absolutely no sense, especially when employers need apprentices and apprentices need employers. The system is limiting our growth and the number of jobs available in our province. We need to prepare Ontarians for the jobs of today and of the future.

Another critical issue is our trade classification system. The current system is complicated and outdated. We can no longer ignore these issues, Speaker. Through Bill 47, our government intends to transform and modernize the apprenticeship system, starting by proposing amendments to the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009. If passed, amendments would immediately lower journey-person-to-apprenticeship ratios to a simple 1-to-1 ratio, making us far more competitive with other provinces in Canada.

Our government will also establish a moratorium on trades reclassification and de-prescribe 24 low-volume trades where apprenticeships are not in demand. Further, if the legislation is passed, we would move towards the repeal of the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009, have a mechanism for interim governance structure and provide for an orderly transition to be completed in 2019.

As far as we're concerned, if you are prepared to do the work, then you deserve a shot at that job. That means the status quo has to be fixed.

While these are big changes, they are necessary in order to respond to the needs of apprentices and employers, to address the skills gaps and to help people reach their full potential.

During this time of transition, our government intends to maintain the essential system functions and ensure certainty as we move forward. By reducing the regulatory burden on businesses, apprentices and journeypersons, by closing the skills gap and increasing access to apprenticeships, we are cutting the red tape and making Ontario open for business, creating more high-paying jobs and making it easier for apprentices to join the workplace.

The Making Ontario Open for Business Act is our government's signal to the province, the country and the world that Ontario is open for business. In the months and years to come, our government plans to introduce a series of changes to improve Ontario's business environment and competitiveness. Speaker, we're going to reduce the costs to Ontario businesses of complying with regulations, while maintaining rules that keep Ontarians safe and healthy, and we are going to make it easier and faster for companies to do business with the government. Our government is going to streamline, modernize and, in some cases, eliminate unnecessary, complicated, outdated or duplicative regulations. Ontario imposes thousands of

rules that businesses are telling us just don't make sense, and we're listening. We're reviewing these rules.

An entrepreneur who applied for approval to build a dairy plant submitted a design for a modern and efficient facility that would be a safe and comfortable place to work, but the application was rejected. It was rejected because the design didn't meet the specific rules that required low doors and higher ceilings. Regulators wrote these rules decades ago to ensure good air circulation for dairy production during the summer. The only problem is, Madam Speaker, air conditioning is not exactly a recent invention and it has made these rules irrelevant, yet they are still being enforced.

Businesses are also telling us that many regulations get in the way of making operations more efficient. One auto parts maker told us that whenever they make minor modifications to an existing piece of equipment, they incur costs to re-measure noise levels across the entire plant for a small modification.

Businesses are telling us that it takes far too long to get an environmental compliance approval, which they need to build a new facility. They say this takes three years in Ontario, while a comparable approval in Michigan takes just 90 days. When companies have production contracts to fill, they can't wait.

Regulations like these give government a bad name. More importantly, they make businesses think twice about investing and creating jobs in Ontario. They waste time and they waste money. They do nothing to protect Ontarians and they cost us jobs that we want, so we all end up losing.

Speaker, we're going to put a stop to this waste. We're going to take a systematic approach to getting rid of all of these bad regulations. We will review Ontario's stock of regulations and ask some tough questions: Is this regulation effective? Does it achieve the goal it's supposed to? Is it efficient? Does it achieve its goal at a reasonable cost in time and money? Is it redundant, is it out-of-date, or does it needlessly replicate regulations from another ministry or another level of government? The answers to these questions will guide our next steps.

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We'll eliminate regulations that are ineffective or redundant, and we will modernize regulations that are necessary but inefficient. We're going to make the regulations that we do need easier and cheaper to comply with. Speaker, we're not against regulation; we're just against overregulation.

We'll keep the many good regulations that help make our province a great place to live in. Ontarians want clean air and clean water. They want their products to be safe when they buy them. They want employees to have safe working conditions. Regulations are there to ensure all these things happen. But just because a regulation is necessary doesn't mean that people should have to jump through hoops to comply with it. Our aim is to make compliance as low-cost and painless as possible. We'll write new regulations so they meet this standard right from the start.

We'll also make regulations easier to understand by writing them in plain language, so you won't need a law degree to make heads or tails of them. I've seen some of these regulations. I almost thought of going back to school to get a law degree to help me.

We're going to send a clear signal that Ontario is open for business by setting one of the best regulatory service standards in North America. We're going to take action in a number of areas to meet this standard.

We'll also do what smart businesses do: Listen closely to what their customers are telling them.

As well, we'll move away from the current prescriptive approach, where the government is the micromanager that enforces detailed rules on how businesses must comply with regulations. Instead, we'll adopt an outcomes-based approach that will focus on achieving the goal of the regulations, such as keeping our air and water clean and keeping Ontarians safe and healthy.

We'll also look for ways to reward companies with strong compliance records and then focus regulatory enforcement on the bad actors.

As we do all these things, we'll track the cost savings from reducing the regulatory burden. So, instead of the regulatory burden getting worse every year, it will get lighter. This will help unlock a resurgence in Ontario's industrial capacity and reinvigorate our entire economy. By eliminating unnecessary red tape and reducing regulatory burden, we will make it easier and cheaper to do business in every single sector.

We have a stockpile of burden-reduction proposals in hand to get started on, and we're ready to take action on these proposals right away. We'll bring quality jobs back to our province and help families get ahead.

Speaker, here's a quote and an example by Patrick McManus, who sent this to us. He said, "After years of calling for action to reduce barriers and red tape created by the Ontario College of Trades, we're pleased this government is moving to address the concerns of so many employers and workers across the province." That's Patrick McManus, chair of the OSTA. These are the kinds of changes that make it possible for more employers to hire and train the next generation of skilled trades workers and do it right away.

I had the opportunity to travel across the province, as did the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, Minister Wilson. I have to tell you—I'm a little biased on this—but you cannot learn from a better minister when you're a rookie MPP than Minister Wilson. He is the real deal: so experienced, so knowledgeable, and it's just an honour for me to be his parliamentary secretary and learn from him every day. I'm sure that all members of this House would agree with that.

While we were travelling, we heard a lot of stories. I personally met with over 400 small business owners. I just want to reiterate one point: These weren't big companies and these weren't big businesses. Many of these businesses that we were meeting at these round tables had two, three, four or five employees. Many of them are very proud and have been taking chances, making personal

sacrifices, and putting their own personal funds to invest in these businesses.

After one round table, one business owner came up to me and said, “I took on a family business that had been in operation for 57 years. It has become so difficult because of high expenses: high hydro prices and everything else. After Bill 148, it made it even more difficult for me to survive. But I took a chance, I remortgaged my house, invested it back into my business. I have not laid off a single person, have not reduced the hours of any of my employees, but I haven’t paid myself since November of last year. I haven’t collected a paycheque since November of last year.

“My wife and I sat down and said that this is a very critical stage. We have to think about something. We can’t just keep putting money in the business. So we decided, during the election when we heard from you guys and when you said you were looking at those very small businesses that you were going to help—we took a chance and we were waiting to see what your government can do to help us.”

Those stories, when you travel and you listen to those people and to those small business owners—he kept referring to his employees as part of his family. He said, “That’s just the way it is with small business. Our employees are part of our family. That’s how it has always been in small businesses.”

The Making Ontario Open for Business Act will get government out of the way of job creators. Bill 47 will build prosperity across our province by making Ontario once again a great place to invest and grow a business. I would like to thank the government for introducing this important bill. I would also like to thank all members of this House for their attention today as I outlined details about the Making Ontario Open for Business Act.

I’d like to thank you. I’d now like to yield my time to the Minister for Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, who will take you through the urgent need to reduce red tape and regulatory burden right across our government.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you, Speaker. I’m happy to rise today to speak at second reading of the Making Ontario Open for Business Act. I had the honour of introducing this bill in the Legislature on October 23, on behalf of our caucus. This bill is the first step in our plan to open Ontario for business.

I want to thank my parliamentary assistant and member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill, Michael Parsa. I also want to thank my other parliamentary assistant, Ms. Donna Skelly, the member for Flamborough–Glanbrook. Both joined me, and I joined them, as we criss-crossed across the province—north, south, east, west, every corner—to talk to businesses about the competitive issues that they face and to develop our “Open for Business” plan, of which this is the first salvo in a number of pieces of legislation that we hope to introduce over the next term

that will truly open business, create thousands of good-paying jobs in the province, and make us more competitive.

I’m delighted to have this chance today to talk about how our government is going to keep one of our most important promises to the people of Ontario. We promised to work hard every day to keep and grow good jobs here at home. Every single member of our government was elected on a promise to be for the people. When it comes to the economy, being for the people means keeping and growing good jobs, right here in this province.

This will not happen on its own. A big part of this work is cutting the red tape that’s getting in the way of Ontario’s job creators. Red tape is squeezing businesses and driving jobs and investment out of our province. We need to make sure that the businesses we’re counting on to grow and create good jobs are competitive with their peers across North America, particularly at a time of a more challenging trading relationship with our partners in the United States.

We have a real problem in Ontario with the high costs, delays and lost business associated with burdensome regulations. Businesses across the province are telling us loud and clear that the regulatory burden is getting worse every year. At the same time, many US states are reducing this burden, making them increasingly attractive to Ontario businesses as a place to invest.

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Many companies have had enough of the high cost of doing business here—it’s a sad fact. Some are simply not investing in modernizing or expanding their operations in Ontario, so they risk falling behind competitors in the US and elsewhere. Others are taking their new investments to more welcoming places or actively exploring options to shift their entire operations to the US. We are talking directly with many companies that are considering leaving Ontario or investing elsewhere. We can’t let this continue. The Making Ontario Open for Business Act is just one way our government is going to get Ontario back on track.

A recent forecast of business investment shows how far Ontario is lagging our North American competitors. Companies invest their capital in jurisdictions that they see as good places to do business, and the total amount they plan to invest shows whether they see plenty of opportunities to grow and create jobs. In September, the C.D. Howe Institute forecast that business investment in Ontario will average \$9,100 per worker in 2018. That doesn’t sound too bad until you compare it with the US, where it’s forecasted to average \$23,200 per worker. For every dollar that US businesses will invest this year per worker, Ontario businesses will invest 39 cents.

This huge and historic gap points to a painful reality that we need to face: The hard truth about Ontario’s economy is that we’re not as rich as we think we are. If you live in downtown Toronto and see construction cranes everywhere, you might figure the economy is doing pretty well, but that’s not what it looks like in most of the province. Millions of Ontarians are deeply worried about the economy, and rightly so. They’re anxious about our

province's economic future and about providing for their families. They don't want to see government manage the decline; they want to see government create the conditions for greater prosperity. Yet they see businesses struggling to stay afloat and young people struggling to find a good job, a better job.

There was a time when Ontario was the undisputed economic engine of Canada, so it's shocking to see the latest figures on GDP per capita. They show that in 2016—the latest figures available—economic output per person in Ontario was 1% below the national average. We're behind British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

It's even more shocking when we compare how we're doing with the rest of North America. We have long been accustomed to thinking of Ontario as in the top league in North America; that's what our previous government told us all the time. That's what the Liberals told us: in the top league alongside, say, New York and California. But we've been slipping, Speaker. The latest figures on GDP per capita, also from 2016, compared the 50 US states, the District of Columbia and the 13 Canadian provinces and territories. Out of those 64 jurisdictions, New York ranked third and California ranked ninth. Ontario ranked 46th out of 64, the lowest in my 28 years and, I think, the lowest in probably a hundred years. We're way down in the bottom third of the rankings, with a GDP per capita similar to Oklahoma's and Montana's.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Unemployment is at an all-time—

Hon. Jim Wilson: Unemployment is not a measurement of how healthy your economy is, I say to the opposition. That's what's wrong: It's thinking about one figure and not thinking ahead about the whole economy as a whole, and how wealthy we are or how not wealthy we are. We are nowhere near as rich as the previous government used to claim.

Now, there are two schools of thought, Speaker, about how the previous government viewed the private sector economy in Ontario. Some people believe that they were oblivious to the competitive realities facing employers in our province. Others believe that they were blinded by ideology and just did not care about the barriers to job creation that resulted from their policies. Well, I have to tell you, I'm partial to both theories, but one thing that is beyond debate is that Ontario's economy, once a leader in Confederation, is now trailing the pack.

Our collective prosperity has been flattening, and the previous government did little to change that. They were focused far more on investing the dividends from short-term, deficit-fuelled economic growth than on making our economy stronger, richer and more competitive for the long haul.

But our government has different priorities. We're not going to accept that Ontario will remain an also-ran in North America. We refuse to accept that Ontario will remain a have-not province. We refuse to accept that good jobs will keep leaving our province. We refuse to accept that our kids will have fewer opportunities than we did. That's why we're getting down to work fast to fix the economy, so people can find a good job right here at home.

At the heart of our plan is the conviction that Ontario can once again be a great place to invest, grow and create jobs. As part of that, we believe that Ontario can once again be a great place to make things. After all, they're making things all around us.

Our province has a long and proud tradition as one of North America's premier manufacturing centres. We make or process an amazing variety of products here, everything from food and beverages, to steel, to cars and trucks, to petrochemicals and pharmaceuticals. We are now adding to the mix homegrown, world-leading advanced technologies. We have some of the brightest people in the world in Ontario.

Generations of Ontarians have held well-paid manufacturing jobs that have provided a solid foundation for families and communities, and a strong manufacturing sector has lifted the entire economy. Manufacturers support deep supply chains and create good spinoff jobs. They buy vast quantities of raw materials, parts and machinery, software capability, equipment and engineering services. They use a long list of professional services, including financial, legal and accounting. And they have a huge and growing appetite for technologies that are crucial to every aspect of their operations.

So we should all be worried about the decline of manufacturing in Ontario. Our industrial base has been eroding as factories have closed their doors and manufacturers have made new investments elsewhere. Ontario lost a staggering 320,000 manufacturing jobs from 2003 to 2009. Losing 30% of our total manufacturing employment was a terrible blow to communities across our province.

In the past few years, many US states have reduced their regulatory burden and achieved a rebound in manufacturing. They've done this particularly in advanced manufacturing, with its highly skilled jobs, robotics and digitization.

But Ontario has been missing out. We've seen no net growth in manufacturing jobs since the depths of the recession in 2009. That's because, in the past decade, Ontario has lost its way. Doing business in Ontario is too costly and too burdensome.

The previous government brought in a tsunami of new burdens or regulations that have imposed significant, unnecessary costs on businesses and stifled economic growth. The total number of regulatory requirements has grown past an incredible 380,000. That's 380,000 pieces of red tape and regulation, Speaker. In comparison, British Columbia has about 167,000 regulations, yet no one thinks BC is a terrible place to live in.

Far too many of the regulations we impose on Ontario businesses—those are our job creators—contain heavy-handed requirements that add paperwork but not greater protections for people. They're inefficient, they duplicate federal or municipal regulations, or are simply out of date.

The previous government also made it expensive, frustrating and time-consuming for companies with the regulations that we do need. Now Ontario families are paying the price as companies flee south. One business owner who was at one of our round tables, and who is

moving his production from Ontario to Ohio, told everyone it was like going from a torture chamber to a candy store.

We can't let this continue, obviously. We must get government out of the way of our job creators. That's why we aren't wasting any time in lowering business costs to make companies more competitive. Through the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, we're getting down to work to reduce red tape and regulatory burden and to make life easier for job creators.

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Last week, I spoke with the owners of a small business in my riding, Barb's Clothes Closet. It was Small Business Week last week and it was Small Business Saturday. Upon hearing our government's plan to introduce Bill 47 and repeal the job-killing parts of Bill 148, the owner, Michael, thanked me. He told me that they had held off on replacing staff, had stopped investing in infrastructure and had taken to doing more services themselves rather than hiring others.

Since then, the owner has pulled the switch on hiring. They immediately, upon hearing the news about Bill 47, posted two job postings online and have already hired one staff. This is great news for the people of Alliston, and it's great news for the people of Ontario.

Just think, Speaker, if every business did that, we would truly be booming.

The Making Ontario Open for Business Act is a clear signal to job creators that we are taking some big steps in order to keep our promise. As the member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill mentioned, the first of these steps is a broad repeal of the sweeping changes to employment standards and labour relations that the previous Liberal government made through Bill 148.

Our legislation will remove regulatory burdens for businesses—our job creators—while continuing to maintain strong protections for workers.

Our government is preserving the right of every worker in Ontario to three weeks of paid vacation after five years.

For the first time in Ontario's history, workers will be able to take up to three days per year for personal illness, two days for bereavement and three days for family responsibilities. These eight days are protected leave. They will be in line with Alberta and British Columbia, and workers will be able to take them without fear of termination.

The provisions in Bill 148 were too open to abuse for some employees, who took leave for what clearly weren't emergencies. One company in Trenton conducted a survey of employee labour hours over the months of January and February in 2016, 2017 and 2018. From a sample of 75 employees over those two months each year, they found employees were absent for approximately 350 hours in 2016, 275 hours in 2017 and up to 750 hours in 2018, following the implementation of Bill 148. The 2018 absentee numbers were more than double the previous two years combined, Speaker. The numbers are compelling.

We'll protect against abuse by repealing the prohibition on requiring a note from a medical professional. You don't

have to have a doctor's note. Employers tell us they only ask the "bad apples" to bring in a note and it can be from a chiropractor or any medical professional.

We'll also repeal the overly broad scheduling provisions of Bill 148. People may not realize that the worst part of Bill 148 on the affected jobs was to come in on January 1. That was the incredibly complicated scheduling provisions that affected our hospitals, our restaurants and our manufacturers—affected every business that had employees and was running any type of shift work or having to give requirements for people to come in to fill in on the farm even.

For instance, provisions requiring companies to give employees 96 hours' notice of a shift change and on-call pay both introduced significant new costs for companies. They also reduced the flexibility that companies need to run their businesses in a highly competitive climate where just-in-time delivery has become the norm. We'll replace these provisions by creating the authority to create scheduling regulations for specific sectors if the need arises.

Bill 148 also raised the minimum wage by 21% overnight. Twenty-one per cent is quite a bit to absorb in a short period of time. This was a sudden and dramatic increase in business costs, especially for companies with fixed-price contracts to supply products to customers in the US or overseas.

We'll give employers some breathing room to adapt to this change in their cost structure by maintaining the minimum wage, for now, at \$14 per hour. We'll resume indexing the rate to that of inflation in 2020, bringing Ontario into line with most other Canadian jurisdictions.

Last week, I was also delighted to introduce, as part of the act, proposals to modernize the skilled trades and apprenticeship system so companies can hire the skilled tradespeople they need. Tradespeople build our schools, homes and workplaces. They manufacture and repair our cars and trucks. They maintain the power systems to keep the lights on. But they're in chronic short supply. Employers in sectors such as manufacturing and construction have a tough time recruiting enough skilled tradespeople to expand their businesses. Last week in Niagara, a local manufacturer told me that he could increase the number of machinists at his facility by 50% overnight but he can't find any.

Ontario makes it even tougher to train tradespeople by requiring companies to have more journeypersons for every apprentice they hire than most other provinces do. This severely limits the flow of new talent into our trades. Our growing businesses need skilled workers, and our young people need the good opportunities that apprenticeships provide. Our high ratio of journeypersons to apprentices means that far fewer apprentices enter the skilled trades than we need. Those are great career opportunities being lost. Here's a comparison that shows the scale of the problem. Ontario has a population 3.4 times as big as Alberta's, and in 2017-18 we registered only 1.8 times as many apprentices as they did.

Currently, the Ontario College of Trades sets those ratios. If our legislation is passed, the Ministry of Training,

Colleges and Universities will assume this responsibility and lower the ratios to 1 to 1 so we can train a new generation of apprentices, tomorrow's skilled professionals. This will allow businesses to hire the additional apprentices they need, giving more young people the opportunity to develop a good career in the trades.

This legislation is our government's signal to the province, the country and the world that Ontario is open for business. Our government is sending a clear signal to businesses that we have listened to them and are taking substantive action to fix the problem we have in Ontario with burdensome regulation due to the decisions of the previous Liberal government. And we're just getting started, Speaker.

In years ahead, we will introduce a series of bills to further lower business costs and boost competitiveness, and we'll streamline and modernize the regulations we have. We'll maintain the rules that are effective and necessary to protect the people of Ontario while eliminating burdensome regulations that don't clearly contribute to health, safety and the environment.

Our government is getting out of the way of our job creators and making Ontario open for business. This will allow companies to focus on growing their businesses with speed and efficiency, the speed and efficiency they need to compete locally and globally. It will reward entrepreneurs who have ideas for products and services that improve people's lives. Our plan to make it cheaper, faster and easier to do business will create prosperity across Ontario. Our government will put our province back on track as a growth leader in North America and help return Ontario to its rightful place as the economic engine of Canada.

I thought I would take a couple of minutes just to read some quotes we've received in response to the introduction of Bill 47 and the repeal of the job-killing parts of Bill 148.

Karl Littler, senior vice-president of public affairs, Retail Council of Canada:

"In stark contrast to the previous Ontario government's sweeping labour reforms passed less than a year ago, we are pleased to see this government taking a responsible and sensible approach in reforming the effects of the flawed Bill 148.

"From the outset, we have been clear that our position was never to oppose a minimum wage increase—everyone deserves a decent wage. Our primary concern with Bill 148 was always the cumulative impact of its provisions, and the extraordinary pace at which they were implemented.

"It is encouraging to see a government that has understood and acted upon the major pain points of our industry; namely, in the areas of full-time/part-time work, public holiday pay, scheduling and leaves.

"Tying future minimum wage increases to the consumer price index (CPI)—the approach taken prior to Bill 148, and one long-advocated by RCC—provides employers with the predictability they require and ensures that employees' wages keep up with price increases.

"We are also glad to see that some very important provisions have remained, such as guaranteeing time off for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, and ensuring at least three weeks' vacation for longer-term employees.

"These proposed labour law changes will ensure that Ontario's retail industry remains vibrant, and protects employment in our sector."

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From J. Scott Allinson, vice-president, public affairs, Human Resources Professionals Association, or HRP: "Recently this month, the HRP surveyed its 22,500 registrants on the implementation of Bill 148 on their organizations. Over 40% of respondents believe that there are areas of the Employment Standards Act (ESA) that should be further clarified. Some common examples include sections surrounding personal emergency leave, greater right or benefit, equal pay for equal work, and on-call scheduling and compensation. The province's announcement today will require HR professionals to re-evaluate their workplace policies and adjust them accordingly once the proposed changes take effect. The HRP welcomes the opportunity to bring our registrants' views on the proposed changes forward during the legislative process."

Mark Nantais, president of the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association: "The CVMA and its member companies appreciate the Ontario government's efforts to ensure that Ontario is open for business by reducing regulatory burden in the workplace so industry remains competitive and can attract investment and compete in North American and global markets."

From the Association of Canadian Search, Employment and Staffing Services, executive director, Mary McIninch: "The Association of Canadian Search, Employment and Staffing Services"—it's called ACSESS—"supports the Ford government's decision to repeal Bill 148, the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017, almost in its entirety. ACSESS is pleased to see this government taking a responsible approach in reforming the rushed Bill 148. As the national voice of the \$15-billion recruiting, employment and staffing services industry, ACSESS welcomes the opportunity to work with the ... Minister of Labour and the Ford government on behalf of our members on new amendments to our Employment Standards Act that protect the interests of workers and business alike. We are committed to keeping Ontario competitive in the global market and eager to help shape new legislation built on in-depth stakeholder consultation and evidence-based amendments, backed by cost-benefits analysis. Our members are ready to develop equitable legislation that protects all workers and is upheld by steady enforcement to foster compliance and hold companies accountable for any contraventions."

From the Business Council of Canada, vice-president Cam Vidler: "The Business Council of Canada welcomes the government of Ontario's commitment to improve the province's workplace legislation and apprenticeship system.

"The plan tabled ... recognizes the need to promote job creation and business growth at a time when Canada faces increased international competition for investment.

"Ontario business leaders are strongly committed to a positive work environment that supports the well-being of their employees and their families.

"In a submission to provincial legislators last year, the council noted that the previous law had been poorly designed and hastily implemented, imposing a significant burden on companies and offering them little time to adjust to higher costs and new regulations.

"On behalf of Ontario employers, we also welcome the government's desire to modernize the province's apprenticeship system, making it easier for workers to get the skills and experience they need to build successful careers. It will be important to ensure a smooth transition to a new system and for industry to have a strong voice in the process."

From Stephen Laskowski, president of the Ontario Trucking Association: "The Ontario trucking industry's hundreds of thousands of workers need a healthy, viable economy in a province that is open for businesses to thrive. We think the Making Ontario Open for Business Act and the general direction of this government sends a positive signal to businesses that this is a good time to invest and expand....

"OTA believes a healthy economy requires balance. Certainly, the province needs a workforce that is paid a fair living wage that increases over time. This new direction seems to find a much better equilibrium between that reality and how quickly and efficiently businesses can be expected to absorb increases."

The president of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Rocco Rossi: "On behalf of our 60,000 members in 135 communities across" Ontario, "the Ontario Chamber of Commerce is absolutely thrilled that the government of Ontario is building labour legislation that is both reasonable to employers and fair to workers.

"As Ontario's business advocate, our position has always been clear: Bill 148 was too much, too fast. The compounding labour reforms and unintended consequences came at too high a cost to Ontario's economy.

"We applaud the government of Ontario for implementing policies that make it easier to invest, start and grow a business"—

Interjection.

Hon. Jim Wilson: I don't know what that note says that someone just gave me. I've got to be honest, Speaker.

"We applaud the government of Ontario for implementing policies that make it easier to invest, start and grow a business in the province as well as build an economy that connects workers to Ontario jobs."

That's a quote from Rocco Rossi, president, Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

The president and CEO of Restaurants Canada, Shanna Munro: "Bill 148 forced restaurants to make tough choices that resulted in higher menu prices and fewer hours of work for staff. Restaurants Canada applauds the government for hearing the concerns of our members and making

changes that will provide some welcomed relief for Ontario's foodservice sector."

From the president of the Burlington Restaurant Association, a quick one: "These changes make sense for hospitality and other businesses in our community."

From the president of the Canadian Elevator Contractors Association, Pedro Oughourlian: "We would like to commend the Ontario government for taking steps to repeal the negative on-call provisions included in Bill 148 which would have severely impacted elevator mechanics response times and tripled the cost on Ontario elevator contractor small businesses.

"The new legislation will allow elevator mechanics to continue having high service standards and allow the industry to grow and hire more Ontarians into the highest-paid trade in the province."

From the president and CEO of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, Dennis Darby—

Interjections.

Hon. Jim Wilson: Apparently people are getting bored by what it's saying, Madam Speaker.

Interjection: That's not true.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'm not, and I'm listening.

Interjections.

Hon. Jim Wilson: I thought we needed to have our hours in on this piece of legislation. I have nothing to do with that next meeting.

From the president and CEO of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, Dennis Darby: "The repeal of Bill 148 is a major step toward reducing costs and restoring business competitiveness for Ontario manufacturers.

"The bill had the unintended consequence of raising the cost of labour, increasing the red tape burden and undermining the balance between employees and employers.

"We applaud the government's action to eliminate these barriers to doing business in the province."

From the executive director of the Canadian Tooling and Machining Association, Robert Cattle: "While the raising of the minimum wage from \$11.60 per hour to \$14 per hour seemed to grab all of the headlines, it was the other changes that were implemented within this legislation that affected our members more directly.

"Our members are from the machine, tool, die and mould (MTDM) sector which provides vital products and services to many types of manufacturing companies in the form of design, engineering and development of tools, dies, moulds, jigs, fixtures, gauges, machinery, robotics, automation equipment, machine shop products and cutting tools.

"In a CTMA survey conducted in March 2018, it was clear that personal emergency leave days, (PEL), shift change provisions and the removal of the exemption that was in place prior to this new legislation for companies with less than 50 employees, were areas that were being misused and creating major problems for member companies.

"While the CTMA supports improvements to workplaces and workers' rights, we also believe that these

changes should take place in a balanced and orderly manner where they are phased in at a pace similar to changes taking place in other parts of the world. This was certainly not the case with Bill 148 and we welcome the chance to reopen these issues and discuss the consequences of them.”

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From the president and CEO of the Mississauga Board of Trade, David Wojcik: “The Mississauga Board of Trade supports the government’s significant repeal of Bill 148. Our members shared their concerns over the bill and its impact on their businesses.

“We applaud the government for taking a step back and relooking at all aspects of this to support business in Ontario.”

I’m near the end, Madam Speaker.

From the general manager of the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, Joe Sbrocchi—oh, this is a good one: “We wish to thank Minister Wilson and the Ontario government for helping to support the needs and aspirations of Ontario greenhouse growers. The recent initiatives that have been announced will no doubt have a significant impact on helping to bolster incomes that were so hard hit with the business irritants brought about by Bill 148.”

I think I’ll leave it at that, Madam Speaker. Ontario is open for business. I thank all of these business leaders and many, many more. We received hundreds of quotes, frankly. That has really been the first time in a long time that the business community—our job creators, speaking up on behalf of their employers. They want to hire young people. They want better jobs in the province of Ontario.

We shouldn’t be having legislation that embraces a minimum wage economy. That’s ridiculous. No government would aspire to just a minimum wage economy. We aspire to try as hard as we can, with every tool we can, to get back the manufacturing jobs, to get back the good jobs in this province. That’s what we were elected to do and that’s what we’re going to do.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jamie West: I’m stunned at what to say. It was interesting reading all those comments. I keep hearing from the government about these large consultations they’re doing with everybody. But for the last 10 or 15 minutes, all I heard was “business”—how many times business spoke to them, what business thought, what these CEOs thought, and what these wealthy corporations thought. I didn’t hear one word in the last 15 minutes about workers, how it affects workers and the lowest-paid workers in Ontario—not one word, but we can’t stop gushing about how great this is for business.

We talked about small business. Interesting: Our Conservative friends, every time they talk about small business, they want to hold them to their chest. But they only do that when it’s going to affect big business, when it’s a Walmart or a Loblaws, because big business is 500% more likely to pay their workers minimum wage. Small business doesn’t do it because they know their employees, they know their employees’ kids, and they’re embarrassed

if they can’t make ends meet. But big business—they love minimum wage. They can afford to pay more, but this government lets them get away with not doing it.

I’m frustrated, Speaker. They talked about minimum wage being tied to inflation to make it fair. All through the campaign and prior to this we heard, “Too fast, too soon.” It’s time for a history lesson. The reason we’re in this mess for minimum wage is because of the previous Conservative government that froze it for over eight years. Over eight years with no raises. And now you crow like it’s such a good thing, what you’re doing. You froze it at zero. You starved out the poorest of Ontarians for eight years, and now you say, “Too fast, too soon.” Well, “Too fast, too soon” for this government is zero over eight years. And now you’re going to freeze it for four years and tie it to inflation after the election.

We’ve been down this path before. You pulled the wool over workers’ eyes. You think we’re going to fall for it again and again. Shame on you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments.

Mr. Roman Baber: I thank the House for allowing me to digress from the debate for a moment.

For more than two days, I struggled with the grief and shock over the senseless execution of 11 members of my faith worshipping peacefully in a Pittsburgh synagogue. The bulk of the carnage took place during a baby-naming ceremony, being my faith’s most ancient and holy ritual. Having attended the ceremony countless times, I always felt something mystical about it. In truth, I felt the presence of God in the room. That’s why I can’t make sense of this senseless tragedy. And my grief remains unabated.

At first impulse, one would say that Saturday was no different than Spain in 1492, Europe in the mid-19th century, eastern European pogroms, the Holocaust, Buenos Aires, Bulgaria, Toulouse, or the Hyper Cacher supermarket in Paris in 2017.

But somehow, this one feels different.

Here’s how: The outpouring of support from all faiths and friends, the show of strength on social media and everywhere, and the unanimous and unequivocal condemnation of anti-Semitism over the course of this weekend has been unprecedented. Perhaps I, myself, and other members of my faith will find some solace in Saturday’s act, a greater purpose that will derive out of this crime, and that is the universal understanding by all civilized people everywhere that incitement to violence against Jews or violence against Jews is unacceptable at any time, any place, at any point in history or the future, in Pittsburgh or anywhere on this earth. It is unjustifiable—not now, not ever.

May the memory of those who passed be blessed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Miss Monique Taylor: I would like to thank the member from York Centre for his comments. We all feel the tragedy here in this House, and across the province and Canada, and stand in solidarity. An attack against one truly is an attack against us all. It’s not a community that any of

us choose to live in. It's not a community that any of us choose to see happening to our neighbours. Our thoughts and prayers are with your community and with all of us around the world, quite frankly. Until we can beat racism, until we can come together as communities, as human beings—it will make us a better race as a whole.

I'm thankful to have the opportunity just to be able to say that we're with you and we'll be there at the vigil this evening to make sure that we are all standing in solidarity.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Jane McKenna: I just want to actually direct this back to the member from Sudbury. You made a comment about how we're pumping our chest and pounding on our chest. The only one that was doing that right now in the House was yourself.

I'm not sure who you're speaking to, but we've had numerous, numerous round tables with businesses. They've told us over and over again that they have not been heard at all and they're looking for people to hire and everything else. So I find it a bit confusing. If we're all for the people, then that's what we need to be doing.

We undertook a thorough review of Bill 148, which included in-depth consultations with dozens of businesses and unions. But we need to look at the facts and make evidence-based decisions that are going to help Ontario deliver on our goal of creating more jobs and prosperity in Ontario. We need to give our private sector and our small businesses more room to grow their businesses and hire more people rather than burdening them with costs and regulations.

I do not enjoy quoting these statistics, but we cannot ignore these realities. So let's start with a few key facts. Production in the auto industry, Ontario largest manufacturing sector, has fallen from 2.8 million to 2.2 million vehicles over the past decade. Auto parts producers are following automakers' customers by shifting investments, jobs and production to Mexico and the US.

According to Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, over the past decade, critical investment in machinery and equipment fell by 24% in Ontario. Output per worker in advanced manufacturing is now 100% higher in the US than Ontario, reflecting the competition-killing lag in investment and in modernizing machinery and equipment in Ontario. In September, the C.D. Howe Institute forecasted that business investments in Ontario will average \$9,100 per worker in 2018 versus \$23,200 in the US.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Mr. Michael Parsa: I want to start off by thanking my colleagues—the MPPs for Sudbury, York Centre, Hamilton Mountain and Burlington—for all your passionate comments and for stating what you believe in. We might disagree on that, but that's what this House is all about.

1650

Some of the comments that were made by my colleague across—I just want to reiterate this point, so that people understand: We're still paying the debt that the party that

was in power in the 1990s left us behind. That's why taking economics lessons from certain political parties is not something that we're going to do or make any apologies for.

Speaker, when we talk about small businesses, we refer to small businesses as the backbone of our economy. We all talk about it, but when it comes to listening to them, previous governments have all shied away from doing so, especially in the last 15 years. That's what we said we were going to change. Again, these are small businesses who are employing two, three or four employees. We all have them in our towns. We all talk about the importance of supporting these small businesses, but for some reason, for opposition parties, they become the big, bad businesses—for some reason; I'm not sure. I don't understand why.

Speaker, these businesses are dealing with 380,000 pieces of regulation on a daily basis. In comparison, the next province in Canada, British Columbia, only has 161,000-plus. That's the next province in Canada. We have to eliminate the red tape. We lost over 300,000 manufacturing jobs. That wasn't an accident. We said that when we formed government, we were going to make Ontario open for business, and that means bringing good-paying manufacturing jobs right back here in Ontario again.

Once again, I thank all my colleagues for all their support, and I hope that the opposition reaches out and supports our small business owners all across the province.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Vanthof assumes ballot item number 32 and Mr. Gates assumes ballot item number 40.

Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure to see you in that chair. I will tell you, though, that I am not happy about being part of this debate on Bill 47. For those of you who don't remember the two years of consultations which took place across the province in developing Bill 148—I mean, it took a long time, I will say. It took a long time for the Liberal Party to come to the light on some of the real issues that were facing workers in the province of Ontario, and facing businesses, quite honestly, as well. Throughout that entire process, we were very vocal about addressing the income inequality and wage disparity that have become systemic in the province of Ontario, particularly for women in the workforce, particularly for racialized communities in the workforce, and with great geographical disparities as well.

And so, while I have an hour to talk about this particular piece of legislation, it will not be the government's finest hour, I can guarantee you, because this piece of legislation, as we go through it—and I would encourage some of the members across the way and, ironically, to my left to actually read this piece of legislation, because when a government crafts a piece of legislation essentially behind closed doors, in secret, there are often unintended consequences with the implementation of that legislation. I

guarantee you that Bill 47, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018, will have a detrimental, devastating effect on the workers of this province and on the economy of the province of Ontario. I plan to take you through that step by step.

We first have to remember, though, what this piece of legislation does. It makes amendments to a number of acts: the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act; the Employment Standards Act, which I will be spending most of my time talking about; the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act; the Labour Relations Act; the Occupational Health and Safety Act; the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act; the Public Sector Dispute Resolution Act; the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act; and the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, 2014. Bill 47 not only repeals a number of the new labour laws that were introduced in Bill 148 to address the changing nature of work, but in some places it goes beyond Bill 148 reforms and restricts workers' rights even further.

According to the law firm Goldblatt Partners—we have their legal opinion here, as well. This is a direct quote from their assessment: “As compared with the sustained, extensive consultations and expert research which preceded Bill 148, Bill 47 appears to be a drafted piece of legislation that strips important protections from workers—particularly for the least well-off workers—for the benefit of wealthy business interests with close connections to the government.”

To put it bluntly, the NDP will not be supporting this legislation. It goes against everything we believe in, and it goes against every worker in the province of Ontario, Madam Speaker.

The changes to the Employment Standards Act—the majority, of course, of Ontario's workers do not work in a unionized environment. And it's ironic to hear the PCs talk about those lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs. They were part of the problem in the conditions that actually led to the demise of the manufacturing sector because they have consistently attacked unions in the province of Ontario.

The main source of protection for most workers in Ontario is the Employment Standards Act. That is all that you have if you are a worker in Ontario. Freezing the minimum wage at \$14—this has gotten the most attention, I would say. The general minimum wage will remain at \$14 through 2019. It's \$13.15 for students, and it's \$12.20 for liquor servers. Beginning in 2020, minimum wage increases will be tied to the consumer price index, with estimates that the minimum wage will not be \$15 until 2025. That's unconscionable. The livable wage in Waterloo right now, today, is \$16.20. Here in Toronto, one of the most expensive cities in Canada, it is upwards of \$18 just to find housing, just to afford food, just to get on the subway. So you are basically embedding inequity into your plan for the people of this province. Until 2025, \$15—honestly.

The first potential adjustment scheduled is October 1, 2019. But this government has repealed from the Ministry of Labour the mandated five-year review, so they're not even going to review it. No government has ever really

taken their own powers away, but this demonstrates that they've said, “You know what? We're not going to review it in five years. We're not going to do our due diligence.” They're not interested in addressing the poor minimum wage. It is absconding from their own responsibility as a government and embedding it in legislation.

The minimum wage: We've had very strong debates in this House on the minimum wage. We feel that increasing the minimum wage is a good public policy. About any future raises to the minimum wage, unfortunately, the Minister of Labour said that it will be determined by economics, not politics. Well, this is pure politics, because no evidence has been given to justify freezing the minimum wage. No evidence has been given to rolling back the protections of workers in the province of Ontario. This is purely politics and ideology, and we cannot stand for it in the province of Ontario.

Thankfully, though, I must say that I'm hopeful because the media coverage to date has been fairly strong, in that they are calling this government out for some of these moves. These are just some of the headlines from the Toronto Star:

—“PCs Move to Freeze Minimum Wage at \$14: Bill That Would Also Scrap Two Paid Sick Days for Workers Called ‘Mean-Spirited, Reckless’”;

—“Ford Driving a Race to the Bottom for ... Workers”;

—“Ontario is Taking a Big Step Back” on labour laws.

Thankfully, we have the media to actually educate the people of this province on what this government is attempting to do. We also have evidence to show that a strong minimum wage that keeps pace with the real consumer index is actually very good for the economy.

Conveniently, last week, on the same day that the repeal to Bill 148 was in the news, the Parliamentary Budget Officer at the federal level, Yves Giroux—this is an independent officer of the Legislature—attributed to a rise in the minimum wage the reduction on income inequality. He says, “Larger wage gains at the lower end of the distribution reduced wage inequality in the lower half of the distribution between 1997 and 2018.”

1700

Since 1997, though, Madam Speaker, “cumulative wage gains for women have exceeded those for men at all levels of the distribution... Despite these significant wage gains, there remains a considerable gap between the wage levels of women and men.”

I don't have to tell this House that the majority of part-time workers, 62% in the province of Ontario, are women and therefore will be disproportionately negatively affected by Bill 47.

It also has—and this is very concerning for workers across the province—the removal of equal pay provisions. It repeals the equal-pay-for-equal-work provisions set in Bill 148. Bill 148 was built upon already-existing prohibitions around wage discrimination based on sex by extending prohibitions to wage discrimination based on employment status. But under Bill 47, part-time workers will not be entitled to the same hourly wages as full-time workers, even if their work is identical. You can have

somebody doing exactly the same job but who only has access to part-time hours, and they will be paid less.

The *Globe and Mail* pointed out that this bill, Bill 47, the bill that is going to strengthen the economy, according to Mr. Ford, will quite honestly do the exact opposite: “Mr. Ford’s bill will discourage employers from hiring full-time, since they can pay part-time workers at a lower rate.” So we will become a part-time employer in Canada. That is not how you strengthen an economy. That is not how you address revenue streams in this Legislature. More part-time jobs do not an economy build.

It is so ironic to see the minister get up and say that they’re going to create better jobs. What Mr. Ford’s government is doing, what this PC government is doing, is creating more part-time work, less stability for those workers and less rights for those workers and, disproportionately, once again, doubling down on the inequality of female workers in Ontario. What kind of sense does that make? You have to be pretty intentional in your attack on one jurisdiction, which is women, who have continued to make very little progress from a wage-parity perspective.

What it does is keep in place equal pay for equal work on the basis on gender. What a low bar we are maintaining, Madam Speaker. Because it’s 2018, I guess you can’t actually say, “Oh, the female worker is going to get less money.” Invariably, though, I must tell you, that part-time worker will be female—62% of them. We know this in the province of Ontario. So you are doubling down on inequality. I say shame on the government for doing so.

I never thought, not in all my years of politics, that in the year 2018 I would still have to come to this Legislature and fight for basic rights for workers in Ontario. I think that it is a dark day. The member from York Centre was very eloquent in describing the pain of his community with the Pittsburgh shooting and feeling that discrimination, that racism and hate. But I have to tell you, the 1.6 million workers in the province of Ontario who make minimum wage right now feel like they are being targeted and they feel like they’re being attacked, because all that they are doing is going to work every single day and trying to make ends meet. To see their rights as citizens rolled back—pulled back even pre-Bill 148—is quite honestly a sign of populism that I just never thought I would see in the province of Ontario in 2018.

We have basic equality issues embedded in this legislation. We have basic issues of wage fairness that are embedded in this legislation.

The gender-based approach to part-time jobs, as I’ve mentioned—and it’s worth giving you some facts because there was no consultation on this piece of legislation, and no evidence has been given by the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, and no evidence has been given by the Minister of Labour. In Ontario, there are 1,346,400 part-time jobs; 486,000 of them are held by men and 859,000 are held by women. That’s actually 64% of part-time jobs in the province that are held by women, so this legislation is very targeted to that group.

We make a logical conclusion: With more women working part-time jobs, and if part-time jobs are not

eligible for equal pay for equal work, then women will be more likely to be underpaid for the work they are doing. This just stands to reason. This is not rocket science; this is basic common sense.

Women have been underpaid for their work forever, and when the government takes away a provision that will help women achieve pay equity, it demonstrates their lack of commitment to creating a fair and equitable society in the province of Ontario, and that is a dark day for this province.

We have seen countless stories of workers across this province asking for pay equity, and asking for a justification for why they’re getting paid less than men. Some people think that this debate is something that happened way, way back in time. Well, just in 2016, the University of Waterloo finally gave female professors a \$2,900 pay bump after it found that they were being paid less for equal work.

Even the consultation was a democratic process which resulted in fairness. By giving employees the opportunity to ask their employers to do a wage review, which Bill 148 did, there was a level of fairness in the system. But Bill 47 repeals that and ensures that women will disproportionately receive less pay for the same type of work as their male colleagues.

I think it’s worth noting that in the province of Ontario, on the sunshine list, published just in March of this year, nine out of the top 10 people were men. Of the top 50 highest earners, there are only five women, and the 10 names that are at the top of that list of 50 are Michael, David, John, Robert, Peter, Paul, Mark, James, Christopher, Peter and Andrew. These guys are doing okay in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Wayne Gates: No Andrea?

Ms. Catherine Fife: There’s no Andrea, there’s no Catherine, there’s no Caroline, there’s no Judith.

A government has to look at economic policy through a progressive lens. If we are 51% of the population, and we are not in a position to reach our financial potential, then the economy of this province suffers because of it.

Equal pay for equal work is for women. It is for racialized communities. It is for minorities who continually face these barriers in the workplace.

The changes to the personal emergency leave: I asked the minister a question this morning on this issue. I think it’s important just to take one step back. When it was last updated, the Employment Standards Act introduced 10 unpaid personal emergency leaves, back in 2001. Bill 148 kept those provisions in place, but they made two of those 10 days paid. Bill 47 takes away those two paid days, limits them to eight and actually restricts employees further through classifying the remaining eight. Not only do you not have flexibility as to what to do with your eight unpaid days—how very generous of you—but they’ve dictated it: Sick leave is three unpaid sick days, family responsibility leave is three unpaid days and bereavement leave is two unpaid days. It reintroduces the employer’s ability to request medical notes, or proof of death in cases of bereavement.

This is a well-known issue that the Ontario Medical Association raised through the Bill 148 consultation. They said, “Don’t ask a sick employee to go to the doctor.” They have to pay the doctor for that note, somewhere upwards of \$35. So a sick person has to go to the doctor and get a note so that they don’t have to drag themselves into their workplace. Now, the minister just sort of dismisses this, as if this would never happen. This happened to my own son not that long ago.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Every day.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Every day. For my niece, who was working at Chapters, they insisted on it, and she was basically only a part-time employee. She was barely, after tax, making \$35. So she has to go to the doctor’s office and get a \$35 sick note to prove that she actually is sick, so that they can’t fire her.

There is an incredible power imbalance between workers and employers in the province.

Now, not all employers are geared in this manner. There are really progressive employers in probably all of our regions. There are 21 livable-wage working groups that are trying to promote employers to offer livable wages. To date—it is growing in Waterloo region and I’m sure it’s growing in other places—there are 22 small businesses that have said, “You know what? We understand that when you offer a fair wage to an employee and you treat that employee with respect, in the long run, you get better value.” People stay employed. They stay in that workplace. They’re more committed to their workplace. It’s actually just a smart business idea.

1710

But we do know, unfortunately, that there are those employers who view workers through a very different lens. I have to say that we had just an example last week. Fiera Foods, for instance: This is a company that received federal funding, by Stephen Harper’s government, for being a good employer. Most recently, they received Liberal funding for being a good employer. Four workers have died at the Fiera Foods plant. A man was killed just last week, and it’s—

Mr. Wayne Gates: Temp worker.

Ms. Catherine Fife: That is the big issue, actually: This is a large corporation that uses two temp agencies that funnel workers into Fiera without adequate training, without adequate resources, or even health and safety equipment, quite honestly. They have been known to actually pay cash, so the government is actually losing the revenue through the taxes. They sidelined their whole responsibility to the worker to ensure training. If that worker is injured on the site, they bypass WSIB altogether—not that that’s always altogether a helpful agency.

Whenever I talk about Fiera Foods—and I talked a lot about this particular company because they’re not alone in the province of Ontario. They have figured out the ultimate loophole is that you basically run a temp agency out of your corporation and you bypass the Employment Standards Act. Now, Bill 148 did address this, finally. I talk a lot about 148, but it took us a long time to get the Liberals to bring this to the floor of this Legislature. We

had to shame them for years to recognize income inequality and unsafe working conditions.

Whenever I talk about Fiera Foods, I talk about this young woman who was named Amina, who was studying to be a nurse. She was 23 years old. She came into this factory to make money to go to school, and her dream was to be a nurse. She received inadequate training and she was clearly not prepared to be working close to heavy machinery. Her hijab caught in the factory line and no one around her knew how to press the emergency release. No one knew who to call. Nobody knew what to do, and she was killed—23 years old.

I think about her all the time. I have her story in my desk. Sara Mojtehdzadeh is the reporter who covered it and went undercover into Fiera. When she found out that this organization also received government funding, it really was a true slap in the face.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Three times.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Three times, yes.

I’m just trying to remember where I am here. This is why on Friday of this last week, the PC government did something that I thought I would never have to speak to again in this House. Last Friday, “the Ministry of Labour has instructed staff not to initiate any new proactive inspections aimed at preventing wage theft and other employment standards violations, according to an internal memo obtained by the Star”—this is by the same reporter—“a day after the Progressive Conservative government introduced a bill that will significantly roll back recently enacted labour protections.”

It’s interesting because the smart money—not just the most compassionate, humane or moral, which is what we hear a lot from the other side—is to actually prevent people from being injured in the first place and to ensure that workers feel safe enough and protected enough to actually say to an employer, “I don’t feel that I have enough information to actually do my job safely.”

“The memo, which is signed by the ministry’s acting director of employment standards, Joe Boeswald, says that as of Sept. 3, staff should ‘not initiate any new inspections.’ It also says the ministry will defer inspection and prosecution training for staff who have not yet received it.

“Employment standards inspections deal with basic workplace issues such as unpaid wages and overtime.”

So not only are we making our workplaces less safe in the province of Ontario, when workers do work in these conditions, we are not giving them any backup, any reinforcement, to ensure that they are paid their fair wages and for their overtime as well.

Clearly, legal services from across the province have huge concerns, as they should. Inspections are important because they are the backbone of enforcement. Why have an Employment Standards Act if you’re not going to enforce it? This is what we were telling Liberals. This is what you, the PC caucus, when they were the official opposition, were telling the Liberal government of the day because we had seen such violations, blatant, criminal investigations.

Right now there are so many criminal investigations against employers in the province of Ontario that they’ve

had to shut it all down, Madam Speaker. That really speaks to where this government puts the rights and the responsibilities around workers in Ontario. For me, it speaks volumes—for us, I should say. Doing the proactive inspections is really the only way to maintain just the minimum standards.

The memo goes on to say that “inspectors will have to focus on claims and should not initiate any new inspections.”

When I think of this, I think of a young man named Nick Lalonde in my riding. In 2013, this 23-year-old man fell to his death in my riding. I go by the building every time I’m in Waterloo. He had no on-site training, no working-at-heights training. There was no health and safety team or a team approach. He had a harness on, but was not harnessed in. And a young girl no longer has a father, and a mother and father no longer have a son.

There was no proactive—we fought so hard to get proactive inspections. To see that this government, this PC government, last Friday night decided that you were not going to do any more inspections in a proactive way is beyond—it’s unconscionable. It is unconscionable. And then you double down with Bill 47, which is a full-on attack against any progress that workers have been able to make. It really is astounding.

I’ll leave you with this one stat: “Ministry blitzes in the past regularly found violations in more than 75% of workplaces....”

So workers are not getting their fair share. They’re not being paid for their overtime. Now they’re not going to be making liveable wages in the province of Ontario, nor are they going to receive the appropriate training and have somebody in their corner. We all bear this responsibility. It is a shared responsibility that we have as legislators in Ontario.

The changes to the personal emergency leave: I thought it resonated with the minister today because when a woman contacted me—her name is Carolyn. Carolyn was working in the insurance industry. She had a really good job. There were a series of downsizes. Because she’s the sole provider in her family, she went and got a temporary job doing similar work but not being paid as much. It’s unstable work. There are no benefits. I have to say, it’s probably very stressful being in that situation.

She wrote Premier Ford. She said, “Mr. Ford, last year my mother-in-law passed away, and if I didn’t have that two paid leave”—emergency leave days—“I would have had to take an unpaid leave for that day,” because obviously she’s going to attend her mother-in-law’s funeral.

She gave a dollar value to it. She said that one day is worth one week’s worth of groceries. Those are choices that people think that people don’t have to make in Ontario.

I think a lot of people think of Waterloo and they think there’s a lot of money there, there is a lot of wealth. Well, the social fabric is so frayed and the state of work for precarious, part-time, contract workers—which is the new reality, and which is why Bill 148 was crafted: to respond to the fact that most workers don’t have rights. The

Employment Standards Act is all that they had. But if it’s not enforced and if it’s not a strong piece of legislation, you’ve really left workers in the province of Ontario out in the cold and basically said, “We’re going to pit business against workers,” when a true government would acknowledge that there has to be a collaborative approach to the economy.

1720

The OMA has weighed in, of course, on this need for medical notes. Our health care system is in a crisis. Hallway medicine is real. I recently took a colleague to the hospital here, at Toronto General, and I have to tell you that the level of stress in our health care system is at a breaking point. Adding \$90 million to address the flu surge, when last year \$100 million wasn’t enough, really isn’t going to cut it.

There are a total number of days that you can take each year, but quite honestly, if you have three kids and each of them get sick one day a year, you are out of luck once again. And this, somehow, is the priority of this government. It’s astounding to me. None of those days can roll into each other, like they could before, so you’re reducing the flexibility around unpaid days. The broader categorization of these days as personal emergency leave days gave people the flexibility they needed to deal with complex and different lives.

These new classifications give no flexibility, and that flexibility piece was important to families. There was some autonomy that people had, that they could say, “I’m not going to send my sick kid to school and then those kids get sick.” In fact, there actually is a quantifiable amount where people can say that when the health care system is being taxed the way that it is by having sick people going to work or sick people going to school because they have no other choice and because they’re not protected—there is a long-term economic cost to that as well.

The losses to the new scheduling rights: This is pretty interesting. If you want to think about precarious, part-time and contractual workers, they are really at the mercy of these schedules. It’s like they have no lives whatsoever. These changes were designed to respond to our changing economy, which is, as I just said, part-time, contract and precarious work. The new scheduling rights in Bill 148 were set to take force on January 1, 2019. Almost all of them have been repealed before taking effect. All of the pieces of the scheduling rules have been repealed and they strip workers of their dignity.

I always think about this elderly man who came to the committee during Bill 148. He said, “Listen, I’ve got three part-time jobs. My wife now has diabetes. My health condition is being compromised by the scheduling of shifts and the juggling of these three part-time jobs.” The PC member at the time said, “Listen, if we raise the minimum wage, you’re going to lose a part-time job.” The delegation said back to the PC caucus members, “Don’t I deserve some dignity too? Where is my integrity in your discussion around workers in the province of Ontario?”

We forget, or we choose not to see, these workers who are really building up Ontario. They are doing the work.

It's not the politicians, Madam Speaker; it's the workers on the front lines.

What happens here is that employee rights to request changes to a schedule or work location without fear of reprisal—that's repealed. Minimum on-call pay? That's repealed. The right to refuse work without fear of reprisal when less than 96 hours' notice is given by the employer? That's repealed. Worker dignity and rights? Those are repealed by Bill 47. I contend that I can prove it, and there is enough evidence across this province to show that, based on the ministry investigations in and of themselves.

The misclassification of employees is also a major issue. Employers would misclassify employees as independent contractors to avoid legal obligations to their employees.

This was the classic loophole. This was actually a loophole that the PC caucus identified because, in doing so, when an employer calls a worker an "independent contractor," they don't have to follow the Employment Standards Act. They don't have to pay competitive wages. They make their entire employment environment about making one contract worker to another contract worker, one contract to another contract, all the while absconding their whole responsibility to those employees. It's a loophole that was identified by the PCs and has now been embedded in Bill 47.

Bill 148 prohibited the misclassification of employees and created a reverse onus so that employees have to prove that an employee is properly classified. Employees have to prove that they're employees. In what world does this make any sense, Madam Speaker, to put the entire onus on the person who's doing the work and not the employer? Bill 47 removes the reverse onus provision so employers must still classify their workers properly, but it is now up to the worker to prove to a court, a labour board or an employment standards officer that they are an employee and not an independent contractor.

To say that we are going backwards would be an understatement. Why this government is targeting workers in such a manner when all we've heard from Mr. Ford is that he's here for the little guy—well, this little guy has to prove that he's an employee to a labour board. How is that supporting the little guy? I've already established that it's not supporting women, right?

This government has embedded in Bill 47 lower maximum penalties for employers who contravene—they've actually made the penalties not so bad—if they get caught. Well, it's highly unlikely they're going to get caught because the Ministry of Labour is not doing any more inspections—at least in a proactive manner. All of the fines from Bill 148 are reduced. The maximum penalties decreased from \$350, \$700 and \$1,500 to \$250, \$500 and \$1,000 for employment violations and are reduced from \$5,000 to \$2,000 for Labour Relations Act violations. That's a significant reduction, Madam Speaker.

Once again, if you're not going to have inspections, if you're not going to create a proactive culture where employee safety and rights are embedded so that employers actually know the terms of engagement, so that

employees know what the terms of engagement are—and by now, of course, doubling down and including less monetary penalties, you're really saying it's open season now. Employers can do what they will. We're lessening those protections for workers, and then we're going to call that "open for business." It's quite the sales job, Madam Speaker.

When I think of the fines that Fiera Foods got for not training Amina, or the company that didn't train Nick before he fell to his death, these are not huge numbers. When you look at the books of these corporations and these companies, this is just a small smidgeon right out of the profit margin, but look at the cost on the lives of the people here in the province of Ontario.

I mentioned earlier that there are some unintended consequences. Aside from losing the sick days, aside from losing rights around scheduling—the list goes on and on and on.

I received this release from People First of Canada, and it's titled "Devaluing Ontarians with Intellectual Disabilities." This is what happens when you craft legislation in the backroom. This comes out of a federal organization. It says: "Many Ontarians are understandably upset at the announcement that the government of Ontario's freezing the minimum wage at \$14 instead of raising it to \$15 as planned. But lost among the long list of labour-related announcements was one that stated a delay to the repeal to the exclusion to close sheltered workshops by January 1, 2019."

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"Most people are not aware of sheltered workshops"—and I hope that you're listening, because these are actually in all of your ridings—"or their role in the province. Sheltered workshops are places where people with disabilities are 'employed' for below minimum wages. Most often, it is people with intellectual disabilities who are working in these workshops or under this 'exclusion' clause from the Employment Standards Act." I have to say I didn't know that this existed, but this exclusion clause "allows employers to pay them incredibly low wages, with some ranging from 46 cents to \$2 an hour.

"In 2015, the then government of Ontario announced that it would close sheltered workshops forever. 'The delay of the repeal of this exemption means that it will remain legal for employers to pay people with intellectual disabilities less than minimum wage,' said Shelley Fletcher, executive director of People First of Canada (PFC). 'This is unacceptable. This is discrimination. This is how people with intellectual disabilities are devalued and excluded....'

"Kory Earle, president of PFC said, 'You won't find me asking to be paid less than minimum wage—who would!' Earle works under the 'exclusion' clause, earning only \$1 an hour when he is on the clock."

Madam Speaker, the fact that these sheltered workshops existed and that workers were being paid as little as 46 cents an hour should be of great concern to everyone in this House. Indeed, the fact that Bill 47 stands as is right now and allows this exclusion to continue under the Employment Standards Act essentially says that those with

disabilities do not have the same rights as other citizens in the province of Ontario. This deserves your full attention, if you care about those who live in this province and those who actually could be taken for granted.

A lot has been said about the negative impact of the minimum wage on our economy. You don't have to go too far to counter that byline, if you will, of this government. In fact, our own Financial Accountability Officer here in Ontario—once again, an independent officer of the Legislature, and I'm really looking forward to their next report; it will be coming out shortly—is on the record. This was from September 2017, and this is a direct quote:

“The government's proposal to raise Ontario's general minimum wage to \$15 per hour will dramatically increase the number of minimum wage workers from just over 500,000 currently to 1.6 million in 2019. As well, under a \$15 minimum wage, adults and those with full-time jobs would represent the majority of minimum wage workers....

“The FAO estimates that the higher minimum wage will raise total labour income (after adjusting for price inflation) by 1.3% by 2019.”

So there is a return on investment. There is a return on investment for having expendable income, for increasing health outcomes for people who actually have enough money that they don't have to go to a food bank. I hope that we could agree in this House that if people are working full-time, if they're contributing in a very significant manner, they shouldn't have to go to a food bank at the end of the week. I feel strongly about that. I know our leader does as well. We are well on our way to undermining that complete value system with Bill 47, I have to say.

When I go back, and I have a review—I should actually say before I move on that I found a banker, a chief economist with Scotiabank, who weighed in on the minimum wage. His name is Brett House, chief economist at Scotiabank:

“The ongoing debate over minimum wages is so important because it speaks to issues of income inequality, House said.

“Because over the past decade and a half, he said, any Canadians who own stocks or real estate have done very well, financially speaking. ‘The recovery has mainly benefited you,’ he said. But that's not true of a huge percentage of the population who depend on their pay cheques as a sole source of income. ‘If you rely on wages only, you haven't had a real wage increase in any substantial way in 10 to 15 years.’” That's why House is among those who think that the positivity of wage increases far outweighs the negative.

You are making it harder for Ontarians to get ahead, to reach their potential, by freezing the minimum wage, and especially by dragging it out to 2025 to get to a \$15 mark. That is just astounding to me, that any government would stand up and applaud that move, because it just is not good enough for the people of this province, I have to tell you.

As I mentioned, 100 CEOs across this great country, when they found that this government was cancelling the guaranteed income project—which, I must tell you, was

where 4,000 Ontarians agreed to enter into a contract with the government of the day. They basically said, “I'll share all my finances with you, I'll open my bank accounts to you and I will share how this project is affecting my life and my children and my health.” It was a contractual agreement with this government, which this government cancelled, as they say in quotations, “in a compassionate manner.”

Well, you can't pull out of a human research project in a compassionate manner before it ends in three years, not getting the results for that project, not seeing it through to make sure that it made a difference in the lives of those people. Actually, by international research standards, it is considered unethical to cancel a human research project, as you have done. And so, once again, this government will be in court, as they should be, and once again, the lawyers are happy, Madam Speaker. In fact, this government has been very—what can I say?—proactive in creating more legal jobs and more jobs for lawyers in Ontario. But as a result—

Interjection: “For the lawyers.”

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, it's not “for the people;” it's “for the lawyers.” You should just change those little—they have these things on their desks, right, “For the people.” Honestly, if you have to have that on your desk, “For the people”—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Listen, if you have to have that on your desk—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We were doing so well, and I was able to hear you. I would encourage the members to continue to listen. They will have their opportunity for questions and comments, I promise.

I return to the member.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Listen, if you have to have a little sticker on your desk saying “For the people,” you're in the wrong business, I'd have to tell you.

When the 100 CEOs wrote an open letter, with the cancellation of the guaranteed income project, they wrote to Premier Ford and they received no answer.

They wrote to Prime Minister Trudeau, and they said, “Listen, this is bad for the economy. Follow through on this project. Let's find out how to actually help people, lift them out of poverty and give them those tools for empowerment so we can actually figure out why the social assistance system as it stands right now is not altogether an effective system.” Reducing a lot of those administrative costs at the very top of it actually seemed like a very good idea and made economic sense as well.

Unfortunately, the Trudeau government seems to have lost its enthusiasm to address the growing income gap. It has also lost its enthusiasm for by-elections. Our poor member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton can't get a by-election out of this Prime Minister.

So here we are on Bill 47, making Ontario open for more part-time workers in the province of Ontario. As I said, the Employment Standards Act is the only document, the only legislation, that workers have to protect them in their corner. Not only have we seen less inspections and less proactive measures, but, shockingly, less oversight over the Ontario Labour Relations Board. Now, once again, the OLRB has been fraught with issues, and they're well documented. The board has broad power to determine its rules and procedures. Since 2006, procedural changes have had to be reviewed and approved by cabinet. This has been repealed. I guess if you finally want to make it official and turn your back on workers in the province of Ontario, you just wash your hands of all responsibility and reduce your own oversight, the government oversight over the Ontario Labor Relations Board.

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Changes to public holiday pay as well: Under Bill 148, public holiday pay was set based on a formula that would give most part-time workers a full day's wages for public holiday pay. It's not like they get to choose when the public holidays are. This was quietly changed by the Liberals during the election—showing their true colours—to give part-time workers part-time pay for public holidays. Those changes, of course, have been maintained by this government.

So here we are in 2018 with a set of regressive measures that roll back the protections for workers under the Employment Standards Act. We will now have less oversight over the Ontario Labour Relations Board. The onus is on employees to prove that they're not contractual workers. We have a whole segment of the population who have struggled to find full-time employment, and now you have a government that says, "You know what? For this part-time employee, you can pay that part-time employee less money, even though they're doing the same job as the full-time employee," which will actually create more part-time employment in Ontario. It is a watering-down but very intentional act of aggression against the very people who depend most on us, as legislators, to protect them, as workers, in the workplace.

I have to say, the news footage and the media coverage have been quite critical.

"Taking a Big Step Back: Labour Laws," from October 25: "It's amazing what a government that styles itself as being 'for the people' can accomplish in a few short months to make life just a bit more miserable for so many people struggling to make it in this province.

"In August, the Ford government cut a planned 3% increase in social assistance payments and scrapped the basic income pilot project launched by the Liberals.

"As it turns out, that was just the warm-up."

We keep saying, "How bad is it going to get?" Well, I'm going to stop saying that, because it keeps getting worse. Just when you think, "What else are they going to do?", they do something else.

It goes on: "Now, with what it calls the Ontario Open for Business Act, the government has made it clear that the 'people' it speaks for do not include those at the bottom of

the heap who have been struggling for a share of the province's growing prosperity.

"The government says the new law will 'create good-paying jobs with benefits.' In reality, it will do just the opposite by clawing back planned wage increases, rights and protections contained in the former ... Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, passed late last year.

"That certainly isn't good for employees, and as many economists have argued, it isn't good for the economy as a whole either."

I have to say that I've rarely heard such cutting reviews of legislation like this. I think it's because there is a growing recognition that we are actually at a tipping point in the province of Ontario. We thought, last spring, when at least we were trying to be very strategic about investment in a piece of legislation which, for the time being—and it wasn't even that great of a legislation. Offering two paid sick days—I mean, nobody should get a medal for this, Madam Speaker. But it was a step in the right direction, and we were very clear that our support was conditional until we could make it stronger. Never did I think that we would be rolling back these worker rights in the fall of 2019.

In this piece, "Premier Driving a Race to the Bottom for Workers," it says—and I think that, of course, it's cutting into basically the very hypocritical rhetoric—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member will withdraw.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Withdraw—the rhetoric which doesn't necessarily match the actions of the government; otherwise known as what I just said.

"That is the perverse thinking behind the economic philosophy"—and this one is from Linda McQuaig.

He said, "We're going to make sure" Ontario is "competitive around the world."

"At first glance, that statement might lead us to believe the Premier, especially given his commitment to act 'for the people,' was vowing Ontario would make sure its workers got as good a deal.... But that's not what he meant at all. In fact, he meant just the opposite—that he would ensure our workers got a worse deal than workers elsewhere.

"That is the perverse thinking behind the economic philosophy that has dominated North American politics in recent decades: that workers must offer themselves up at the lowest possible wage with the fewest possible benefits in order to create an attractive investment climate for businesses that might otherwise move elsewhere."

I have to say, Premier Ford is doing a good job of creating the instability and—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The Minister of Energy will come to order.

Ms. Catherine Fife: —is doing a good job of dismantling Ontario's social infrastructure. I see the minister likes to clap very aggressively at some of these measures.

But I have to say—because I have to talk for an hour—that these measures compromise confidence in the province of Ontario. When the Premier cuts cap-and-trade and

addresses the carbon tax and then won't meet with the German delegations whom we want to partner with to create better jobs in Ontario, that certainly doesn't instill confidence.

What we heard at the economic summit hosted by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce was that being consistent and being reliable in your policies and not ripping up contracts and insisting that companies must go to court just to validate the contracts that the government has already signed with them—this is actually not in the best interests of the economy. So what this PC government has essentially established is that they are willing to create new rules for themselves as a government as it relates to contract law in Ontario—because it still exists. Thank goodness we have the courts, Madam Speaker.

Then you also, with Bill 47, have relegated the rights of workers to the sidelines entirely and said to them, “You are on your own. The Employment Standards Act will be watered down. It will be compromised. We will not enforce it. We will not have oversight over the Ontario labour board. We will not issue a livable wage in the province of Ontario until 2025.”

That is a strong signal to other jurisdictions that this government has very political priorities, not economic priorities. Because if this government fully understood how important it is to ensure that people have income to spend in their communities and how strong those good local jobs are, especially full-time ones, then they wouldn't embed in this piece of legislation a new directive to all businesses across Ontario to “hire part-time people. You can pay them less even if they're doing what your full-time employees are doing.”

There are 145 other jurisdictions that have made progressive employment standards a priority for them, and they are very competitive—but not the province of Ontario, not in 2018.

It goes without saying that in the bottom half of Canadian workers, some 13.5 million people are earning less than they did in 1982 in inflation-adjusted dollars. Lars Osberg, who is an economist, says that only Canada's social safety net—child, disability, welfare benefits, etc.—prevents them from actually being worse off than they were in the early 1980s. That's how little progress we had made until 15 years of Liberals, who finally saw the light and brought Bill 148 to the floor of this Legislature

But the rise of neo-liberalism in this province, which says that workers must accept less and not address the changing economic landscape and basically sacrifice themselves up for the economy when the government has no problem whatsoever ripping up their contracts and not following through on their contractual obligations that would improve economic stability—you have to say, where are the real priorities of this government? It certainly isn't the people.

To say that this Premier says that he's for the people is based in a reality that's completely not the reality for the province of Ontario. We have a Premier who has made aggressive actions now against workers, who has embedded in this piece of legislation basically recognizing

that we're going to treat workers in the province of Ontario as lesser. We're going to embed it in legislation, and we're going to say that you have to wait until 2025 before you can make \$15 an hour.

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As I pointed out, the fact that women are disproportionately affected by this legislation and really singled out for further discrimination is a very dark day in the province of Ontario. I guarantee you that New Democrats are going to fight it every step of the way. We have the support of our communities, we have the support of the people in our communities, and we're going to make sure that you hear about it. Because Bill 47 is not good for the economy and it is not good for workers, and we deserve better in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Stan Cho: So much to say, so little time—two minutes—coming from a small business background, so I'll try and go quickly through some of the key points.

I just want to remind all of the members of this House that the majority of businesses out there are small businesses. We're looking at companies with three or four employees. I can't help but think about the people I spoke to at the door and the people who came to see me in my constituency, like Pat. Pat is a restaurant owner who put his life's savings into his location at Yonge and Sheppard, and he succeeded. He went from three employees to seven employees. Then he called me, and he said he had serious concerns with Bill 148. Actually, as a direct result of that bill, he held off on his plan not just to hire more employees in that location, but to open a second location, which was planned on being bigger, larger, employing up to 40 people.

It's not just the small businesses out there that have been affected by Bill 148. I think of Christian Horizons, which has a very special place in my heart. My much better half is a special education teacher, and Christian Horizons is a non-profit organization that helps empower individuals with multiple exceptionalities and help them find meaningful employment in our society. They requested a meeting with me, saying to me that 85% of their cost was related to wages, and that Bill 148 seriously threatened shutting down their operation. It's stories like that that I think we're not talking about here in this Legislature, and that we need to talk about in this Legislature, because it hurts small business. It hurts the non-profits out there.

I do have a happy ending: After we discussed Bill 47, that business owner called me and said that he is opening that second location—a huge location. Ontario is open for business, and so is Willowdale.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: First of all, I want to thank the member from Waterloo, who I believe did an unbelievable job of going through this whole thing in an hour.

I want to ask the PCs who are here and who are listening: Why don't you guys say something different that you haven't said now for about six months? Why don't you try

saying the word “workers”? Workers are part of this province, not just business. Why don’t you guys try that? That would be good.

To have this bill come forward is not a surprise to me. I’ve been fighting for workers my entire life. Do you know why I’m fighting for workers? Anybody know? I’m a worker. It’s what I do. I’ve done it my whole life.

I want to talk on Bill 47 and why we shouldn’t be surprised where you guys are at when it comes to minimum wage. In 1995, under Mike Harris, the minimum wage was \$6.85. Everybody remember that? Some of the guys are old enough to remember that; I know they are. Do you know what happened eight years later? Do you know what it was? It was \$6.85, every year, as inflation went to 2.1%, 2.3%, 2.4%, 2.7%. What that meant was that that \$6.85 had less and less buying power.

Today, your attacking workers and families and the minimum wage is not a surprise to me, because I remember—you guys might not remember this, but I remember. I remember going to the MPP’s office, after Mike Harris said, “You know what those people making \$6.85 can do? They can eat bologna sandwiches, or they can go to the grocery store and buy dented cans of tuna.” I remember what that was like.

So you guys attacking us—I want to finish, I’ve got a few seconds left. I have three daughters and four grandchildren. My daughters deserve to be paid an equal wage. Equal pay—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Will Bouma: I would like to thank the members from Waterloo, Willowdale and Niagara Falls for their comments.

I’ve run my own small business for the last 12 years, and it’s amusing talking about these paid sick days. I’ve taken two sick days—unpaid—over the last 12 years. The one was, I came downstairs and my wife took one look at me and said, “You are not seeing patients today.” The second one was, I couldn’t get off the floor because of my back. And that’s it.

It’s a little different when you run your own small business, but it appears to me—just the premise that I don’t understand—is that every single car payment of every employee that I’ve had, every mortgage that they’ve had, I carry that on my shoulders too. When you hear people talking about—a former member, I think, from the Liberal Party, saying that if your business model can’t accept a \$15-an-hour minimum wage, you just don’t deserve to be in business. I consider that a slap in the face.

I think of Trevor, who owns the Food Town in St. George, who drives a regular truck. His son plays hockey with mine. In talking to him the other day, I said, “What did Bill 148 do to you?” He said, “Do you know what?”—he employs the youth in our town. He said, “I had to cut 80 hours of work from my employees.”

So when we talk about this, fixing Bill 148—in fact, 99% of what we do, which everyone agrees with, is fix the unintended consequences of well-intentioned legislation.

So when we think about the impact that that bill had on small-town workers, that’s exactly the impact that it had. That’s what we need to fix in this legislation.

I want to quickly finish with the Seattle study. They made their minimum wage \$15 an hour a bunch of years ago. Five years later, the average low-income earner there was making \$125 a month less than they were before.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Jamie West: I also want to thank the member for Waterloo for her comments earlier.

One of the things she said that stuck in my head was a quote. It said that Bill 47 not only repeals Bill 148, but it goes even further. And to expand on that, it talks about the PEL days, the personal emergency leave days. A lot of people think those were new. A lot of workers didn’t even know that they had a personal emergency leave day until Bill 148 came out, but they did. From 2001 to 2016, they had 10 unpaid PEL days.

In 2017, Bill 148 came along and they still had 10 PEL days: they had eight unpaid and two paid sick days. This new bill, Bill 47—because I guess workers have it too good, they are going to end up with eight PEL days. They’re going to be worse off than they were in 2001, because they’re taking away the two paid ones but are not replacing the unpaid ones. And they make it even worse than that, because it’s going to be restricted leave; you technically have eight, but it has to fit in these different categories. So you have three sick days, you have three family days and you have two bereavement days.

If you look at the bereavement days, for example, section 50.0.2, subsection (6), says: “Leave deemed to be taken in entire days.” What that means is—let’s say, for example, you’re at work. You work until 5 o’clock, and at 4 o’clock your parents phone you to tell you that one of your grandparents died and you leave work. If you leave work an hour or 45 minutes early, that’s a day. You’ve used a day of bereavement. If you stay home the next day to take care of your parents and help plan for the funeral, that’s a second day. You can’t go to the funeral, because you’ve used your two bereavement days. And you can’t use any other days, because those are for sick days and those are to take care of your family. That’s not going to work; you’ve used your two days.

That’s the problem with this. This doesn’t help people. It doesn’t make things better; it makes it worse. This is a change for the worse.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member for her remarks.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I still am struck by how differently we see this legislation. I tried to present the economic perspective, just to demonstrate that when you value workers, when those workers have clearer rules of engagement, when they are protected in the economy, then we have a stronger economy. If the government is truly committed to actually addressing the fiscal mess—which I think we can agree on that the Liberal government left this province in—then workers are part of the equation.

Quite honestly, to demean them and to reduce their status in the world of employment actually undermines the collective goal of building a stronger province.

There is little evidence that shows that raising the minimum wage will have a negative impact on the economy. In fact, the evidence shows very clearly that most low-wage countries remain that way, while the high-wage nations of Europe and Scandinavia continue to excel in global competitiveness. The return on investment is very clear there.

It is astounding that this Premier says that he wants to put more money in the pockets of workers, but with the \$15 minimum wage gone, what he has essentially said is

that workers in the province of Ontario will have \$2,000 less in their pockets. Which leads us to ask this fundamental question: Whose money is Mr. Ford interested in keeping in their pockets? Whose pockets is he really interested in? Because it isn't those of the workers doing the work in the province of Ontario.

Bill 47 is a race to the bottom and, honestly, a dark day for Ontario.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): It being after 6 p.m., this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, October 30, at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1801.

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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	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
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	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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	
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	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
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	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
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	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
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 déléguée 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 Maria (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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
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	
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	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
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 / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs 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	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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	
Yakubski, 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 / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates
Stan Cho, Jill Dunlop
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Stephen Lecce, Gila Martow
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Lindsey Park, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Stephen Crawford
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stan Cho
Stephen Crawford, Doug Downey
Sol Mamakwa, David Piccini
Jeremy Roberts, Sandy Shaw
Donna Skelly
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Dave Smith
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Jessica Bell, Lorne Coe
Chris Glover, Christine Hogarth
Logan Kanapathi, Daryl Kramp
Natalia Kusendova, Amarjot Sandhu
Mike Schreiner, Dave Smith
Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Roman Baber, Rudy Cuzzetto
Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
Andrea Khanjin, Marie-France Lalonde
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Jeremy Roberts, Marit Stiles
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Parm Gill
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Roman Baber, Aris Babikian
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Présidente: Jane McKenna
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Robert Bailey, Rima Berns-McGown
Michael Coteau, Mike Harris
Faisal Hassan, Jane McKenna
Christina Maria Mitas, Sam Oosterhoff
Amanda Simard, Gurratan Singh
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Présidente: Catherine Fife
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Peggy Sattler
Catherine Fife, Goldie Ghamari
Jim McDonnell, Norman Miller
Suze Morrison, Michael Parsa
Peggy Sattler, Kinga Surma
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Randy Hillier
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kaleed Rasheed
Toby Barrett, Will Bouma
Mike Harris, Randy Hillier
Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Présidente: Nina Tangri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Deepak Anand
Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden
Belinda Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Select Committee on Financial Transparency / Comité spécial
de la transparence financière**

Chair / Président: Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Doug Downey
Roman Baber, Doug Downey
Catherine Fife, Robin Martin
Lindsey Park, Ross Romano
Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria, Sandy Shaw
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim